



Ribble Valley
Borough Council

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RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Our Ref: RV/2017/ENQ/00083

Proposal: Conversion of the existing nursing home into three dwellings and the erection of two additional dwellings at Showley Brook Rest Home, 10 Knowsley Road, Wilpshire.

Date: 12th October 2017

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Pre-Application Enquiry Response

Dear Mr Hitchen

Following our site meeting with your clients on the 3rd of October I write in response to your pre-application enquiry regarding the proposed conversion of 'Showley Brook Rest Home' into three dwellings and the erection of an attached new-build dwelling to either side resulting in five dwellings in total. Information submitted for consideration initially included a supporting statement, site location plan and proposed sketch site plan. Given that the development would result in the loss of an employment use I requested further information with regards to the sale particulars which was received via e-mail on the 26th of September. At our meeting your client also explained in greater detail the circumstances of the sale and provided evidence of the active sale of the premises over the last few years. I have not received detailed elevational plans of the buildings proposed or the desired landscaping therefore I am unable to clarify whether the visual impact of the scheme would be compliant with policy. On this basis, my response will focus upon the broad principle of the scheme together with any material considerations that I consider relevant if an application is submitted.

Relevant Policies of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy:

- DS1 – Development Strategy
- DS2 – Sustainable Development
- EN2 – Landscape
- EN5 – Heritage Assets
- EC1 – Business and Employment Development
- DMI2 – Transport Considerations
- DMG1 – General Considerations
- DMG2 – Strategic Consideration
- DME2 – Landscape and Townscape Protection
- DME4 – Protecting Heritage Assets
- DMB1 – Supporting Business Growth and the Local Economy

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

Principle of Development:

Conversion of the existing Nursing Home into three dwellings:

Any subsequent application would need to be accompanied by a supporting statement outlining that the current use and that the established business is no longer viable (refer to DMB1 of the Core Strategy). In

relation to viability and proof of sale a number of documents have been submitted to demonstrate that the premises have been actively marketed for a number of years.

My colleague in Planning Policy has issued a formal response based upon the initial information submitted as follows:

"While acknowledging the current residual housing requirement the Core Strategy (Policy EC1) is explicit in stating that proposals involving the loss of existing employment sites to other forms of development would need to demonstrate that there would be no adverse effect on the local economy. This is amplified within Policy DMB1 which sets out a series of tests for the conversion of such sites to other uses. Among other matters item 5 requires such proposals to show any attempts made to secure an alternative employment generating use for the site supported by relevant evidence.

As such the proposal would have to satisfactorily address the DMB1 tests before an alternative use, such as the one proposed, could be considered.

Therefore I consider that, in principle, this proposal could be not supported as it stands. This comment is made without prejudice to any other matters that you may consider to be material to this application. I trust that the above is of assistance".

Since the application was submitted the sales particulars have been submitted and further evidence provided at our meeting from the owners to demonstrate that they have marketed the premises as a Nursing Home for some time and that offers have been made and accepted, however the buyer could not get finance from the bank. In my opinion, there is evidence that the business as an established nursing home has been actively marketed. However the Authority would in my opinion need to see evidence that the business is no longer viable and that attempts have been made to secure an alternative employment generating use (as per DMB1 of the Core Strategy), both of which have not been provided at this stage.

On this basis, I am unable to confirm whether the change of use of the nursing home and thus the loss of an employment generating business and conversion to dwellings would be compliant with EC1 and DMB1 of the Core Strategy. I can only stress that if an application is submitted more evidence needs to be submitted to prove that the business is no longer viable (the submission of financial accounts that will remain exempt will be required) and that the business has been marketed for alternative uses for a period of 6 months.

Erection of two new-build dwellings:

The dwellings attached to the existing building are within the main settlement of Wilpshire which is shown on one of the Draft Proposal Maps for the Borough, all of which have reached an advanced stage in the adoption process. Wilpshire is identified within the Ribble Valley Core Strategy as a Tier 1 settlement. On the basis that the site is an infill plot within the main settlement of Wilpshire the principle of two market dwellings on this site is considered compliant with DS1 and DMG2 of the Core Strategy. Please be aware that any alternative use for the existing building may affect the suitability of the site for dwellings.

Visual Amenity:

Notwithstanding that the broad principle of the erection of two dwellings is considered acceptable the visual impact of the works upon the existing building, street scene and general locality will be a material consideration. I am mindful that the general design and appearance of development should be sympathetic to existing and proposed land uses in terms of its size, intensity and nature as well as scale, massing, style, features and building materials. Para 56/58 of the NPPF states that 'the government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and should respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials'.

In the absence of elevational and landscaping plans I am unable to establish the potential visual impact of the development. The size of each plot is however shown on the submitted plan and it would appear that they are likely to be two-storey.

I noted from my site visit that the date stone on the porch of the Nursing Home is 1791 and that a building is present on the 1845 historic maps. In my opinion the present form and appearance of the building, the stone wall to the frontage and grounds to the south interspersed with mature trees cumulatively represent a positive feature of the locality and should be retained as such. I am mindful that there is a general desire to sustain and enhance buildings of historic interest and that development should make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (refer to para. 126. Of the NPPF). Even in the absence of more detailed plans I have strong concern that the erection of a new-build property to either side of the existing building which is flush with the existing building and creation of parking to the frontage is likely in my opinion to significantly harm the present appearance of the site by diluting the present form and appearance of the building, which in my opinion is a non-designated heritage asset. On this basis, a heritage statement will be required as part of any subsequent application.

I consider that the introduction of five parking bays to the frontage of the properties would result in visual harm to the appearance of the street scene and would also result in the loss of the majority of the low stone boundary wall to the frontage of the site which in my opinion is a positive feature.

There are a number of mature trees surrounding the site and careful landscaping should be considered so as not to harm these trees or result in their loss. I must stress that there is a general presumption against the removal of any trees other than in exceptional circumstances where satisfactory works of mitigation or enhancement would be achieved (refer to DME2 of the Core Strategy).

Residential Amenity:

Any proposed scheme should be mindful of the residential amenity of occupants of neighbouring dwellings (refer to DMG1 of the Core Strategy). I noted from my site visit that the land levels on the site of the Nursing Home are higher than those of the residential bungalows to the rear (east). No plans have been submitted to clarify the proposed elevations; however it would appear that plot 3 is to include the extension to the rear thus resulting in the distance between the rear elevation of plot 3 and the property opposite being approx. 20 metres. There are a number of trees to the boundary of the site which currently offer some screening however it is unclear whether these are to remain. In any event, careful consideration will have to be made in ensuring that there is no overlooking or loss of privacy for existing residents to the east and west of the site as a result of proposed works.

Highways:

Upon reviewing the planning history of the site I noted that the original permission to convert the building to a nursing home in the 1980's included a parking area to the eastern side of the building however it appears this was never implemented. In the 1990's approval was granted for a first floor rear extension and extension to the southern gable elevation. At the request of LCC Highways at the time, five parking spaces were plotted on the site plan which included three to the northern side and two to the rear. At our meeting it appeared that the only area for parking was to the northern side of the building with no access to the rear.

I note that five parking bays for two vehicles each are proposed to the frontage of the properties. I have strong concern that this arrangement will conflict with other vehicles on Knowsley Road and vehicles entering and leaving the bungalows opposite (nos. 11,15 & 17). LCC Highways no longer offer pre-app advice to the Authority, however they are now offering pre-app advice to individuals and planning agents for a fee. I would strongly suggest that you contact them directly prior to a formal application being submitted in which further details can be found via the following link:

<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/business/business-services/pre-planning-application-highways-advice-service.aspx>

Other Matters:

The plan submitted (PHD/SB/200) shows that the rear garden areas of each property will continue up to 'Showley Brook'. It is not clear at this stage as to whether works will be carried out within close proximity of the Brook. As part of any subsequent application detailed plans should be submitted clarifying any fencing or hard and soft landscaping within close proximity of the Brook. For information, the Authority are likely to consult the Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) in which case any observations or comments received will be a material consideration.

Conclusion:

On the basis of the information submitted at this stage of enquiry, I consider that the broad principle of converting the Nursing Home into three dwellings would not be compliant with EC1 and DMB1 of the Core Strategy and therefore an application would be refused. If your client wishes to submit an application and as outlined within my response, I would strongly suggest that they submit alongside the information already supplied the finances of the business for the last few years (as well as other information as you see fit) in order to demonstrate to the Authority that the business is no longer viable. Furthermore, evidence that other avenues have been explored to market the building for alternative uses must also be submitted in order for the Authority to make a judgement as to whether the application is acceptable in principle.

I have significant concern that the visual impact of the development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the existing building and the appearance of the street scene. In short, I cannot foresee how any proposed scheme would mitigate any of the concerns I have previously raised with regards to the visual harm upon the appearance of the building. Furthermore, the parking arrangement as proposed in my opinion would not be supported and may have an impact upon highway safety.

Submission Requirements:

Should you proceed to the submission of a formal application irrespective of my advice, based on the nature of the proposal/site constraints it is my opinion that the Local Planning Authority would require the following information:

- Design and Access Statement
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment / Tree Constraints Plan to BS5837 standard
- Heritage Statement
- Bat Survey
- Proposed landscaping scheme
- Marketing Information and Financial Reports in order to assess the development against DMB1 and EC1 of the Core Strategy.

Please note this aforementioned required information may not be exhaustive and is provided on the basis of the level of information submitted. Failure to provide required information is likely to result in an application being made invalid until such information is received or potentially refused on the basis of insufficient information. The above observations have been provided on the basis of the level of information submitted and the comments contained within this response represent officer opinion only, at the time of writing, without prejudice to the final determination of any application submitted. Should you wish to discuss any of these matters further please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs Rachel Horton
Pre-Application Advice Officer