

Planning Committee

Wednesday the 14th September 2022 at 7.00pm



Update Report for the Committee

The following notes and attached papers will be referred to at the meeting and will provide updated information to the Committee to reflect changes in circumstances and officer advice since the reports on the agenda were prepared

3. Requests for Deferral/Withdrawal

None

4. Schedule of Applications

- (a) 21/01250/AS - Oakleigh House, Watercress Lane, Ashford, Kent - Redevelopment of site to provide 54 apartments for Independent Living for Older People and 13 apartments for Adults with Learning Disabilities, with associated communal facilities, landscaping and parking.

The applicant (Ashford Borough Council) has submitted additional information in support of the application. The additional information is summarised below:

Current housing need:

- Currently 155 people aged between 50-59 on council's waiting list for affordable housing
- 266 people aged 60+ on council's waiting list for affordable housing

(Officer comment: this information identifies the need for housing for older people as required by Policy HOU18 of the Local Plan and is consistent with paragraph 125 of the Officer Report which attributes weight to the provision of specialist housing).

Management and staffing arrangements:

- Older persons' accommodation will be managed under ABC's DAHLIA brand with a dedicated scheme manager. There will be no overnight accommodation for the scheme manager.
- The learning disability accommodation is anticipated to work in a similar way to the arrangements at Cherry Tree Court (LD accommodation at Farrow Court), which is managed by KCC. There will be no staff overnight accommodation.

Communal facilities proposed:

- A community room, located so as to act as a focus for the wider community;
- A hair & therapy suite with independent 'shop front' access from Watercress Lane;
- A meeting room which could also be used as an activity room for residents;
- Secure parking for mobility scooters;
- A laundry;
- A guest suite for visiting relatives & friends;
- Offices for Scheme Managers;

- Landscaped communal gardens, with vibrant secure courtyard spaces incorporating a variety of sensory planting & places to sit, together with an area for residents to grow their own fruit & vegetables.

Pre-app consultation:

- Former residents of Oakleigh House January 2020
- Local community July 2020
- Design South East review panel August 2020
- Members briefing December 2020
- Multiple site visits with Ward Member Cllr Suddards

Open space calculation:

- The Public Green Spaces & Water Environment SPD requires the provision of informal green open space to be 2ha per 1000 persons, ideally within 400m of a development site, which for this site equates to 3.24ha.
- The total area of available public open space within this radius is 3.29ha. This figure includes that officially designated as public open space on the current, updated Policies Map, with the addition of the land immediately to the south of the site, (which is 0.26ha excluding the parking area & which provides the same function as the application site). All of this land is the informal green space typology.
- In addition to this, there is approx. 0.5ha of green corridor open space surrounding Singleton Lake within a 400m radius of the site, with a network of footpaths leading virtually directly to it from the site.
- There are also numerous further pockets of land within the 400m radius of varying sizes which are not designated as open space however they provide informal amenity space available for use by local residents, with a total area of 5.13ha.
- The open space which will be the site of the learning disability accommodation is 0.19ha. Approx. 22% of this will be retained as a single area of public open space, plus there will be additional open space on the southern corner of this site.

(Officer comment: this information is consistent with the assessment set out in paragraphs 23-36 of the Officer Report and does not affect the conclusions that the local community would retain access to a sufficient quantity of alternative open space in the area in accordance with the Council's adopted OSS and Open Spaces SPD).

Sustainability key principles:

- Targeting zero carbon in operation, being the first ABC housing development to do so – underfloor space heating & hot water provided by ground source heat pumps & renewable on-site energy generation via photovoltaic panels connected to the landlord's supply;
- Following a fabric first approach;
- Achieving resilience by reducing overheating & incorporating sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS);
- LETI Pioneer Project registration – the London Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI) is a voluntary network of over 1000 built environment professionals that are working together to put the UK on the path to a zero carbon future. Being registered as a LETI Pioneer Project will allow ABC to join the LETI network & showcase the project's zero carbon credentials.

(Officer comment: this additional information further supports the conclusion set out in paragraph 105 of the Officer Report that the proposed development has been designed to address and mitigate the risks of climate change and is consistent with national and local planning policy and guidance).

Financial Viability:

- The financial viability of the scheme has been assessed using SDS ProVal software. The proposed development achieves an Investment Rate of Return (IRR) only marginally above the minimum acceptable level, due to the requirement to achieve nutrient neutrality & aspiration for a scheme which is zero carbon in operation, both of which require significant financial investment. Should it be suggested that the LD units are removed from the proposals, the impact on viability is that the IRR is reduced to the breakeven point, leaving no room for comfort as to financial viability.

(Officer comment: the viability of the proposals has not been evidenced or independently reviewed and Officer's can therefore give little weight to this information in the assessment of the application).

There are no further updates and no amendments are required to the Officer Report or Recommendation.

- (b)** 21/01654/AS - Ashford International Sports and Social Club, Beaver Road, Ashford, Kent, TN23 7SG - Demolition and redevelopment of the site to provide a replacement Club facility and the erection of 31 no. apartments across 1x three-storey and 1x five-storey building with associated access, parking and landscaping.

The applicant for this planning application is Ashford International Sports and Social Club (AISSC).

Paragraph 87 of the Officer Report relates to Archaeology. Since the publication of the Officer Report, Kent County Council's Archaeological Advisor has commented on the planning application. In summary, they note the potential for remains associated with Early Prehistoric activity on this site close to the alignment of a Roman road and in view of Roman and geo-archaeological potential recommend any grant of planning permission is subject to a condition to secure archaeological field evaluation works and any necessary investigation, recording and reporting to ensure that features of archaeological interest are properly examined and recorded. In accordance with the requirements of Policy ENV15 of the Local Plan I therefore recommend that a further condition (34) be added as below:

34. Details of archaeological field evaluation, investigation and recording works.

I also recommend that a further Note relating to Breeding Birds is added to any decision in accordance with Kent County Council Ecological Advice Service's recommendation as below:

- *The applicant is reminded that, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (section 1), it is an offence to remove, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built. Planning consent for a development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this Act. Breeding bird habitat is present on the application site and assumed to contain nesting birds between 1st March and 31st August, unless a recent survey has been undertaken by a competent ecologist and has shown that nesting birds are not present.*

- (c)** 22/00487/AS - Site Adjacent to 18 Chapmans Close, Challock, Ashford, TN25 4AX - Erection of two storey dwelling with associated parking

Statement from ABC Housing Services (The Applicant)

This application revolves around an innovative affordable housing solution that will deliver a bespoke home for a family in Challock.

A local family with a profoundly disabled son, whose needs are complex and are increasing over time, are currently in accommodation that is not appropriate for their needs. These proposals would rectify that situation and have been considered by the family and the Occupational Therapist who has been working with the family.

The son is in his early twenties, his mother and sister act as his first-line carers. They have always lived in Challock and rely on their local support network. The family have endured a long road to get to this point following an unsuccessful attempt to secure them an adapted home on another development coming forward in the village. Therefore the Housing Services acquired number 18 in order to access the land to the side of it to create this much-needed, personalised home.

Moving the family to another area would be detrimental to the family's wellbeing. The application site is the only one available in the local area. Larger properties that could be adapted for such purposes just do not come forward through section 106 agreements, hence why this option is being taken.

The size and layout of the home is largely dictated by the needs of the disabled son who has a large walker and needs assistance to move around the house. A 'catslide' roof on the front elevation echoes the roofs of existing neighbouring houses, helping it to fit in with the surrounding development. The proposed house will be heated and insulated to the highest standards having an air source heat pump and underfloor heating along with photovoltaic panels mounted on the roof.

Foul drainage will run into the existing communal private foul water treatment plant which will be renewed and enlarged as part of this project to the benefit of the existing homes and the proposed new home it will serve.

A mature Mulberry tree on which a tree preservation order has recently been sought will be retained and protected.

The amount of on street parking is unaffected by this proposal.

These plans are thought through, they represent not only a new home for the Councils Housing Revenue Account stock, but a chance for a new life for the family who sorely need it.

(d) 22/00602/AS - Annexe at, Mersham Manor, Church Close, Mersham, Kent - Variation of condition 9 (approved plans) on planning permission 19/01602/AS to alter the materials, height and footprint of the annexe

In support of their application, the agent has submitted an additional letter referencing the Inspector's appeal decision (as set out in the report), particularly the improvements gained to the setting of the listed building by removing the existing annexe and the location of the new annexe and also the landscaping. Photographs were also provided pre/post build as comparison (see below)



Condition 2: Landscaping implementation

To require retention for 5 years and if necessary replacement within that time period.

(e) 22/00673/AS - 383 Hythe Road, Willesborough, Ashford, TN24 0QF - Proposed Ground Floor Rear Extension and vehicular crossover with hardstanding

The agent has submitted an aerial photographs of the site as existing and one with the extension indicatively shown as set out below:



Figure 1 - existing aerial view - site outlined in red



Figure 2 - proposed aerial view - site in red