

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE DATE: 29 July 2009

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APPLICATION REF. NO:	09/00374/FUL
STATUTORY DECISION DATE:	31 July 2009
WARD/PARISH:	NORTHGATE
LOCATION:	County Durham And Darlington NHS Foundation Trust, Darlington Memorial Hospital Hollyhurst Road
DESCRIPTION:	Alterations to approved tower block rooftop plant room, ducting to the ward block plant room and across the podium building together with replacement of windows to the HD and IT units (additional plans received 25 and 30 June 2009 and additional information received 29 June 2009)
APPLICANT:	County Durham And Darlington NHS Foundation Trust

APPLICATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site contains the hospital and associated buildings. It is bounded to the west by Hollyhurst Road; by Woodland Road/Elms Road and West Crescent to the south; east by Greenbank Road and north by Reid Street and Reid Street Primary School. The site is covered in part by two tree preservation orders dated 1952 and 2007.

Planning permission (See Planning History) has been granted for a new energy centre, roof top plant rooms to the Tower Block and Podium Building, , new electricity substation, gas governor houses and additional car parking at the Marrion Centre. A further approval was granted for a new VIE compound and bottle store, both connected with the above approval.

The proposed application seeks planning permission for the following works:

- Further alterations to the Tower Block plant room;
- The erection of ducting to the air handling units with the Tower Block plant room;
- Elevated ducting to the Tower Block plant room from the new Intensive Therapy Units and High Dependency Units within the Tower Block building;
- Elevated ducting and hot water pipes and cabling across the Podium Building

- Replacement windows and panels on the Tower Block

PLANNING HISTORY

The application has a long planning history and the most recent are listed below:

02/00141/FUL - In June 2002 planning permission was GRANTED for the erection of a new VIE tank and replacement of existing tank with larger unit

02/00877/FUL - In January 2003 planning permission was GRANTED for the erection of a new VIE facility

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

08/00971/FUL - In February 2009 planning permission was GRANTED for an energy centre, roof top plant room, new electricity substation, gas governor houses and additional car parking at the Marrion Centre

09/00123/FUL - In April 2009 planning permission was GRANTED for the erection of bottle storage building and oxygen (VIE) compound

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

PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

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

- E2 Development Limits
- E16 Appearance from Main Travel Routes
- E29 The Setting of New Development
- E48 Noise Generating /Polluting Development
- H15 The Amenity of Residential Areas

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY

Two letters of objection have been received raising the following concerns:

- *Adding to the height of the tower block will adversely affect my property, as the 50m chimney has already been approved. Our privacy and light reaching our property (on Greenbank Road) will be greatly reduced;*
- *The addition of another third level will impinge on the privacy and light to my property due to its closer proximity*

The letters also expressed further concerns not specifically relating to this application, and they can be summarised as follows:

- *Foundations for the energy centre will cause problems with vibrations to the neighbouring houses;*
- *Access arrangements to carry out the development within the site will cause vibrations to houses;*
- *Drainage systems will be weakened by vibrations caused by the development;*

PLANNING ISSUES

The main issues to be considered here are whether or not the proposed development is acceptable in the following terms:

- Planning Policy
- Visual Appearance and Character of the Area
- Residential Amenity

Planning Policy

The application site falls within the development limits for the urban area as defined by Policy E2 (Development Limits) of the Local Plan. The remainder of the report will consider each aspect of the proposed development in general development control terms.

Visual Appearance

The planning permission (ref no: 08/00971/FUL) for the energy centre also involved the creation of additional plant room space on the Tower Block. The height of the plant room was increased to approximately 8.15m. This proposal involves increasing the height of the plant room by a further 1m to a total of 9.15m but the footprint of the building would remain unchanged. The increase in height is required in order to provide a safer operating environment and to allow for the introduction of further air handling units within the plant room, which would be used by the new Intensive Therapy Units and High Dependency Units within the Tower Block building.

In addition to the change in height of the plant room, four mesh screens would be off set from each of the wings of the plant room. The screens would measure 6.30m; by 2.3m with an overall height of 7.15m. The screens would act as both a protective cover and screen for the new duct entering the plant room. A hand rail on top of the plant together with fire escapes on the east and west elevations would also be fitted.

It is necessary for sealed air handling ducts to be put in place to connect the new Intensive Therapy Units and High Dependency Units to the plant room. This is achieved by running two enclosed ducts across the roof of the Tower Block to the south east and south west wings of the plant room and from the east, south and west elevations of the inner courtyard. To enable routine maintenance of the roof, the ducting at this point is elevated off the roof by approximately 0.60m via metal supports. This elevated ducting would be set back some 5m and 6m from the east and west edges of the Tower Block respectively.

There is also a requirement for elevated ducting on the roof for the pipe work from the energy centre to north west wing of the plant room. The elevated routing for the distribution of hot water and cabling from the energy centre is carried across the Podium Building to the existing theatre plant room and other parts of the hospital. This elevated service provision is accommodated on an open tray arrangement.

The ducting on the elevations of the Tower would be on the western elevation, which has the effect of reducing the area of ducting that can be seen within and from outside the hospital estate. Existing and new ducting on the east elevation of the Podium Building would be enclosed within a mesh screen.

Existing windows and separating panels would be replaced on parts of the Tower and Podium Blocks as part of internal works to create the new Intensive Therapy Units and High Dependency Units

The increase in height of the Tower Block plant room to 8.15m has been approved as part of the energy centre proposal. It is considered that increasing the plant room by a further 1m in order to allow the hospital to include the new Intensive Therapy Units and High Dependency Units within the building would not have an adverse impact on the visual appearance of the area despite there being clear views of the development from the main travel routes surrounding the hospital site such as Woodland Road and Hollyhurst Road and from streets further afield. The views of the plant room get more oblique when stood in close proximity of the building. The use of uniform materials for the extended plant room and the mesh screens would minimise its impact.

The elevated ducting on the roof is set away from the edges of the Tower Block which will minimise their visual impact. The remaining ducting on the elevations of the Tower Block and the Podium Building have been positioned in areas to minimise their visual impact and they would be screened in the areas where there are more visible.

The alterations to the existing windows would not have a detrimental impact on the external appearance of the hospital building.

The proposed revisions to the previous approval for the energy centre would accord with Policies E16 (Appearance from Main Travel Routes) and E29 (The Setting of New Development) of the Local Plan.

Residential Amenity

The main issues here are whether or not the revised development and the additional works will have an impact on the nearby residents in terms of noise, outlook and loss of privacy.

Under the provisions of the previous approval for the energy centre and the initial alterations to the plant rooms, the Noise Assessment concluded that whilst the plant to be placed in the energy centre and plant rooms has not been finalised they would be designed to 10dB(A) below the existing ambient noise levels.

The Council's Environmental Health Officer requested the imposition of planning conditions relating to the submission of a full Noise Impact Assessment and securing the 10dB rating level for any proposed plant.

It is considered appropriate to attach the same planning conditions if this application is to be approved as it has been confirmed by the applicant that new plant will be placed within the extended plant room. The applicant has agreed to the imposition of the planning conditions.

The views of the extended plant room from the rear of the dwellings on Greenbank Road and West View would be quite oblique and the clearer views would come from the surrounding

streets. However, it is considered that with the use of suitable materials the extended plant room and the associated works would not be visually imposing.

There would be a fire escape and staircase on the elevation facing the dwellings to the east, but the plant room will not be occupied by workers etc and therefore these areas would not be manned on a regular basis to create any overlooking problems. Any the obtuse views would also restrict loss of privacy.

It is considered that the development would accord with Policy H15 (Amenity of Residential Areas) of the Local Plan.

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

The proposed development is sought to ensure that the Darlington Memorial Hospital continues to provide a key clinical facility for Darlington and the wider area with its consequential health, social, community and economic benefits. After considering these factors, and also the potential impacts of the development on the neighbouring residential properties and the character of the area, Officers consider, on balance, that the development would be acceptable, subject to suitable planning conditions being imposed to secure mitigation measures for noise and materials. The following policies within the Borough of Darlington Local Plan 1997 were taken into consideration

- E2 Development Limits
- E16 Appearance from Main Travel Routes
- E29 The Setting of New Development
- E48 Noise Generating /Polluting Development
- H15 The Amenity of Residential Areas

RECOMMENDATION

PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT OT THE FOLLOWNG CONDITIONS:

- A3
- Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces including of the building and screens shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to the commencement of the development. Development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details
REASON: In the interests of the visual appearance of the development and the surrounding locality
- Prior to the commencement of the development a full noise impact assessment shall be undertaken and approved by the local planning authority. Prior to commencing the assessment the scope of the report including all plant and machinery associated with this

planning permission shall be agreed in writing with the local planning authority. The findings of the noise assessment shall be implemented in accordance with a timescale to be agreed with the local planning authority. The operation of the plant room shall not commence until the local planning authority has given notice, in writing, that it is satisfied that the level of noise emissions from the plant room is acceptable.

REASON: In the interests of residential amenity.

- The Rating Level (as defined in BS 4142:1997) as a result of site operations associated with this planning permission shall be at least 10 dB(A) below the background noise level, at any residential property, when measured in accordance with BS 4142:1997. The background noise level to be used shall be that specified in the report by RPS Gregory entitled Environmental Noise Assessment of a Proposed Energy Centre, 26 November 2008, or if it is the opinion of the Local Planning Authority that these noise levels are no longer applicable, the background noise level shall be measured and agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of residential amenity.

- Before the development hereby permitted is commenced a construction management plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and thereafter the development shall proceed in accordance with the plan unless otherwise agreed in writing with the local planning authority. For the avoidance of doubt the plan should address the matter of dust suppression and the hours of operation for construction activities

REASON: In the interest of residential amenity.

- B5

SUGGESTED SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR GRANTING PLANNING PERMISSION

The proposed development is sought to ensure that the Darlington Memorial Hospital continues to provide a key clinical facility for Darlington and the wider area with its consequential health, social, community and economic benefits. After considering these factors, and also the potential impacts of the development on the neighbouring residential properties and the character of the area, Officers consider, on balance, that the development would be acceptable, subject to suitable planning conditions being imposed to secure mitigation measures for noise and materials. The following policies within the Borough of Darlington Local Plan 1997 were taken into consideration

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