

Planning Committee

Tuesday, 14 November 2017

Planning application no.	17/01089/FUL	
Site	Former Wednesfield High School, Lakefield Road Wednesfield WV11 3ES	
Proposal	Proposed residential development comprising 210 houses and 56 apartments with associated landscaping, highway amendments, parking and ancillary buildings	
Ward	Wednesfield South	
Applicant	City of Wolverhampton Council	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John C Reynolds Cabinet Member for City Economy	
Accountable Director	Keren Jones, Service Director, City Economy	
Originating service	Planning	
Accountable employee	Stephen Alexander	Head of Planning
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1.0 Summary recommendation

1.1 Delegated Authority to grant.

2.0 Application site

2.1 The site is approximately 4.8km to the east of Wolverhampton City Centre and is the site of a former senior school consisting of school buildings which have now been demolished and school playing fields.

2.2 The site is adjoined to the north by the playing fields and multi-use games area of Wednesfield High School. To the east and south are residential properties and to the west, Lakefield Road, which is a tree lined road with grass verges which runs parallel to the site.

2.3 The site is 6.9 hectares and predominantly flat, sloping gently from north-west to south-east.

- 2.4 There is a wide strip of land which runs the length of the western boundary adjacent to Lakefield Road which contains many established trees. Along this boundary is a 1.8m high metal railing. On the east/south eastern boundary is a large area of tree planting (Millennium Forest) which has been unmanaged and is overgrown in appearance.
- 2.5 There is an electricity sub-station in the south-east corner of the site with two access routes either side, leading to March End Road, which have been inaccessible for many years.

3.0 Application details

- 3.1 The development proposes 266 units and comprises two, three and four bed houses and two-bedroom apartments. There would be a mix of tenure offering market sale, market rent and 25% affordable housing (affordable rent and shared ownership). The breakdown of those units are:
- 43 two-bedroom, two storey houses;
 - 60 three-bedroom, two storey houses;
 - 51 three-bedroom three storey houses;
 - 9 four-bedroom, two storey houses;
 - 47 four-bedroom, three storey houses;
 - 56 two-bedroom apartments.
- 3.2 The apartments comprise two, four-storey blocks on the northern boundary of the site. The blocks are rectangular in shape with amenity areas to the west and centre of the blocks. Balconies would provide private amenity space. Parking is provided to the east, west and south of both blocks with provision for cycle parking and bin stores.
- 3.3 There would be one new vehicular access to serve the whole site located opposite the junction with Green Meadow. This would be a new signalised junction with widening of Lakefield Road.
- 3.4 The layout adopts a place-making approach with three distinct character areas; boulevard, shared surface area and private lane. The boulevard exhibits a more urban aesthetic with a greater height along a wider road. The shared surface area has a mews house type of similar appearance but two-storey in height and the houses on the private roads are more suburban comprising two-storey houses in a more generous setting.
- 3.5 The houses would be of a contemporary design constructed of traditional brick and tiles. The apartments would be constructed of brick, with coloured render inserts and some timber cladding and steel profile roof sheeting.
- 3.6 An area of open space with attenuation basin is proposed in the south-east corner of the site, north of the electricity substation.
- 3.7 No pedestrian access is proposed other than two additional points created north and south of the main access on Lakefield Road.

- 3.8 Parking for the houses is primarily within curtilage although in some areas the parking is on street.
- 3.9 The development will result in the loss of some trees to facilitate the proposed development. A band of trees can be retained on the frontage retaining a wildlife corridor. An area of Millennium planting which is overgrown and comprising mainly shrubs will be removed in part and the planting which remains will be thinned. Additional tree planting is proposed across the whole site.

4.0 Relevant policy documents

- 4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- 4.2 The Development Plan:
Wolverhampton Unitary Development Plan (UDP)
Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS)
Wolverhampton City Centre Area Action Plan (AAP)

5.0 Publicity

- 5.1 Three letters of objection have been received. The planning related concerns are mainly:
- Drainage/flooding
 - Pedestrian access through the site
 - Loss of green space
 - Traffic congestion
 - Overdevelopment
 - Noise during construction
- 5.2 Residents were re-notified on the receipt of the Transport Assessment, Air Quality Assessment and Drainage information and have until 7 November 2017 to comment.

6.0 Consultees

- 6.1 Environmental Health, Highways, Landscape/Ecology and Western Power– no comments received at time of writing report.
- 6.2 Police – no objections subject to some minor changes to the house types and layout to achieve Secured by Design.
- 6.3 Drainage – no objections in principle but seek clarification on the point of discharge, water quality treatment and subsequent adoption of the SUDs.
- 6.4 Sport England have lodged a holding objection subject to clarification about the quality of replacement pitches at Coleman Avenue, provided as mitigation for the loss of playing fields at this site.

7.0 Legal implications

7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report [LD/01112017/B].

8.0 Appraisal

- 8.1 This former school site has been deemed surplus to requirements and is identified in the Wolverhampton Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) as suitable for housing. Its redevelopment for housing would assist in the timely and necessary delivery of new housing. The principle of residential development is therefore acceptable.
- 8.2 The development would be built on the former playing fields of Wednesfield High School which have been unused for many years and were never publicly accessible. Sport England have requested and been provided with details of the quality of pitches installed at Coleman Avenue as mitigation for loss of these playing fields and officers are confident that Sport England will now withdraw their holding objection.
- 8.3 In accordance with BCCS Policy HOU3 the development will provide just over 25% affordable housing with 67 units to be managed by Wolverhampton Homes, five shared ownership, ten units for market rent and 184 houses for market sale. The provision of the affordable housing can be secured by condition.
- 8.4 The proposal would generate an increased amount of traffic which would impact on the highway network. A proposed signalised junction is necessary to alleviate any impact of that increase in traffic on the wider highway network. This can be conditioned.
- 8.5 The development would result in the loss of a number of trees on the frontage and on the eastern boundary of the site in the area of the Millennium Forest. However, a replacement planting scheme is proposed and the retention of a linear tree belt along Lakefield Road and management of the remaining Millennium planting will significantly enhance the wildlife habitat.
- 8.6 There are no protected species on the site with only evidence of bird nests in trees. The provision of bird and bat boxes will enhance the natural habitat and can be conditioned.
- 8.7 The proposed height and massing of the development is in-keeping with its surroundings. The development would provide a contemporary bespoke design with traditional building materials. The hierarchy of streets resulting in a strong urban rhythm on the main route, which is reduced in scale towards the rest of the site is an appropriate design solution and adopts the fundamental principles of a successful housing layout and in general terms is acceptable subject to some minor changes to improve surveillance of the street, open space, and parking areas.
- 8.8 There would be a distance in excess of 12 metres between the rear of existing properties in March End Road and the proposed side gables of the houses along the southern

boundary. Together with proposed landscaping there would be no overlooking or loss of privacy to existing occupiers.

8.9 An Air Quality Assessment has been submitted and is still being considered at the time of writing this report. The outcome of the assessment can be satisfactorily conditioned.

9.0 Conclusion

9.1 The development is welcome in principle and would provide much needed housing in the City, creating new communities with housing of an appropriate tenure mix and high quality bespoke design. The development is acceptable and in accordance with the development plan subject the finalisation of the technical details, some minor amendments, and any necessary conditions.

10. Detail recommendation

10.1 That planning application 17/01089/FUL be granted delegated authority to deal with the technical details including matters raised by statutory consultees and to grant planning permission subject to conditions including those below and any other necessary conditions:

- Affordable housing
- Submission of materials
- Landscaping (including street furniture)
- Accordance with recommendations of ecology survey
- Bird and bat boxes
- Signalised junction improvements
- Archaeological watching brief
- Submission of drainage details
- Travel plan
- Electric charging points
- Renewable energy
- Boundary treatments
- Management company
- Tree protection fencing
- Construction Management Plan
- Bin store design
- Provision of cycle storage
- Mining Advisory

