

Name of Applicant	Proposal	Expiry Date	Plan Ref.
Leo Bromsgrove Ltd Chloe Leo Bromsgrove Ltd	Proposed Demolition of Existing Buildings and Erection Of 72-Bedroom Care Home 277 Birmingham Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B61 0EP		21/01657/FUL

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be **REFUSED**

Consultations

North Worcestershire Water Management

No objection subject to pre commencement drainage scheme condition.

Worcestershire Archive and Archaeological Service

Given its local interest and value, it would be preferable to see the retention of the non-designated heritage asset rather than its demolition and the applicant should explore opportunities for retention and reuse of the Victorian elements of the site, as part of any new development proposal.

Should the application be granted two conditions will be required.

- Programme of archaeological work
- The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed

Conservation Officer

I can advise that the proposed alterations would cause harm to the Non-Designated Heritage Asset through the complete demolition of the building. The proposals have failed to comply with the relevant sections of the NPPF and Bromsgrove District Plan as highlighted above.

Based on the above assessments, Conservation would recommend refusal of the application.

WRS - Contaminated Land

No objection

WRS - Noise

No objection subject to compliance with the submitted noise surveys.

WRS - Air Quality

WRS have reviewed the planning application for potential air quality issues of which none have been identified, therefore WRS have no adverse comments to make.

Highways - Bromsgrove

No objection subject to conditions and contribution for community transport.

- Vehicular visibility splays Approved Plan

- Pedestrian Visibility Splays
- Residential Parking Provision
- Electric Vehicle Charging Point
- Cycle Parking
- Accessible Parking Provision
- Residential Travel Plan
- Residential Travel Welcome Pack
- Construction Environmental Management Plan

NHS/Medical Infrastructure Consultations

No contribution required in this case. Whilst the patients take a higher proportion of GP time, patients tend to be visited in the care homes rather than coming to the surgery, where we could justify the use of more space.

NHS Acute Hospitals Worcestershire

As its evidence demonstrates, the Trust is currently operating at full capacity in the provision of acute and planned healthcare. The contribution is being sought not to support a public body but rather to enable that body (i.e. the Trust) to provide services needed by the occupants of the new homes. The development directly affects the Trust's ability to provide the health services to those who live in the development and the community at large. Without contributions to maintain the delivery of health care services at the required quality standard, and to secure adequate health care for the locality, the proposed development will strain services, putting people at significant risk of receiving substandard care, leading to poorer health outcomes and prolonged health problems. A developer contribution of £18,246.23 is required.

Arboricultural Officer

No objection subject to conditions.

Leisure

No open space contribution required.

Waste Management

Note that private waste collection is proposed. No objection.

Publicity

18 letters were originally sent to neighbours 19.09.2021 expired 13.12.2021

Press advert 26.09.2021 expired 13.12.2021.

Site notice displayed 25.09.2021 expired 19.12.2021

One objection has been received objecting on the following grounds.

Traffic

Disturbance during construction and operation of care home

Overlooking

Appearance of development

Public safety

Other issues which are not material planning considerations have been raised but are not reported here as they cannot be considered in the determination of this application.

Relevant Policies

Bromsgrove District Plan

BDP1 Sustainable Development Principles
BDP2 Settlement Hierarchy
BDP4 Green Belt
BDP6 Infrastructure Contributions
BDP10 Homes for the Elderly
BDP12 Sustainable Communities
BDP16 Sustainable Transport
BDP19 High Quality Design
BDP20 Managing the Historic Environment
BDP21 Natural Environment

Others

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework (2021)
NPPG National Planning Practice Guidance
High Quality Design SPD

Relevant Planning History

17/01237/FUL	Demolition of all structures and hard standings and erection of six detached residential dwellings together with associated access and landscaping.	Withdrawn (but recommended for refusal)	02.01.2018
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Assessment of Proposal

Site Description and Current Use

This application site (0.72ha) consists of the former Mount School which is a 3 storey Victorian building that is now in office/training use by KeyOstas which provides health and safety and environmental training. The Mount School is surrounded by several single storey outbuildings that are disused. The buildings are in a depilated state, images on the current condition of the buildings are provided within the submitted Heritage Assessment¹

The site is located in the Green Belt on the edge of the residential area of Bromsgrove. A new development has been completed to the south of the site with a run of residential dwellings located to the north. Fields bound the site to the west. The site is served by a single driveway off the Birmingham Road.

Proposed Development

The proposed development is a full application for the demolition of existing buildings and development of a three-storey, 72-bedroom care home with communal amenity areas and

¹ [21/01657/FUL | Proposed Demolition of Existing Buildings and Erection Of 72-Bedroom Care Home | 277 Birmingham Road Bromsgrove Worcestershire B61 0EP \(bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk\)](#)

an extensive resident's garden and associated parking for 20 plus spaces. The building includes facilities such as dining rooms, lounges, hair salon, cinema, family rooms, balconies and clinics. Full details of the facilities of the care home are outlined in detail within the area schedule Bromsgrove document submitted as part of the application.

Burghley Care (part of Torsion Care) has entered an agreement to deliver the scheme, the nature of development proposed is that of a care home (C2 use) to be registered with CQC for the provision of care to the elderly. The care home will therefore cater for users including the elderly, dementia patients and nursing patients. De

The development will employ up to 75 Full time Equivalent (FTE) employees.

Planning Considerations

The main issues to be considered in assessing the application are the following:

Principle of Development;

Green Belt;

The Impact on 277 Birmingham Road (Mount School) as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA);

Design and Appearance;

Amenity;

Highways Matters;

Landscape and Trees;

Ecology;

Planning Contributions; and

Planning Balance

Principle of Development

Policy BDP10 sets out that the Council will encourage the provision of housing for the elderly where appropriate whilst avoiding an undue concentration in any location. The applicant has commissioned a Care Home Need Assessment by Healthcare Property Consultants which concludes that their client is seeking to develop a new residential care home for the elderly. The report content points towards a need for such development – not only to offset the growing statistical shortfall in appropriate accommodation but to increase the proportion of the local care home estate that might be deemed fit for the future. This is further reinforced by the Torsion Care Planning & Justification Statement.

This shortfall reflects that set out in the District Plan (Policy BDP10) which predicts that the population aged over 60 will increase substantially. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2012 shows that within the District the proportion of older person households is forecast to grow from 21.4% to around 33% of the total population by 2030.

Policy BDP10 of the local plan highlights the critical present and future need. It notes that there will be a very large increase in the need and demand for housing with care for older people (paragraph 8.87) and that a failure to provide alternatives for the increasing pensioner population will result in most people staying in their existing family homes. The

consequence being a poorer quality of life and “dramatically reducing the supply of such properties in the local housing market.” (paragraph 8.88).

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at Paragraph 60 sets out that to support the objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed.

The Governments Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) stresses that the need to provide housing for older people is critical. In this respect, it has to be concluded that the needs of BDC’s ageing population are acute, and evidenced national, regional and local need is currently unmet and forecasted to remain unmet in the foreseeable future. The principle of the proposed development is acceptable.

Green Belt

NPPF paragraph 137 explains that the Government attaches great importance to Green Belts. The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. NPPF paragraph 147 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. NPPF paragraph 148 advises that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt and that very special circumstances will not exist unless the potential harm to Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm arising from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

NPPF paragraph 149 says that the construction of new buildings in the Green Belt is inappropriate unless exceptions exist. BDP4 Green Belt only permits development in the Green Belt if certain exceptions apply or in very special circumstances. It is agreed that the proposal would not accord with any of the NPPF or LP exceptions and so would be inappropriate development. However, it remains necessary to consider the effect on Green Belt openness and purposes.

Openness is capable of having both spatial and visual elements. Spatially, the development would result in more built form across the entirety of the site compared with the existing situation. The height, footprint and volume of new buildings would greatly exceed the existing building. This is summarised in the table below. There would be a significant loss of openness in spatial terms particularly for the undeveloped parts of the site.

	Existing	Proposed	Change (+/-)	% Change
Volume (m3)	6,874	14,659	7785	113%
Footprint (m2)	950	1123	173	18%
Total Floorspace (m2)	-	3455	-	-

Visually, the site is well-contained by its location, existing trees and landscaping. I have considered the Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) by Weddle Landscape Design and subsequent response to officer comments by the applicant. It is evident that the building is not in a ‘similar’ position to the existing. A large area of the proposed building is moved

onto the existing hardstanding, other elements are sited on land currently undeveloped, with further hardstanding extended onto further undeveloped land. I can accept that the mature trees are largely being retained and that these provide some physical and visual enclosure to the site and that retaining the undeveloped nature of the eastern part of the site is welcomed. However, even with these measures in place the scheme will have an effect on views particular from the northeast and southeast compared to the existing.

The development would result in harm to the spatial and visual openness of the Green Belt that would be permanent with a greater degree of activity generated than existing. The extent of the harm to openness would not be sizeable due to the extent of built form across the site.

Green Belt Purposes

NPPF paragraph 138 sets out five Green Belt purposes: (a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; (b) to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another; (c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; (d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and (e) to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

The Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) provides a useful section on this matter, comparing the Green Belt Purposes Assessment Aug 2019, with the applicant's own assessment, identifying the site as having a small to limited contribution to the green belt to purposes of (a), (b) and (c). I would agree with both studies that (d) and (e) are not relevant for this area or application site.

The site's visual containment makes it difficult to appreciate the gap between the settlements from the site. The increased amount of built form across the site would not result in any kind of direct coalescence. This is due to the continuation of existing buffers. However, development within the gap would diminish the separation of the two settlements. Thus, there would be an element of sprawl and merger and conflict with purposes (a) and (b).

As outlined above, I don't agree that the proposed development would have a similar visibility and position of built form. The degree of encroachment would be moderate by the site's contained nature but there would still be conflict with purpose (c).

Conclusion on Green Belt

In addition to its inappropriateness, the development would result in a sizeable degree of harm to the openness of the Green Belt and would conflict with three Green Belt purposes. In accordance with the NPPF, such harm to the Green Belt should be afforded substantial weight. This weighting will form part of the planning balance outlined in the later part of the report with conclusions on compliance with NPPF paragraphs 147 and 148 and BDP4.

The Impact on 277 Birmingham Road (Mount School) as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA)

Non-designated heritage assets are on the lowest rung of the hierarchy of heritage assets, they do not have statutory protection and their loss requires a balanced judgement (NPPF

paragraph 203). The NPPF does not seek to prescribe how that balance should be undertaken, or what weight should be given to any matter.

277 Birmingham Road is a three-storey red brick building in the English Bond. The gables are detailed with decorative timber framing on white background. The building was designed by the notable Birmingham Architect Julius Alfred Chatwin and constructed between 1876 and 77. The building was originally built as the vicarage to All Saints church, some 800 meters to its south. The Church itself was erected slightly earlier, between 1872 and 74.

The building was a vicarage until 1957 and then served as a school until 2004. Since this time, it has been in use a training centre. The surrounding site is occupied with parking and temporary cabins which are all in a poor state of repair. To the north and east of the building is a substantially sized garden with mature trees and greenery.

The planning history on the site is extensive. Application 17/01237/FUL was for the demolition of the training centre and the erection of residential housing. This was withdrawn with one of the principal reasons being the loss of the Non-Designated Heritage Asset.

The applicant's heritage consultant has assessed the significance of 277 Birmingham Road and conclude the following summary of significance:

- Architectural – The Vicarage is a typical example of a mid-Victorian vicarage, built during a period of parochial housing renovation and construction, and conforming closely in layout and style to contemporary national guidance. Whilst it broadly follows a 'Gothic' theme, this is inconsistently applied throughout, in many places falling back on Georgian styles and techniques that may demonstrate a lack of resources. Many of the original fittings have been removed or damaged (e.g. fireplaces, kitchen equipment etc) and rooms converted (e.g. into kitchens and toilets), and there are notable and intrusive alterations to the exterior (e.g. the fire escape). As such, overall it is considered to have limited architectural interest;
- Historic – Although linked with the well-known local architect J. A. Chatwin, it is evident that there is nothing in the treatment or design of the building that strongly evokes the better examples of his work and, as mentioned above, the architectural treatment is uneven across the entire composition. Otherwise, there is no evidence for notable persons being occupant or events having occurred within or associated with the building, other than sitting within a nationwide drive to improve parochial housing, such that could add to its historic interest. Being a typical mid-Victorian vicarage, there is nothing in the surviving fabric that demonstrates any advances in technology or 'new' ways of thinking in terms of the functionality as a house. As such, the Vicarage is considered to have limited historic interest;
- Artistic – Similar to the architectural interest, the overall composition of the building is typical of a mid-Victorian vicarage in the popular Gothic style of this period and does not demonstrate any great flourish of artistic design. There is also no particular aspect, detail or feature that individually is of great artistic interest, with the surviving fireplaces being typical of mass-produced examples from the late 19th century. As such, the vicarage is identified as having very limited artistic interest; and

- Archaeological – as a relatively recent building and of limited phasing, the Vicarage is identified as having no archaeological interest.

Based on these conclusions, the applicant is of the view that the Vicarage is identified as having a limited significance, derived from its limited architectural and historic interest, and very limited artistic interest, and being, overall, of no more than local interest within Bromsgrove.

The site has been fully assessed by the Conservation Team and 277 Birmingham Road is considered a Non-Designated Heritage Asset and would be considered a prime candidate for the local list for the following reasons:

- Age, Authenticity and Rarity: The building, constructed between 1876 and 77, retains a large amount of its original fabric. The building displays a high number of original features externally and internally such as windows, original downpipes, herringbone brickwork, internal sashes, cornicing and skirting, and some fireplaces. It is rare for an unlisted building to show such completeness of original architectural design.
- Architectural Interest: The building was designed by Julius Alfred Chatwin, a prolific Birmingham Architect. As mentioned above, the care of design was not just external, but internal. The building is mentioned in the Worcestershire Pevsner and is described as follows: “large unobtrusive brick, with half timbered gables”.
- Historic Interest: The building is associated with Julius Alfred Chatwin and The Church of England’s attention to expanding towns and parishes and their needs. The vicarage was built at a time where many new churches were built to address these needs. The building illustrates the historic use of the site as a vicarage serving the grade II listed All Saints church.
- Townscape/ Villagescape/ Landscape Interest: The building was originally a vicarage serving All Saints church. It became a school in the mid C20, and is now a training centre, so has a history of being part of the community. The building is a good example of Victorian architecture by a prolific Victorian Birmingham Architect that positively contributes to the character of the area.

The significance of the 277 Birmingham Road as a NDHA would be totally lost due to demolition. NPPF paragraph 203 requires weighing applications that affect a NDHA and this means the consideration of the application (i.e. the scheme including the replacement buildings). It then requires a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm and the significance of the heritage asset. There is no requirement in this balance to give ‘great weight’ to the preserving of the heritage asset’s significance.

The importance of Heritage Assets is clearly set out in the NPPF. Paragraph 189 states the following: “Heritage assets range from sites and buildings of local historic value to those of the highest significance, such as World Heritage Sites which are internationally recognised to be of Outstanding Universal Value. These assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations”.

277 Birmingham Road is a Heritage Asset and is therefore an “irreplaceable resource”. The proposed demolition of the building would be permanently removing this resource which has positively contributed to the quality of life of past and existing generations. Its loss would mean it could no longer be enjoyed by existing or future generations. Paragraph 197 of the NPPF states that “Local Planning Authorities should take account of: c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness”. The loss of this Heritage Asset, which is associated with a prolific Architect, and has served the community for nearly 140 years, would not be considered to make a positive contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the area.

Paragraph 203 of the NPPF states that “The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.” Furthermore, policy BDP20.3 of the Bromsgrove District Plan states that “Development affecting Heritage Assets [...] should not have a detrimental impact on the character, appearance or significance of the Heritage Asset”. The building has been assessed by both the applicant and the Local Planning Authority as a Heritage Asset. One that is not important enough to merit inclusion on the national list, but merits regard and identification as a Heritage Asset. Additionally, the building satisfies the criteria to be included on the Local Planning Authority’s Local Heritage List. The scale of harm therefore is considered to be large, due to the complete demolition of this Heritage Asset, and is not balanced out by the significance of the Heritage Asset which is considered to be high. Additionally, the proposals cannot be considered to comply with Policy 20.3 of the BDP as the complete demolition of the Heritage Asset would result in irreversible detrimental impact.

Paragraph 195 of the NPPF states that Local planning authorities should take into account “the particular significance of any heritage asset [...] when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.” The provided heritage statement sets out the significance of the affected Heritage Asset, but the proposals do not follow logically to avoid significant harm to the Heritage Asset. The proposals are not heritage led, and there is conflict therefore between the proposals and the Heritage Assets conservation. It is possible for new development to complement the existing Heritage, but this is not explored in the proposals. It is acknowledged that the building has not been well kept, but as stated above, many original features remain, and quoting from paragraph 196 of the NPPF, “Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.”

The proposals are not considered to comply with Policy BDP 20.20 from the Bromsgrove District Plan which states that “The District Council will embrace opportunities to mitigate the effects of climate change by seeking the reuse of historic buildings and where appropriate their modification to reduce carbon emissions and secure sustainable development without harming the significance of the heritage asset or its setting.” 277 Birmingham Road contains a certain amount of embodied energy.

Its destruction and the rebuilding of another in its place would result in the release and creation of far more carbon and energy than if the existing was to be reused. 277 Birmingham Road has been in existence for nearly 140 years and therefore the materials

have proved themselves to be of high quality, capable of longevity and there is no evidence to suggest that they could not continue serving the building for another significant period.

This principle of conserving historic material for the sake of the environment is endorsed by the IHBC's (Institute of Historic Building Conservation) "Sustainability and Conservation of the Historic Environment" position statement 2020 which states that "Historic buildings contain large amounts of embodied energy and carbon. Further energy and carbon release is required to destroy them and construct replacements".

Furthermore, it is clearly laid out in paragraph 152 of the NPPF that "The planning system should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure". Therefore, any proposal for this site should be intentionally seeking to reuse the existing buildings and resources as part of any scheme in order that both sustainable development and conservation of the historic built environment is achieved.

Based on this assessment the conservation team are recommending refusal of the application.

Following comments from the Conservation team, the applicant has indicated that the benefits of the provision of a care home significantly and demonstrably outweigh any adverse impacts of the demolition of this non-designated heritage asset. The existing building is unsuitable for conversion to a care facility, as demonstrated in Torsion's Support Statement.

Based upon the comment and discussions with the Conservation Team, it is considered that the classification of significance to be medium and the magnitude of change as the result of the total loss of the heritage assets is high, resulting in a substantial impact.

The proposed development would result in the demolition of 277 Birmingham Road. Therefore, the development would result in the total loss of significance of a non-designated heritage asset which would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. In line with NPPF paragraph 203, this loss and harm needs to be weighed against other considerations, including any public benefits, and again I shall return to that question in the planning balance section.

Design and Appearance

Policy BDP 19 of the BDP seeks high quality design which would enhance the character of the local area. 277 Birmingham Road comprises a large Victorian vicarage, constructed in 1876-7. It was later extended unsympathetically in the 1960's with the addition of numerous flat roof prefabricated structures and converted into a school. The original plan form is clearly discernible, with many of the original features. The grounds are interspersed with various areas of local hardstanding, access pathways and what is believed to be the remains of a former tennis court with a large hardstanding area to the south and east off the main building.

The proposed care home is designed to be of a classical nature without becoming a pastiche representation of a mock architectural style. The rendered areas will add contrast and help further highlight these features.

The elevations will incorporate materials such as red brick and blue slate roofing with detailing and features that reflect the character of the area, window detailing with heads and sills contrasting in colour will help break up the materials whilst also providing variety, interest and articulation to the elevations. The nature of the use means that the window pattern has some repetition, but the glass and recessed nature of the windows will provide visual interest and articulation to the elevations. This building has been designed to reflect the functionality of its use and the nature of its immediate surroundings.

The application site is accessed via a long drive and there is substantial tree coverage along the front of the site adjoining the Birmingham Road meaning the proposal's impact on the wider street scene would therefore be limited.

Notwithstanding the concerns raised regarding the loss of the building, the new care homes design and appearance is considered to be acceptable and in accordance with the requirements of Policy BDP 19.

Amenity

The site has substantial amenity space for residents which would be the enclosed garden to the front the building (adjacent the entrance driveway). The rest of the building is designed in a way that feeds this space.

The change in levels across the site mean access can be formed from upper levels into the garden areas, this can be seen via the long pathway leading from the terrace to the north-east corner of the building. This is considered acceptable.

Policy BDP1: Sustainable Development Principles requires that in considering new development, regard will be had to:

“e) Compatibility with adjoining uses and the impact on residential amenity”

In terms of any impact on neighbours, concern has been raised by a resident along Copse Wood Way. However, the applicant has produced a section, which shows that there is a levels difference in this area and also substantial landscaping at the boundary, on this basis while there would be views of the development from these properties, it is not considered to be detrimental to the amenity of these properties.

The proposed location of the development on the site is considered to ensure that effects on residential amenity are minimised, taking into consideration separation distance between existing properties and the proposed development.

The proposed development would not have an overbearing or visually intimidating impact upon nearby properties. It is considered that daylight to existing habitable rooms would not be prejudiced and that no loss of privacy would occur.

In terms of the living conditions of future occupants WRS has not objected to the scheme on noise grounds. A suitable glazing condition has been requested.

Therefore, on balance, the application is in accordance with policy BDP1.4e) and the High Quality Design Guide SPD.

Highway Matters

The applicant proposes to utilise the existing drive to access the development. In terms of parking the proposal will provide the following:

- 20 standard car parking spaces
- 2 accessible parking spaces
- 2 electric vehicle charging spaces
- 4 cycle parking spaces

The proposals would also provide a dedicated area for drop-off and pick-up trips and ambulance parking close to the site entrance. The Highway Authority has undertaken a robust assessment of the planning application and concludes that significant parking has been provided and the internal site layout and proposed pedestrian footpath facilities have been provided in a safe and suitable manner. The proposed development will result in a net reduction in trips compared to the existing use. The proposal therefore accords with Policy BDP16 of the BDP.

Landscape and Trees

There is a substantial number of trees on the site, most of which are located towards the northern and eastern boundaries of the site. Many of the existing trees within the site are subject to formal protection under Bromsgrove District Council Tree Preservation Order (17) 2016 (TPO). Subject to several conditions the tree officer has no objection to the proposal. The proposal will therefore not unduly impact on the local tree stock in accordance with BDP19 and BDP21.

Ecology

An Ecology Appraisal has been submitted by the applicant by Estrada Ecology. It identifies that the former Mount School building is used by bats for roosting, or as a place for shelter. Common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats were recorded as roosting within the building at four roost locations. A series of mitigation measures are proposed to ensure that the loss of this habitat can be satisfactorily overcome on site. The proposal therefore has no undue impact upon protected species in accordance with policy BDP21 of the BDP.

Planning Obligations

In accordance with Paragraph 56 of the Framework and Section 122 of the CIL regulations, planning obligations have been sought to mitigate the impact of this major development if the application were to be approved.

The obligation in this case would cover:

- A financial contribution £13,600.00 for necessary Community Transport Services

- A financial contribution of £18,246.23 towards NHS Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust
- A section 106 monitoring fee

The legal section has confirmed that these contributions would be dealt with by a unilateral undertaking, should the application be approved.

There is no requirement for an affordable housing contribution under Policy BDP8. As the nature of the accommodation is a C2 Residential Institution use and not Class C3 dwelling houses, this has been adequately justified by the applicant. The use could be adequately conditioned to restrict its use to C2.

Planning Balance

For the reasons outlined above, the proposed development would cause harm to the Green Belt, due to inappropriateness and loss of openness, contrary to adopted Policy BDP4. The NPPF requires substantial weight to be given to any harm to Green Belts.

The proposal would involve total loss of the non-designated heritage asset, equating to substantial harm. The NPPF advises at paragraph 203 that in these circumstances, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. Policy BDP20 requires that development protects, preserves, and wherever possible enhances designated and non-designated heritage assets and that in considering proposals that directly affect non-designated assets, weight will be given to the conservation of the asset and a balanced judgement is necessary having regard to the extent of harm or loss and the significance of the asset.

Having regard to the emphasis that the NPPF gives to the conservation of heritage assets, I consider that this harm, like the harm to the Green Belt, should be given substantial weight.

On the other side of the planning balance, there is no doubt that there is a clear local need in Bromsgrove for all forms of elderly persons' accommodation, and this need is both urgent and growing.

The applicant has outlined benefits of the proposed redevelopment which can be summarised as follows:

- Provision of care accommodation – provision of 72 beds of care accommodations, especially in the context of a wider lack of housing land across the district, which has been furthered due to the identification in January 2022 via the HDT 2021, that the LPA have only been able to deliver 44% of its housing need over the past 3 years
- Provision of care accommodation against the identified shortfall of this specialised use, as set out in the HPC assessment and Carterwood analysis.
- Knock-on positive impact on the local housing market area, resulting in the freeing up of homes due to the ability of those in need of care to be moved into such a facility.
- Net gain in local employment opportunities, both immediate and long term.

- Resultant impact on the reduction of pressure on local health care facilities, together with the improvement of elderly people's lifestyles, who may be in and out of hospital or living alone. The development of the care home will also reduce 'bed blocking'

The development would also produce further economic and social benefits in terms of construction jobs, and longer-term employment and training opportunities in the caring professions and related services. These considerations weigh heavily in favour of the application.

It is also argued by the applicant that this application should also be considered in the context of application 20/00458/FUL. This application was for the single storey, first floor and two storey extensions to existing 20-bed residential care home to create a 48-bed residential care home at Hopwood Court Hopwood and was approved at Planning Committee on 21st December 2021, contrary officer recommendation for refusal. The Committee noted that whilst Members understood the intrusion on the Green Belt, the area was screened by trees and the plans showed extensive replacement tree planting was proposed. Members referred to the comments made by the applicant with regard to the need for the care home to be brought up to date with new ensuite facilities and ultimately determined that "looking after the elderly did amount to very special circumstances and the need to provide suitable accommodation".

Drawing all these considerations all together, NPPF paragraph 144 makes it clear that, in Green Belts, 'very special circumstances' cannot exist unless the harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by the other considerations. Consequently, for the application to succeed, the overall balance would have to favour the appellants' case not just marginally, but decisively.

In the present case, the considerations weighing in favour carry considerable weight, but even so, they do not clearly outweigh the combined weight of the harm to the Green Belt and to designated heritage assets. Nor would the harm to the heritage assets be outweighed by the public benefits, irrespective of the Green Belt issues. Very special circumstances of the type required by the NPPF have therefore not been demonstrated.

Conclusion

Despite the application considerable merits, their inherent conflict with both the development plan and national policies, with regard to the harm to both the Green Belt and non-designated heritage asset, leads me to conclude that the application cannot be supported and recommend for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be **REFUSED**.

Reasons for Refusal

- 1.) The site is located within an area identified within the Development Plan as falling within the Green Belt where there is a presumption against inappropriate development. In such an area, development is limited to that which is not inappropriate to a Green Belt and which would preserve its openness. The proposal does not meet any of the policy criteria specified at Policy BDP4 of the Bromsgrove District Plan (BDP) or at Paragraph 149 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) and as such the proposal would amount to inappropriate development, which by definition, is harmful to the Green Belt. The development would reduce the openness of the Green Belt and furthermore, the development would conflict with the purposes of Green Belt policy. No very special circumstances exist or have been put forward to clearly outweigh the significant harm caused to the Green Belt. As such the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy BDP4 of the Bromsgrove District Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

- 2.) The proposal results in the complete demolition of a non-designated heritage asset of architectural merit. Its loss has not been fully justified and would not be outweighed by the benefits of the scheme. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policy BDP20 of the Bromsgrove District Plan and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

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