

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

7th December 2010

PLANNING APPLICATION 2010/253/FUL

**RESUBMISSION OF PLANNING APPLICATION 2009/271/FUL:
PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT CONSISTING OF 39 NO.
TWO BED, 16 NO. THREE BED, 3 NO. FOUR BED HOMES AND 21 NO.
TWO BED FLATS**

**FORMER MARLFIELD FARM FIRST SCHOOL, REDSTONE CLOSE,
CHURCH HILL NORTH, REDDITCH**

**APPLICANT: ACCORD HOUSING ASSOCIATION
EXPIRY DATE: 17TH JANUARY 2011**

WARD: CHURCH HILL

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) for more information.

(See additional papers for Site Plan)

Site Description

The site is located at the end of a cul de sac in Redstone Close and comprised the former Marlfield Farm school building which has since been demolished. The demolished buildings were generally single and two storeys in height. The surrounding land within the application site is generally grassed with some tree/shrub planting and former tarmac play areas. The perimeter of the site is generally secured with fencing and established tree/hedge planting, and is not accessible to the public currently.

The former buildings and tarmac play areas are undesignated in the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3 (the same as the adjacent residential areas). However, the remaining area that is grassed and landscaped is designated as Primarily Open Space in Local Plan No.3. The site is generally level with a slight slope, falling away in a north to south direction across the site.

Proposal Description

The proposal is for 79 residential units, comprising of 21 No.3 bedroom flats, 39 No. 2 bedroom houses, 16 No. 3 bedroom houses and 3 No. 4 bedroom houses.

69 of the 79 units would be affordable (61 being rented and 8 being via shared ownership). 10 would be for private sale.

The 21 flats form a three storey flat roofed apartment block whilst the remaining housing would be sited in assorted rows in a semi detached but mostly terraced arrangement.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

7th December 2010

Four particular house types are proposed – referred to as types A1, A2, B1 and C1. With respect to the Code For Sustainable Homes, the 10 ‘for sale’ units would meet Code Level 3, 67 of the affordable units would meet Code Level 4 and two of the dwellings (Plots 34 & 35) would meet Code Level 6 – in other words, these would be ‘zero-carbon’.

The houses would generally have asymmetrical rooflines with a gable on the front with Juliet balconies. Some of the plots would be 2½ storeys in height to create a varied roofline in the streetscene. Materials would be finished in stained timber. Green roofs are proposed to the small single storey flat roofed ancillary garden stores which accompany the dwellings, but otherwise, roof tiles would be used throughout.

The three storey apartment block would be finished in horizontal timber cladding for the walls and stained, whilst a metal clad flat roof is proposed.

The layout of the access road would be a shared surface for pedestrians and vehicles. Access to the site would generally be via Redstone Close. However, 10 dwellings would be accessed via Upperfield Close. As well as the shared surface access roads, two pedestrian entrances are proposed to the north and south of the site and would link to existing footpaths.

To the west of the site, the development creates an open space ‘courtyard’ that provides a green communal area for potential occupiers of the development as well as off street car parking.

The application is supported by a:-
Design & Access Statement, Planning Statement, Arboricultural Survey, Phase I Habitat Survey, Reptile Survey, Great Crested Newt Survey, Transport Statement, Travel Plan, Flood Risk Assessment and Geotechnical Assessment. The applicant is also agreeable to enter into a S106 Agreement.

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

www.wmra.gov.uk

www.worcestershire.gov.uk

www.redditchbc.gov.uk

National Planning Policy

PPS1	Delivering Sustainable Development
PPS3	Housing
PPS9	Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
PPG13	Transport

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

7th December 2010

PPG17	Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation
PPG24	Noise
PPS25	Development and Flood Risk

Regional Spatial Strategy

SR1	Climate Change
SR2	Creating Sustainable Communities
SR3	Sustainable Design and Construction
CF2	Housing beyond the Major Urban Areas
CF3	Level and Distribution of New Housing Development
CF5	Delivering affordable housing and mixed communities
CF6	Making efficient use of land
CF7	Delivering affordable housing
EN2	Energy Conservation
T3	Walking and Cycling

Worcestershire County Structure Plan

SD.1	Prudent Use of Natural Resources
SD.3	Use of Previously Developed Land
CTC.5	Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
CTC.8	Flood Risk and Surface Drainage
CTC.15	Biodiversity Action Plan
D.5	The Contribution of Previously Developed Land to meeting Housing Provision
D.6	Affordable Housing Needs
D.43	Crime Prevention and Community Safety
T.4	Car Parking
T.10	Cycling and Walking
IMP.1	Implementation of Development

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3

R.1	Primarily Open Space
CS.1	Prudent Use of Natural Resources
CS.2	Care for the Environment
CS.6	Implementation of Development
CS.7	The Sustainable Location of Development
B(HSG).5	Affordable Housing
B(BE).13	Qualities of Good Design
B(BE).19	Green Architecture
B(BE).28	Waste Management
B(NE).1a	Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows
C(T).12	Parking Standards
S.1	Designing Out Crime

Supplementary Planning Guidance / Documents (SPG / SPDs)

Encouraging Good Design
Affordable Housing Provision

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

7th December 2010

Education Contributions
Open Space Provision
Designing for Community Safety

Relevant Site Planning History

2007/265	Erection of extra care retirement village – Housing for the elderly (affordable housing)	Resolved at Planning Committee to approve the application subject to the completion of a S106 Agreement Application disposed of by RBC due to the absence of a completed S106 Agreement within the appropriate timescale.	25.03.08
2009/271	Residential development consisting of 39 No. 2 bed, 16 No. 3 bed, 3 No. 4 bed houses and 21 No. 2 bed flats	Refused	08.03.10

Public Consultation Responses

The application has been advertised by writing to neighbouring properties within the vicinity of the application site, by display of public notices on site, and by press notice.

Responses in favour

One received. Comments are summarised as follows:

- Providing existing important landscape features and ecology/protected species are protected, support can be given

Responses against

23 letters received in objection to the application.

Comments are summarised as follows:

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

7th December 2010

- Lack of available parking on site will be a problem
- Redstone Close too narrow to accommodate this level of development with access unsuitable
- Too many dwellings for the site – over development
- The existing green space would be missed by many
- Design of dwellings out of keeping with surroundings
- Increase in noise levels from building work
- Alternative access routes into the site should be considered
- Mud on the road would increase
- Accidents will increase if permission is granted
- Anti Social Behaviour would increase
- The revised submission is better than the previous plans, but still the same number of units – too many

Other issues which are not material considerations have been raised, but are not reported here as they cannot be considered in the determination of this application.

Consultee Responses

County Highway Network Control

Although no objections from ourselves were raised in principle to the previous application, in view of the representations made by local residents regarding traffic matters relating to the proposal, the county council is undertaking additional surveys of the existing traffic generation in order to accurately assess the impact of the proposal. The results will be received and interpreted by 26th November 2010, when further comment can be made.

Council's Waste Management Service

Comments awaited

Council's Arboricultural Officer

No objection subject to condition regarding agreeing full landscape details.

Police Crime Risk Manager

No objection. Request that conditions be imposed to improve surveillance of parking areas should consent be granted.

Development Plans (Planning Policy) Team

The site is identified on the Local Plan No. 3 Proposals Map as 50% white land and 50% open space. The site is partially brownfield land which was previously home to a school. Developing on previously developed land is considered as a sustainable approach and favoured ahead of greenfield land.

It is worth noting that this portion of open space was previously the playing field for the adjacent school; in 2006 the school was closed. Subsequently,

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

7th December 2010

the playing field is no longer required as open space to serve the school therefore the 2009 update to the Open Space Needs Assessment de-designates this open space and classifies it as white land. This Open Space Needs Assessment Update has not been through formal Examination procedures and therefore currently does not hold significant weight. However it has been published.

This application contains measures that contribute towards achieving sustainable development and is in accord with existing and emerging policy.

Council's Community Safety Officer

Comments awaited

Council's Drainage Officer

Comments awaited

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

Comments awaited

Council's Greenspace & Biodiversity Officer

No objection subject to conditions regarding newt habitat protection.

The Cyclists Touring Club

Comments awaited

Environmental Health

No objection subject to conditions and informatives relating to noise, lighting, odour and contamination.

Worcestershire Public Rights of Way Officer

No objection subject to informative to ensure that the applicant is made aware of their obligations to not hinder access to the right of way at any time.

County Education Service

If development goes ahead in this area, there will be a need for a contribution to be paid towards local education facilities in accordance with the SPD on planning obligations for education facilities.

British Horse Society

Comments awaited

Severn Trent Water

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

PLANNING COMMITTEE

7th December 2010

Sport England

Does not raise any objections to the granting of planning permission for this application, but would recommend that a suitable contribution is sought for supporting the local sports facility infrastructure.

Council's Housing Enabling Officer

Supports proposal and requests certain details be dealt with in the planning obligation.

Worcestershire County Archaeology Service

The proposed redevelopment may affect deposits of archaeological significance. No detailed archaeological investigation of the site has been carried out to date, hence the archaeological potential of the site is unknown, however, its proximity to the Roman Road (Ryknild Street) increases the possibility of contemporary road side settlement and farmsteads. Therefore as a condition of planning consent, a staged programme of archaeological work (field evaluation) will be required prior to commencement of development.

MADE (West Midlands design review affiliated with CABE)

The overall design and density of the submission provides a positive sustainable response to the need to deliver affordable housing within a high quality environment.

Councils Urban Design Advisor

Looking at the revised scheme as a whole, it is considered to represent a big improvement over the earlier submission and works better internally.

Procedural matters

This application is put before the Planning Committee due to the fact that it is a 'major' application (as defined in the NI 157 returns). Under the agreed scheme of delegation to Planning Officers, 'major' applications should be reported to Committee, where the recommendation is one of approval.

Background

The applicant has submitted this scheme in response to Members' decision to refuse planning permission for a similar application for residential development earlier this year. The single reason for refusal (application 2009/271) was as follows:

The proposed development by reason of its position, mass and height would have an overbearing effect on the occupiers of the neighbouring properties. The design of the proposed development is such that it would be out of keeping with the surrounding housing and be of a density that would result in overdevelopment of the site. As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policy B(BE).13 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3 and Planning Policy Statement 3 – Housing.

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

7th December 2010

Assessment of Proposal

The key issues for consideration in this case are:-

Principle

The application site is indicated as white land and Primarily Open Space. The principle of residential development is acceptable on the white land. However, as part of the site is designated as Primarily Open Space in Local Plan No.3, Policy R.1 would apply. This policy states that proposals which lead to the total or potential loss of Primarily Open Space will not normally be granted planning permission unless it can be demonstrated that the need for the development outweighs the value of the land as an open space area.

In the latest Open Space Needs Assessment 2009, the land concerned is no longer designated for open space purposes due to the fact that the school has since been closed and demolished. From a practical point of view, there is considered to be no real loss of open space provision given that it was only for the purposes of the school and has never been publicly accessible. The principle of the development was not objected to under application 2009/271.

Density, Design and Layout

Officers consider that the proposed density of 53 dph is satisfactory given the density of surrounding built form. Oldbury Close to the west and Upperfield Close, situated immediately to the south of the site are developed to a similar density to that proposed here. Redstone Close, from which access to the site would be served is constructed to a slightly lower density, but officers consider that the site's layout and form should draw more from the form of Upperfield Close and Oldbury Close, since the longest boundaries to the site, immediately beyond which existing residential development lie are those western and southern boundaries.

The form of the proposed development is considered generally to respect the character and appearance of surrounding built form, which in the case of Oldbury and Upperfield Close is red brick under tiled roofs. Officers consider it would be incorrect to try to 'mimic' the style of dwellings in Redstone Close which are of 'mock tudor' appearance, with dark timbers, and not necessarily typical of house styles in Redditch generally.

The proposed dwellings, in terms of their overall heights, together with widths of dwellings and their terraced form, would be typical of the appearance of properties in Oldbury and Upperfield Close. Whilst clearly the external treatment of properties in timber would not 'match' the red brick found in existing properties in the two closes' above, in the same way that the 'mock tudor' dwellings found in Redstone Close do not 'match' with properties in Upperfield Close, your Officers are satisfied that the use of suitable timber staining treatment would ensure that the proposed development would

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

7th December 2010

harmonise with its surroundings in accordance with Policy B(BE).13 of the Local Plan.

Under application 2009/271, two particular house types, including the 'Recycled' house were to be sited in a prominent location within the site, south of the then proposed apartment block. Whilst the 'Recycled' Code Level 6 (Zero Carbon) homes would be sited in a similar location, their design this time would match very closely with that of the other house types within the scheme.

With respect to the apartment block, as before, this is to be located towards the north-east corner of the site. This time, it has however been sited such that the block is slightly further inside the site, and as such, further away from 137-139 Upperfield Close. In addition, the apartment block would be flat roofed, reducing its prominence such that its height to ridge would measure only 9.75 metres – only marginally taller than the 2.5 storey dwellings which are 9 metres to ridge. The apartment block as proposed under application 2009/271 was three storeys, with a pitched roof over, giving a more prominent appearance. The current proposal is considered to be significantly less visually intrusive.

95 car parking spaces are proposed providing at least one car space per unit. The relatively large percentage of 2 bed units in the scheme as a whole means that the provision of any further car parking would be at odds with the Council's maximum car parking standards as referred to under Policy C(T).12 and Appendix H to the Local Plan. The approach to the development as a whole is however sustainable living, with dwellings exceeding current standards for sustainable means of construction and layout. Good footpath links (north and south of the site) to neighbouring bus stops exist and have been considered within the scheme's layout.

Some of the plots have smaller than usual gardens. However, the overall policy requirement of minimum garden/ amenity space has been provided within the site for the number of units proposed with some of this provision being combined together to create a large, useable communal area within the courtyard. It is intended that the communal area would be used for social occasions and would be suitably landscaped. The overall open space provision on site has increased from 4,974 metres squared under the previous scheme to 5,171 metres squared.

Officers are satisfied that other spacing standards would be adhered to, and that no loss of existing residential amenity in terms of overshadowing or overbearing impact would result.

Overall it is considered that the layout of the proposal is more traditional, softer and utilises space more effectively than the previous application did, where small triangles of unusable green space were shown. The scheme

PLANNING COMMITTEE

7th December 2010

more closely follows the existing built form in the vicinity. Officers concur with comments given by MADE and the Council's Urban Design Advisor. The scheme is certainly more 'inward looking', particularly with regard to the row of dwellings to the northern boundary, which now face towards the centre of the site, rather than looking outwards. Internally however, the courtyard area is considered to work more successfully, and with rear gardens facing outwards, together with the reduction in height of the apartment block, the 'overbearing' impact members were concerned with previously has been overcome.

Landscaping and Ecology

The aspiration for the development is very much a sustainable lifestyle. As such, an allotment area is proposed within the site to be used by the potential occupiers of the scheme. Native species planting will be provided in respect to general shrub and tree planting to encourage biodiversity in the area. A Great Crested Newt and reptile survey has been carried out on the site. At the time of the survey there was no evidence of newts / reptiles. However, the applicant is keen to incorporate some ecological mitigation measures due to the suitability of the surroundings and its potential to accommodate such species. For this reason, it is recommended that an additional survey be carried out prior to the commencement of development to clarify the position in respect to these protected species.

Groups of trees within the site are too young to be protected by the Area Tree Preservation Order that covers the site. However, some trees along the boundary are protected by the Order and it is intended that these trees would be retained. Mature hedgerows also exist around the site and are overgrown and in need of management. In particular, the hedge to the north of the site would need to be reduced in height. These matters can be controlled through the imposition of conditions, in order to protect visual amenity and retain trees of merit.

Highways and access

Initial comments submitted by County Highway Network Control state that the number of houses proposed to be served off Redstone Close would not raise highway issues.

Most of the comments submitted by neighbouring occupiers relate to vehicle movements and potential volume of traffic. It is considered that vehicle movements, if permission were to be granted are likely to be less than those of the school when it was in use. Highway Network Control does not consider the potential volume of traffic to be an issue in this particular location. Members will note that Highway Network Control are undertaking additional surveys of the existing traffic generation as a result of those concerns, the results of which are at the time of writing not available, but are likely to be by 26th November 2010. The Update Report will provide further clarification in this respect.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

7th December 2010

Discussions are still taking place between the applicant and Highway Network Control regarding minor amendments to the access road into the site. More information on this matter will be provided in the Update Report.

Officers can confirm that an emergency access (collapsible bollards) already exists via Upperfield Close, therefore, no further improvements are required in this respect.

The applicant has provided information to demonstrate that the access and courtyard would be suitable for refuse vehicles to use, and it is understood that the applicant has been in discussion with Waste Management Services regarding this proposal prior to its submission. Comments are awaited from Waste Management and any received will be reported in the Update paper.

95 spaces are to be provided in total, equivalent to 100% provision in respect of Policy C(T)12 – (Maximum Car Parking Standards). To provide more than 95 car parking spaces for the development would be at odds with the Planning Policy Framework and could not therefore be justified. This level of provision is thought by your Officers to be sufficient, especially due to the highly sustainable location of the site, as explained below.

Sustainability

The site is located within the Redditch Urban Area within reasonable walking distance (400m) of local shops and other facilities at the Church Hill District Centre. There are also a number of bus services which run via Church Hill Way, Tanhouse Lane and Ravens Bank Drive. These routes provide a frequent service to Redditch Town Centre and interconnecting rail and bus services. A number of cycle ways and footpaths also link to wider areas from the site.

As stated earlier, the scheme is considered to promote a sustainable lifestyle, by the provision for example of an allotment area within the site. The dwellings would be built to achieve Levels 3, 4 and 6 of the Code for Sustainable Homes and incorporate sustainable construction approaches including the use of solar panels and orientating dwellings such that natural daylight into the proposed rooms is maximised.

Planning obligations

The size of the proposed development is above the policy threshold for requiring contributions which should be sought via a planning obligation. Normally, the following would be required under the adopted policy framework:

- A contribution towards County education facilities, however, affordable housing schemes are exempted from this requirement in the SPD, and therefore this is only required in relation to the market housing units that are proposed (10 in total). The County have confirmed that there is a

PLANNING COMMITTEE

7th December 2010

need in this area to take contributions towards three schools - Abbeywood First School, Church Hill Middle School and Arrow Vale High School.

- A contribution towards playing pitches, play areas and open space on the area due to the increased demand/requirement from future residents is required in compliance with the SPD; and
- That 40% of the dwellings be provided as affordable housing in line with SPD policy, however in this case the applicant has confirmed that 69 of the 79 units will be for this. This must however also be included in the agreement to ensure the retention of the units for this purpose in perpetuity.

Conclusion

This scheme is considered to be innovative and highly sustainable in nature, complying with the Councils planning policies and general objectives. The proposal maximises its potential to provide sustainable homes with the layout and elevational treatment of the units being considered to respect existing surrounding built form. Officers therefore consider that the proposed development is compliant with policy, overcomes the previous reason for refusal and would be unlikely to cause harm to safety or amenity such that it can be considered favourably.

Recommendation

- 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) The applicant entering into a S106 planning obligation ensuring that 69 out of the 79 units are for the provision of affordable housing in perpetuity; that the Council are paid appropriate contributions in relation to education (for the 10 units that would be for sale), and the development for pitches, play areas and open space provision in the locality to be provided and maintained; and**
 - b) the following conditions and informatives:**

Conditions

1. Development to commence within three years
2. Details of materials to be submitted
3. Landscape scheme including details of boundary treatment to be submitted and approved

PLANNING COMMITTEE

7th December 2010

4. Landscape scheme including details of boundary treatment to be implemented in accordance with the approved details
5. Limited working hours during construction period
6. Dwellings to be built to a minimum Level 3 requirement set out under Code for Sustainable Homes
7. Land contamination
8. Development to be carried out in accordance with plans submitted with application
9. Measures, monitoring and targets set out in the travel plan for the proposal shall be implemented
10. Great Crested Newt Survey to be carried out between March and June.
11. Great Crested Newt Mitigation strategy to be implemented to protect potential Great Crested Newts
12. Archaeological programme (field evaluation) to be carried out prior to commencement of development
13. Lighting area to immediate west of apartment block to be agreed as per Police CRM request

Informatives

1. Reason for approval
 2. Drainage details to be in agreement with Severn Trent Water
 3. No burning on site
 4. Dust mitigation
 5. Lighting
 6. NB public rights of way legislation
- 2. In the event that the planning obligation cannot be completed by 17th January 2011, Members are asked to delegate authority to officers to:**
- a) **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 would cause to community infrastructure by a lack of provision for their improvements, and that at least 40% of the dwellings could not be restricted to use for affordable housing in line with current policy requirements; and**
 - b) **In the event of the applicant resubmitting the same or a very similar application with an acceptable and completed S106 legal agreement attached, authority be delegated to the Head of Planning & Regeneration to GRANT planning permission subject to the conditions stated in this report and any subsequent update report and any conditions agreed at the determining Planning Committee meeting.**