

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

5th September 2012

PLANNING APPLICATION 2012/209/FUL

CONVERSION AND EXTENSION OF BUILDING TO FORM SIX FLATS

**VICTORIA HOUSE: 10 - 12 FECKENHAM ROAD, ASTWOOD BANK,
REDDITCH**

**APPLICANT: CHARLES MARTIN HOMES
EXPIRY DATE: 24TH SEPTEMBER 2012**

WARD: ASTWOOD BANK & FECKENHAM

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

(See additional papers for Site Plan)

Site Description

The site lies to the northern side of Feckenham Road, approximately 100 metres due west from 'Bank stores' which is situated just to the west of the Feckenham Road / Evesham Road / Sambourne Lane crossroads to the north of Astwood Bank. The immediate area contains a mix of commercial and residential uses including a public house to the west of the site, a doctor's surgery, a post office / stores to the east and the residential cul-de-sac Beverley Close immediately beyond the northern boundary of the site. The application site itself contains the offices of Huntley Funeral Services, a large two storey rectangular building of brick and tile construction dating from the late 1950s period. The building contains approximately 320 square metres of floorspace. A large garage of irregular shape measuring approximately 200 sqm is situated to the rear. The remainder of the site is formed of part gravelled hardstandings and an overgrown and unkempt grass and scrub area. An existing access into the site is situated near to the junction of Feckenham Road and Queen Street at a point between number 14 Feckenham Road and an electricity sub-station. This access leads to the rear of the site. A second access exists immediately in front of the entrance to the Huntleys building at a position between the sub-station and the doctor's surgery to the east.

Proposal Description

It is proposed to demolish the single storey garage building referred to above and to convert the main two storey office block to form two one bedroom and four two bed roomed flats. The existing building would be extended by 50 sqm at the front with a two storey gable extension and a single storey porch / front entrance. A new external open entrance with steps would be provided at the rear. A total of 13 car parking spaces would be provided on site (10 to the rear and 3 to the frontage). Access to the parking spaces would be via the two existing accesses as referred to above. A new detached single storey secure refuse / recycling and cycle store would be provided to the rear. The

PLANNING COMMITTEE

5th September 2012

remainder of the site would be used as grassed amenity space for residents totalling in excess of 560 sqm.

The application is supported by a Design & Access Statement and an agreement 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

www.wmra.gov.uk

www.worcestershire.gov.uk

www.redditchbc.gov.uk

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and Worcestershire County Structure Plan (WCSP)

Whilst the RSS and WCSP still exist and form part of the Development Plan for Redditch, they do not contain any policies that are directly related to or relevant to this application proposal. Therefore, in light of recent indications at national level that Regional Spatial Strategies and Structure Plans are likely to be abolished in the near future, it is not considered necessary to provide any detail at this point in relation to the RSS, or the WCSP.

Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3

CS.6	Implementation of Development
CS.7	The Sustainable Location of Development
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
B(RA).8	Development at Astwood Bank
C(T).12	Parking Standards

Supplementary Planning Guidance / Supplementary Planning Documents

Encouraging Good Design
Designing for Community Safety
Planning obligations for education contributions
Open space provision

PLANNING COMMITTEE

5th September 2012

Relevant Site Planning History

Appn. no	Proposal	Decision	Date
2012/129/FUL	Conversion and extension to form 10 flats	Application Withdrawn	28th June 2012

Public Consultation Responses

Responses in favour

Two letters received commenting that the conversion of such buildings to residential uses should be encouraged since it would add numbers to the RBC housing stock. Parking at two spaces per flat would be acceptable.

Responses against

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

- Proposal would create too much traffic in an already congested area
- Loss of green area, and wildlife
- Over-intensive development
- Noise concerns
- Privacy enjoyed by nearby residents would be affected
- Would result in loss of light to properties

Consultee Responses

County Highway Network Control

No objection subject to conditions concerning access, turning and parking

Worcestershire Regulatory Services (Environmental Health)

No objection. Suggests that conditions be applied to restrict hours of construction work on site in order to safeguard nearby residential amenities

Severn Trent Water

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

Worcestershire County Education Service

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

RBC Community Safety Officer

No objection

Assessment of Proposal

The key issues for consideration in this case are considered to be:

- a) The design and appearance of the proposals
- b) The impact of the development upon nearby residential amenities
- c) The impact of the proposals on highway safety

PLANNING COMMITTEE

5th September 2012

- d) Sustainability
- e) Planning Obligation requirement

The location of the site, within the Astwood Bank Village Settlement is considered to be sustainable. It is situated in close proximity to the village amenities including schools, shops and bus stops. The site is not designated for any particular use in the local plan but a residential use on the site is acceptable in principle given that the surrounding area contains a mix of commercial and residential uses.

Design and appearance

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. The proposed development represents a conversion of an existing building other than for a small single storey entrance to the building, adjacent to what would be a two storey gable situated towards the centre of the south (Feckenham Road) facing elevation.

The gable extension would protrude no more than 4 metres from the front elevation of the existing building and would be well set back from Feckenham Road (in excess of 12 metres). This two storey element would have a ridge height set one metre below that of the existing two storey office building, and would have a low, pitched roof to match the existing roof form. Officers consider that the addition of these two storey and single storey elements would actually break up and add interest to what is a rather bland and monolithic rectangular building. The scale, massing and appearance of the extensions complement the scale of the existing building and are therefore considered to be acceptable.

Impact on residential amenity

Some new windows are proposed in order to provide daylight to habitable rooms, the main alteration being to that of the existing blank, west facing gable where four new windows are proposed. However, the insertion of these windows would not give rise to a loss of amenity by virtue of any overlooking effect. There are existing windows at first floor level in the north facing elevation of the building. Windows to this elevation would continue to overlook into rear gardens in Beverley Close, although the distance between windows serving existing residential development and the proposed development would easily exceed the Councils minimum distance of 22m with such separations ranging between 35m and 40m.

Amenity space provided on site for future residents would take the form of a large grassed area which would include the provision of new trees. Details would be agreed by means of a recommended planning condition. Officers consider that this would enhance what is a poorly maintained and overgrown area. This provision would comply with the Councils SPG on Encouraging Good Design.

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

5th September 2012

The existing building has been used on a relatively 'low key' basis being open between 11:00am and 3:00pm Monday to Friday and not being open on Saturdays/Sundays. It is important to consider that the building could be let to another commercial occupier in the future who could operate more intensively, given the lack of any restrictive conditions. Officers do not consider that the amenities enjoyed by the occupiers of Beverley Close to the rear would be harmed by a change of use from a commercial to a residential use. The proposed car parking spaces would be located a minimum of 7m and a maximum of 12m from the rear gardens of these properties, and the removal of the large garage building which would need to be demolished in order to accommodate the parking spaces would be of benefit to the visual amenities of the area.

Officers do not consider that any loss of light which might harm nearby amenity would occur from the erection of the two storey extension to the front of the building. This would be lower in height than the existing building and set back 12 metres from the road. It is important to consider that many buildings to the northern side of Feckenham Road, such as No.14, a part of the doctor's surgery and Bank Stores are positioned either right on to pavement or set back only slightly from the highway.

Clearly many forms of new built development have the potential to disturb and inconvenience nearby occupiers during the construction phase. In the case of permission being granted for this development, it is recommended that hours of operation on site be restricted by condition. Action can be taken separately and immediately by Environmental Health Officers under the Environmental Protection Act if a statutory nuisance is considered to exist.

The proposals are therefore considered to comply with Policies B(BE).13 and B(HSG).6 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3.

Highways and Access

The proposed development would provide a total of 13 car parking spaces across the whole of the site. Such provision accords with highway standards and with Policy C(T).12 of the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.3. County Highway Network Control has no objection to the use of the existing vehicular accesses together with the proposed car parking provision and arrangements which would allow vehicles to enter and exit the site in a forward gear. Conditions are recommended which are considered reasonable to impose.

Sustainability

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 COMMITTEE

5th September 2012

Secure storage for bicycles would be provided within the scheme enabling their use for practical or leisure purposes.

By virtue of the demolition of the existing detached garage building to the rear, a greater area of green open space would be created and permeable surfacing would be used in the creation of the new car parking area benefiting surface water drainage on site. Rainwater harvesting would be employed for use on soft landscape watering.

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:

- A contribution towards playing pitches, play areas and open space in the area, due to increased demand/requirement from future residents in compliance with the SPD; and
- 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

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. 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:

Either:

- 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**

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

5th September 2012

and open space provision in the locality to be provided and maintained; and

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
6. Access, turning and parking
7. New parking areas to be constructed using permeable materials
8. Plans approved specified

Informatives

1. Reason for approval
2. Drainage details to be in agreement with Severn Trent Water
3. Highway Note 4
4. Highway Note 5

Or:

2) **In the event that the planning obligation cannot be completed by 24th September 2012:**

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.**

**PLANNING
COMMITTEE**

5th September 2012

Procedural matters

This application is being reported to the Planning Committee because the recommendation is that permission be granted subject to a planning obligation. Further, two or more letters have been received in objection.