

**Development Control
(Hetton, Houghton and Washington) Sub-Committee**

SUPPLEMENT

Number: S 1

Application Number: 08/03289/FUL

Proposal: Erection of "extra care" facility for the elderly comprising 50 apartments with associated communal facilities and car parking.

Location: Moor House Four Lane Ends Hetton Le Hole Houghton Le Spring

Amended plans have been received and a further consultation carried out with a number of residents in Moorhouse Gardens. The period for receipt of representations expires at midday on 25th November, thereby allowing any further representations to be reported to members at the meeting.

The main issues for consideration are:

- The principle of development.
- The scale, layout and design of the proposal
- The impact on residential amenity; and
- The highway implications
- Other Environmental Issues (Sustainability and Ecology)

The Principle of the Development

The site is not allocated for any specific use on the adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and hence is subject to policy EN10, which seeks to ensure that new development proposals accord with the predominant land use of the area. In this instance the land to the north south and west is predominantly residential, while to the east lie the Hetton Lyons Cricket Ground, the Lyons tavern and an electricity sub station.

The proposed use of the site for apartments for the elderly with associated care and communal facilities is considered to accord with the surrounding land uses and therefore is considered to be in line with policy EN10 and hence acceptable in principle.

The Scale, Layout and Design of the Proposal

Policy B2 of the adopted UDP requires that new development should respect and enhance the best qualities of nearby development and retain acceptable levels of privacy.

The amended plan shows the northern end of the main arm of the development rotated anti-clockwise by approximately 25 degrees so that the gable wall is oriented parallel to the site boundary. In addition the number of apartments in the block has been reduced from 12 to 10, achieved by reducing the northern end of the block from 3 to 2 storeys. This has the benefit of reducing the height of the gable wall directly facing properties in Moorhouse Gardens. The amended scheme also removes the Juliette balconies from flats nos 17-19 and 35.

A further amendment results in the gable of the southern end (Four Lane Ends) of the main arm being reduced by the introduction of a lean to roof structure rather than a simple gable and thereby reduce the height immediately opposite properties in Four Lane Ends.

The majority of the surrounding properties are two storeys in design whereas the majority of the proposed scheme is three storeys. Consequently, it is accepted that the scheme will have a greater impact on the area than the current two storey care home. Discussions were held with the applicant about the possibility of accommodating the third storey partly within the roof space, an approach adopted in the Silksworth development. However, the agent has indicated that that element of the scheme has proved unpopular with occupants/purchasers and added costs to the scheme and the applicant was not willing to adopt that design solution in this instance.

It is important to understand that the scheme achieves the relevant spacing standards required between 2 and 3 storey development set out in the council's Supplementary Planning Guidance (section 2.7) and Residential Design Guide (section 10.C) even without the amendments outlined above. It is not considered that a refusal on the grounds of the three storey design could be upheld on appeal.

A number of objectors raised concern that the scheme represented an overdevelopment of the site. It is clear from a comparison of the footprint of the existing and proposed development that the latter is larger. However, there is no policy within the adopted UDP which seeks to limit the scale of a development on a redeveloped site to a level no greater than the existing. Indeed the government's housing policy,

as expressed through Planning Policy Statement 3 Housing, is to generally increase densities in order to make more efficient use of urban land. In this instance it is considered that while the density of the scheme is in the region of 80 units per hectare, it has to be borne in mind that these are sheltered units. Further the total floor area of the buildings on the site represents only one third of the site area. Thus it is not considered that the site is overdeveloped.

The scheme is of a relatively simple design, with an essentially handed "L" shaped footprint. The scheme is similar in overall concept to the other extra care schemes recently approved at Woodlands (Washington) and Leonard House (Silkswoth). The bulk of the roof is broken to an extent by a number of steps in the roofline to provide some relief along with the angled arrangement of the northern section of the main limb. It is proposed that sections of the elevations will be rendered to further break up the elevations. It is considered that further detailing would enhance the design and consequently it is considered that a condition requiring the approval of drawings of the detailed finishes of the elevations and the materials to be used should be imposed on any consent should members be minded to grant consent.

The scheme proposes canopies over both the front and rear entrances, the design of which is still to be finalised. However, it is considered reasonable that those designs be the subject of an appropriate condition should Members be minded to grant consent for the scheme.

The apartments are arranged to look out over the communal garden in the north west part of the site, the private garden along the Four Lane ends frontage and onto the trees along the eastern boundary and open space beyond.

It is considered that the amended proposals, with the imposition of the conditions indicated, are acceptable and accord with the requirements of policy B2 of the adopted UDP.

The Impact on Residential Amenity

In terms of residential amenity the main relevant policy within the adopted UDP is policy B2 which seeks to maintain acceptable levels of privacy.

As indicated on the main agenda 4 letters of objection were received from residents of Moorhouse Gardens, raising material planning concerns in respect of:

1. Three storey nature of the development
2. Loss of privacy
3. Noise and disturbance during construction

Each of these will now be examined in turn.

1. Three Storey Nature of the Development

While policy B2 seeks to maintain the best qualities of development in the area it does not insist on development being maintained at 2 storeys as exists at present. The council's Supplementary Planning Guidance seeks to ensure the retention of adequate spacing between new and existing properties. As indicated above those standards are achieved and exceeded in most instances by the development as amended. Therefore although of greater height than the houses around the site the building would not lead to significant problems of either overshadowing or overbearing impact. The western elevation is approximately 40 metres from the western site boundary with the nearest facing elevation some 10 m further away. Along the northern boundary the nearest part of the development to properties in Moorhouse gardens is a two storey gable which is some 21m away from the facing main elevation. The normal spacing standard would be 14m. The southern elevation facing properties in Four Lane Ends is again a gable and is situated between 17.0 m and 19.4 m from the facing properties. The development is also set down relative to the road and in the case of the shorter measurement the gable has been reduced in height by the introduction of a small hip/lean to section of roofing thereby further reducing the impact. It has also to be borne in mind that the nearest property to the proposed development's southern elevation has oblique views across the proposed front garden area of the scheme again reducing the potential adverse impact of the proposal.

2. Loss of Privacy

As indicated above the retention of privacy is one of the main aims of policy B2 of the adopted UDP.

The layout has been amended so that no apartments have direct short views into either gardens or facing windows of adjacent properties. It is accepted that there will be some long range views from the proposed apartments which may be considered more intrusive than the current situation. However in that the spacing achieves the council's adopted standards it is not considered that this impact is sufficient to sustain a refusal of planning permission. On balance therefore, it is not considered that there will be any significant adverse impact on levels of privacy for either existing residents or occupants of the proposed apartments and the scheme would therefore comply with the aims and requirements of policy B2 of the adopted UDP.

3. Noise and Disturbance during Construction

It is almost inevitable during any construction programme that there will be some noise from vehicles coming and going from the site and especially during the demolition programme. However, it is not considered that these will be such as to warrant refusal of the proposal. Any consent granted would be subject to a condition requiring the approval of a scheme of working which would aim to ensure that such

issues are kept to a minimum.

Highway Implications

Policy T14 of the adopted UDP requires that all new development should: be accessible by all modes of transport; not cause congestion or safety problems on the highway network; make appropriate arrangements for vehicular access and egress; make provision for loading and unloading of vehicles; and make appropriate provision for vehicle parking. In respect of the latter policy T22 also indicates that in assessing the requirement the development and location al characteristics of the proposed development will be taken into account.

The access to the site from Four Lane Ends in the south west corner of the site is considered to be acceptable in terms of policy T14 with no safety implications for the adjacent network. The applicant has clarified that the access road will be of 4.8m width and thereby achieves the required standard.

The servicing and car parking arrangements (22 spaces including 4 disabled bays) are considered to be acceptable and in accord with policies T14 and T22.

Other Environmental Issues

Sustainability

The applicant has indicated that it is intended that the scheme achieves level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes. However, no details of how this is to be achieved have been submitted. It is considered that if Members are minded to approve the application a condition requiring the submission and approval of such information should be imposed on any consent issued.

Ecology

The views of English Nature on the information submitted are still awaited, although it is anticipated that these will be received in advance of the meeting.

Conclusions

The proposal is considered to be satisfactory in principle and in respect of its scale and massing and design and hence its impact on the amenity of nearby residential properties is considered to be satisfactory. In addition the scheme does not raise any highway issues. It should be noted that the Hetton Town Council has not raised any objections to the scheme.

However, the views of English Nature are still awaited. It is anticipated therefore that a recommendation will be made to Members at the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: Director of Development and Regeneration to Report

Number:	S3
Application Number:	08/03582/OUT
Proposal:	Application for outline planning permission for the erection of a B8 distribution unit, (up to 10,000 m2 in size), including detailed permission for means of access, including stopping up and diversion of public footpath and bridleway.
Location:	Plot 2, Mandarin Way, Pattinson Industrial Estate Washington

Further to the report on the main agenda this supplement provides consideration of the following matters arising from the development:

- Revision to access details.
- Wildlife.
- Noise.
- Air Quality.
- Ground Contamination.
- Flood Risk.

Revision to access details

Further to the main agenda report, some minor revisions have been made to the layout. Briefly, these modifications include:-

- I. Reduction of diameter of the roundabout.
The reduced size of the central island now appears to provide approx 7.5m circulatory carriageway width. This is considered satisfactory for planning approval purposes. The final detailed design will be subject to review as part of the detailed design and safety audit process post determination.

- II. Introduction of passing place / road widening.
The passing place proposed on Barmston Lane has been shown as being large enough for two HGVs to pass, which whilst achieving the desired objective is considered to be excessive in nature. A smaller area to cater for two cars will suffice and revised details to this effect have been requested to be submitted prior to any consent being issued.
- III. Extension of footpath/bridleway along Barmston Lane.
Whilst the footpath / bridleway has been extended, which is considered as being acceptable, the manner in which this links into the roundabout approach should be simplified. The applicant has been asked to revise these details and officers are confident that a satisfactory arrangement can be agreed prior to any consent being issued.
- IV. Increase in visibility splay to bridleway / cycleway in south east corner.
The submitted plans show the creation of a 20m visibility splay which is considered to be acceptable.

To conclude, it is considered that the revisions to the access details are considered to be acceptable and generally in accordance with Policy T14 of the UDP subject to further minor revisions being submitted.

Wildlife.

In terms of the revised ecological mitigation statement that has been submitted as per the main agenda report, comments are still awaited from the Council's ecologist. These are anticipated to be received in time to report at the committee meeting. In any event, it is re-iterated that the proposals do provide a level of confidence that habitats of value will be created as a result of the development and generally, it is considered that the proposed measures will be positive in ecological terms and can be controlled via the imposition of appropriate conditions, should Members grant consent.

Noise.

The Council's Environmental Health Section has advised that the applicant should employ a suitable qualified and experienced noise control consultant to undertake an assessment of the site in relation to the likely noise impact on the nearby residential premises. The assessment should fully consider the implications of the development in terms of background noise levels and noise likely to be generated on site and indeed from additional traffic associated with the site, and any mitigation measures required to ensure that such noise does not adversely impact on residential premises. As the scheme is only at the outline stage, it is advised that a condition be imposed to require the submission of the assessment and any necessary mitigation measures as part of any future full or reserved matters application, should Members be minded to grant consent.

Air Quality.

The Council's Environmental Health Section has also advised that there may be concerns relating to local air quality. Again this issue must be considered by the applicant and it is recommended that the applicant contacts the Environmental Health Section in order to determine the need for and /or the parameters of such an air quality impact assessment. A condition can be imposed to this effect, should Members be minded to approve the application.

Ground Contamination.

A detailed response is still awaited from the Council's Environment Health Section in respect of the acceptability of the geo-environmental report that has been submitted in support of the application. As the site is green field, it is considered unlikely that any contaminants will be present, as per the adjacent site recently completed by the developer (08/00129/FUL). It is anticipated that a formal response will have been received in time to be reported at the meeting.

Flood Risk.

The Environment Agency (EA) has advised that it is considering the information that has been submitted and that it anticipates that its formal comments will be provided in time to be reported at the meeting. In general terms, it should be noted that on the developers adjacent recently completed site (08/00129/FUL) flood risk issues were addressed to the satisfaction of the EA. Ground conditions on this plot are considered to be similar and as such, it is not expected that there will be any unforeseen issues.

Conclusion

The development is considered generally to be in accordance with the adopted UDP and provides further employment opportunities within the City on a site allocated for industrial uses. Whilst concerns have been raised from residents with regard to the effects that the development may have upon them primarily in terms of access and disturbance, it is considered that the proposal provides the best solution for all users, creating a more easily accessible route to the City's adopted highway network for residents and improved facilities for cyclists and horses. In addition, due to the constraints of the site, any building that is to be placed on the site, will need to be positioned in such a manner so as to back onto Low Barmston Farm, which combined with the imposition of conditions suggested by the Council's Environmental Health Section should minimise any noise disturbance factors. With regard to wildlife, whilst some trees will be lost, the proposed mitigation measures and enhancements will improve the habitat for birds and wildlife known to frequent the area. While consultee responses are awaited in respect of ground contamination and flood risk, it is not envisaged that these will be problematic.

It is therefore recommended that the application be delegated to the Director of Development and Regeneration for determination and the application be approved subject to the outstanding issues outlined above being resolved prior to the statutory 13 week determination deadline, which is 23 December 2008. In the event that the consultees raise objections in respect of ground contamination and / or flood risk, the matter will be reported back to a further meeting of the Sub-

Committee A list of conditions to be imposed are listed below, which may be subject to revision, depending upon the resolution of issues outstanding.

RECOMMENDATION: DELEGATE to the Director of Development and Regeneration for determination.

Conditions.

- 1 Application for approval of reserved matters shall be made to the Local Planning Authority before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of two years from the date of approval of the last reserved matters to be agreed.

Imposed pursuant to the provision of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

- 2 Approval of the following details (hereinafter referred to as the reserved matters) shall be obtained from the Local Planning Authority, in writing before the development is commenced.
 - Details of the siting of the building(s)
 - Design
 - External Appearance
 - The landscaping of the site.

Plans and particulars of the reserved matters shall be submitted utilising a planning application form and shall be carried out as approved. Because the application is in outline only as no details have been submitted of the reserved matters, they are reserved for subsequent approval of the Local Planning Authority.

- 3 For the avoidance of doubt the gross floor space for the development hereby approved shall not exceed 10,000 sq metres (including any mezzanine floors) of warehouse/distribution units (use class B8), including upto 1000sq m of ancillary office space (use class B2), in order to achieve a satisfactory form of development and ensure that the highway network is not unduly strained by the traffic generated by the site and to comply with policies B2 and T14 of the UDP.
- 4 Prior to the commencement of works, the following details shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority: Samples of all external materials and finishes, comprising roof cladding, wall facing materials, window glass, door and window frames and rainwater goods etc. Sample panels of brickwork, demonstrating the colour, texture, face bond and pointing. Thereafter, the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details; in the interests of visual amenity and in order to comply with policies B2 of the Unitary Development Plan.
- 5 Notwithstanding the submitted plans full details of all walls, fences or other means of boundary enclosure, including a method statement for their erection, shall be submitted to

and approved by the Local Planning Authority before the development is commenced. The agreed boundary treatment shall be finished in a colour to be agreed by the Local Planning Authority prior to installation and maintained as such thereafter, in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with policy B2 of the UDP.

- 6 No ground works or development work shall take place until a programme of archaeological work (to include desk based assessment, evaluation and where appropriate, mitigation) has been completed. This shall be carried out in accordance with a specification(s) provided by the County Archaeologist. The archaeological report(s) shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before the development is commenced, due to the site being located within an area identified as being of potential archaeological importance. The investigation is required to ensure that any archaeological remains on the site can be preserved wherever possible and recorded and to accord with Policies B12 and B13 of the UDP.
- 7 Should any contamination not previously considered be identified during construction works a method statement regarding this material shall be submitted to the local planning authority for approval, in the interests of the amenities of the area and to comply with policy EN14 of the UDP.
- 8 Notwithstanding the submitted plans, all works shall be carried out in complete accordance with the Ecological Mitigation Report dated 10.11.2008 produced by Arnott and Mann Consultant Ecologists. If the development has not commenced by 10.11.2009, a further ecological study will have to be undertaken and a revised Ecological Mitigation Report submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA in the interests of nature conservation and in order to comply with Policies CN17, CN18 and CN22 of the UDP.
- 9 Prior to the commencement of development a method statement detailing the clearance and disturbance of any grassland and hedgerow/scrub vegetation, on and adjacent to the site as a result of this development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such a method statement shall include mitigation measures in relation to the protection of breeding birds and wildlife. Notwithstanding these details, no removal of hedgerows or felling of trees shall be carried out on the site between the 1st March and 31st August inclusive in any year unless otherwise approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once approved, all works will be undertaken as per the agreed method statement in the interests of nature conservation and in order to comply with Policies CN17, CN18 and CN22 of the UDP.
- 10 Prior to the occupation of the building, details of the provision and location of bat boxes, together with technical information that demonstrates that any exterior lighting will not compromise their effectiveness will be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once approved, the bat boxes will be installed as per the agreed details and maintained as such thereafter in the interests of nature conservation and in order to comply with Policies CN17, CN18 and CN22 of the UDP.
- 11 Prior to the occupation of the development, details of the design of the proposed on-site

pond, including proposed management, water holding capacity and landscaping, shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once agreed, the pond shall be created, maintained and managed as such thereafter, in order to enable the pond to establish itself as a viable habitat, in the interests of nature conservation and in order to comply with Policies CN17, CN18 and CN22 of the UDP.

- 12 No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a detailed scheme of landscaping and landscape management. Such a scheme shall be prepared in complete accordance with the Ecological Mitigation Report dated 10.11.2008 produced by Arnott and Mann Consultant Ecologists and shall include
 - A detailed method statement for all planting, provide indications of all existing trees and hedgerows on the land (and details for their protection during the course of development)
 - A detailed management regime for their long term management thereafter,
 - The provision of a landscaped bund / acoustic barrier along the south eastern boundaries of the site. The barrier / bund shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details prior to the occupation of the building and thereafter be retained as approved,in the interests of residential / visual amenity and nature conservation and in order to comply with policies B2 and CN17 of the UDP.
- 13 All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting season following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development whichever is the sooner, and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation, in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with policy B2 of the UDP.
- 14 Prior to the occupation of the development precise details (and samples where necessary) of all hard landscaping materials to be used throughout the development , (including details and location/layout of all proposed hard surfacing, means of enclosure, lighting columns, bollards and any other street furniture) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA, and used as agreed in such details In order to achieve a satisfactory form of development on site and to comply with the requirements of Policies T14 and B2 of the adopted UDP.
- 15 Prior to the occupation of the development, details of the foul and surface water drainage shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage shall then be provided and installed in accordance with the approved details to ensure satisfactory drainage to the site and to comply with policy B24 of the UDP.
- 16 Details of any proposed external lighting and CCTV scheme, including a technical specification to demonstrate that overspill and trespass of light does not occur shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing before the development

is commenced. All works shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details. In order to achieve a satisfactory form of development and to comply with policy B2 of the UDP.

- 17 Prior to the commencement of the development, a scheme of working shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; such a scheme shall include; the siting and organisation of the construction compound and site cabins, access arrangements to existing public rights of way on the site, access to the site for construction traffic, routes to and from the site for construction traffic, and measures to ameliorate noise, dust, vibration and other effects including measures to stop mud spreading onto the highway. All works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details in the interests of the proper planning of the development and to protect the amenity and access rights of adjacent occupiers and in order to comply with policy B2 of the UDP.
- 18 Unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority, the construction works required for the development hereby approved shall only be carried out between the hours of 08.00 and 18.00 Monday to Friday and between the hours of 08.00 and 13.00 on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank Holidays in order to protect the amenities of the area and to comply with policy B2 of the UDP.
- 19 Notwithstanding the submitted plans the final highway / cycleway / bridleway arrangement (including passing place) shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Following which the highway / cycleway / bridleway shall be constructed, surfaced, sealed and made available in accordance with the plans to be approved and maintained as such thereafter in order to comply with policies T14 and T22 of the UDP.
- 20 The building shall not be occupied until details of the parking provision including disabled parking provision has been agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. Once agreed the parking provision shall be constructed, surfaced, sealed and made available in accordance with the approved plans before the building is brought into use. This parking area shall then be retained and permanently reserved for the parking of vehicles to ensure that adequate and satisfactory provision is made for the off street parking of vehicles and to comply with policies T14 and T22 of the UDP.
- 21 Prior to the commencement of the development plans shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority detailing space and facilities for bicycle parking and changing facilities in the buildings. These facilities shall then be provided prior to the occupation of each building, retained and permanently reserved for bicycle parking to ensure that adequate and satisfactory provision is made for bicycle parking and to comply with policy T14 of the UDP.
- 22 Prior to the occupation of the development, a method statement shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority detailing measures to control and prevent on street parking within the application site. The statement shall include timescales and monitoring and review mechanisms. Such monitoring and review requirements will cease one year post completion of that phase of development and all necessary works shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed method statement unless otherwise agreed in

writing with the Local Planning Authority in the interests of safe and free flow of traffic and to accord with policy T14 of the UDP.

- 23 Before the development hereby approved is commenced, details of energy efficiency / renewable energy measures to be incorporated within the building shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority for consideration prior to the completion of the building. Such details shall include a justification for the type of measures chosen, including estimations of energy saved / created by such measures. The approved scheme shall then be fully implemented in the interests of sustainable development and in order to comply with policy R1 of the UDP.
- 24 Prior to the occupation of the development a noise assessment shall be undertaken in line with Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 24, Planning and Noise, in order to determine the Noise Exposure Category of the development. Following the assessment a report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, detailing the results of the survey and any measures that are to be adopted to ensure that noise generated by the development does not cause nuisance or disturbance to the occupiers of the proposed development or the residential occupiers of Low Barmston Farm, in order to comply with Policy EN9 of the UDP.
- 25 Prior to the commencement of the development an air quality impact assessment shall be undertaken in order to determine the impact of the development upon air quality. Following the assessment a report shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, detailing the results of the survey and any measures that are to be adopted to ensure that there is an acceptable level of air quality for the occupiers of the proposed development and the residential occupiers of Low Barmston Farm, in order to comply with Policy EN6 of the UDP.

Number: S4

Application Number: 08/03761/LAP

Proposal: Proposed infill extension to existing buildings for storage.

Location: Office And Storage Buildings Herrington Country Park Chester Road
Houghton-Le-Spring,

Amendments

Following a meeting between council officers and the applicant at which concerns were expressed about the height of the ridge of the building and its potential visual

impacts on the Green Belt as well as the proposed access arrangements, revised plans were submitted on 19th November 2008.

As specified on the main agenda, the relevant issues to this application include:

1. Principle of Development
2. Biodiversity
3. Impact on highway safety
4. Visual Amenity

1. Principle of Development

The site is located within the Tyne and Wear Green Belt and is therefore subject to Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policies CN2, CN3 and CN5. Nationally, Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 Green Belts (1995) is also of significance.

The Tyne and Wear Green Belt plays a vitally important role in the protection of the open countryside around Sunderland, this is expressed within policy CN2 of the UDP. As a consequence of the importance of the Green Belt, new development is highly restricted within its boundaries. Development is only considered appropriate in specific circumstances, as set out within policy CN3 of the UDP and paragraph 3.4 of PPG2. One such purpose is for the provision of essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation. However, in order to be considered appropriate there must be a genuine need for such facilities and any development must not harm the openness of the Green Belt nor conflict with the purpose of including land within its boundaries.

It is important to note that previous developments for the erection of the WC block (application reference 04/02419/LAP) and the temporary storage container (06/02167/SUB) have been considered appropriate as they were deemed to provide essential facilities for the park in its use as a centre for outdoor recreation.

With regards to the present case, the applicant has indicated that the extension is required in order to provide storage facilities for the park. Items that are proposed to be stored within the building include a tractor, grass cutters, small hand electric equipment, fencing material, crowd control barriers, tents and marquees, signage, flags, tables and chairs, sheep hurdles and any other equipment needed to hold events within the park. The building will also provide an open working space to allow repairs and assembly of equipment. It is considered that there is a genuine need for the extension in order to provide a facility for storage so that the park can continue to operate as a centre for outdoor recreation as well as a place for holding leisure events such as the Durham County Show. It is also considered that the proposed extension relates better visually to the existing office building and WC block than the storage containers that were previously housed on the site (see photographs attached with file). These containers have now been removed in

order to facilitate the erection of the proposed extension.

Whilst the proposal is considered to be an appropriate form of land use in the Green Belt as it provides an essential facility for outdoor recreation, it is important to acknowledge that no development will be considered acceptable if it harms the open setting of the Green Belt. Of particular relevance is policy CN5 of the UDP which states that care will be taken to ensure that the visual amenities of the Green Belt will not be injured by proposals for development within, or conspicuous, from the Green Belt.

In the present case it is considered that the topography of the site significantly helps to reduce its visual impacts. This is because the land immediately north of the site rises up towards Chester Road by approximately 5m. This ensures that the proposed building will not intrude significantly into views along or from Chester Road (A183).

Whilst it is acknowledged that the ridge height of the extension (5.8m) would be 1.3m higher than the ridge of the WC block and 1.5m higher than the existing staff office block, this is not considered to be of such an extent that would cause the development to harm the openness of the Green Belt. It is also considered that this additional height is a necessity given the amount of equipment required to be stored on the site. It is accepted that the applicant has attempted to minimise the overall ridge height by providing a mezzanine floor for storage within the roofspace rather than proposing to build a two storey building. Furthermore, it is also considered that the current proposal is preferable to the construction of a single storey extension which would require a larger footprint in order to house the same level of equipment. The built form of the extension appears as an 'L' shape, which is considered to be an appropriate design solution given that it will connect the two existing detached buildings on the site. This also helps to reduce its visual impacts.

In addition it should be noted that the proposed extension would be sited upon an area of hardstanding for vehicles within a fenced off area and is not in use as open amenity space. As such the siting of the development within the park is considered acceptable in minimising the impact upon the openness of the Green Belt.

In view of the above it is considered that on balance the development is an acceptable use within the Green Belt which does not injure its openness and therefore complies with policies CN2, CN3 and CN5 of the UDP.

Policy HA10.1 relates specifically to the application site and states that the City Council will support and promote new development for the purposes of appropriate new leisure, recreational and visitor facilities. Given that the development relates to such purposes it is considered to be acceptable in relation to this policy.

Planning Policy Statement 7 is also of relevance to the application. Paragraph 16.2 (ii) states that developments within the countryside should support other countryside

based enterprises and activities which contribute to rural economies, and/or promote recreation in and the enjoyment of the countryside. In this case it is considered that the proposed extension will promote recreation in the countryside through providing a place for maintenance vehicles to be stored, which will allow for the Park to be kept in good condition. Furthermore, it is considered that the building will be of benefit to the rural economy through enabling events such as the Durham County Show to be held. These events help to support rural businesses.

It is considered that the proposal is an acceptable land use and complies with policies CN2, CN3, CN5, HA10.1 of the UDP and Planning Policy Guidance Note 2 and Planning Policy Statement 7.

2. Biodiversity

In relation to the site's setting within open countryside, policy CN18 is of relevance to the application. This policy states that the promotion of nature conservation will be sought throughout the city and areas of conservation interest will be protected and enhanced.

The biodiversity statement submitted by the applicant considers the site not to be of ecological significance. No species of nature conservation concern were recorded in or immediately adjacent to the site. The development is therefore considered to have a neutral impact on the biodiversity of the area.

The development is considered to be acceptable on grounds of biodiversity and therefore complies with UDP policy CN18.

3. Impact on highway safety

Policy T14 of the adopted UDP requires that all new development should: be accessible by all modes of transport; not cause congestion or safety problems on the highway network; make appropriate arrangements for vehicular access and egress; make provision for loading and unloading of vehicles; and make appropriate provision for vehicle parking. In respect of the latter policy T22 also indicates that in assessing the requirement the development and location all characteristics of the proposed development will be taken into account.

The City Council's Transportation section provided comments on 21st October 2008, stating that the development will lead to the loss of the existing access to the rear of the buildings for loading and unloading. This would have required the tractor and other vehicles to access the rear of the buildings via the bridle path to the north of the site. This was considered unacceptable on grounds of safety to pedestrians and horses using the path. Consequently a meeting with the applicant resolved that it would be acceptable to develop a new road linking the hardstanding

(to the rear of the building) with the existing highway (linking Chester Road to the public car park). This would allow vehicles to access the site for servicing and loading in a direct and easy manner which would not cause highway safety problems. The section of road proposed is small in scale measuring approximately 10m in length and 4.7m in width, and as such is unlikely to cause any harm to the Green Belt or the visual amenities of the park.

The revised access would also enable an additional four car parking spaces to be created.

The development is now considered to be acceptable on grounds of highway safety and complies with policies T14 and T22 of the UDP.

4. Visual Amenity

Policy B2 of the adopted UDP requires that new development should respect and enhance the best qualities of nearby development and retain acceptable levels of privacy.

Originally concerns were expressed about the height of the extension as it would have been 2m higher than the existing WC block. This was considered to be unacceptable both on grounds of design as well as its impacts on the Green Belt. The revised plans reducing the ridge height to 5.8m, in line with the plans submitted as part of a pre-application enquiry in 2007, limit its visual impacts and it is no longer considered that the extension appears overbearing. The ridge height of the extension will now be 1.45m higher than the highest part of the ridge of the existing buildings on the site. The design of the roof has also be amended to incorporate a gable end to the western elevation rather than a hip, this is considered to relate better to the existing buildings which also have gable ends.

A condition will be placed on any consent issued should members be minded to approve the application, requiring the applicant to submit materials for the proposed extension prior to the commencement of works in order to ensure that the development does not appear visually obtrusive and does not harm the visual amenities of the Green Belt.

The proposal is considered to be acceptable on grounds of visual amenities and consequently complies with policy B2 of the UDP.

Conclusion

It is considered that the proposal is an appropriate form of development within the Green Belt and does not harm its openness or the purposes of including land within its boundaries. Furthermore, the development is acceptable on grounds of

biodiversity, highway safety and visual amenity. The development will provide an important facility for the park and will aid the enjoyment of those who use its facilities. The proposal therefore adheres to all relevant local and national planning policies.

Members are therefore recommended to grant consent under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 subject to the conditions set out below.

RECOMMENDATION: GRANT CONSENT In accordance with Regulation 3 of the Town & Country Planning Regulations (1992) subject to the following conditions:

1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than three years beginning with the date on which permission is granted, as required by section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to ensure that the development is carried out within a reasonable period of time.
 2. Notwithstanding any indication of materials which may have been given in the application, no development shall take place until a schedule and/or samples of the materials and finishes to be used for the external surfaces, including walls, roofs, doors and windows has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the approved details; in the interests of visual amenity and to comply with policy B2 of the Unitary Development Plan.
 3. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of treatment of hard surfaces on the land in the interests of highway safety, visual amenity and to comply with policy B2, T14 & T22 of the UDP.
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