

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE DATE: 20 October 2010

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| APPLICATION REF. NO: | 10/00592/FUL |
| STATUTORY DECISION DATE: | 11 November 2010 |
| WARD/PARISH: | NORTHGATE |
| LOCATION: | Darlington Memorial Hospital, Hollyhurst Road |
| DESCRIPTION: | Re-ordering, re -allocation and creation of additional staff car parking spaces |
| APPLICANT: | County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust |

APPLICATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

The Memorial Hospital site is located within a predominately residential area and contains a variety of buildings, car parking areas and landscaped areas. The Memorial Hall and Memorial obelisk on the Hollyhurst Road frontage, are Grade II listed buildings and a number of trees are covered by tree preservation orders dated 2007, 2009 and 2010. The proposals focus on four areas within the site:

Area 1 – This area contains the existing Social Club building, which has been closed since January 2010 and associated car parking areas. The proposal involves demolishing the building and

Utilising the resulting space and rear service area for additional car parking

Area 2 – This area is adjacent to the existing Dialysis Unit and Administration block . This area currently has 13 spaces which are ad-hoc in terms of size and arrangement. The spaces would be re-ordered to include a disabled space and to create a safe and controlled access to Area 3.

Area 3 – This area is located to the rear of Block 15 and currently consists of a courtyard; a VIE compound and a grassed area containing trees and landscaping. The proposal involves the creation of No 38 parking spaces to be used by consultants and executives only.

Area 4 – This area is currently used for parking spaces for consultants and executives of the Hospital. The formation of the parking spaces in Area 3 would allow for these existing spaces to be reallocated to public use.

PLANNING HISTORY

The most relevant entries are:

00/00286/FUL In July 2000 planning permission was GRANTED for extension to existing car parking facilities to provide a total of 12 new spaces and rationalization of existing spaces.

04/00969/FUL In November 2004 an application for, amongst other elements, additional car parking spaces and a decked parking area was WITHDRAWN

07/00905/FUL In December 2007 planning permission was GRANTED for the creation of additional 40 car parking spaces

08/00971/FUL In February 2009 planning permission was GRANTED for the erection of energy centre, sub station, roof top plant rooms, additional parking at the Marion Centre and other ancillary operations

09/00284/FUL In June 2009 planning permission was GRANTED for the demolition of existing laundry building, recreational building and ancillary hospital buildings and the formation of a car park for 39 staff car parking spaces. Erection of temporary bottle store and sharps store

10/00389/FUL In July 2010 planning permission was GRANTED for the provision of cycle compound to hold No 62 cycles and 2 shelters to hold a further 20 cycles

PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

The relevant policies within the Borough of Darlington Local Plan 1997 are:

E2 – Development Limits

E11 – Conservation of Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

E12 – Trees and Development

E48 – Noise Generating/Polluting Development

R26 – Protection of Community Uses

H15 – The Amenity of Residential Areas

T24 – Parking and Servicing Requirements for New Developments

T39 – Conditions for Pedestrians

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY

Three letters of objection have been received and the contents can be summarised as follows:

- *Drainage adjacent to Area 3 is currently poor and has increased due to works in the hospital. The removal of trees will increase the problems further;*
- *Area 3 is currently secure preventing any public access. The new car park will allow anyone to enter and wander around and the safety and security of the neighbouring dwellings will be at risk*
- *Area 3 is currently covered by CCTV so that would not be an added benefit*
- *The proposed development in Area 3 would spoil our peace with engine noise, opening and closing of vehicle doors and the general noise of people coming and going disturbing the enjoyment of our currently peaceful garden*

- *The car park in Area 3 would require new street lighting. The current level of light emitted by the hospital and its grounds after dark is low and does not disturb us. Street lighting would pollute our nights, especially for those people using the rooms to the rear of their properties*
- *Vehicles using the car park in Area 3 during the hours of darkness would have their headlights pointing in the direction of our property on entry to the car park. Several parking spaces point in this direction. This would affect our night time and early morning peace*
- *Vehicles using the car park in Area 3 will emit fumes into the air. This would change the air quality and affect the enjoyment of our garden*
- *We currently enjoy the sight of an area of greenery beyond our garden wall with many birds and squirrels. A car park in Area 3 would change this and the view from our property will be spoiled by its existence*
- *Extra trees should be planted to screen the car park from Elms Road*
- *The car park should only be open until 6pm during weekdays and also with limited use at weekends*
- *The car park in Area 3 will increase security issues and increase risk of burglaries*
- *We are concerned that the Emergency Entrance gate on Elms Road will be used as an entrance to the car park in Area 3 by non emergency vehicles and then the general public causing traffic problems in Elms Road*
- *I accept there is a need for construction traffic to use the Emergency Entrance but I would ask that the contractors consider the residents in Elms Road. In the past construction traffic has caused a lot of unnecessary distress and disturbance. The wear and tear on the roads and pavements has not been addressed and they are in a poor state of repair.*
- *A report in 2009 identified very high levels of car use by staff and targets were suggested by the Council. Although token measures have been made to reduce pressure on car parking, it difficult to see where nay sustained effort has been made to reduce the pressure on car parking other than adding parking spaces in 2007 and 2009.*
- *Little is being done to promote alternatives to car use and the Trust has developed a policy for across site working, forcing staff and patients to travel between hospitals. Staff are funded to use their cars and there is no car sharing in place, no waiting list for parking permits for staff and volunteers and no attempt to prioritise those who have to use their cars for work. There are no cycle lanes within the site and there is no public parking areas for cycles. The existing provision of public transport is poor*

Consultee Responses

The **Council's Transport Policy Officer** has no objections to the increase in parking spaces and recognises that the Trust are looking to implement and promote other forms of sustainable travel initiatives

The **Council's Senior Arboricultural Officer** has no objections to the proposed development subject to the imposition of conditions relating to tree protection measures, the planting of replacement trees and details of the "no dig" construction

The **Council's Highways Engineer** has no objections to the proposed development subject to the imposition of conditions relating to securing drop kerbs

The **Council's Environmental Health Officer** has considered the details of the Design and Access Statement and no objections have been raised on the grounds of amenity relating to Area 3 of the development. However, a condition to secure details of any lighting has been requested.

PLANNING ISSUES

The main considerations to be discussed here are whether or not the development is acceptable in the following terms:

- Planning Policy
- Highway and Transport Matters
- Residential Amenity
- Visual Amenity
- Trees

Planning Policy

The application site lies within the development limits of the urban area as defined by Policy E2 (Development Limits) of the Borough of Darlington Local Plan.

As part of the creation of the car parking spaces in Area 1, the existing Social Club will be demolished. Policy R26 (Protection of Community Facilities) of the Plan seeks to retain buildings that are used by the wider community but the applicant has confirmed that the building has not been in operation since January 2010 and it was a private facility of the Trust. As a result the policy would not be applicable to this proposal. The remainder of the report will consider the general development control issues.

Highway and Transport Matters

It is recognised that the provision of staff and visitor car parking at the site has been a longstanding issue and this is reflected in the number of planning applications submitted to the Council to alleviate the problem. In 2004 planning permission was sought for the erection of a decked car park to provide an additional 100 spaces and the application was approved subject to a Section 106 Agreement. Prior to the Section Agreement being finalised an application was submitted and approved in 2007 (07/00905/FUL) for 40 additional spaces to meet the requirements of the Hospital and the 2004 submission was subsequently withdrawn.

Planning permissions were subsequently approved in 2009 for the new energy centre and also for the demolition of the laundry building and the creation of additional car parking. However, not all of the parking spaces that have been previously approved can or will be implemented due to the location of the energy centre and associated construction works and compounds and other development which have been subsequently approved on the site. Also, some of the spaces would not meet current standards. There will be a net loss of 40 car parking spaces during the construction period for the energy centre and associated works (until March 2012) and there is a strong possibility that the spaces which front the boundary wall facing Greenbank Road will either not be brought back into use or significantly reduced due to non standard parking spaces and potential conflicts with the other users of this area.

The current level of parking delivery equates to a net deficit of 14 spaces during the construction period of the energy centre and a marginal gain of 2 spaces once the works have been completed. The proposed development will result in the level of parking available during the

construction period continuing to produce a deficit figure of 5 parking spaces, whereas upon completion there will be a net gain of 20 spaces.

The proposed development would effectively reallocate and create 50 further car parking spaces for the public, including spaces close to the Accident and Emergency Unit.

Vehicular and pedestrian access to the new car parking areas would be via the existing entrances off Hollyhurst Road and the internal road network of the site. There is an Emergency Entrance off Elms Road in close proximity to Area 3, but this would not be used as a general access and a suitable condition can be imposed to ensure that the entrance is for emergency purposes only.

The Council's Highways Engineer considers that the parking areas are well laid out and although the access to Area 3 is only 3m wide over part of its length, it is considered acceptable. There is sufficient provision of disabled parking spaces but there will be a need to impose a planning condition to secure suitable dropped kerbs for the additional disabled parking space

One of the objectors has expressed concern over the need for additional parking and lack of green travel initiatives. The Trust is currently in discussions with the Council on the scope and form of a Travel Plan and they are currently trialling a bus between the Trust's hospital sites and they are in the process of establishing a car sharing scheme. The Council's Transport Policy Officer has raised no objection to the increase in provision of parking and they recognise that the Trust is currently increasing and improving cycle parking in the site (ref no: 10/00389/FUL) and promoting other initiatives.

The proposed development would accord with Policies T24 and T39 of the Borough of Darlington Local Plan.

It is not common practice for the Local Planning Authority to impose controls over the movements of construction traffic. However, Elms Road is a narrow and busy street and it is considered prudent to impose a planning condition relating to traffic movements which is consistent with conditions imposed on other approvals at the hospital

Residential Amenity

Area 1 is located adjacent to the Reid Street School and opposite dwellings on Hollyhurst Road. This part of the hospital site is already used for the parking of vehicles and it is considered that the introduction of new spaces and the reordering of the existing spaces would not create any significant amenity issues such as noise and the tree coverage in this area would also prevent unsatisfactory level of light pollution into the dwellings opposite. Area 1 is separated from the dwellings opposite by Hollyhurst Road, which is a busy road and against this backdrop any noise from the new parking area will not be significant.

Area 2 is also an existing car parking area adjacent to residential properties and it is considered that the introduction of the access to Area and the reordering of the existing spaces would not create any significant amenity issues.

Area 3 is recognised as the most contentious location for a new car parking space and the Trust were advised to take this into consideration when designing the proposal. The car park in Area 3 would be dedicated and managed for consultants and executives only and would be available for use from 0700 and 1900 each day. The access to the parking area would be through Area 2 only and not from Elms Road (as mentioned this would be the subject of a planning condition). The principal area of parking would be located within an existing courtyard area and 26 parking

spaces would be formed here. The remaining 12 spaces would be formed within an area of green space surrounding a VIE compound. This green space has residential dwellings to the east (West Crescent) and to the south (Elms Road). An Emergency Entrance off Elms Road leads onto an existing access road in this area. The boundary of Area 3 and the dwellings consists of a brick wall and extensive tree coverage. The car parking would be approximately 25 – 30 metres from the neighbouring dwellings.

The applicant predicts that allowing for the disposition of the parking spaces and the patterns of usage, the spaces within the courtyard area will attract the greater use but obviously this may not prove to be the case once implemented.

No details of lighting have been submitted with the application and therefore a condition would have to be attached to any grant of planning permission requesting details of a Lighting Impact Assessment. A condition to secure appropriate drainage methods for Area 3 is also deemed necessary

It is considered that as the car park in Area 3 is not to be used by the public and only used between the hours of 0700 and 1900, the development would not adversely affect the amenities of the neighbouring dwellings, subject to appropriate conditions. The existing boundary treatments, which would be strengthened by additional tree planting, would help to screen the development and prevent unacceptable levels of light pollution from the vehicles. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has considered the details of the Design and Access Statement and no objections have been raised on the grounds of amenity relating to Area 3 of the development.

The works in Area 4 would not raise any residential amenity issues.

It is considered that the proposal would accord with Policies E48 and H15 of the Borough of Darlington Local Plan

Visual Amenity

The existing building within Area 1 is of no architectural merit and its loss would not have an adverse impact on the appearance of the street scene. The existing tree coverage on the Hollyhurst Road frontage would also provide a visual screen from the dwellings.

The works in Area 3 does involve the loss of a green space and three trees within the hospital site. There is no public access to this area and it is only visible from limited public areas. Nevertheless, the loss of the green area has been considered and on balance, the benefits of increasing the number of parking spaces would outweigh the subsequent loss of the greenery. The impact upon the trees within the site will be considered in more detail in this report but the applicant has agreed to plant compensatory trees in Area 3.

Trees

The trees to the south and west of Area 1 are covered by a tree preservation order dated 2010. The footprint of the hard standing once the existing building has been demolished will not increase or extend towards the trees and therefore they will not be adversely affected by the development. The works carried out in Area 2 would not affect any trees in the locality. In Area 3, two sycamore trees located adjacent to the VIE compound and one cherry tree within the courtyard area would be felled. These trees are not worthy of a tree preservation order and they would be replaced by a further three trees, with two being planted on the boundary with West Crescent and the remaining tree planted within a landscaped area to the rear of parking space Nos 23 – 25.

Also in Area 3, there are three mature trees along the boundary with No 15 Elms Road, which make a contribution to the visual appearance of the area. The car park is outside of the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of these trees but the access from Area 2 would cross the RPAS of one of the trees and it has been agreed that the access will be constructed via a no dig process.

In Area 4, there are some young trees on the boundary of the existing car park which would need to be retained.

The Council's Senior Arboricultural Officer has no objections to the proposed works subject to the imposition of planning conditions to secure tree protection measures throughout the site and the replacement planting and no dig construction in Area 3.

SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

CONCLUSION

It is recognised that the provision of staff and visitor car parking at the site has been a longstanding issue and this is reflected in the number of planning applications submitted to the Council to alleviate the problem. However, due to subsequent developments being carried out at the site, the actual number of car parking spaces that will be implemented is not significantly high. As a result there remains a need to increase the existing levels of car parking for both the public and staff. The proposed development is divided into four areas within the site and it is considered that the development, as a whole, would not raise any adverse residential or visual amenity issues nor highway safety issues. The loss of any trees in Area 3 would be compensated by the planting of replacement species and the acceptance of the loss of green space in this Area was, on balance, considered against the overall benefits of the proposal. The following policies within the Borough of Darlington Local Plan were taken into consideration:

E2 – Development Limits

E11 – Conservation of Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

E12 – Trees and Development

E48 – Noise Generating/Polluting Development

R26 – Protection of Community Uses

H15 – The Amenity of Residential Areas

T24 – Parking and Servicing Requirements for New Developments

T39 – Conditions for Pedestrians

RECOMMENDATION

PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

1. A3 – Implementation Limit (Three Years)

2. Prior to the commencement of the development of Area 3 as shown on the approved Site Relationship Plan, details on the methodology to undertake the no dig process shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the development shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved details
REASON: To safeguard the life of the trees in the interests of visual amenity
3. Prior to the commencement of the development of Area 3 as shown on the approved Site Relationship Plan, details for the lighting of the parking areas shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include the submission of a Light Impact Assessment and the development shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved details
REASON: In the interests of residential amenity
4. Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, precise details of the replacement trees in Area 3 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include the species and location of the replacement trees and the development shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved details
REASON: In the interests of the visual amenity
5. The car park in Area 3 shall not be used outside of the hours of 0700 and 1900 Mondays to Sundays and shall not be used by the public unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority
REASON: In the interests of residential amenity
6. Prior to the commencement of the development of Area 3 as shown on the approved Site Relationship Plan, details for the drainage of the parking areas shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the development shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved details
REASON: In the interests of residential amenity
7. Prior to the commencement of the development of Area 3 as shown on the approved Site Relationship Plan, details of a Construction Management Plan for Area 3 shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include a Dust Action Plan and the traffic movements for the construction vehicles and the development shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved details
REASON: In the interests of residential amenity
8. The entrance on Elms Road shall be used for Emergency purposes only, with the exception of construction vehicles used in connection with the formation of the development in Area 3 as shown on the approved Site Relationship Plan unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
REASON: In the interests of residential amenity
9. Prior to the approved parking spaces in Areas 1, 2 and 3 as shown on the approved Site Relationship Plan shall not be brought into use until the respective Area has been hard surfaced and marked out in parking bays and the car parking areas shall be retained in accordance with the approved plans unless otherwise agreed with the Local Planning Authority

REASON: In the interests of highway safety

10. Prior to the commencement of the development in Areas 1, 2, 3 and 4 (including the demolition of the Social Club building) tree protection measures shall be erected around the appropriate trees agreed with the Local Planning Authority. The measures shall comply generally with the specification laid down within BS 5837 and shall include fencing of at least 2.3m high, consisting of a scaffolding frame braced to resist impacts, supported by a weldmesh wired to the uprights and horizontals to dissuade encroachment. The Local Planning Authority shall be given notice of the completion of the protection works prior to the commencement of any work to allow an inspection of the measurements to ensure compliance with the approved scheme of protection. Notwithstanding the above approved specification, none of the following activities shall take place within the segregated protection zones in the area of the trees:

- (a) The raising or lowering of levels in relation to the existing ground levels;
- (b) Cutting of roots, digging of trenches or removal of soil;
- (c) Erection of temporary buildings, roads or carrying out of any engineering operations;
- (d) Lighting of fires;
- (e) Driving of vehicles or storage of materials and equipment.

REASON - To ensure that a maximum level of protection in order to safeguard the well being of the trees on the site and in the interests of the visual amenities of the area.

11. Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, the disabled space shown within Area 2 shall not be brought into use until the location of the dropped kerb(s) have been agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved details

REASON: To ensure the car parking space is formed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority

12. B5 – Detailed Drawings (Accordance with Plan)

SUGGESTED SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR GRANTING PLANNING PERMISSION

It is recognised that the provision of staff and visitor car parking at the site has been an issue and this is reflected in the number of planning applications submitted to the Council to alleviate the problem. However, due to subsequent developments being carried out at the site, the actual number of car parking spaces that will be implemented is not significantly high. As a result there remains a need to increase the existing levels of car parking for both the public and staff. The proposed development is divided into four areas within the site and it is considered that the development, as a whole, would not raise any adverse residential or visual amenity issues nor highway safety issues. The loss of any trees in Area 3 would be compensated by the planting of replacement species and the acceptance of the loss of greenspace in this Area was, on balance, considered against the overall benefits of the proposal. The following policies within the Borough of Darlington Local Plan were taken into consideration:

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