

UTT/12/5227/CA - (SAFFRON WALDEN)

PROPOSAL: **Erection of 31 sheltered apartments including communal facilities, access, car parking and landscaping.**

LOCATION: **Lodge Farm, Radwinter Road, Saffron Walden**

APPLICANT: **Churchill Retirement Living Ltd**

AGENT: **Planning Issues Ltd**

GRID REFERENCE:

EXPIRY DATE: **7/12/2012**

CASE OFFICER: **Consultant (Alison Hutchinson)**

APPLICATION TYPE: **MAJOR**

1. NOTATION

1.1 Within development limits. Partially within Saffron Walden Conservation Area.

2. DESCRIPTION OF SITE

2.1 The application site, located on the southern side of Radwinter Road is currently partially used as a coach depot and for the storage of plant and machinery. The site is mostly open and slopes upwards to the south with single storey structures along the eastern and northern boundaries. A two storey building is located gable end onto Radwinter Road and the site is screened from the road by a high, prominent flint and stone wall of some 3 to 4 metres in height. To the west, the site is located adjacent to the former gas works where planning permission has been granted for residential development. To the east, is a veterinary surgery, whilst to the south are the modern residential properties in Harris Yard. Opposite the site on the northern side of Radwinter Road are residential properties and the junction with Hollyhock Road.

3. PROPOSAL

3.1 The application seeks Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of the two storey building located on the eastern boundary of the site and gable end onto Radwinter Road and the open sided building which backs onto the flint wall along the road frontage. Permission is also sought for the lowering of the frontage wall to 3.1 metres in height. The remaining buildings on the site do not need Conservation Area Consent for their demolition as they are not located within the Conservation Area.

3.2 The demolition would facilitate the redevelopment of the site for 31 sheltered apartments for the elderly. A full planning application has been submitted for the redevelopment of the site under Ref: UTT/5226/12/FUL which is also before this committee for consideration. The redevelopment scheme is described in more detail in that application report and is considered to be acceptable.

4. APPLICANT'S CASE

- 4.1 A Heritage Statement and a Design and Access Statement are submitted with the application. The documents confirm that none of the buildings on the site are listed and are not of any historical or architectural merit such that would warrant their retention.
- 4.2 In terms of the largest building, the Heritage Statement states that, in its own right the building has little intrinsic architectural merit and its external visual quality is limited to the selective appearance of flint and the 'perception' of early layout and plan.
- 4.3 In terms of the contribution to the Conservation Area, the building makes a limited contribution, principally as an example of vernacular building tradition of knapped flint with brick dressings. The building lies at the edge of the Conservation Area and has lost much of its context. The setting of the edge of the Conservation Area is now determined by some fairly random development which gives the area a neutral character.

5. RELEVANT SITE HISTORY

- 5.1 There are no recent relevant planning applications. The most recent applications for the site were in 1976 and 1975:
- 5.2 UTT/0029/76 - Application for the open and enclosed storage of plant and other materials used in connection with the business. Approved
- 5.3 UTT/0618/75 - Proposed erection of 14 no maisonettes (2 person) and 6 no houses (3 person) Approved.

6. POLICIES

6.1 National Policies

- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

6.2 East of England Plan 2006

- Policy ENV7 Quality in the Built Environment

6.4 Uttlesford District Local Plan 2005

- Policy GEN2 Design
- Policy ENV1 Design of Development within Conservation Areas

7. TOWNCOUNCIL'S COMMENTS

- 7.1 The Committee has no objections to the proposed development.

8. CONSULTATIONS

None.

9. REPRESENTATIONS

- 9.1 No letters of representation have been received.

10. APPRAISAL

- 10.1 It is considered that there is a single issue to be considered in the determination of the application:
- A. The impact upon the Conservation Area and whether the design of the redevelopment scheme would be acceptable and would preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area (ULP Policies GEN2 and ENV1)
- 10.2 The application proposes the demolition of the existing buildings on the site that are located within the Conservation Area. Other buildings, located towards the rear of the site and therefore, outside the Conservation Area will also be demolished as part of the redevelopment proposals.

The Draft Saffron Walden Conservation Area Appraisal was published in July 2012 and identifies the flint building as being of narrow rectangular plan form in a state of dilapidation at the eastern side of entrance to Plant Hire and bus depot site, Radwinter Road. It has some broken windows and boarded up doors and is considered to be one of the none-listed buildings that make an important architectural or historic contribution to the Conservation Area.

The tall distinctive and important flint wall, along the boundary with Radwinter road which forms part of a storage building is also identified and the Appraisal notes that it is in need of repair at its western extremity.

The Appraisal confirms that the improvement and securing of the flint building and also the prominent flint wall represent one of the opportunities to improve the character of this part of the Conservation Area.

The flint wall is currently over 4m in height and, as highlighted in the Conservation Area Appraisal, is an important feature in the street scene. The wall is to be retained, albeit at a reduced height and will be repaired as part of the proposals.

In terms of the building, the applicants have argued that it is of limited visual or historic merit and that it needs to be demolished to facilitate the redevelopment of the site. The building is located at the corner of the site and is currently in a poor state of repair with self set sycamore trees growing in close proximity and part of the gable end being overgrown and obscured by ivy. The building does not lend itself to modification within the redevelopment scheme. The high flint wall also obscures views of much of the building and, as a consequence, the building has only limited visual prominence along Radwinter Road. It is considered that the loss of this building would have a minimal impact upon the character of this part of the Conservation Area, especially as the applicants propose to replace it with a further length of flint wall along the road frontage, intended to mirror the retained, existing flint wall along the rest of the frontage.

The demolition of the building would facilitate the proposed sheltered units which are to be accommodated within a single building set back behind the wall along Radwinter Road. The new building is predominantly two and a half storey and will be constructed on a slightly elevated level to the road because of the sloping nature of the site. The building will be visible from the street and from the Conservation Area but will be partially screened by the flint wall. The design of the new building will create visual interest within the site and the proposed materials reflect the local context with a combination of orange facing brick, flint, darker red feature brickwork and weather boarding combined with slate colour roofing.

It is considered that the proposals for the redevelopment of the site are acceptable and that the new building for the sheltered accommodation is in keeping with the character of the area. The development will bring about the improvement of this current untidy site and achieve the future retention and repair of the flint wall. It is considered therefore that the redevelopment proposals will provide a positive enhancement to this part of the Conservation Area and that Conservation Area Consent should be granted for the demolition of the buildings and the lowering of the flint wall. The application is in accordance with Policy ENV1 and GEN2.

It is considered that there are no other material considerations.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 The proposals for the redevelopment of the Lodge Farm site for residential purposes is acceptable and will facilitate the improvement and enhancement of the site and this part of the Conservation Area. It is considered that the demolition of the buildings and the reduction in height of the wall will facilitate a positive improvement to this part of the Conservation Area and as such the proposal complies with relevant Development Plan policies and the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION –APPROVAL WITH CONDITIONS

CONDITIONS

1. The development to which this consent relates shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this decision.
REASON: To comply with the requirements of Section 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2. The works of demolition hereby authorised shall not be carried out before a contract for the carrying out of the works of redevelopment of the site has been made in accordance with planning permission UTT/5226/12/FUL has been signed and a copy of the contract has been lodged with and receipt acknowledged in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
REASON: In the interests of the appearance of the development and conservation area, in accordance with Policy ENV1 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005).
3. Permission is hereby permitted for the reduction of the height of the flint wall along the frontage of the site with Radwinter Road to 3.1 metres only measured on the northern elevation of the wall.
REASON: In the interests of the appearance of the development and conservation area, in accordance with Policy ENV1 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005).
4. Prior to the commencement of the demolition hereby approved a schedule of the materials to be salvaged for re-use in the development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved schedule.
REASON: In the interests of the appearance of the development and conservation area, in accordance with Policy ENV1 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005).

5. All materials arising from the demolition of the buildings that are not be re-used in the development shall be removed from site within three months of the commencement of the works unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: In the interests of the appearance of the development and conservation area, in accordance with Policy ENV1 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005).

6. Before any work hereby authorised begins a scheme shall be submitted to the local planning authority setting out the method and steps to be taken to reduce the flint wall along the frontage of Radwinter Road to 3.1m in height, its repair and the measures to be taken to secure the safety and stability of that part of the flint wall which is to be retained. Such steps shall, where necessary, include measures to strengthen the wall and to provide protection for the structure against the weather during the progress of the works.

REASON: In the interests of the appearance of the development and conservation area, in accordance with Policy ENV1 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (adopted 2005).