

APPLICATION NO:	14/00013/FUL
LOCATION:	Shepherds Road, Castlefields, Runcorn
PROPOSAL:	Construction of 17 no. 2 bed 4 person houses, 4 no. 1 bed 2 person houses and 6 no. 1 bed 2 person apartments.
WARD:	Halton Castle
PARISH:	N/A
CASE OFFICER:	Glen Henry
AGENT(S) / APPLICANT(S):	Plus Dane Housing
DEVELOPMENT PLAN ALLOCATION:	
Halton Unitary Development Plan (2005)	RG6 Action Area 6 Castlefields and Norton Priory
DEPARTURE REPRESENTATIONS:	No 0
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve subject to Conditions.
SITE MAP	

1. APPLICATION SITE

1.1 The Site and Surroundings

Site of approximately 0.43Ha located at Shepherds Row, Castlefields. The site was formerly occupied by a block of deck access flats which have been demolished.

1.2 Planning History

None directly relevant

1.3 Background

This scheme forms part of the wider regeneration proposals for Castlefields which seek to replace existing deck access and outdated dwellings with new build and refurbished dwellings.

2. THE APPLICATION

2.1 Proposal Description

The scheme proposes development of 17 no. 2 bed 4 person houses, 4 no. 1 bed 2 person houses and 6 no. 1 bed 2 person apartments on the site of a former deck access block. The properties are proposed to be social rented or shared ownership by Plus Dane Housing.

2.2 Documentation

The planning application is supported by a Design and Access Statement and Tree Survey.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in March 2012 to set out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied.

Paragraph 196 states that the planning system is plan led. Applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as per the requirements of legislation, but that the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions. Paragraph 197 states that in assessing and determining development proposals, local planning authorities should apply the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 14 states that this presumption in favour of sustainable development means that development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where a development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF; or specific policies within the NPPF indicate that development should be restricted.

3.2 Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2005)

The site lies entirely within Action Area 6 Castlefields and Norton Priory in the Halton Unitary Development Plan. The site is identified as a Potential Reinvestment Site in the adopted Supplementary Planning Document for Castlefields and Norton Priory Action Area. The following National and Council Unitary Development Plan policies and policy documents are of particular relevance: -

RG6	Action Area 6 Castlefields and Norton Priory
BE1	General Requirements for Development
BE2	Quality of Design
H2	Design and Density of New Residential Development
H3	Provision of Recreational Greenspace
TP6	Cycling Provision as part of New Development
TP7	Pedestrian Provision as Part of New Development
TP12	Car Parking
PR14	Contaminated Land
TP7	Pedestrian Provision as Part of New Development
TP17	Safe Travel for All

3.3 Halton Core Strategy (2012)

The following Core Strategy Policies are considered to be of particular relevance:

CS2 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
CS3 Housing Supply and Locational Priorities
CS12 Housing Mix
CS13 Affordable Housing
CS18 High Quality Design
CS19 Sustainable Development and Climate Change
CS23 Managing Pollution and Risk

3.4 Relevant SPDs

Castlefields and Norton Priory Action Area; New Residential Development SPD; Designing for Community Safety SPD; Draft Open Space Provision SPD are of particular relevance

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 HBC Highways– No Objection in principle

4.2 HBC Open Spaces – No Objection in principle

4.3 United Utilities – No objections subject to condition relating to drainage details and informative in relation to public sewers.

5. REPRESENTATIONS

5.1 None received

6. ASSESSMENT

6.1 Principle of Development

The site lies entirely within Action Area 6 Castlefields and Norton Priory in the Halton Unitary Development Plan. Formerly occupied by a deck access block and associated car park, the block has recently been demolished. The site is identified as within a Primarily Residential Area in the adopted Supplementary Planning Document for Castlefields and Norton Priory Action Area.

The proposals are considered to accord with the adopted SPD for Castlefields and Norton Priory Action Area with respect to the contribution of the scheme to the wider area regeneration strategy. Proposals for residential development are considered acceptable in principle.

6.2 Design Character and Amenity

The scheme proposes a mix of residential houses and apartments constructed predominantly of a mix of traditional brick with contrasting brick and render detail with traditional ridged tiled roof comparable with similar properties in earlier schemes.

The scheme is a relatively simple replacement of linear blocks of apartments and houses following a similar line to the previously demolished deck access block. Floor slabs are staggered to account for the changes in levels across the site. It is considered that in terms of the built form and design of the dwellings and apartments the scheme is of a good quality and, in keeping with existing residential properties and previous similar developments in the area. It is considered that appropriate separation and privacy is provided within the site. It is considered that appropriate outlook and separation distances are maintained for existing and surrounding properties.

Conditions relating to hours of construction and wheel wash facilities need to be included on any permission given to ensure that disturbance to existing local residents are kept to a minimum. Conditions relating to materials to be used, landscaping and highways provision are also required to ensure the quality of the final scheme.

6.3 Highways, Parking and Servicing

House driveways and the parking court for apartment swill be accessed direct off the existing carriageway and a new pedestrian footpath will be constructed along the length of Hedge Hey to serve the proposed dwellings.

The Councils Highways Engineer has confirmed that they are satisfied with the scheme and therefore raise no objection in principle. They have however

requested a plan showing vehicle tracking of a HBC refuse wagon to demonstrate appropriate access and turning for Hedge Hey. The applicant has responded that:

- Carrying out the study will cost approximately £1000;
- that they are not creating or altering vehicular highway;
- that refuse lorries have always used, and currently use the existing road serving existing properties and the former deck access flat and presumably are able to turn there;
- this requirement has not been requested before for similar applications (The Butts, Kingshead, Keepers, Caesars Close)
- The application scheme actually results in a net reduction in dwellings of 13 from the flats which have been demolished, meaning that the new proposal actually improves the situation;
- Altering turning areas will not only result in valuable existing parking spaces being lost, but also result in substantial expense which is not in the budget and would very likely put the scheme in jeopardy.

It is not considered that such a request, or any request for alterations to the highway can be justified. Adequate provision can be made for highway circulation, servicing and parking.

6.4 Contamination

The Council's Environmental Health Officers have confirmed that, due to the sensitivity of the proposed use, detailed ground investigation should be provided. No objection is raised in principle however and it is considered that this can be adequately secured by condition.

6.5 Trees

The proposals will result in the loss of a number of mature and semi-mature trees from the site. The application is supported by a detailed tree survey. Whilst the trees are considered to offer amenity value and loss of trees is regrettable, it is not considered possible to retain the trees through the development. It is considered that the wider benefits of the scheme outweigh any harm resulting from the loss especially in the context of the wider regeneration proposals for the Castlefields area.

The aspirations of the Castlefields Tree Strategy can be achieved with scope for replacement planting identified within the proposals. It is considered that protection of trees to be retained and replacement planting can be adequately secured by condition. The Councils Open Spaces Officer has not raised objection.

6.6 Affordable Housing

Policy CS13: Affordable Housing of the emerging Core Strategy seeks to secure 25% of total residential units for affordable housing provision. The scheme proposes 12 houses and flats within the social rented sector with possible options for shared ownership. Plus Dane is a registered provider of social housing and the proposals are therefore considered to accord with the Policy CS13 and the adopted Affordable Housing SPD.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The scheme will play an important role in the on-going redevelopment and regeneration of the area. The scheme is considered to offer a good quality of development suited to the character of the site and the wider area and that the requirements and aspirations of UDP policy, the Castlefields Masterplan and SPD can be met.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Approve subject to conditions.

9. CONDITIONS

1. Standard 3 year permission (BE1)
2. Condition specifying amended plans (BE1)
3. Materials condition, requiring the submission and approval of the materials to be used (BE2)
4. Landscaping condition, requiring the submission of both hard and soft landscaping to include replacement tree planting. (BE2)
5. Boundary treatments including retaining walls to be submitted and approved in writing. (BE2)
6. Wheel cleansing facilities to be submitted and approved in writing. (BE1)
7. Requiring development be carried out in accordance with the submitted finished floor and site levels. (BE1)
8. Construction and delivery hours to be adhered to throughout the course of the development. (BE1)
9. Details of foul and surface water drainage details (BE1)
10. Vehicle access, parking, servicing etc to be constructed prior to occupation of properties/ commencement of use. (BE1)
11. Conditions relating to the agreement and implementation of, bin and cycle parking provision (BE1/ TP6)
12. conditions relating to restriction of permitted development rights relating to extensions and outbuildings and boundary fences etc. (BE1)
13. Site investigation, including mitigation to be submitted and approved in writing. (PR14)

14. Conditions relating to tree protection during construction (BE1).

10. SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

As required by:

- Paragraph 186 – 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework;
- The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment No.2) Order 2012; and
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2012.

This statement confirms that the local planning authority has worked proactively with the applicant to secure developments that improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of Halton.