

Name of Applicant Type of Certificate	Proposal	Map/Plan Policy	Plan. Ref Expiry Date
<b>Bromsgrove District Housing Trust 'A'</b>	1 & 3 storey extensions to existing unit to provide (25 new units) new entrance porch and associated parking and landscape alterations (augmented by Transport and Landscaping Plans dated 16.05.2007) - Gilbert Court, Charford, Bromsgrove	RES	<b>B/2007/0388</b> 06.07.2007

**RECOMMENDATION:** that permission be **GRANTED**.

### Consultations

WCC(HP)	Consulted - Defer require details of access means or proposed alterations require plans showing / reflecting these changes. 04.05.2007. Transport assessment received and forwarded for further comments
CEHO	Consulted - No comments to make. 18.04.2007
WME	Consulted - Comments should be available in full to all committee Members for them to consider their responsibilities under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.  Footpath 505 that leads from Farmers Road has been a hotspot for crime and disorder . The most effect solution is to close the footpath however I fully support the rerouting of the footpath across the green with landscape and fencing either side. This would remove the open space where youths gather and prevent access to the adjacent bungalows.  Perimeter security is vital for the extension. This could be via the provision of lockable gates for residents, BDHT and the emergency services this should reduce the risk of crime and disorder.  Landscaping should not hinder surveillance or provide hiding places. 18.04.2007
ENG	Consulted - Suggest Conditions 27.04.2007
BC	Consulted - Verbal comments received. Schemes like this are negotiable and any additional fire and access arrangements if required are designed into the scheme as a project progresses. Planning and building regulations are not dependant on each other.
LT	Consulted - No problems as agreed conditions recommended for tree protection. 23.04.2007
LP	Consulted - Site is within residential area of Bromsgrove. Policy S7 and SPG10 is applicable to consideration of this scheme. As the proposal is for affordable housing it complies with this guidance. Need to check with Highways Engineer and Tree Officer as impact on these. Note some tree felling and impact on right of way. 31.05.2007
PROW RA	Consulted Consulted - Unclear as to which revisions to line of footpath are being taken. Circular 2/93 indicates that PROW are material considerations. Also please be advised by PPG13 and PPG17 and PPS7. 23.04.2007

Housing	Consulted - extension and conversion of Gilbert Court to Extra Care Housing is fully supported by Strategic Housing Section. The development will provide units of affordable housing and achieve Extra Care Housing provision for the District that is a target in the Councils Housing Strategy Action Plan. 11.05.2007
Publicity	2nd Site notice posted 11.05.2007 - expires 31.05.2007 Press notice posted 26.04.2007 - expires 17.05.2007 27 Letters sent to neighbouring properties Responses received 18 Individual letters and emails received Individually signed standard letter Petition containing 89 signatures Objections received identify the following aspects: Character - Cramped design inappropriate to exiting pattern of development. Materials do not match the exiting brickworks of the local area which are red brick buildings. Loss of privacy - Loss of privacy to residents a minimum of 27.5 separation distance is required to achieve privacy and visual separation. . This is not achieved . The height of the hedges surrounding the development will not sufficiently shield overlooking the bordering residential properties. Loss of daylight - Day light will lead to a loss of daylight for the greater part of the year for all properties in Farmers Road and some on Drovers Way and some existing flats at Gilbert Court. Lack of consideration of landscape. - Sloping site has not been taken into consideration. Same number of flats on two terraced area. This would avoid the necessity of 3 storey extension. The present design does not fit in to the landscape, this may cause erosion and flooding. Insufficient infrastructure - Development is design for the elderly and no public transport exists for people with disabilities, etc. Hire of taxi is an option but this is usually unaffordable. Many residents will be caged in and isolated. Fire Safety - Flats unsuitable to wheelchairs users or people with walking aids as escape route in case of fire is staircase. Access for pump appliance should be 45m from all points. Security - Design provide little daylight. Poor energy efficiency is undesirable for security reasons.  Extra Care Housing - <i>Corridors</i> Uninspiring and monotonous design of corridor will hinder orientation of cognitive impaired persons. Leading to undesirable lighting for mainly people with visual impairments. <i>Handrails</i> - Design does not allow for continuous handrail to either side of the corridor for to door openings etc. This is discouraged as it could snag clothing and cause falls. <i>Natural Light</i> Natural daylight is an issue in kitchen and bathrooms which is recommended by the Dept of Health.

Building Ventilation - Presently inadequate ventilation and no system identified or proposed by agent/applicant to overcome this which could lead to noise issues.

Heating and Air Con - Heat accumulation by poor design of building increased risk of heat stroke. Design has not taken this into account.

Concerned about the value of property.

How is the tenure of the properties going to be secured as these are for the elderly and will this remain.

Concerned that screening should be left in place and this should be guaranteed to ensure no overlooking.

Would prefer smaller scale as presently looks like a school or prison.

Conflict of interests in breach of protocol on planning probity.

Understood at meeting these plans would go ahead regardless to whether or not there were a number of objections.

Reasoning behind this is to get funding required for more than 25 residential units. This does not comply with the guidelines set out in SPG1 and SPG10 will be contacting the Local Government Ombudsman and solicitor over this matter.

### The site and its surroundings

The site area extends to 1.25 hectares in total and consists of a range of bungalows; the main building known as Gilbert Court. This main unit extends to the south towards Drovers Way. The site itself appears fairly flat although there is a difference of levels between the front and rear of the building where the patio and amenity area is located. The level changes across the site range from 2m to 2.5m to the houses in Drovers Way and Farmers Road. The rear of the amenity area is currently demarked by a bank, boundary fencing and a large planted boundary of leylandi trees. Other trees are dotted around the site which help define the present landscaping and car parking areas.

The whole site, known as Gilbert Court, is split principally into two sites either side of Gilbert Road and located east of Austin Road. The northern side of the development consists of 24 bungalows with landscaping and parking and the southern side has a further 18 bungalows and the apartment building (which is the main focus of this application) with 25 self-contained flats and some communal facilities. The communal facilities are noted as office areas, toilet facilities, laundry, kitchen / dining and common room, refuse area and two guest bedrooms with en-suite facilities. Within this block there are currently 23 one-bedroom flats at the entrance level and two further two-bedroom flats at first floor. To the rear of this unit is a paved patio area and retaining wall with ramps to a lower grass amenity area.

The site is within a well established residential area of Bromsgrove.

The main building was constructed in 1984 and is finished in mainly red brick with timber painted windows with a standard concrete tile roof. The building and site is within a residential area of Bromsgrove.

## Proposal

This proposal is to provide an extension to the main building to provide a further 25 apartments to the main building. The reconfiguration of the apartments will in total provide:-

- 23 one-bedroom units
- 21 one-bedroom extra care flats
- 3 one-bedroom disabled person extra care flats
- 3 two-bedroom extra care flats

50 Total units

In addition to this, there will be two guest bedrooms as previously offered with en-suite, and upgraded communal facilities. These include a hairdressing room, treatment room, gym, reception and quiet rooms. These upgraded facilities will not only be available for the residents of the Court but the surrounding bungalows and the local community.

The proposed new wing of the building has a rectangular arrangement and measures 58 metres wide by 65 metres long and 11.5 metres in height, and is orientated north to south. The building proposed will have a hipped roofline linking to the existing building (indicative materials have been shown as a mixture of brick and render with a plain tile roof).

The new entrance canopy is a curved lightweight construction with new glazing to provide a more open and welcoming access to the building. New 'Juliet' style balconies are proposed on part of the proposed scheme. The exiting site will be brought up a 'decent' homes standard with new kitchen, bathroom, heating and windows. New security and 'Telecare' systems are also proposed.

### Parking provision

<u>Present</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
39	47

This equates to a ratio of 2 homes per parking unit.

A landscaping scheme has also been proposed as part of the proposal. Other works are proposed to improve the existing residential units on the surrounding site but they do not form part of this particular proposal.

### Relevant Policies

WMSS	CF2, CF3, CF5, CF6, QE1, QE3, T2
WCSP	SD.2, SD.3, SD.4, SD.5, SD.6, D.1, D.3, D.4, D.5, D.6, D.9, CTC.1, CTC.8, T.1, RST.3
BDLP	DS3, DS13, S6, S7, S15, S28, S29, C5, C17, TR11, RAT12, RAT13
Others	PPS1, PPS7, PPS3, PPG13, PPG14, SPG1, SPG10

## Relevant Planning History

B10129 Outline - Residential Development. Granted 1982  
B11142 Reserved matters - Residential development and roads. Granted 1982

## Notes

### **Background to Gilbert Court Extra Care Scheme**

*Extract taken from Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) Bulletin 1 February 2007*

"This scheme forms part of a £5 million project to convert an existing sheltered housing scheme to a new 'extra care housing scheme'.

Extra care dates back from the 1990's with a national recognition of needs for an increasingly older population within a national policy context. In Worcestershire this is identified in the 20 year vision for housing with care services by effective use of the sheltered housing stock, development of care models within a housing context and shifting the balance of acute institutional based services to community based facilities.

Design and delivery of each project may vary; however, it is generally agreed that extra care housing is not so much the bricks and mortar but:-

Living at home, not in a home.

Having one's own front door.

Provision of culturally sensitive services delivered in a familiar location.

Flexible care delivery - that can increase or decrease according to circumstances.

Improvement of independent living skills.

Accessible buildings for people with or without cognitive disability.

Variation of tenure and ability to contribute to a wider community."

Consultation sessions took place with residents (this consultation being with the residents of the existing scheme and the surrounding area). A number of responses were recorded. The outcome of the consultation period has also been recorded separately above and includes detailed responses, and a petition from local residents.

*More details and background to the Housing 'extra care' scheme are enclosed in the Design and Access Statement and 'Background to the Proposal' document.*

The Bromsgrove project has resulted in this application for consideration.

### **Policy**

PPS1 advocates sustainable development through the planning process and the re-use and re-development of brown field sites. The site is presently utilised for sheltered type accommodation and this proposal extends this function. There are no alternatives as there are no other sites which have provided the same facilities.

The site represents a redevelopment of an existing site which is in a well established residential context with good transportation links to the Town Centre and beyond. I also

consider this location is sustainable in terms of its location and is broadly in line with the principles of policy DS13 of the BDLP.

PPS3 encourages housing especially on previously developed land, and the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy encourages the delivery of affordable housing and mixed communities through policies in the RSS 2004. This is with particular reference to policies CF5 and CF6. Both the Worcestershire Structure Plan (WCSP) and the Bromsgrove District Local Plan (BDLP) identify land outside Green Belt areas which may be suitable for housing development subject to a number of criteria which will be considered below in accordance with policies S6, S7 and S15 for affordable units.

### **SPG10**

Members will be aware of the present moratorium on further housing development in the District due to the issue of housing over-supply. There are exceptions and exclusions to this policy and one of these is for affordable units which are 100% affordable. In this instance, the scheme is proposed by Bromsgrove District Housing Trust for a specialised development of affordable housing in accordance with policy S15 of the BDLP. As this is the case, I am satisfied that the proposed scheme will comply with the exclusions as noted in Supplementary Guidance Note 10 (SPG10) as the proposal is clearly a scheme for affordable units and, therefore, does not conflict with this policy and the purposes for it.

### **Access / Servicing - Highways**

A transport statement has supported the scheme. The development presently has parking areas and the extension will allow further spaces on the site; these will be located predominantly to the main access area and adjacent parking court to the east of the main entrance.

The supplementary transport statement identifies the current position in relation to the local road network (Gilbert Road). The road appears to attract a large number of vehicles which travel faster than the prevailing speed limit. The report also highlights the bus services in the local area (93 and 99). The development must integrate with the existing road patterns. The majority of movements in this location appear to be pedestrian. The development would need to provide a safe environment for pedestrian movements in and around the site. Ambulance and emergency access will be gained from the front of the property and further details in respect to any proposed changes / alterations to the access arrangements are to be clarified. The report identifies some alternatives to improve the pedestrian environment; however, these areas are not within the applicants direct control (as they are within the public highway) and cannot be taken into account in respect to this proposal, which should be assessed under its own merits.

#### *Parking provision*

<u>Present</u>	<u>Proposed</u>
39	47

This equates to a ratio of 2 homes per parking unit when compared to other extra care schemes in the West Midlands. It appears that parking requirements may be adequately

accommodated within the development, and this is considered favourable and is in line with the guidance T.1 and TR.11.

The units are presently served by 4 support workers based at Gilbert Court between 9.00 and 5.00 p.m. These staff provide help to the residents of the Court and the other sheltered schemes around Charford. The extension to the extra care scheme will be on a 24/7 basis - 6 staff during the mornings and early evenings and 2 staff during the day and through the night. Extra kitchen staff are proposed, and also an activities co-ordinator will be provided.

### **Density of the Development**

The density of the development equates 56 dwellings to per hectare. I note this is just beyond the density identified in WCSP of 30-50. However, I note this is a residential area with good transport links to the town centre and beyond and, for this reason, I consider this is still acceptable in context to the site and local area.

### **Scale, Design form and Layout of the Development**

Policy S7 identifies various criteria that new development should conform to in terms of the scale and layout of the development and its associated impacts on neighbouring properties.

For the purpose of this proposal, the neighbouring properties in this instance are the existing residents of the current Gilbert Court, and the residents of both Farmers Road and Drovers Way in particular.

I do appreciate the concerns raised in terms of the character of the area and the materials of the development in context to the surrounding area; however, I note the area has a range of styles and characters with a mixture of single storey, two storey and three storey units in the area (Austin Road), and these are not just one definitive design. The design of the local area also appears to reflect the time period in which these units were built. Materials range from brick, brick with rendering details and vertically hung tiles with pitched gable roof lines.

I consider the proposed extension draws on the basis of red brick of the local vernacular and the mixture of lighter materials to provide visual interest and visually lighten its appearance in this location. The finished proposed materials would be subject to approval.

As noted previously, the proposed extension measures 58 metres wide by 65 metres long and 11.5 metres in height, and is orientated north to south. The proposal forms an extension to the existing facility which has been in place for a number of years. The wing projects from north to south into the space to the back of the existing unit.

The unusual aspect of this development is the land level changes between north and south within the site and to the surrounding properties. The land is on a plateau, 2.5m above Farmers Road (to the east), level with 6 Drovers Way (south), and lower and 14 Drovers Way. The new wing faces both Farmers Road (to the east) and Drovers Way to the south (hipped end flank wall).

The entrance building is two storey and the changes in level allows the extension to project to a 3 storey building finished with a hipped roofline. The roofline is thus more continuous and the hipped roof shape helps to reduce its visual appearance. The height is comparable to many 3-storey type developments in the District.

I acknowledge that many objections have been received in terms of the distance separations between the proposed building and the existing dwellings. The guidance in your adopted SPG1 indicates that changes of levels should increase the amount of distance separation between the proposed extension and the existing neighbouring properties (Farmers Road and Drovers Way). In this instance, the extension is set at a minimum of 33m from the rear face of 15 - 29 Farmers Road, which meets the provision of SPG1 (this includes the changes in level).

The effective retention and management of the existing tree screening would further assist in this aspect. As a general guide, new development windows overlooking private spaces should be set back by a distance of 5 metres per storey from the boundary where it adjoins a private garden. I note the main window extension line is parallel to the side boundary with 15 - 29 Farmers Road but has been designed and set off 19m from the fence which exceeds the expected 15m (5m per storey) required by SPG1. Again, I am satisfied that these distance standards have been adequately achieved. This is also the case in terms of the flank end wall and the relationship to Drovers Way. No habitable windows overlook this location and the distance separation has been maintained in line with SPG1.

Issues have been raised in terms of the loss of daylight. The applicant has provided a basic sun path survey for assessment. This indicates that there is less daylight during the middle of winter; however, given the existing boundary hedge, I do not consider this would be significant enough to warrant of refusal on this aspect alone given the light at other times of the year. The orientation of the sun path will ensure adequate day lighting is received by the development and neighbouring properties.

Consideration of alternative designs have been raised in objections received. Whilst I acknowledge these, the brief was to provide a certain floor area. The choice of other designs could potentially cause other issues for overlooking which would be increased with the smaller blocks of buildings, which could potentially be detrimental to neighbouring amenity, hence the design as proposed.

I do acknowledge that the minimum standards have not been wholly met in term of three flats within the development; however, these are within the control of the applicant and, as such, the improved landscaping will help reduce this impact.

### **Landscaping / Trees**

The site presently does not presently benefit from a wealth of landscaping. There are trees around the front and side of the unit and a majority of these trees will be retained as part of the development. The applicant has submitted a landscaping scheme for the site.

The planted area to the main access will be improved. The adjacent parking area to the east will be altered. This does involve the loss of two of the smaller trees; however, the majority are to be retained and specialist tree protection matting is proposed on the car

parking extension area. The footpath re-routing to the south-east will allow some tree management and additional landscape areas. The area to the rear involves a remodelled patio area with landscape planters with aromatic and sensory planting. This will assist in softening of the present raised patio areas and outlook for residents. The lower area to the rear of the main building is presently grassed and around the perimeter is a hedge line of leylandi. This area is currently underused as a space. The proposed landscaping will provide a more robust solution of landscaped area compared to the present scenario and will give an opportunity to provide an improved outlook for residents of the area and neighbouring properties. The majority of the leylandi hedge will be maintained, with any gaps replanted. The Tree Officer has considered these proposals and has indicated that he has no objection subject to conditions to ensure their ongoing maintenance is provided. The formal landscaping proposal has been forwarded and further comments are awaited, although a landscape management plan has been proposed.

### **Secure by Design**

Members will note the open area to the rear of the main building. This area is currently underused by the residents. This is due to a number of factors but it is noted that this area has little landscaping merit / definition, merely levelled and grassed. More importantly, whilst this is a 'private space', access may still be gained from outside the development so there is little definition of this being a usable private space which residents can enjoy.

The existence of Footpath 505 across the corner of the site and adjacent bungalow allows for more access opportunities from the housing area up across to Austin Road. Information provided by West Mercia Constabulary indicates that there is a large number of recorded incidents with respect to anti-social behaviour on and around this footpath and the use of the open space for people to gather. The residents have been reluctant to utilise these areas due to these incidents. The West Mercia Crime Risk Manager has commented on this application and has suggested that, whilst he would prefer the footpath to be stopped-up and thus access restricted, the proposed slight realignment of the footpath and boundary treatment will direct users of the footpath away from the open areas and the boundaries of the bungalows. The movement of the footpath away from boundaries and across the centre of this space will allow the footpath to function in the same manner whilst avoiding the present contact with private boundaries. For these reasons, I am satisfied the slight realignment of the footpath will be acceptable and would not conflict with policies RST3, RAT12 and RAT13 of the BDLP.

### **Flooding Drainage Erosion**

The engineers have considered this application and have suggested conditions to ensure effective drainage from the site. The existing drainage will be diverted or effectively built over if required.

The main drainage from the site is presently at the southern part of the site and is within the landscaped area. The existing drainage facilities will be able to accommodate the proposed building and therefore I find this aspect of the application acceptable.

The proposal does not identify any issues with the stability of the bank; however, I appreciate the concerns that have been raised regarding its potential stability. PPG14

indicates that this is a material consideration; however, this may be adequately controlled by the imposition of a condition in respect to ground stability and ensuring this is properly assessed (methodology statement, etc.)

### **Other issues / Fire and Building Regulations**

Much of the correspondence identifies concerns in respect of building regulations, fire regulations and the impact of solar gain.

The accommodation proposed is flexible and not all occupants will be heavily dependant. However, this type of concern is assessed under separate legislation and do not fit within the remit of this planning application. Building regulations are negotiated within a working scheme, and internal alterations may be incorporated within any given scheme and therefore not dependant on the planning merits of the case.

### **Conclusion**

On balance, this proposal does represent a use of previously developed land and does accord with the national and local policy guidelines. For these reasons, I find it acceptable, subject to conditions as listed below.

**RECOMMENDATION:** that permission be **GRANTED** sfc

1. C099
2. C37
3. C9
4. C10
5. C11
6. C12
7. C13
8. C14
9. C15
10. C16
11. C17
12. C18
13. C19
14. Prior to the commencement of the development, full details of the occupancy criteria which are to be used to select occupancy of the dwellings shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. Subsequently, persons meeting the approved occupancy criteria shall only take up the occupation of these units, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. REASON: to ensure the dwellings are provided at an affordable level and to meet local housing need in accordance with policy S15 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan.
15. The disposal of storm water shall be by means approved by the Local Planning Authority and be operational before building works commence. Existing drains will

accommodate the proposed extension. Car park area will require trapped gullies to contain spillage. REASON: R011.

16. Prior to the commencement of the development of the site, existing and proposed finished site and floor levels, levels of the adjoining land and building, details of any proposed retaining structure will be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. REASON: to ensure a satisfactory appearance to the development in accordance with policy S7 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan.
17. The applicant shall submit details of a scheme of noise insulation which should include soundproof double glazing along with a soundproofed means of ventilation, both to a recognised standard; and such a scheme shall be approved in writing and implemented before occupation of the extension hereby permitted. REASON: to ensure a satisfactory level of amenity to neighbouring properties.
18. A landscape management plan, including long term design objectives, management objectives and maintenance schedules, for all landscape areas and the leylandi hedge shall be submitted to, and approved by, the Local Planning Authority prior to the occupation of the development or any phase of the development, whichever is the sooner. The landscape management plan shall thereafter be carried out as approved. REASON: in order to maintain the value of the landscaped areas and hedge, and in accordance with policies DS13 and S7 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan.
19. Prior to the commencement of development on site the applicant shall provide a survey in relation to the bank surrounding the development (in particular to the south and east) and its integrity / stability. A method statement shall be provided detailing means of the protection of this bank whilst works are carried out and these shall be carried out in strict accordance with the details provided. REASON: to ensure the protection of the neighbouring properties in accordance with policy S7 and the guidance in PPG14.

This decision has been taken having regard to the policies within the Worcestershire County Structure Plan (WCSP) June 2001 and the Bromsgrove District Local Plan January 2004 and other material considerations as summarised below:-

WMSS	CF2, CF3, CF5, CF6, QE1, QE3, T2
WCSP	SD.2, SD.3, SD.4, SD.5, SD.6, D.1, D.3, D.4, D.5, D.6, D.9, CTC.1, CTC.8, T.1, RST.3
BDLP	DS3, DS13, S6, S7, S15, S28, S29, C5, C17, TR11, RAT12, RAT13
Others	PPS1, PPS7, PPS3, PPG13, PPG14, SPG1, SPG10

It is the Council's view that the proposed development complies with the provisions of the development plan and that, on balance, there are no justifiable reasons to refuse planning permission.