

APPLICATION NO.	P14/V0695/RM
APPLICATION TYPE	RESERVED MATTERS
REGISTERED	3.4.2014
PARISH	CUMNOR
WARD MEMBER(S)	Dudley Hoddinott Judy Roberts John Woodford
APPLICANT	Active Lives Care Ltd
SITE	land to the rear of 82-88 Cumnor Hill Oxford, OX2 9HU
PROPOSAL	Erection of a 72 bed care home in respect of appearance, landscaping, layout and scale
AMENDMENTS	None
GRID REFERENCE	447656/205202
OFFICER	Stuart Walker

SUMMARY

The application is referred to committee because Cumnor Parish Council and a number of local residents object.

The main issues are:

- Appearance, scale and layout
- Landscaping
- Amenity
- Highways / access within the site
- Protected species / wildlife

The recommendation is to grant planning permission.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application seeks approval of reserved matters pursuant to permission P12/V1819/O for the erection of a 72 bed nursing care home (Class C2) and related works. The matters for consideration under this application are layout, scale, appearance and landscaping.
- 1.2 The site comprises part of the rear gardens of four properties, measures 0.93 hectares, and is located on the north-west side of Cumnor Hill. The site is bounded by detached dwellings, and the topography of the site is such that the rear gardens fall steeply away from the road. There are many trees on the site and the large unkempt garden areas provide various habitats for wildlife. A block of flats (Breeches End) is located to the south-east corner adjacent to the vehicle access into the site. A site plan is **attached** at appendix 1.
- 1.3 The application comes to committee because Cumnor Parish Council and a number of local residents object.
- ### 2.0 PROPOSAL
- 2.1 The proposal is to create a class C2 residential institution in the form of a 72 bed nursing care home. The accompanying plans show a three storey development shaped to work with the site's constraints, where the singular formed building runs south from the middle of the site with a curve westwards to the south-west boundary. The main

building has been located and designed to avoid the largest and most diverse area of semi-natural broad leaved woodland to the north-west of the site, and to minimise the impact on a badger sett. The space between the front of the building and the boundary to the flats at 88 Cumnor Hill will be laid out as a car parking area providing 18 spaces along with provision for attendance by service vehicles and ambulances.

2.2 The proposed building, contemporary in design, comprises 72 single occupant bedrooms with en-suite shower room set over three floors. Shared communal facilities comprise an activity room, cinema, hair salon, private dining room, along with communal lounge / dining room and kitchen, assisted bathroom and nurses' station provided within each bedroom cluster. A separate staff access only area will provide offices, changing facilities, a main kitchen and a laundry. The main entrance level (at second floor) comprises an entrance lobby, reception and foyer space.

2.3 A copy of the application drawings is **attached** at appendix 2.

3.0 **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS**

3.1 **Cumnor Parish Council** – objection. A copy of the parish council's comments is **attached** at appendix 3.

3.2 **Local residents** – A total of seven representations of objection have been received from local residents. The objections are made on the following grounds:

- Neighbour amenity impacts – loss of privacy, over dominance, inadequate boundary treatments and light pollution.
- Inadequate on site parking for staff, visitors and residents.
- Inappropriate design.
- Scale and form is inappropriate and out of keeping with surroundings / character of the area.
- Impact on protected species and wildlife.
- Loss of trees.

3.3 The following issues have also been raised by local residents, but were either dealt with at the outline stage or are not material to the determination of this reserved matters application:

- The site is unsuitable site for a care home due to its steep topography.
- Conditions on outline application have not been discharged.
- Traffic generation.
- Awkward entrance into the site.
- Flood risk and drainage.
- Noise pollution.

3.4 **Oxford Badger Group** – objection, a large badger sett will be adversely affected by this development.

3.5 **Councillor Judy Roberts** – objection. "My main objection to this proposal is the gradient of the access which makes year round pedestrian access impossible for class 2 elderly provision as all these people would qualify for constant attendance allowance. Given this restraint, which was dealt with at outline planning, the design of this building has to provide a more self contained community than the Abingdon Care Home they compare themselves to. I can't find the Landscape Proposal referred to, only the Landscape Concept, so my comments are made from that. There should be provision in the communal garden for smell and touch plants and the sound provision of water should also include wind chimes and (imaginatively) sound instruments. Music is one of the longest lasting abilities to remain and music therapy is prominent in dementia care.

There are several private patios and communal areas provided and the flat surfacing materials must be non slip as this is a deep ravine with drainage problems. This concerns me most where 13 patios are provided facing the incline. On the outline planning application there was no indication of providing rooms that faced the bank, indeed the building was set into it. These rooms that are currently designed to do so should be restricted to mobile inhabitants and in the long term, as this is a care to terminal establishment, these rooms will always be a problem. There is only provision for a female staff room; male staff are an essential part of this type of care as many elderly and dementia patients become violent as their condition progresses. There should be 2 WC's provided at all 3 communal lounge and eating facilities. Elderly patients need to frequent these services and their mobility and ability declines quite rapidly. Without this provision the communal areas will not be used as is apparent in nearly all but the best of these establishments. A comment but not a criticism is the lack of any accommodation for couples. There is a huge shortage for this type of provision and this site would be able to care for an able and constantly nursed couple. The design of this building has not really thought about the experience for the visitor. There is only one toilet provided in the whole site and the communal areas make any visit lack privacy. The size of the rooms would also make a family visit difficult. There has been scope provided in the garden but more imagination needs to be given to the interior.”

- 3.6 **County Highways** – no objection, subject to conditions.
- 3.7 **Landscape Architect** – no objection, subject to conditions.
- 3.8 **Forestry Officer** – no objection, subject to condition.
- 3.9 **Countryside Officer** – no objection to reserved matters, but conditions on outline will need to be discharged prior to construction starting.
- 3.10 **Urban Design Officer** – no objection “The extra-care home is a very substantial building but similar in scale and massing to that granted outline planning consent (ref: P12/V1819/O). The building utilises the slope of the site well to minimise its impact on the street and neighbouring property. The building is north facing to take advantage of the slope and the outlook over woodlands. The north and south elevations are well articulated and divided up into elements to help legibility and provide interest. The building has been redesigned so that the corridors now serve rooms on both sides. The south facing rooms, particularly those on the ground floor, face directly into the slope from a distance of approximately 1.5m. Despite the orientation, the topography means that sunlight will be restricted into the hollow and how the landscaping is treated will be important to prevent these rooms feeling claustrophobic for residents. The design and access statement refers to units being divided into family clusters but the corridors are very long and broken up only by fire doors; the interior design will be crucial to prevent them having too institutionalised a character. Servicing the building needs further consideration. No provision has been made for delivery vehicles and the bridge across to the kitchen appears very narrow as the main service entrance. There is not a dedicated service lift. The refuse and recycling store is located at the back of the parking area which could make it difficult to access and there is very limited manoeuvring room for refuse lorries.”
- 3.11 **Architects’ Panel** – no objection. “Although a large building is proposed, the topography of the site sits well with the building form, which will not be obtrusive from any angle. The fenestration and articulation of the elevations, given the curved form is also felt to be successful. Great care must be taken over choice of materials and detailing, particularly at roof edges and junctions of materials. Detailed landscaping proposals should also be conditioned.”

3.12 **Waste Management Team** – no objection.

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 [P12/V1819/O](#) - Approved (12/12/2013)

Outline application for the erection of a 72 bed residential care home and 4 units for staff accommodation with associated parking, landscaping and access.

[P05/V1637](#) - Refused (19/01/2006)

Erection of 7 houses and 6 apartments.

[P05/V0977](#) - Withdrawn (11/11/2005)

Erection of 7 houses and 6 apartments.

[P03/V6581/O](#) - Approved (04/08/2003)

Erection of 8 detached houses and a block of 6 flats. (Demolition of 88 Cumnor Hill). (88 and rear of 82, 84 & 86).

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

5.1 *Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2011 policies:*

CF2 - Provision of new community services and facilities

DC1 - Design

DC5 - Access

DC7 - Waste collection and recycling

DC8 - Provision of infrastructure and services

DC9 - Impact of development on neighbouring uses

H3 - Housing sites in Botley

5.2 *National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)*

The National Planning Policy Framework confirms there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and within the overarching roles that the planning system ought to play there are a set of 12 core planning principles, the following of which are directly relevant to this application:

- i. Be genuinely plan led
- ii. Not simply be about scrutiny, but be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives.
- iii. Always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.
- iv. Support the transition to a low carbon future, taking account of flood risk and encourage the reuse of existing resources
- v. Contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- vi. Take account of and support local strategies to improve health, wealth, and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.

5.3 In delivering sustainable development, the framework sets out a variety of detailed guidance, and the following sections are directly relevant to this application:

- i. Building a strong, competitive economy – plan proactively to meet the development needs of business.
- ii. Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes – plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as older people)..
- iii. Requiring good design – achieving high quality and inclusive design to

- iv. contribute positively to making places better for people. Promoting healthy communities – planning positively for the provision and use of community facilities.
- v. Meeting the challenge of climate change and flooding – managing risks through suitable adaptation measures to ensure flood risk is not increased elsewhere.
- vi. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment – minimising the impact on biodiversity through adequate mitigation.

5.4 *Planning Practise Guidance (March 2014)*

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

Appearance, Scale and Layout

6.1 The proposal is not considered to be harmful to the character of the area. The proposal is to the rear of existing dwellings where it will have only a limited public presence in views from Cumnor Hill. Furthermore the layout form and scale of the proposal is considered to work well with the site's constraints and is not out of keeping or an over-development of the site. Consequently, the visual impact of the proposed development and its impact on the character and appearance of the locality are considered acceptable.

6.2 Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and the NPPF is explicit in seeking a high quality outcome. The proposed building uses a simple uncluttered contemporary design with natural surveillance of the site providing generous glazed fenestration and elevations. The architects' panel considers "The fenestration and articulation of the elevations, given the curved form is felt to be successful". The urban design officer has also commented that "the north and south elevations are well articulated and divided up into elements to help legibility and provide interest."

6.3 Councillor Roberts, Cumnor Parish Council and the urban design officer have highlighted a number of points with regard to the interior layout of the building. In specific response to the urban design officer comments, the applicant has confirmed "south facing rooms at ground floor level have a separation distance from the building face to start of the slope of a minimum of 3.0m. Indeed all rooms which have access to the south facing gardens have the same separation distance. The bridge from the car park across to the staff ancillary areas is a minimum of 1.5m wide which is sufficient for the type of deliveries to the care home where the majority of goods are transported in mesh cage roll pallets. For distribution of goods within the care home there are two lifts available. The client is a long term operator of care homes and is fully aware of the servicing arrangements for the development whilst also being mindful of the needs of the residents/staff/visitors in respect of lift usage." On balance, officers consider the issues raised are minor and there would be no justifiable reason to withhold approval of reserved matters on such grounds and overall officers are confident, subject to detailing, that the scheme will deliver a high quality design outcome.

Landscaping

6.4 The concept landscape proposal as shown on the plans and as detailed in the design and access statement is acceptable. The landscape officer and forestry officer have assessed the scheme and raise no objection. Subject to further detailing (controlled by condition), the proposed development is considered to be visually acceptable.

Impact on residential amenity

6.5 The proposed development would not have any harmful impact on residential amenity of adjacent dwellings in terms of noise and disturbance, overshadowing, over-dominance or loss of privacy and security. Officers consider there is sufficient distance

between the new building and adjoining dwellings. Amenity standards set out in the council's adopted residential design guide (12m to window to flank wall and 21m window to window) are exceeded and sufficient existing vegetation will be retained. The impact on neighbours, therefore, is considered acceptable and officers see no reason to withhold approval of reserved matters on amenity grounds.

Access / Highways

- 6.6 The proposed road layout within the site is acceptable in terms of highway safety. The county highways team and the waste management team raise no objections to traffic circulation within the site. There is sufficient parking provision to meet the needs of the development along with turning areas and county highways consider the respective levels of on site parking to be satisfactory.
- 6.7 The majority of objections raise issues of traffic generation and the access onto Cumnor Hill. These issues were considered acceptable as part of the outline application. As such, officers consider there would be no justifiable reason to withhold approval of reserved matters on these grounds.

Wildlife

- 6.8 The applicant has provided updated surveys / reports in relation to protected species within the site. Subject to further survey work prior to commencement of development, the proposed mitigation measures are considered acceptable and the relevant licence tests are considered to have been met. Any impact on other wildlife (i.e. that is not protected under EU directives or UK law) is considered acceptable. It is therefore considered there would be no justifiable reason to withhold approval of reserved matters on protected species grounds or in relation to impact on other wildlife.

7.0 **CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The proposal will meet in part an existing shortfall in provision of class C2 accommodation in the local area, will not be harmful to the character of the area, residential amenity, highway safety or protected species and, therefore, complies with the relevant policies of the local plan and the national planning policy framework.

8.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

8.1 **Approval of Reserved Matters**

- 1 : TL3 - Time limit - reserved matters**
2 : Approved plans
3 : MC3 - Materials in accordance with application
4 : Building details
5 : Construction Traffic Management Plan
6 :HY6 - Access, parking & turning in accordance with approved plans
7 : Landscaping Scheme details & implementation
8 : LS4 - Tree Protection

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