

MC/15/0869

Date Received: 17 March, 2015

Location: Chatham Golf Centre, Street End Road, Wayfield, ME5 0BG

Proposal: Construction of a two storey block comprising of four 2-bedroomed self-contained flats with associated parking, cycle store and amenity space (demolition of existing toilet block)

Applicant: Chatham Golf Ltd

Agent: Mr P Dodds Lawrences 16 Kneesworth Street Royston Herts SG8 5AA

Ward Luton & Wayfield

Recommendation of Officers to the Planning Committee, to be considered and determined by the Planning Committee at a meeting to be held on 3 June 2015.

Recommendation - Approval with Conditions

- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

- 2 The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: WPS/CG5/5 and WPS/CG5/6, received 17 March 2015 and WPS/CG5/7, received 23 March 2015.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

- 3 Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans, no development above slab level shall take place until details and samples of all materials, including red brick, render, tile hanging, and roof tile, to be used externally have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the appearance of the development is satisfactory and without prejudice to conditions of visual amenity in the locality, in accordance with Policy BNE1 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 4 Notwithstanding the detail shown on the approved plans, no part of the development shall be occupied until there has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping (hard and

soft) and boundary treatment. The approved boundary treatment shall be completed prior to first occupation and shall thereafter be retained. All planting, seeding and turfing comprised in the approved scheme of landscaping shall be implemented during the first planting season following occupation of the buildings or completion of the development, whichever is the earlier. Any trees or plants which within 5 years of planting are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: Pursuant to condition 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to protect and enhance the appearance and character of the site and locality, in accordance with Policy BNE1 and BNE6 of the Medway Local Plan 2003.

- 5 Notwithstanding the submitted plans, no part of the development shall be occupied until the rear parking area has been formed from permeable surfacing materials in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The submitted details shall also include details of the proposed bollards and these shall be provided on site prior to first occupation.. Thereafter it shall be kept available for such use and no permanent development, whether or not permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (or any order amending, revoking or re-enacting that Order) shall be carried out on the land so shown or in such a position as to preclude vehicular access to this reserved parking space.

Reason: Development without provision of adequate accommodation for the parking of vehicles is likely to lead to hazardous on-street parking and to accord with Policy T13. and in the interests of sustainability.

- 6 Prior to any development above slab level, a scheme of acoustic protection for the proposed flats shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme must demonstrate that the internal noise levels within the residential units will conform to the indoor ambient noise levels for dwellings identified by BS8233 2014: Guidance on Sound Insulation and Noise Reduction for Buildings. All works which form part of the approved scheme shall be completed before any part of the development is occupied and shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of residential amenity in accordance with Local Plan Policy BNE2.

- 7 Prior to first occupation of any of the units hereby approved, details of the cycle storage facilities shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and provided on site in accordance with the approved details. The facilities shall thereafter be retained on site.

Reason: In the interests of sustainability and visual amenity.

For the reasons for this recommendation for approval please see Planning Appraisal Section and Conclusions at the end of this report.

Proposal

The application seeks full planning permission for the construction of a two storey block comprising of four 2-bedroomed self-contained flats with associated parking, cycle store and amenity space. The proposal includes for the demolition of the existing toilet block.

Each flat will comprise a kitchen, lounge/diner, 2 bedrooms and a bathroom. There will be a landscaped area to the front. To the rear there will be small amenity areas (mostly for privacy) for the ground floor flats and a parking area for 6 vehicles served from the existing access to the Golf club car park.

Site Area/Density

Site Area: 0.056 hectares (0.14 acres)

Site Density: 66.6 dph (28.6 dpa)

Relevant Planning History

91/0707/A	Renewal of planning permission ME/91/0707, for the conversion of disused public, convenience into a shop with single, storey rear extension Decision Approval with Conditions Decided 01/04/1997
91/0707	Conversion of disused public convenience, into a shop with single storey rear, extension Decision Approval with Conditions Decided 11/02/1992
86/530	Change of use from disused toilet block to class, i retail shop Decision Approval with Conditions Decided 17/11/1986

Representations

The application has been advertised on site and by individual neighbour notification to the owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties. Kent County Council Ecology has also been consulted on the proposal.

3 Letters of representation have been received raising objection to the proposal on the following grounds:

- Owners of the new properties may be cat owners and as there are already a large number of cats in the area, this may result in an over population of cats

- The new development would impact on cats' roaming area.
- The details provided within the submission are misleading. The toilet facility did not occupy the majority of the site as stated.
- There seems to be a contradiction on the number of parking spaces remaining for use by the Golf Club as a result of the proposed development, 21 or 27?
- How will the development benefit the Golf Centre?
- Sets precedent for further development of the car park area.
- The proposed flats are within close proximity to a Teenage Shelter, and future occupiers would suffer from noise disturbance coming from this shelter.
- The proposed flats would also be close to a child's play area and therefore further noise disturbance.
- Highway safety. Additional traffic as a result of the proposal raising s safety issues for an already busy road.
- Large amount of wildlife habitat. Area is enjoyed by dog walkers etc. If application goes ahead the area would fall victim to urban sprawl.
- Building work will cause a large amount of inconvenience.

Development Plan

The Development Plan for the area comprises the Medway Local Plan 2003. The policies referred to within this document and used in the processing of this application have been assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework, 2012 and are considered to conform.

Planning Appraisal

Main Issues

The main issues for consideration in determining this planning application are:

- Principle of the development, given it's location within Protected Open Space as defined within the Medway Local Plan, 2003.
- Design and impact on the Street Scene.
- Amenity Issues for neighbours and future occupants
- Highways and Parking.

Principle

The general thrust of national and local planning policy is to secure sustainable patterns of development through the efficient re-use of previously developed land, concentrating development at accessible locations. The proposal is considered to facilitate the achievement of these objectives through the redevelopment of a site which, despite its open space designation, is previously developed land in an accessible location.

The site is shown on the Local Plan Proposals Map as forming part of surrounding Protected Open Space (Policy L3 of Medway Local Plan) and an Area of Local Landscape Importance (ALLI)(Policy BNE34 of Medway Local Plan), although it is clearly segregated from the Protected Sites by fencing and by virtue of it's current

leisure use (which would not be lost as a result of the scheme). The toilet block itself has sat neglected for some period of time, and over the years the site has become overgrown with vegetation. The current use of the wider site and the neglected nature of the redevelopment site itself, in addition to the previous use as a public toilet has meant that the site has not functioned as useable open space and its current appearance detracts from the character of the area..

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) advises that 'previously developed land' is land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land and any associated fixed surface infrastructure. The presence of the former toilet block and hard standing do not sit comfortably within their surroundings, adding little in the way of a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the wider area. It is considered that the site continues to constitute previously developed land in accordance with the definition in the NPPF.

The site itself is located on the west side of Street End Road within the Luton area of Chatham. The wider site is home to the Chatham Golf Centre. The application site itself makes use of part of the car park area for the Golf Club. The site is currently laid to hardstanding and the front of the site is currently home to a disused building last used as a public toilet. A bus stop is positioned immediately to the front of the application site. It is therefore considered that in principle, the application site is well placed for a small redevelopment to provide residential uses under the provisions of Local Plan Policy H4 (Housing in Urban Areas), which considers that redevelopment and infilling for residential purposes is acceptable in principle providing a clear improvement in the local environment will result.

Within urban areas the retention of public and private open space or recreational and amenity value is important. Medway Council attaches great importance to the retention of recreational and amenity open space in urban areas and recognises that once built on, open space is likely to be lost to the community forever. The loss of open space as a result of development has been raised as a concern via representation to this planning application. Policy L3 (Protected open Space) of the Medway Local Plan (the Local Plan) seeks to protect the loss of existing formal open space, informal open space, allotments or amenity land unless certain criteria are met. As the Golf Club use would remain, and no useable open space would be lost as a result of the development, the application in this instance is considered to be in accordance with Local Plan Policy L3 (i), which indicates that a development may be acceptable if sports and recreational facilities can best be implemented, or retained and enhanced through redevelopment of a small part of the site. In this particular case the sale of a proportion of the site would aid in ensuring that the Golf Centre facility is retained. The development would not set precedent for further development of the Golf Centre site, which is to be retained.

As the proposal meets one of the set criteria listed under Local Plan Policy L3, it is not in this instance considered a departure from the aims and objectives of Development Plan Policy. In addition, the site is, as discussed, previously developed land, which does not constitute useable open space and does not function as such due to the site's location and previously developed nature and the fact that it is physically separated from the Open Space and ALLI as a result of an existing leisure use. Principle policy support for the redevelopment of the site is found under

Paragraph 111 of the NPPF, which advises that decisions should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has previously been developed, provided it is not of high environmental value. It is considered that not all open spaces are of equal merit and some, such as the site the subject of this application, may be suitable for alternative uses. In this instance, it is considered that its visual environmental value is low (given its previous use and current state) and that a visual improvement to this portion of land could be achieved through appropriate redevelopment. Design quality, as advocated in the NPPF (as referred to in the design section below), is also important given its prominent location along the street frontage of Street End Road. In addition, whilst clearly resulting in the loss of a small proportion of a site which forms designated open space and ALLI, it would not result in the loss of useable open space, or cause material harm to the landscape character or function of the area, with the remainder of the Golf Club being kept and preserved as such in accordance with the provisions of Local Plan Policies L3 and BNE34 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The proposal can be considered acceptable in principle under the provisions set out under Local Plan Policies H4, L3 and BNE34 and the National Planning Policy Framework provided that the design is of good quality.

Street Scene & Design

Development Plan Policy places considerable emphasis on the importance of achieving good design to ensure that all new developments are appropriate to the shape, size and location of the site. Local Plan Policy BNE1 seeks to ensure that the design of development is appropriate in relation to the character and functioning of the surrounding area.

The application site is currently a neglected site, providing limited value to the area. The proposed development and indeed the proposed design approach is considered to assist in the enhancement of the local character of the area. Although there are no other purpose built flats within the vicinity, the proposed four 2-bed flats on the site would not be considered uncharacteristic of the area. Their design and appearance is considered to be similar to two large semi-detached properties, which are common in this location. Set back from the road side and benefiting from front garden/landscaped areas, access to the development would be via a central access door, with two flats either side of this central corridor at ground and first floor level. The development itself would also be separated from existing residential development by Street End Road, and as little residential development exists on the north west side of Street End Road, the scale of the proposed flats would not be obviously uncharacteristic, and most certainly would not result in a negative impact on the character of the street scene as a whole.

The proposed design is modest, and the use of materials not uncharacteristic of those used within existing development in the area. The use of red brick, render and tile hanging is found opposite the development site and further along Wayfield Road. The introduction of first floor gabled window features and gable ended roof design is also common place. Locally, development is of mixed design, although the material palette is primarily red brick and render. The proposal development reflects these common features. The modest design is considered appropriate in this instance as

the development would be 'stand alone' and therefore, would ensure that it was not visually intrusive within the street scene. Paragraph 56, 58 and 61 of the NPPF advises of the importance of design within the built environment, as such notwithstanding the details provided within the submission, a condition regarding the submission of details of materials is recommended.

The footprint of the proposed flats is broadly in keeping with many of the properties in this immediate locality. The ridge height would be a maximum of 8.5m. Overall, the proposed scale of the proposed development would sit well within this infill site providing enclosure and resulting in an overall improvement to the street scene when compared to existing circumstance.

The proposed development would face Street End Road and align with the Sports Building adjacent to the site. Buffers of soft landscaping would be provided between the apartments and the highway footpath (including bus shelter) and to the rear adjoining car park. Particular emphasis would be made in respect of the planting behind the existing bus shelter. The car park facility would be located to the rear of the site. Notwithstanding the detail provided on the submitted plans, a condition is recommended to require the submission of detailed landscaping scheme. The landscaping scheme would be expected to include hard standing details, soft planting and boundary treatment.

Overall, the proposed development has attempted to take a sensitive approach to the existing constraints in relation to the existing topography and the use of an existing access road which will assist with the integration of the surrounding built environments. .

It is considered that the proposal accords with the provisions set out within Local Plan Policies BNE1 and H4 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Amenity

All development should secure the amenities of its future occupants and protect those amenities enjoyed by nearby and adjacent properties. According to Policy BNE2, the design of development should have regard to: privacy, daylight and sunlight; noise, vibration, light, heat, smell and airborne emissions and activity levels and traffic generation.

Each flat would typically consist of a small entrance lobby, lounge/diner and kitchen, bathroom, two bedrooms and cupboard /storage built in. The accommodation would be of a generous size, measuring approximately 63.9 sqm, which is acceptable for a two bed, three person dwelling according to the advice set out within the Medway Housing Design Standards, 2011. The individual rooms provide sufficient living space, in line with the guidance and therefore the amenity provision of future occupants is considered acceptable under the provisions set out under Local Plan Policy BNE2. Whilst the flats would benefit from only very small external private garden areas to the rear, the site is surrounded by Public Open Space and as such the development is considered acceptable in this regard.

Given the location of the development away from other residential properties, it is

considered that the impact on neighbour amenity would be minimal, with no impact in terms of overlooking and privacy, loss of sunlight and day light. In addition, any impact in terms of noise and vibration that could be experienced at construction phase would be short lived and temporary. Concern has been raised in terms of the impact on neighbouring amenity from additional traffic. The development is for four residential units, served by an existing access to the site. The development is unlikely to result in a large number of vehicles using this access point (above and beyond what is already experienced) and as such, unlikely to cause harm to residential amenity in terms of traffic generation in this regard.

Concern has been raised with regard to the potential noise disturbance from the adjacent Sports building (pavilion) used socially by younger members of the community. Future occupants would purchase flats here already knowing the adjacent facility exists. The location of the development in close proximity to the bus stop and golf centre may be subject of noise disturbance from activities associated with these uses. It is therefore recommended that a condition be imposed requesting the submission of a scheme of acoustic protection.

There are no objections to the proposal under the provisions set out under Policy BNE2.

Energy Efficiency

A key aim of the NPPF is to promote energy efficient, sustainable new homes. Policy BNE4 of the Local Plan is compliant with the aims of the NPPF in this regard. Energy efficiency measures will be sought within development proposals, providing there will be no detriment on the amenity. Proposals should have regard to appropriate siting , appropriate use, energy efficient technology, high standards of insulation and use of building materials. In the case of this proposal, the applicant has aimed to achieve a minimum sustainability of Design Code 3 and if possible Code Level 4.

There are no objections to the proposal under the provisions of the NPPF and Policy BNE4.

Highways

The proposed parking includes for 6 off road parking spaces, resulting in one parking space per unit, with an additional 2 for visitors. The parking provision in this regard accords with the Council's vehicle parking standards. The development would also benefit from secure cycle storage for use by future occupants.

A shared access in this location for this relatively small number of people is not likely to be problematic. Collapsible bollards to the entrance of the car parking area for the flats is proposed preventing customers visiting the Golf Centre from using resident spaces. The number of spaces retained for the Golf Centre, following the development would be 21 (a resultant loss of 6 spaces), which will continue to provide adequate parking for the Golf Centre, with no detrimental impact in this regard.

There are no objections to the proposed development under the provisions set out

under Local Plan Policies T1 and T1

Local Finance Considerations

There are no local finance considerations relevant to this development.

Conclusions and Reasons for Approval

In summary, the portion of land which makes up a small portion of the car park area for the Golf Centre and former public toilet site is considered to be previously developed land. The site has limited open space value for the reasons discussed. Whilst the site is designated in the Local Plan as open space, it is considered that that the proposal meets the criteria set out under Local Plan Policy L3 (i) and in addition, the site does not fulfil the true purposes of this 'Open Space' designation and is therefore suitable for residential development. The development is acceptable in terms of its impact on the street scene and character of the local area by way of design and layout for the reasons given above, and there are no concerns raised with regard to amenity protection.

As such the proposed scheme for four 2-bedroomed flats are in general accordance with the above mentioned Development Plan Policies and is hereby recommended for approval.

The application would normally fall under Officer delegated powers of determination, but is being reported to Committee due to the number of representations received expressing a view contrary to the recommendation.

Background Papers

The relevant background papers relating to the individual applications comprise: the applications and all supporting documentation submitted therewith; and items identified in any Relevant History and Representations section within the report.

Any information referred to is available for inspection in the Planning Offices of Medway Council at Gun Wharf, Dock Road, Chatham ME4 4TR and here <http://publicaccess.medway.gov.uk/online-applications/>