

**PLANNING  
COMMITTEE**

**17th August 2010**

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**PLANNING APPLICATION 2010/154/FUL**

**DEMOLITION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS AND THE ERECTION OF SEVEN  
DWELLINGS WITH GARAGES**

**WELLINGTON WORKS, 15 HIGH STREET, ASTWOOD BANK**

**APPLICANT: MR AND MRS NEWTON**

**EXPIRY DATE: 19TH AUGUST 2010**

**WARD: ASTWOOD BANK AND FECKENHAM**

The author of this report is Steven Edden, Planning Officer (DC), who can be contacted on extension 3206 (e-mail: [steve.edden@redditchbc.gov.uk](mailto:steve.edden@redditchbc.gov.uk)) for more information.

**(See additional papers for Site Plan)**

**Site Description**

The site, which measures approximately 1331m<sup>2</sup>, contains a number of buildings which are proposed for demolition, in order to accommodate the new development. These include a two storey detached brick building which has been vacant since December 2008, but has previously been in office use and single storey corrugated roofed workshops. The site is roughly square in shape, fronting directly onto Queen Street (to the east), Butler Street (to the south), and High Street (to the west). The site is level throughout. The land is not designated for any particular use in the adopted local plan, and would therefore be considered as 'white land'.

**Proposal Description**

This is a full application for the erection of 7 no. dwellings comprising of 4.no three bedroomed semi-detached houses which would face towards High Street, and 3.no. four bedroomed detached dwellings which would face towards Queen Street. The dwellings proposed are outlined as follows:

Units 1 & 2, and 3 & 4 would be semi-detached; three bedroomed; fronting onto High Street, with single attached garage. The properties would be formed of part red brick / part timber (cedar) walls, under a plain clay tiled roof. Access would be via High Street. The properties would have a private garden to the rear.

Units 5, 6 and 7 would be detached, four bedroomed dwellings, fronting onto Queen Street, each with single attached garages. The properties would be formed of part red brick / part timber (cedar) walls, under a plain clay tiled roof. Access would be via Queen Street. The dwellings would each have a garden to the rear.

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Units 1, 2, 3 and 4 would be two storey, measuring a maximum of 8m to ridge.

Units 5 and 7 would have accommodation over three levels (with room in roofspace), measuring 8.75m and 9m respectively to ridge.

Unit 6 would be two storey, measuring 8.5m to ridge.

The application is supported by a Design & Access Statement, a contamination report, an ecological report and an agreement in principle to enter into a planning obligation.

**Relevant Key Policies:**

All planning applications must be considered in terms of the planning policy framework and all other relevant material considerations (as set out in the legislative framework). The planning policies noted below can be found on the following websites:

[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

[www.wmra.gov.uk](http://www.wmra.gov.uk)

[www.worcestershire.gov.uk](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk)

[www.redditchbc.gov.uk](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk)

***National Planning Policy***

PPS1	Delivering sustainable development
PPS3	Housing
PPS5	Planning for the Historic Environment
PPG13	Transport

***Regional Spatial Strategy***

Following the recent government statement, it is recommended that these policies be given only limited weight. However, as the legislation that includes the RSS within the Development Plan has not been formally revoked yet, these policies are still referred to and can be taken into consideration in the determination of this application.

QE3	Creating a high quality built environment for all
CF2	Housing beyond Major Urban Areas
CF3	Level and Distribution of New Housing Development
CF5	The reuse of land and buildings for housing
CF6	Making efficient use of land
T7	Car parking standards and management

***Worcestershire County Structure Plan***

SD.3	Use of previously developed land
T.4	Car parking
IMP.1	Implementation of development

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***Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3***

CS.6	Implementation of development
CS.7	The sustainable location of development
CS.8	Landscape character
S.1	Designing out crime
B(HSG).6	Development within or adjacent to the curtilage of an existing dwelling
B(BE).13	Qualities of good design
B(BE).19	Green Architecture
C(T).12	Parking Standards
B(RA).8	Development at Astwood Bank

***SPDs***

Encouraging good design  
Designing for community safety  
Planning obligations for education contributions  
Open space provision

**Relevant Site Planning History**

None.

**Public Consultation Responses**

**Responses in favour**

1 letter of support has been received. Comments summarised as follows:

- The site lies within the sustainable village of Astwood Bank and is a 'windfall' application
- The seven dwellings would complement the area of new and old residential properties
- Removal of the 'old' employment buildings will lose an eyesore

**Responses against**

3 letters received in objection to the proposals. Comments summarised as follows:

- The detached dwellings which would front onto Queen Street are considered to be out of character with, and would dominate the area
- The dwellings would invade privacy and overshadow nearby houses, resulting in a loss of light
- The garaging proposed is unlikely to be used for the garaging of vehicles, and as such the proposal is likely to increase on-street parking in the area
- Access into the site will be difficult given the narrow width of nearby roads
- Dedicated residents parking areas for existing High Street residents should be provided in order that existing on-street parking is not lost following the occupation of the new development.
- Wildlife in the area will be affected by the development

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**Consultee Responses**

***County Highway Network Control***

No objection subject to conditions concerning access, turning and parking

***Environmental Health***

Suggest that the following issues be considered:-

- Noise: recommends that working hours during construction be limited
- Light nuisance: external security lighting should not affect the amenities of neighbouring occupiers
- Odour nuisance: suggests no burning on site
- Land Contamination: conditions should be considered for imposition in order to identify and adequately deal with contamination if it is found

***Severn Trent Water***

No objection. Drainage details to be subject to agreement with Severn Trent

***Police Crime Risk Manager***

No objection

***Worcestershire Wildlife Trust***

Note that a bat survey has been submitted with the application and does not wish to object to the application

***Council's Drainage Officer***

No comments submitted

***Worcestershire County Education Service***

If development goes ahead, there will be a need for a contribution towards local education facilities

***Worcestershire County Council Archaeology Service***

Comments that the applicant should consult the historic environment record and that the site should be appraised to assess any historic significance.

**Assessment of Proposal**

The key issues for consideration are as follows:-

**Principle**

The site falls within the Astwood Bank Village Settlement in the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3.

Astwood Bank is considered to be a sustainable rural settlement. Policy B(RA).8 specifies that development within Astwood Bank will only be permitted where it is at an appropriate level to meet local needs for housing and should be restricted to within the settlement boundary.

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The land is previously developed, or 'brownfield' land. The site is not designated for any particular use in the Local Plan. Officers, having had regard to PPS3 and Policy CS.7 of the Local Plan which requires that a sequential approach to the location of development be followed, can support the re-development of the site for residential purposes in this sequentially preferable, urban brownfield, sustainable location.

Loss of existing buildings

The Worcestershire County Council Archaeology Service have inferred that the red brick building which is present on the site, and which has been vacant since December 2008 is of some historic importance. Information provided by the applicant together with your Officers' knowledge of the building which is neither listed, nor considered to be of sufficient worth that it merits inclusion on the Council's List of Buildings of Local Interest satisfies your Officers that the loss of the building which exhibits rather unsympathetic additions such as plastic windows and a large flat roofed extension, would not be significant. Further, its retention would prejudice the successful and comprehensive re-development of the site as a whole. Dilapidated single storey workshops and concrete hardstandings cover the remainder of the site. Your Officers concur with comments received that these detract significantly from the visual amenities of the area, and that the 'in-principle' redevelopment of the site by removing the workshops could significantly improve the quality of this predominantly residential part of Astwood Bank. However, in accordance with PPS5 a condition is recommended which would require the applicant to maintain the County Council's historic environment record.

Density

Developing the site to accommodate 7 no. dwellings would result in a density of approximately 52 dwellings per hectare (dph). Although the Government have recently removed density thresholds under PPS3 and therefore the previously recommended minimum density of 30dph no longer exists, your officers consider that developing the site in this way would represent a density that would respect densities of housing surrounding the site, and would make efficient use of land as advised under PPS3.

Design and Layout

Policy requires that the appearance of the proposal, its layout and separation distances be considered, in terms of within the site and in context with surrounding built form.

Your Officers consider that the layout responds well to local distinctiveness with the proposed development properly addressing the prominent High Street and Queen Street frontages. The use of non-homogenous house types and in particular, the 'stepping down' of ridge lines, together with the 'setting in' of front walls with materials being both in red brick and timber adds both visual interest to the scheme and reduces its prominence. Overall, the design of the proposed dwellings is considered to be sympathetic to the character of

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the area and compliant with Local Plan Policy, and in particular, with Policy B(BE).13.

The dwellings are set back from High Street and Queen Street giving 'defensible space' to each dwelling, with each 'garden backing onto garden' as recommended by the Police Crime Risk Manager. Each garden's size meets the Council's spacing standards as stated within the SPG Encouraging Good Design. The development would be in compliance with other separation distances, as contained within the SPG ensuring a satisfactory level of amenity for occupiers of the development without prejudicing the amenities enjoyed by occupiers of existing residents living near to the site.

Highways and Access

Parking space provision proposed accords with maximum standards as set out in the local plan with each dwelling having 2 no. car parking spaces. Parking provision on site as such is considered to be acceptable.

No objections have been received from County Highways and therefore the proposals would not be considered to prejudice highway safety.

Sustainability

The dwellings would be heated by means of a ground source heat pump (GSHP) which the applicant considers to be the current optimum renewable energy technology available. The solution is based on a closed loop system utilising vertical bores to be located on each plot in the rear garden area. It is projected to achieve Code level 4 of the Code for Sustainable Homes helping to deliver a 44% improvement in energy/CO<sub>2</sub> levels over the target emission rate as determined by 2006 building regulation standards in conjunction with typical construction and insulation levels to be applied to the development. Your officers fully support this positive approach. Whilst achieving the lower requirement of Code level 3 is not yet mandatory for new private schemes such as this, since the applicant is attempting to achieve Code level 4, a condition to this effect asking that the development achieve Code level 3 or higher is recommended for inclusion on any planning permission.

It is important to note that the development is located within the village settlement of Astwood Bank, which is considered to be a sustainable location. The location of the site enables it to be in close proximity to village amenities, shops, post office, public houses, public transport links and local schools, reducing reliance on the motor car.

Planning Obligation

The size of the proposed development is above the policy threshold for requiring contributions which should be sought via a planning obligation which in this case would cover:

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- A contribution towards County education facilities. The County have confirmed that there is a need in this area to take contributions towards three schools – Astwood Bank First School, Ridgeway Middle and Kingsley College.
- A contribution towards playing pitches, play areas and open space in the area, due to the increased demand/requirement from future residents, is required in compliance with the SPD.

**Conclusion**

Assuming that the planning obligation is completed in accordance with the policy framework, it is considered that the proposed development would accord with sufficient policy criteria and objectives to result in a favourable recommendation and to outweigh any concerns that might arise. It is not considered likely that the proposed development would result in harm to amenity or safety.

**Recommendation**

**Officers are seeking an either/or resolution from Members in this case as follows, in that officers would carry out whichever of the two recommendations below applied:**

- 1) **That having regard to the development plan and to all other material considerations, authority be delegated to the Head of Planning & Regeneration to GRANT planning permission subject to:**
  - a) **A planning obligation ensuring that the County are paid appropriate contributions in relation to the development for education provision, and that Redditch Borough Council receives contributions towards playing pitches, play areas and open space provision in the locality to be provided and maintained;**
  - b) **the conditions and informatives as summarised below:**

**Conditions**

1. **Development to commence within three years**
2. **Details of materials (walls and roofs) to be submitted**
3. **Landscape scheme including details of boundary treatment to be submitted**
4. **Landscape scheme including details of boundary treatment to be implemented in accordance with approved details**
5. **Limited working hours during construction period**

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- 6. Dwellings to be built to a minimum Level 3 requirement set out under Code for Sustainable Homes**
- 7. Access, turning and parking**
- 8. All hard surfaces to be permeable and retained as such**
- 9. Development to be carried out in accordance with plans submitted with application**
- 10. Contamination: standard conditions**
- 11. Historic Asset evaluation condition recommended by County Council**

**Informatives**

- 1. Drainage details to be in agreement with Severn Trent Water**
  - 2. Any external security lighting to comply with guidance to ensure that it does not adversely affect neighbours amenities**
  - 3. No burning on site**
  - 4. Adequate measures to be put in place to prevent migration of dust and particulates beyond the site boundary; and**
- 2) In the event that the planning obligation cannot be completed by 19th August 2010:**
- a) Members are asked to delegate authority to officers to REFUSE the application on the basis that without the planning obligation the proposed development would be contrary to policy and therefore unacceptable due to the resultant detrimental impacts it could cause to community infrastructure by a lack of provision for their improvements; and**
  - b) In the event of a refusal on the ground at 2a) above, and the applicant resubmitting the same or a very similar planning application with a completed legal agreement attached to cover the points noted, authority be delegated to the Head of Planning & Regeneration to GRANT planning permission subject to the conditions stated above as amended in any relevant subsequent update paper or by Members in their decision making.**