

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL  
PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE – 28 AUGUST 2008  
REPORT OF THE CHIEF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER

S6/2007/0925/MA

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OF 40 UNITS; COMPRISING OF FLATS, DWELLING  
HOUSES AND HIGHER NEEDS SUPPORT UNIT, INCLUDING ACCESS AND  
LANDSCAPING, FOLLOWING DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS

HAZEL GROVE PRIMARY SCHOOL, HAZEL GROVE, HATFIELD, AL10 9DX

APPLICANT: Places for Peoples Homes Ltd

(Hatfield South)

**1 Background**

- 1.1 Members might recollect this application being presented to Planning Control Committee on 27 September 2007 with a resolution to grant conditional planning permission subject to the completion of a s106 legal agreement for the following matters:
- to secure the financial contribution of £9750 towards sustainable highway matters.
  - to secure the provision of 40% of the units as affordable housing
  - to secure the provision of library contribution of £6732 and youth and childcare of £8610 and fire hydrant provision
  - to secure the provision of contributions towards existing play areas for the purchase, installation and maintenance of existing equipment of £13,800
- 1.2 Members might also be aware that this was one of the first applications which dealt with the matter of chalk mining. It was the first application presented to committee with this as a consideration. One of the conditions recommended with the application was for a survey in connection with chalk mining. This is a technical piece of work that needs to be undertaken and specialists are appointed by the developer to carry out the necessary investigations. It does also, however, result in the need for us, as the planning authority, to employ experts to appraise any report that is submitted to ensure that the investigations are sufficient and if any remediation works are required that these are appropriate to secure the future safe development of the site.
- 1.3 This consultation exercise also results in a cost to the local authority, the level of which had not been established at the early stages last September. The consultants advise that the final fee will be £615.68 for this development, which officer's consider should be borne by the developers and not the Local Council

Tax Payer. Accordingly it is recommended that the above matters are amended to also include:

- To secure the provision of £723.42 (which includes VAT) to cover the costs of the appraisal and assessment of reports submitted by the developers in connection with chalk mining

## **2 Amendments to Proposal**

- 2.1 Since a resolution to grant permission was granted, the developers have been reviewing the plans with the aim of implementing the development and discharging the suggested attached conditions. This has resulted in the need to make some minor amendments to the application. These would normally be dealt with post-decision if they are acceptable, however it is considered prudent to gain approval from Members as the decision has not yet been issued.
- 2.2 The amendments include :
- 2.3 **Block A (Higher Needs Support Unit):** revised roof pitches to 17.5°. This would mean that the maximum ridge height would be increased from approximately 8 metres to 8.4 metres. The roofline of this development is varied and so the overall change, if noticed at all, would be very minimal. The lift is being repositioned internally to create a new smoke lobby which means that the brick clad shaft that projects above the roof line would be slightly south to that previously proposed. Two south-facing rooflights are proposed to provide daylight and ventilation to the two first floor internal flat kitchens.
- 2.4 It is considered that these alterations to the HNSU will not have impact upon the amenity of adjoining or future occupiers of the development as the alterations are minimal and are thus judged to be acceptable.
- 2.5 **Block B:** flank obscured window to plots 10 and 14 to the bathrooms.
- 2.6 This will allow natural ventilation and daylight to the units whilst preventing any loss of amenity to adjoining units. An additional condition is recommended to the previous report presented to Members for obscured glazing to these and other relevant windows, as discussed below.
- 2.7 **Block C:** flank obscured first floor windows to the bathrooms to plots 1, 5, 6 and 9. The same considerations apply as the previous paragraph.
- 2.8 **Block D:** Solar panels to the front elevation. Removal of the very small 'relief' to the front elevation and making the internal corridor smaller and thus not projecting as far to the front elevation. Furthermore, like the HNSU, the pitch of the roof is being amended to 17.5°. This results in an increase in the height of the building from 10.3 to 10.6 metres.
- 2.9 Renewable energy provision had been proposed as part of the original scheme although plans did not show what was proposed. The panels will comply with local plan policy R3 and are judged to contribute towards sustainable development and is therefore to be supported and recommended. The other alterations are very minor and thus would have no impact.
- 2.10 **Block E:** flank obscured window to plot 15, solar panels to the rear elevation of plots 15-18. Additionally, it is proposed to widen plot 18 by 300 mm in order to

comply with Lifetime Homes Standards (to provide a wheelchair accessible WC at ground floor level).

- 2.11 The same considerations are applicable for the obscured window and solar panels as discussed previously. Policy H10 of the local plan encourages a proportion of dwellings to comply with Lifetime Homes Standards and therefore it is considered that this modest increase would not have impact on the wider character and design of the development. The proposal therefore accords with this policy and is therefore acceptable.
- 2.12 The applicants have also been advised that the site needs to accommodate a sub-station. It was originally suggested that this could be located on parking spaces 36 and 37, however this would reduce the number of parking spaces and was thus not accepted. It has therefore been proposed to site the sub-station on the area where the cycle store was originally proposed, south of the flatted development and adjacent to the access road which would still allow for the provision of soft landscaping. The cycle spaces that would be lost in this area would be re-provided to the west of the flatted development and would be designed so that more bicycles could be stored in this area to ensure that cycle parking standards are still met.
- 2.13 These alterations would not have any impact on existing residents or future, nor would it have any significant impact on the scheme that was previously resolved for approval.

### **3 Chalk Mining**

- 3.1 With the issue of chalk mining in the area and the possible need to have special consideration with the types of foundations that are proposed. It is suggested that an additional condition is attached for the submission of foundation details to the Local Planning Authority.
- 3.2 The reasoning for this is, the Council's Officer's are aware of the potential problems with chalk mines in the area and are able to advise developers/builders of the potential problems and thus, where appropriate have foundations designed specifically for the ground conditions. In this instance, it is understood that the developers will not be using our Building Inspector's and therefore this knowledge would not be conveyed to the developers which might lead to problems for the stability of the ground and buildings in the future.

### **4 Recommendation**

- 4.1 It is proposed that these amendments to the scheme are accepted with an additional condition for obscured glazing and for the contributions secured be amended to include the following matters:
- to secure the financial contribution of £9750 towards sustainable highway matters.
  - to secure the provision of 40% of the units as affordable housing
  - to secure the provision of library contribution of £6732 and youth and childcare of £8610 and fire hydrant provision
  - to secure the provision of contributions towards existing play areas for the purchase, installation and maintenance of existing equipment of £13,800

- to secure the provision of £723.42 to cover the costs of the appraisal and assessment of reports submitted by the developers in connection with chalk mining

3.2 Additional condition:

31. C.7.9 – Fixed and Obscured Glazing

(to Block B – plots 10 and 14; Block C – plots 1, 5, 6 and 9; and Block E – plot 15)

32. Prior to the commencement of development details of the foundations shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. Once approved, the foundations shall be built in accordance with the approved details unless otherwise agreed in writing.

REASON: To ensure that the foundations are suitable to the proposed development and the physical constraints of the site and any remediation and/or mitigation methods are taken into account in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 14: Development on Unstable Ground

Chris Conway, Chief Planning and Environmental Health Officer (LAH)

Date (7 August 2008)

Background papers to be listed (if applicable)

S6/2007/0925/MA – Committee Report 27 September 2007