

Name of Applicant	Proposal	Plan Ref.
Bromford Housing Group	Demolition of the former Job Centre Plus and Masonic Hall and the erection of 14 "MyPlace" supported apartments (Use Class C2) and 5 houses (Use Class C3) Masonic Hall And Former Job Centre, Churchfields, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B61 8DX	16/1056

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be Refused

Consultations

Strategic Planning- Consulted 11.11.2016
No Comments Received To Date

Highways Department- Worcestershire County Council Consulted 09.11.2016
Recommends that the permission be Deferred for the following reasons:-

The parking spaces for Plot 18 will be difficult to access in that excessive manoeuvres will be required leading to the likelihood of on-street parking. However, this matter is not of such a concern to warrant an objection.

Both Churchfields and Recreation Road are subject to high pedestrian flows and it is essential all individual and shared accesses are provided with 2m x 2m pedestrian visibility splays at the back of the footway.

The applicant should note the construction of the multi-vehicular accesses and relocation and/or replacement of street lighting and other street furniture will require extensive works to be provided under a S278 agreement.

No objection subject to conditions and S106 contributions for the processing of a Traffic Regulation Order to remove the existing on-street parking bays and other road markings fronting the site on Churchfields and Recreation Road.

Worcester Regulatory Services- Contaminated Land Consulted 09.11.2016
No Comments Received To Date

Landscape & Tree Officer Consulted 09.11.2016
No objection subject to conditions

Strategic Housing Consulted 09.11.2016

I have had a look at the above application to provide a block of 14 units and 5 houses. The applicant has advised that the 14 'Myplace' units are C2 units and therefore not to be

considered for the calculation of affordable housing but also below then states these 14 units are 'best described as affordable'. Firstly I do not consider the 14 'Myplace' units should be classed as C2. These are self-contained individual flats not a residential institution.

I do not consider that they should be classed as affordable housing either. NPPF provides the definition of affordable housing as: Social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Affordable housing should include provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. I can see nothing in the application that provides for the 'Myplace' accommodation to meet this definition by providing it as social rented, intermediate or affordable rented or to ensure it goes to eligible households.

This site should provide for 40% affordable housing being 7 units with 5 units social rented and 2 units intermediate in accordance with our policy.

Conservation Officer Consulted 09.11.2016
No objection

Waste Management Consulted 09.11.2016
A financial contribution towards the provision of bins is required.

Leisure Services Consulted 09.11.2016
A financial contribution towards open space improvements at the recreation ground is required.

Parks & Green Space Development Officer Martin Lewis Consulted 09.11.2016
No Comments Received To Date

Urban Design Consultant Peter Dawson Consulted 09.11.2016
From a design perspective the proposals suggested an overdevelopment of the site resulting in poor parking, amenity and privacy. The architectural response to the character of the area is a poor lacking the design, massing and positive visual relationship with the locally distinct forms and details. The apartment block fails to relate to the area, being too weak in its sympathy, too large in its mass and too prominent in the street scene.

North Worcestershire Economic Development And Regeneration Consulted 09.11.2016
No objection

Aisling Nash County Archaeological Officer Consulted 09.11.2016
No Comments Received To Date

NHS England Primary Care Arden, Herefordshire & Worcestershi Consulted 09.11.2016
No Comments Received To Date

Worcester Regulatory Services- Noise, Dust, Odour & Burning Consulted 09.11.2016
No objection

Worcester Regulatory Services- Air Quality Consulted 09.11.2016
No objection subject to conditions

West Mercia Constabulary Consulted 09.11.2016
No objection

Drainage Engineers Internal Planning Consultation Consulted 15.11.2016
No objection subject to conditions.

Publicity:

43 letters sent on the 9th November 2016 (expired 30th November 2016)
1 site notice posted on the 10th November 2016 (expired 1st December 2016)
Press Advert published in the Bromsgrove Standard on the 18th November (expired 2nd December)

Neighbour Responses

2 responses have been submitted. These responses object to the development on the following grounds:

- Inadequate parking for the apartments;
- On-street parking is already a major concern and spaces would be lost;
- Inappropriate location for "My Place" apartments due to busy nature of the area; and
- Construction traffic will be a hazard and block roads

Relevant Policies

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework

Bromsgrove District Plan

BDP1 Sustainable Development Principles
BDP16 Sustainable Transport
BDP17 Town Centre Regeneration
BDP19 High Quality Design
BDP21 Natural Environment

Others:

SPG1 Residential Design Guide

Relevant Planning History

14/0982	Demolition of Job centre and Erection of 7 dwellings	Approved
16/0830	Prior notification of proposed demolition	Approved

Assessment of Proposal

The Site and its Surroundings

The application site is located within Bromsgrove Town within the defined Town Centre Zone. The site consisted of the Job Centre and Masonic Hall however both of these buildings have now been demolished. The site is located on the corner of Churchfields and Recreation Road and there are currently accesses onto both roads. An extra care development is currently under construction and this is located adjacent to the north and east boundaries. Traditional residential properties are located to the east with the recreation ground positioned to the south of the site. A children's day nursery is also adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site.

The Proposed Development

This application seeks to erect the following:

- o 14 "My Place" supported apartments for adults with learning difficulties ; and
- o 3 terraced dwellings; and
- o A pair of semi detached properties

Planning Considerations

The application will be considered under the following headings:

- i) The principle of the proposed development;
- ii) Street Scene & Character Impact;
- iii) Residential Amenity;
- iv) Access, Highways & Parking;
- v) Ecology; and
- vi) Planning Contributions

- i) The Principle of the Proposed Development

Following a Full Council Meeting on the 25th January 2017 the Bromsgrove District Plan (BDP) has been adopted. The Former Bromsgrove District Local Plan (BDLP) has now been deleted and will no longer be a material consideration in planning decisions.

The Policies Map associated with the BDP highlights that the site is located within the Town Centre Zone. In accordance with the NPPF a wide range of uses are considered acceptable in principle including retail, residential, community and commercial uses. However, the site forms part of a specifically designated area within the BDP under Policy BDP17 (Town Centre Regeneration). Allocation TC2 (Recreation Road) highlights that the site would be ideal for a mix of C2 and C3 uses. The proposal, taken at face value, therefore fully accords with this policy. However, the Strategic Housing Manager is of the view that the 'My Place' apartments do not constitute a C2 use as the proposal constitutes self-contained individual flats not a residential institution. Secondly he is of the view that there is nothing within the application to confirm that the apartments meet

the NPPF definition for affordable housing. If the whole of the scheme is considered to be market housing then an affordable housing contribution would be required.

In response the applicant has set out that the occupation of the units is only open to adults with particular long term conditions, and not to the general public. Bromford Housing Association confirms that the occupants are selected by themselves, in conjunction with a steering group, of which the Council's care commissioners are usually party to. A community hub is provided in order to provide support to residents, together with specialist housing support for up to 18 hours a week. Care is also provided by a number of care providers and this is coordinated by a member of Bromford's staff, based in the proposed ancillary resource centre.

In the view of the applicant, the 'MyPlace' model has been accepted as a Class C2 use by other local councils and has stated that case law and appeal decision are available confirming that the model is a Class C2 use. Although these details have not yet been provided by the applicant it is considered on balance that the use is more akin to a C2 use. Therefore the scheme as a whole does not attract an affordable housing contribution as there are only 5 market dwellings.

ii) Street Scene & Character Impact

Policy BD19 of the BDP and the guidance within SPG1 requires such proposals to have a density appropriate for the site and a form and layout appropriate to the area.

The site is bound on 2 sides by the high density extra care development that consists mainly of substantial 3 storey buildings. The development also relates closely to the residential properties on Recreation Road that are opposite the application site. These are generally traditional 2 storey properties with chimneys and bay windows that were built in the early twentieth century and front onto the highway. The whole of the proposed scheme is a 2 storey development that reflects both the adjacent day nursery and the residential development on Churchfields.

There are 2 distinct elements to the scheme. Firstly on the southern part of the site there is a 2 storey apartment building which has frontages on to both Churchfields and Recreation Road. The northern part of the site contains 5 dwellings. A terrace of 3 properties front onto Churchfields with the pair of semi-detached dwellings located to the rear. The pair of semi-detached properties are accessed via a private drive creating a backland layout that is at odds with the traditional pattern of development on Churchfields.

The dwellings have gable end roofs reflecting the existing properties on Churchfields. However, the proposed dwellings lack features such as chimneys and bay windows which are common on nearby properties. It is clear that the addition of simple details would help integrate the development into the locality.

The proposed apartment building retains just 2.1m from both Churchfields and Recreation Road meaning the building would appear dominant in the street when compared to the previous buildings on the site and the day nursery that retain a greater set back from the public highway. The apartment building has a shallow pitch and

generally lacks detail. The apartment appears as a rather generic building and fails to take reflect the detailing of adjacent properties.

The development has substantial areas of hardstanding, modest private gardens and generally lacks soft landscaping areas. When taking into account the siting of plots 19 and 20 in a backland location and the close proximity of the apartment building to the highway verge it indicates that too much development is being squeezed onto the site, creating a cramped and unsympathetic layout that detracts from the character and appearance of the area contrary to Policy BDP19 of the BDP and the guidance within SPG1.

iii) Residential Amenity

The nearest residential properties are located on the opposite side of Recreation Road (no's 25-35) and the 3 storey apartment building adjacent to the northern boundary of the site which is not yet occupied. A minimum distance of 20m is retained between the dwellings on Churchfields and the front elevation of the proposed development. This is considered sufficient to maintain privacy for the occupiers of the existing properties.

The side elevation of plot 19 is 12m from the side elevation of the recently erected apartment building. This is considered sufficient to ensure that the proposed dwelling does not appear unduly overbearing. There are also no habitable windows on the side elevation of plots 18 or 19 ensuring that they do not overlook the adjacent apartment building.

It is considered that the proposal will not unduly impact upon the amenity levels experienced by the occupiers of adjacent residential properties. However, it is also important to consider the amenity levels that would be experienced by the occupiers of the proposed development. Concerns are raised over the positioning of the semi-detached dwellings (plots 19 and 20) in the north-east corner of the site behind the terraced dwellings. The positioning of plots 19 and 20 raises amenity issues in 2 regards. Firstly the quality of the private amenity space for plots 19 and 20 is compromised by overlooking from the new development to the north. A separation distance of just 7.5m is retained from the windows on the southern elevation of apartment building to the garden of plot 19. SPG1 sets out that a separation distance of 5m per storey is required to prevent overlooking of private gardens. With development located to the north and east of plot 19 and directly south of plot 20 it is considered that the gardens would receive only limited sunlight whilst also creating an overbearing environment with poor outlook.

The rear gardens of plots 17 and 18 would also be overlooked by the first floor windows of plots 19 and 20. A distance of only 7m is retained between these windows and the rear garden gardens of plots 17 and 18. In addition, a distance of just 18m is retained between the rear windows on plots 17 and 18 and the front windows on plots 19 and 20. This falls short of the guidance within SPG1 which seeks to achieve 21m to retain levels of privacy.

SPG1 sets out that residential gardens should be a minimum of 70sqm in size and be 10.5m in length. None of the private residential gardens achieve the floor area standard with garden sizes varying between 47 and 77sqm. When taking into account the overlooking and lack of sun light previously identified it is considered the amount and

quality of private amenity space creates an unacceptable living environment for the occupiers of the proposed dwellings contrary to Policy BDP19 of the BDP.

iv) Access, Highways & Parking

The site proposes a vehicular access off Recreation Road to serve the "My Place" apartments with a car park consisting of 8 spaces provided for the 14 units. Two of the three terraced properties have individual vehicular accesses onto Churchfields with the remaining 3 dwellings accessed via a private driveway. Each dwelling has been provided with 2 parking spaces. In this highly sustainable location the Council's Highways Engineer the raises no objection to the level of parking provision.

It has been noted that the spaces provided for plot 18 are not easily accessible and require a number of manoeuvres. However this matter is not so severe to warrant refusal on highway safety grounds.

The Highways Engineer raises no objection to the scheme subject to conditions. The proposal therefore accords with Policy BDP16 of the BDLP, the adopted Local Transport Plan and paragraphs 32 and 35 of the NPPF.

v) Planning Contributions

In accordance with paragraph 204 of the NPPF and section 122 of the CIL planning obligations have been sought to mitigate the impact of this major development, if the application were to be approved. The obligations would cover open space improvements to the recreation ground, the provision of bin storage and highways improvements. No Heads of Terms has been submitted by the applicant and there is no indication that the applicant would enter into a Section 106 agreement. On this basis the proposal would have a severe adverse impact on infrastructure in the local area.

Conclusion

Whilst the development is in a sustainable location that could deliver benefits to the Town Centre it is considered that the development represents poor design, creates an unacceptable living environment and adversely impacts on local infrastructure.

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be Refused

Reasons for Refusal

- 1) The siting, design, layout and density of the scheme represents poor urban design that amounts to an over-development of the site that detracts from the character and traditional pattern of the development in the locality contrary to Policy BDP19 of the BDP paragraph 64 of the NPPF.
- 2) The size and siting of the private residential gardens have created unacceptably small and heavily overlooked areas that in the cases of plots 19 and 20 would

receive insufficient levels of natural sun light creating an unacceptable living environment for the occupiers of the proposed dwellings contrary to policy BDP1 of the BDP and the guidance within SPG1.

- 3) This major application would have a severe adverse impact on infrastructure in the local area. Contrary to paragraph 204 of the NPPF the applicant has failed to enter into a S106 agreement to mitigate these impacts.

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