

DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE DATE: 4 June 2008

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APPLICATION REF. NO:	08/00275/FUL
STATUTORY DECISION DATE:	23 May 2008
WARD/PARISH:	PARK WEST
LOCATION:	1 Blackwell Lane, DARLINGTON, DL3 8QF
DESCRIPTION:	Conversion of existing offices to residential use, forming 4 No. apartments and 5 No. houses with off street car parking provision (as amended by plans received 20 May 2008)
APPLICANT:	THE TRUSTEES OF THE SRM LIMITED PENSION PLAN

APPLICATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site consists of a two storey building currently used for office purposes with a car parking area off the side lane and a garden area to the rear. The building has two flat roofed extensions on the east and west elevations. The proposal involves the demolition of the existing extensions and the erection of two storey extensions to the east, south and west to create 4 No. apartments and 5 No. houses. A car parking area would be provided to the rear with access via an archway off Blackwell Lane. The development incorporates four stores in other amenity areas.

The site is within a predominately residential area close to the junction of Blackwell Lane and Grange Road. A lane which leads to Kendal Close runs down the east boundary of the site. It is part of the Grange Road/Stanhope Road Conservation Area.

PLANNING HISTORY

89/00385/MISC - In July 1989 planning permission was GRANTED for a change of use from residential (Caretakers Flat) to an extension to the existing offices

94/-00027/MISC - In July 1994 planning permission was GRANTED for the erection of an extension to existing office building and construction of new car park.

PLANNING POLICY BACKGROUND

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

- E2 Development Limits
- E29 The Setting of New Development

H3	Locations of New Housing Development
H11	Design and Layout of New Housing Development
R1	Designing For All
T24	Parking and Servicing Requirements for New Development

Guidance on conservation areas is contained within Planning Policy Guidance No 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment.

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY

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

- *Four apartments and five houses are too many for the size of the site in comparison with the rest of Blackwell Lane and the conservation area;*
- *This number of dwellings and associated cars will lead to increased parking problems. At present there are problems entering and leaving Hadrians Court, but only during office hours*
- *The rest of Blackwell Lane and the conservation area are made up of old terraces, mature semi detached and modern detached houses. Modern apartments and small houses do not fit in*
- *If this application goes through it is easy to see further applications for similar developments in the immediate vicinity, which would further change the character of the conservation area*
- *Access to the development is halfway up a hill and very close to several junctions. The location of the entrance is opposite the proposed cycle way;*
- *The proposed building will result in the loss of light and privacy. Building a two storey building up to the building wall will make the proposed building very close to our property*
- *Due to the fact we have no parking to the front of our property (Grange Road) we require constant access to our garage at all times and building will lead to concerns of potential restrictions to access*
- *The proposed building has insufficient parking for its size*
- *The building is not in keeping with the bungalows it is adjacent to. All previous buildings on this section of land have been single storey*
- *This will completely block the light to our bungalow (2A Kendal Close) rear glass entrance and kitchen window. Especially with chimney stack and gable end side elevation;*
- *After all disturbances to the back lane, the developer should be responsible for reinstating the back lane in a manner to accommodate heavy traffic, refuse collection and trades people*
- *The development will increase traffic using the lane. We should have permits for permanent owner parking, double yellow lines where applicable and speed ramps;*
- *Where will refuse collection point be located for the 4 apartments and will the archway be adequate for the access of refuse collection vehicles*
- *There would be considerable noise in the back area adjacent to my property and the pleasant area behind the existing building will be lost;*
- *These properties are presumably for resale and not used by organisations such as we already have in the vicinity in the way of hostel accommodation;*
- *We should ask that a restriction is placed on the user of the property and not for social housing*

Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)

CPRE support the application stating: *We are delighted to find a building which is being converted, rather than demolished and something else built. Darlington's existing buildings are important and the retention of this one is excellent*

Northumbrian Water

Northumbrian Water have raised no objections to the proposed development

PLANNING ISSUES

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

- Planning Policy
- Character and Visual Appearance
- Residential Amenity
- Highway Matters

Planning Policy

The application site lies within the development limits for the urban area and therefore it would comply with Policies E2 (Development Limits) and H3 (Locations for New Housing Development) of the Borough of Darlington Local Plan.

The development is considered to be acceptable in principle, subject to detailed matters of development control, which are considered in the remaining sections of this report.

Visual Appearance

The existing property is a two storey high building with modern single storey extensions to the east and west. The original building does contain elements of architectural merit and contributes to the visual appearance and character of the street scene and the conservation area. The surrounding area is predominately residential, consisting of a mix of bungalows, terraced townhouses and detached dwellings.

The proposal involves the demolition of the modern extensions, the retention of the original building and the erection of two storey extensions to the east, west and south. The proposed development would create No 4 apartments and No 5 dwellings. The Council's Conservation Officer was involved in pre application discussions with the agent.

The extensions have been designed to reflect the architectural features and scale of the original building by incorporating elements such as bay windows, timber windows, chimneystacks, slates roofs and artstone cills. The rooflines of the extensions are set below the roofline of the main building to ensure they appear subservient. The two storey extension to the rear contains set backs at various points to create breaks in the elevations facing the dwellings on Grange Road and Upsall Drive.

There would be adequate levels of amenity space provided for the occupiers of the development and the layout of the development accords with Policy H11 (Design and Layout of New Housing Development) of the Local Plan.

The development would sit comfortably within the existing variety of house types in this location and it is considered sympathetic to the design of the main building, which is to be

retained rather than demolished, and would not have a detrimental impact upon the visual appearance and character of the street scene nor the conservation area.

Residential Amenity

The first floor openings in the east elevation (facing Grange Road) of the two storey rear extension are landing and bathroom windows, whilst the kitchen and living room windows at ground floor level would be screened by a 2m high boundary wall. The west facing elevation (facing Upsall Drive) contains bedroom, kitchen and living room windows at both ground and first floor level. The extension would be 21m from the rear elevations of the dwellings on Grange Road and 25m from the dwelling on Upsall Drive to the west. These distances would comply with minimum separation guidelines between existing and proposed buildings to ensure that a development would not be overbearing when viewed from existing dwellings nor result in any loss of privacy.

The southern boundary with the first bungalow on Kendal Close consists of a wall approximately 2m high and the side elevation of this dwelling contains high-level kitchen and bathroom windows and an access doorway. The end unit of the two-storey extension would be approximately 1.8m from the boundary wall, however, the end elevation contains no window openings and the building has been redesigned and reduced in height in order to minimise its impact upon the adjacent bungalow. It is considered that this relationship is acceptable and the development will no longer have an overbearing impact upon the bungalow.

The end elevations of the two storey extensions to the side both contain landing windows at first floor level. The car parking area in the courtyard would have a mix of hard and soft landscaping to soften its appearance.

It is considered that the amended proposal will not have an adverse impact upon the amenities of the neighbouring dwellings.

Highway Matters

The development provides twelve parking spaces within a courtyard area to the rear with access of Blackwell Lane. This will provide for one space per apartment and 1.5 spaces per dwelling. The site is well served by public transport and it is in reasonably close proximity to the town centre, the parking provision is considered acceptable. The visibility at the access achievable is 2.4m x 43m to the east and 2.4m x 25m to the west. This reflects a traffic speed of 30mph and 20mph respectively. Whilst this is not ideal the site is adjacent to an existing access and in general traffic speeds on Blackwell Lane approaching this junction with Grange Road are well within the speed limit on the road. The Council's Traffic Manager has raised no objections to the proposed development subject to conditions being imposed relating to visibility splays, improvements to footpaths and the use of dropped crossings and tactile paving.

Blackwell Lane is an advisory cycle route and there are plans to improve the cycle links into the town centre along Grange Road and across the roundabout. It is considered appropriate to attach a planning condition to ensure the development also provides a secure cycle parking area.

SECTION 17 OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

The proposed development has 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. The proposed development does not give rise to crime and disorder issues.

CONCLUSION

The application site lies within development limits identified in the development plan. The design and layout of the development accords with the relevant policy in the development plan. The development respects the amenity and general character of the area. The application is not considered to raise any issues in relation to car parking provision, highway safety or crime prevention. The proposal accords with the relevant policies in the development plan set out below:

- E2 Development Limits
- E29 The Setting of New Development
- H3 Locations of New Housing Development
- H11 Design and Layout of New Housing Development
- R1 Designing For All
- T24 Parking and Servicing Requirements for New Development

RECOMMENDATION

THAT PLANNING PERMSSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:-

- 1) A3 Implementation Limit (Three Years)
- 2) B4 Details of Materials (Samples)
- 3) J2 Contamination
- 4) Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, details of the proposed windows 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 development and the Stanhope Road/Grange Road Conservation Area.

- 5) Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, details of a secure cycle parking area 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 - To ensure that adequate cycle parking is provided.

- 6) E1 Submission and Implementation
- 7) Prior to the commencement of the development of the development, details of the sightlines at the point of access to the public highway shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include the widening of the footpath at

the north west corner on the frontage of the site to 2 metres, dropped crossing and tactile paving. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved details.

REASON - To ensure that the proposed development does not prejudice the free flow of traffic and conditions of general safety on the adjacent highway.

- 8) Notwithstanding the requirements of condition 7) there shall not be erected or planted or placed on the land affected by sightlines, anything which will obstruct the visibility at any height greater than 0.6m above the surface of the 08/00275/FUL highway.

REASON - In the interests of highway safety.

- 9) Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, details of the wall on the eastern boundary 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 amenity of the area.

- 10) B5 Detailed Drawings (Accordance with Plan)

SUGGESTED SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR GRANTING PLANNING PERMISSION

The application site lies within development limits identified in the development plan. The design and layout of the development accords with the relevant policy in the development plan. The development respects the amenity and general character of the area. The application is not considered to raise any issues in relation to car parking provision, highway safety or crime prevention. The proposal accords with the relevant policies in the development plan set out below:

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- R1 Designing For All
- T24 Parking and Servicing Requirements for New Development

INFORMATIVE

The applicant is advised that highway works are required and these will need to be the subject of a Sec.38/278 Agreement. Contact must therefore be made with the Assistant Director: Highways and Engineering (contact M S Brannan 01325 388755) to discuss this matter.

The applicant is advised that contact must be made with the Assistant Director: Highways and Engineering (contact Ms.P.Goodwill 01325 388760) to discuss naming and numbering of the development.

