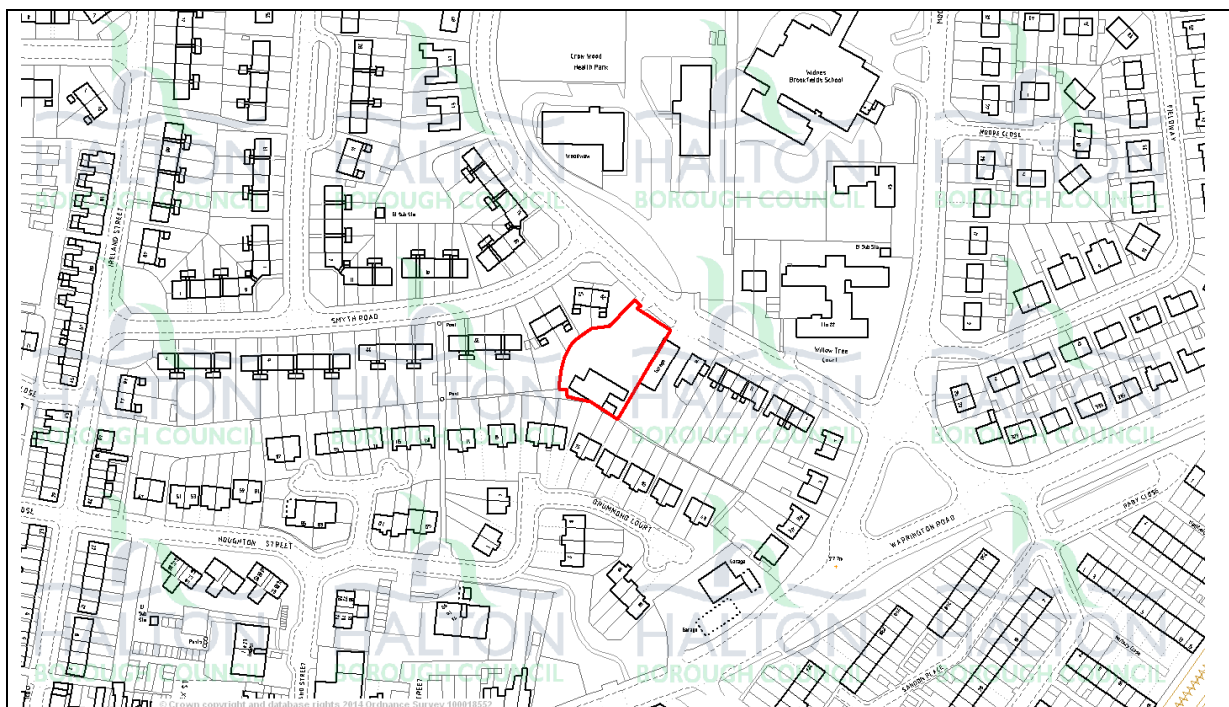


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| APPLICATION NO: | 14/00168/FUL |
| LOCATION: | Land to the west of 19 Crow Wood Lane, Widnes. |
| PROPOSAL: | Proposed erection of 10 no. 1 bedroom apartments with individual access doors arranged in 2no. 2 storey height blocks with associated landscaping and parking. |
| WARD: | Halton View |
| PARISH: | None |
| CASE OFFICER: | Jeff Eaton |
| AGENT(S) / APPLICANT(S): | AGENT – Dave Dickerson, DK Architects. APPLICANT – Halton Housing Trust. |
| DEVELOPMENT PLAN ALLOCATION: | Greenspace. |
| National Planning Policy Framework (2012) Halton Unitary Development Plan (2005) Halton Core Strategy (2013) Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan (2013) | |
| DEPARTURE | Yes |
| REPRESENTATIONS: | No representations received from the publicity given to the application. |
| KEY ISSUES: | Principle of Development, Design, Amenity, Affordable Housing, Open Space, Highways, Ground Contamination, Biodiversity. |
| RECOMMENDATION: | Grant planning permission subject to conditions and the signing of a S106 agreement securing a commuted sum in lieu of on-site open space provision. |
| SITE MAP | |



1. APPLICATION SITE

1.1 The Site

The site subject of the application is located on Crow Wood Lane in Widnes. The site is overgrown and vacant and is an allocated greenspace site on the Halton Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map.

Located to both the north west and south west of the site are residential properties. Located to the south east of the site is a vacant commercial garage with residential properties located beyond this. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in nature.

2. THE APPLICATION

2.1 The Proposal

The application proposes the erection of 10no. 1 bedroom apartments with individual access doors arranged in 2no. 2 storey height blocks with associated landscaping and parking.

2.2 Documentation

The planning application is supported by a Design and Access Statement, and a Preliminary Risk Assessment (Phase 1 Desk Study).

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.

3.2 Halton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (2005)

The site is designated as a Greenspace in the Halton Unitary Development Plan. The following policies within the adopted Unitary Development Plan are considered to be of particular relevance;

- BE1 General Requirements for Development;
- BE2 Quality of Design;
- GE6 Protection of Designated Greenspace;
- GE21 Species Protection;
- GE27 Protection of Trees and Woodlands;
- PR2 Noise Nuisance;
- PR4 Light Pollution and Nuisance;
- PR14 Contaminated Land;
- PR16 Development and Flood Risk;
- TP12 Car Parking;
- H3 Provision of Recreational Greenspace;

3.3 Halton Core Strategy (2013)

The following policies, contained within the Core Strategy are 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 Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan (2013)

The following policies, contained within the Joint Merseyside and Halton Waste Local Plan are of relevance:

- WM8 Waste Prevention and Resource Management;

- WM9 Sustainable Waste Management Design and Layout for New Development.

4. CONSULTATIONS

4.1 Highways and Transportation Development Control

No objection to the proposed development subject to the attachment of a number of conditions.

4.2 Open Spaces Officer

There are several trees scattered around the site which are mostly semi mature but of low amenity value. There are a few mature specimens (one holly and two fruit trees located in the centre of the site) but they appear to be in poor condition and again have limited value. The other notable feature on the site is the mature privet hedge to the front of the site but it is not long enough or diverse enough to qualify for hedgerow regs.

There is no vegetation worthy of retention on this site; however any clearance works should comply with current bird nesting legislation.

4.3 Environmental Health – Ground Contamination

No objection to the proposed development subject to the attachment of a condition which would secure a site investigation, remediation plan and a completion statement.

4.4 Environmental Protection

No observations received at the time of writing this report.

5. REPRESENTATIONS

5.1 The application has been advertised by a press advert in the Widnes & Runcorn World on 16/04/2014, a site notice posted on Crow Wood Lane on 23/04/2014 and 16 neighbour notification letters sent on 11/04/2014.

5.2 Following the receipt of amended plans, 16 neighbour notification letters were sent on 15/05/2014.

5.3 No representations have been received from the publicity given to the application.

6. ASSESSMENT

6.1 Principle of Development

The site is allocated as a Greenspace in the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

The site history has revealed that the site previously benefitted from an outline planning permission (07/00699/OUT & 10/00231/S73) for 2 pairs of semi-detached 3-bed properties and two 2-bed apartments between 2007 and 2013. The previous proposal noted that the site had previously been used as a small holding/private allotment and was not allocated as such on the Halton Unitary Development Plan Proposals Map probably due to the fact that it is in private ownership. It also noted the poor condition of the site and the fact that it was not used by the owner and that it would likely degrade in future years to the detriment of this residential area.

The above considerations are still considered to be relevant in that this is a vacant site in poor condition which does not make a positive contribution to the locality. Based on this and the fact that the principle of developing this site for housing has previously been developed, the principle of development is considered to be acceptable.

6.2 Highway Considerations

The application proposes some modifications to the access from Crow Wood Lane to serve the proposed development. The Highway Officer raises no objection to the proposed access from a highway safety perspective and is satisfied with the visibility that would be achieved.

The proposal has demonstrated that there is sufficient space for resident's cars to enter and exit the site in forward gear. The applicant is proposing that the site would be private and the bin access arrangements have been arranged to accommodate this.

In terms of car parking, the 10 no. apartments proposed would each have one car parking space which based on the proposal being for 1 bedroom apartments is considered to be acceptable in this instance.

The site plan shows some cycle parking provision within the scheme and it is suggested that a condition which secures the submission of precise details is attached.

The proposal is considered to be acceptable from a highway perspective compliant with Policies BE1, & TP12 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

6.3 Layout

The proposed site layout has been amended during the processing of the application to provide improved relationships in terms of light and outlook.

The layout now generally provides separation in accordance with the privacy distances for residential set out in the Design of Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document. There is a minor shortfall in separation between plots 5&6 and the side elevation of the vacant commercial garage building located on the adjacent site, however the applicant has looked to

redesign this part of the building to improve the outlook for persons who would reside in these units.

The Design of Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document indicates that a usable private outdoor space for apartments of 50sqm per unit should be provided as a guide. This scheme falls below this standard, however this is a guide and it is considered that on balance the amount of private amenity space provided would be acceptable and would not be unduly detrimental to residential amenity. The SPD states that the standards for outdoor space provision should relate to the character of the scheme designed and to the area. In this case the outdoor space is well designed and is considered suitable. Given the design and layout of the scheme it is not considered a refusal relating to outdoor space could be supported

The layout of the proposed development is considered to be acceptable compliant with Policies BE 1 & BE 2 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

6.4 Scale

The apartment blocks proposed are two storey in height and would not be dissimilar in height to the many of the other residential properties located in the surrounding area and are considered acceptable in respect of scale.

The proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of scale and compliant with Policy BE 1 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

6.5 Appearance

The elevations show that buildings proposed would be of an appropriate appearance with some variety in materials to add interest to the overall external appearance. The submission of precise external facing materials for approval should be secured by condition. The scheme has been designed as to provide an active frontage to Crow Wood Lane which is considered to be an appropriate design solution. This would ensure compliance with Policies BE 1 & BE 2 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

6.6 Landscaping

Some landscaping details are shown on the proposed site plan which include tree planting within the scheme.

Given the space available, it is considered that a satisfactory detailed landscaping solution can be achieved and this should be secured by condition. This would ensure compliance with Policies BE 1 and GE 27 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

6.7 Noise

The application site is located within a predominantly residential location and it is considered that the proposed development would be acceptable from a noise perspective.

The proposal is considered to be compliant with Policy PR 2 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

6.8 Affordable Housing

Policy CS13 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan states that affordable housing units will be provided , in perpetuity, on schemes including 10 or more dwellings (net gain) or 0.33 hectares or greater for residential purposes.

This application proposes that 100% of the units would be social rented which would be in excess of the 25% of units sought by the policy. The provision of affordable housing to accord with the policy should be secured by condition.

This would ensure compliance with Policy CS 13 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan and the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.

6.9 Open Space

The requirements for provision of recreational greenspace within new residential developments is set out in Policy H3 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

The applicant has been made aware of this requirement and a S106 agreement would be required to secure a commuted sum in lieu of on-site open space provision.

This would ensure compliance with Policy H3 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan and the recommendation to grant planning permission in this case would be subject to the S106 agreement.

6.10 Ground Contamination

The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Risk Assessment (Phase 1 Desk Study). This has been reviewed by the Contaminated Land Officer and no objection has been raised subject to the attachment of a full contaminated land condition to ensure that any ground contamination is dealt with appropriately to ensure compliance with Policy PR14 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

6.11 Flood Risk

The application site is less than 1ha in area in Flood Zone 1 and is in an area which is at low risk from flooding.

The proposal is considered to be compliant with Policy PR16 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan and Policy CS14 of the Halton Core Strategy Local Plan.

6.12 Biodiversity

The application site is not considered to be of a high ecological value, however the trees which would need to be removed to facilitate the development should not be removed during breeding bird season and this should be secured by condition.

Based on the above, it is considered that the proposal is compliant with Policy GE21 of the Halton Unitary Development Plan.

7. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the proposed residential development on the designated greenspace is considered to be justified and would have a positive impact on the locality and provide affordable homes.

An appropriate access to site from Crow Wood Lane would be achieved and the layout demonstrates sufficient space for movement for cars within the site as well as an appropriate level of parking for both cars and cycles.

The layout demonstrates sufficient separation for both light and privacy and there is considered to be an appropriate amount of private amenity space within the scheme.

The proposal is considered to be of an appropriate design with an active frontage to Crow Wood Lane and the elevations indicate a mix of materials to add interest and result in well designed properties.

The application is recommended for approval subject to conditions and the signing of a S106 agreement securing a commuted sum in lieu of on-site open space provision.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Grant planning permission subject to conditions and the signing of a S106 agreement securing a commuted sum in lieu of on-site open space provision.

9. CONDITIONS

1. Time Limit – Full Permission.
2. Approved Plans.
3. Site Levels (Policy BE1)
4. Facing Materials to be Agreed (Policies BE1 and BE2)
5. Landscaping & Boundary Treatments Scheme (Scheme to be agreed)

6. Breeding Birds Protection – (Policy GE21)
7. Protection of Trees – Construction Phase – (Policy BE1)
8. Hours of Construction – (Policy BE1)
9. Dust Suppression During Construction – (Policy BE1)
10. Construction Management Plan (Highways) – (Policy BE1)
11. Wheel Wash – (Policy BE1)
12. Provision of Affordable Housing – (Policy CS13)
13. Ground Contamination - (Policy PR14)
14. Visibility Splay (Vehicles) - Junction with Crow Wood Lane – (Policy BE1)
15. Provision & Retention of Parking - (Policy BE1)
16. Provision of Cycle Parking – (Policy BE1)
17. Disposal of Surface Water to be agreed – (Policy PR16)

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.