

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE DATE: 3 June 2009

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APPLICATION REF. NO:	09/00284/FUL
STATUTORY DECISION DATE:	30 June 2009
WARD/PARISH:	NORTHGATE
LOCATION:	County Durham And Darlington NHS Foundation Trust, Darlington Memorial Hospital Hollyhurst Road
DESCRIPTION:	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
APPLICANT:	County Durham And Darlington NHS Foundation Trust

APPLICATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site is within the northern section of the grounds of the Memorial Hospital. Reid Street Primary School lies directly to the north; Hollyhurst Road lies to the west and the remainder of the hospital site, with associated buildings, lie to the east and south.

The application involves the demolition of the redundant laundry building and the former recreational hall together with a number of smaller buildings in order to create additional staff parking spaces and the re ordering of existing car parking spaces. The development would also include the erection of associated lighting columns and CCTV cameras. In addition to the above, the proposal involves the erection of a temporary sharps store and bottle store buildings. A total of ten trees would be felled as a result of the development however, these trees are not covered by a tree preservation order.

Members should be aware that the demolition of the buildings does not require planning permission but the works have been included in the proposal to provide a comprehensive overview.

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

PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

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

- E2 Development Limits
- E11 Conservation of Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
- E12 Trees and Development
- E14 Landscaping of Development
- E16 Appearance from Main Travel Routes
- E29 The Setting of New Development
- E48 Noise Generating /Polluting Development
- H15 The Amenity of Residential Areas
- T24 Parking and Servicing Requirements for New Development

Government guidance on listed buildings is contained within Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY

The publicity and consultation exercises do not expire until 5th June 2009. No letters of objection have been submitted however, any letters received will be mentioned verbally to the Members of the Planning Committee

Environment Agency

The comments from the Environment Agency will be mentioned verbally to Members at the Planning Committee.

Northumbrian Water

The comments from the Northumbrian Water will be mentioned verbally to Members at the Planning Committee.

PLANNING ISSUES

The development of the energy centre, approved under planning permission reference number 08/0971/FUL will result in the loss of 38 spaces. This was to be addressed by implementing an earlier 2007 approval for car parking provision in the hospital grounds. This has been secured by the imposition of a planning condition attached to the 2008 approval. However, following an interrogation of the two approvals, it became evident that a number of the approved spaces could not be delivered as they were either on the site of the energy centre, in areas where other development is proposed to facilitate the construction of the energy centre, or in areas that would be sterilised during the construction of the energy centre.

In order to deliver the elements of the 2007 planning permission and to cater for the loss of car parking from the energy centre site, the applicant proposes to provide additional spaces by re-ordering of existing spaces and the creation of new areas for car parking. The new car parking areas are as follows:

Social Club Area

This area contains the Social Club building and the former pavilion and garage buildings. The boundary wall and metal fence of Reid Street Primary school creates the northern boundary. There are a total of 27 car parking spaces, which, in terms of overall size and separation distance between the rows does not meet parking standards. This arrangement is a hazard for all users of the car park.

It is proposed to demolish the pavilion and garage buildings to create additional areas of parking together with the creation of additional parking towards the boundary wall to the school playground. The net result would be to increase the number of car parking spaces from 27 to 32. The development would also create a drop off point and pathway to the crèche, together with two dedicated parking spaces immediately adjacent to the crèche entrance. As well as creating a safer environment for the users of the crèche, the proposals would allow for greater surveillance of the car parking area and it will increase the playground area for the crèche itself.

A further 5 spaces would be created outside of this core area of parking, which would result in the loss of one tree. The loss of the trees would be mitigated by the provision of four new trees.

Former Laundry Building

The laundry ceased operating in 2008 and the proposal involves the demolition of the building and the creation of a car park for 55 cars across two levels, by utilising the differing floor levels of the building. The upper level is approximately 1.5m above the lower level and would provide 42 spaces. The lower level would cater for the remaining 13 cars and would be separated from the upper level by the retention of part of an internal wall and a steel panel fence.

Entrance to Estates Office/Workshops & Adjacent to the Chapel Rest

There would be five spaces created at the entrance to the Estates Office/Workshops and six spaces created adjacent to the Chapel of Rest. The latter spaces were part of the 2007 approval that also permitted the removal of four trees.

Grassed Area to the North East of the Memorial Hall

The 2007 approval provided eleven spaces on this area together with parking for ten cycles. The proposal replicates the extant permission save for the planting of three trees to replace a single

Sycamore tree. However, the cycle parking would be sited elsewhere within the grounds of the Hospital as this location is not considered to be appropriate.

Recreation Hall

This area of staff car parking would be delivered in a staged process. The recreation hall will be demolished in the first instance to provide a compound for the construction the energy centre and to improve access to the temporary sharp store and bottle store. Once the energy centre has been completed, a total of 42 spaces would be provided in two areas. The eleven spaces that would be accessed off the service road adopts the arrangements approved under the 2007 permission whereas the remaining 31 spaces will reside on the site of the hall.

Four trees would be removed and replaced by a short avenue of eight trees between the parking areas. A further four trees would be removed as permitted under the 2007 permission.

Overall parking provision

The total number of car parking spaces that can be delivered upon the commencement of the energy centre in October 2009 is 109 spaces, a net increase of 11 spaces (this takes account of the current layouts at the hospital and the spaces approved under the 2007 permission but have yet to be created). Once the energy centre has been completed in 2012 and the temporary buildings have been removed, there would be a total of 151 spaces, an overall increase of 43 spaces.

There are two other aspects to this application. A bottle store has previously been granted (ref no: 09/00123/FUL) as part of the programme for the energy centre. To ensure that an adequate replacement facility is available to meet the operational requirements of the hospital, albeit for a temporary period, planning permission is sought for a temporary bottle store immediately to the west of the Pierremont building. It is proposed that the store will be required for a period of four years, which would cover a contingency period should the project be delayed for any unforeseen reason.

A sharps store is located to the south of the proposed energy centre and during the construction period it will be inaccessible for the collection and subsequent removal of the clinical waste. To ensure that an adequate replacement facility is available to meet the operational requirements of the hospital, albeit for a temporary period, planning permission is sought for a temporary sharps store immediately to the west of the Pierremont building. It is proposed that the store will be required for a period of four years, which would cover a contingency period should the project be delayed for any unforeseen reason.

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

- Planning Policy
- Highway Matters
- Visual Appearance and Character of the Area
- Residential Amenity
- Trees
- Land Contamination
- Impact on Listed Building

Planning Policy

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

Highway Matters

The applicant's Planning Statement concludes that *"the scale of the proposed car parking provision and its delivery period is commensurate with a major healthcare facility employing 2,200 staff and will allow the hospital to meet its staff parking requirements as a result of the approval for the energy centre. The design of the car parking areas imparts greater security for the users of the areas and has considered the social relationship of the development to on site and neighbouring uses."*

The Council's Highways Engineer has commented, *"This development has been the subject of pre application discussion with Highways and Transport Policy Officers. The additional car parking is effectively a replacement of existing car parking spaces removed as part of proposed developments or in lieu of previously approved parking schemes that are no longer feasible. The proposed spaces are well laid out and easily accessible. Also, the proposed development will not be likely to generate any significant increase in traffic on the highway network. I would therefore raise no highway objection to the proposal."*

Visual Appearance

The application site is not within conservation area and it does not contain any buildings of architectural merit. The listed Memorial Hall and obelisk lies outside of the red boundary of this submission and the impact of the proposal on the listed buildings will be discussed further in this report. Even though the demolition of the buildings does not require planning permission, their removal would not have an adverse impact upon the visual appearance and character of the site or the surrounding area.

The car parking areas would not be clearly visible from any neighbouring dwelling. The dwellings on Hollyhurst Road and Greenbank Road do overlook the application site but their direct views would be partially screened by existing tree coverage on the perimeter of the hospital site and the existing hospital buildings. The planting of new trees would soften the visual appearance of the car parking areas, when viewed from within the site

The two temporary buildings would be sited adjacent to the Pierremont Unit and enclosed by sheet cladding within an existing ground floor void. It would be in keeping with the appearance and character of the existing hospital buildings.

Reid Street Primary School would be impacted upon by the demolition of the laundry building, which forms a significant boundary between the two neighbouring sites. Discussions have taken place between the applicant and the school regarding the schedule for demolition and to agree the form of the boundary treatment once the laundry building has been demolished. The building would be demolished during the school holidays to ensure that there is no disturbance to the operation of the school. The applicant has confirmed, *"the structural engineers have produced a solution that would provide the school with a 4.00 metre high brick wall, which would provide a strong visual separation from the car park whilst ensuring the retention of rebound capabilities. As you are aware the former laundry building comprises two distinct elements; That wall area to the west (i.e. the higher car park level) will be reduced to form a 4.00 metre high wall. Whereas, the eastern part of the wall (i.e. the lower car park level) will be demolished in its*

totality and a new brick wall to a height of 4.00 metres will be erected. In essence, the net result is a wall as shown on the submitted plans.”

Essentially, the boundary between the hospital site and the school would take the form of a four-metre high brick wall and it is considered appropriate to impose a planning condition to secure the materials for the construction of the wall.

It is considered that the proposed development would not have an adverse impact on the character and visual appearance of the surrounding area.

Residential Amenity

The 4.0m high solid wall that will be retained along the boundary where the laundry building is located, together with the estates workshop building will provide a significant barrier to protect the nearest houses on Roseberry Street from any noise associated with the car parking. The existing boundary treatments and retained buildings would also minimize any impact on the properties on Greenbank Road and Hollyhurst Road.

The proposal shows new lighting columns associated with the new car park near the school, with the residential properties further along. Obviously, the school is not sensitive to external lighting and the existing dwellings will also not be impacted upon by additional light sources due to the location of the columns.

The proposed development would not have a detrimental impact upon the residential amenities of the surrounding dwellings and it would comply with Policy H15 (Amenity of Residential Areas) of the Local Plan.

Trees

The proposal involves the removal of ten trees, however, six of those trees were marked for removal as part of the 2007 planning permission. A further four trees would be removed due to this submission. To mitigate the loss of these trees, approximately 21 trees replacement trees would be planted throughout the application site.

The Senior Arboricultural Officer has stated; *“It appears that the proposed development is outside of the root protection areas of the retained trees and the trees which are to be removed are not worthy of protection”*.

He has requested that, if planning permission is granted, it should be subject to two conditions relating to securing appropriate tree planting and tree protection measures for the trees to be retained.

Land Contamination

A preliminary geoenvironmental investigation report is included with the application. This report highlights the potential for contamination associated with former uses as allotments (ash, clinker) and a laundry (solvents, detergents). In addition, made ground is likely to be present which may contain some contamination. The principle receptors for any contamination are shown to be site construction workers and groundwater. Therefore, a Phase 2 intrusive site investigation will be required in order to properly assess the contamination status of the land and to allow remediation proposals to be put forward if necessary. Therefore, the Council's Environmental Health Officer has requested the imposition of the standard planning condition relating to land contamination.

Impact on Listed Building

The Memorial Hall and Obelisk, which are adjacent to the application site, are both listed buildings. The majority of the car parking spaces would be to the north of the buildings. There would be some spaces adjacent to the northern elevation of the Hall, however, these would almost totally mirror those approved under the 2007 application.

The Council's Conservation Officer has stated "*I welcome the consultation on this application, in the setting of the above Listed Buildings and the formal gardens to the front elevation.*

I have no issues with the demolition of the laundry building, psychiatric recreation building and the other ancillary buildings (two stores and a vacant building) because they have no architectural merit. I am also unconcerned by the provision of additional parking spaces. I have no issues with the proposed temporary bottle store and sharps store providing they are temporary as described on plan. I feel this proposal will have no negative impact upon the setting of the above Listed Buildings."

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 granting of the planning permission for the energy centre has resulted in the applicant reassessing the car parking requirements for the staff at the hospital. The proposal would result in significant environmental benefits by removing the laundry building, reducing the overshadowing of the adjacent school and crèche and increasing the number of trees within the grounds of the hospital. The development would create a safer parking environment and would not have a negative impact upon the surrounding road network. The proposed development would not raise any residential amenity issues and it would not have a detrimental impact upon the adjacent listed buildings. The following policies within the Borough of Darlington Local Plan 1997 are relevant:

- E2 Development Limits
- E11 Conservation of Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
- E12 Trees and Development
- E14 Landscaping of Development
- E16 Appearance from Main Travel Routes
- E29 The Setting of New Development
- E48 Noise Generating /Polluting Development
- H15 The Amenity of Residential Areas
- T24 Parking and Servicing Requirements for New Development

Government guidance on listed buildings is contained within Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment

RECOMMENDATION

FOLLOWING THE EXPIRY OF THE SITE NOTICE ON 5TH JUNE 2009 AND SUBJECT TO NO OBJECTIONS BEING RECEIVED, PLANNING PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

- A3 – Implementation Limit
- Before the car parking shown referenced as Area 4 on Drawing No. DMH_IW-DEW_ES-DR-A-SG9005 Rev P3 is brought into use details of a cycle shelter including its proposed location shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved details
REASON: To ensure that adequate facilities are provided for cyclists accessing the site
- Before the development hereby permitted is commenced details of fencing for the protection of the retained Tree to the east of Tree T1 as shown on approved Drawing No. DMH_IW_DEW_ES_DR_A_SG9003 Rev P1) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority and shall be erected before any equipment, machinery or materials are brought on to the site for the purposes of the development, and shall be maintained until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Nothing shall be stored or placed in any area fenced in accordance with this condition and the ground levels within those areas shall not be altered, nor shall any excavation be made, without the written consent of the local planning authority.
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.
- Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, a scheme for the planting of replacement trees, including species, size, location and schedule for planting, shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority prior to the commencement of the development. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved details.
REASON: In the interests of the visual appearance of the surrounding area.
- No development shall take place until a sample of the brick to be used in the construction of the boundary wall between the car park on the site if the former laundry building and playground of the Reid Street Primary School have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
REASON: In the interests of the visual appearance of the surrounding area.
- J2 – Contaminated Land
- B5 – Detailed Drawings (Accordance with Plans)

SUGGESTED SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR GRANTING PLANNING PERMISSION

The granting of the planning permission for the energy centre has resulted in the applicant reassessing the car parking requirements for the staff at the hospital. The proposal would result in significant environmental benefits by removing the laundry building, reducing the overshadowing of the adjacent school and crèche and increasing the number of trees within the grounds of the hospital. The development would create a safer parking environment and would not have a negative impact upon the surrounding road network. The proposed development would not raise any residential amenity issues and it would not have a detrimental impact upon the adjacent listed buildings. The following policies within the Borough of Darlington Local Plan 1997 are relevant:

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