

<b>DECISION DATE</b> 9 July 2008	<b>APPLICATION NO.</b> 08/00614/FUL A8	<b>PLANNING COMMITTEE:</b> 30 June 2008
<b>DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED</b>  <b>ERECTION OF SIX 2 BED SHELTERED HOUSING APARTMENTS AND ASSOCIATED VISITOR PARKING</b>		<b>SITE ADDRESS</b>  <b>20 EMESGATE LANE SILVERDALE CARNFORTH LANCASHIRE LA5 0RA</b>
<b>APPLICANT:</b>  Mr John Baldwin 20 Emesgate Lane Silverdale Carnforth Lancashire LA5 0RA		<b>AGENT:</b>  Savage And Chadwick Architects

#### REASON FOR DELAY

Not applicable.

#### PARISH NOTIFICATION

**Silverdale Parish Council** – Support the provision of accommodation for elderly people in the centre of the village, but would prefer not to lose an area of open space. They are concerned that although there could be as many as twelve residents there are only two parking spaces for visitors; they are concerned that this will give rise to problems with the use of the Gaskell Hall car parking opposite. They also query the materials and the arrangements for treating foul sewage (both of these issues have since been amended; see report). If permission is granted, a condition will be needed to restrict occupancy.

#### LAND USE ALLOCATION/DEPARTURE

The site lies within the Arnside/Silverdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

#### STATUTORY CONSULTATIONS

**County Council Highways** – The provision of two off street spaces is consistent with County Council standards for this kind of accommodation. They note that the driveway serving them is an existing access. Detailed observations awaited.

**Strategic Housing** – Support the proposal. There is a need for housing for elderly people in Silverdale.

**Environmental Health** - The application forms specify treatment by a cesspit which would not be acceptable (this has now been corrected). A construction hours condition is required. The site is within an area at risk from radon gas and a suitable advice note should be attached to any consent. Normally, they would recommend a contaminated land study in association with residential development, but the risk of contamination here is very low and the accommodation will not be occupied by children.

**City Contract Services** - No observations received at the time this report was drafted.

**United Utilities** - No objection to the proposal. A separate metered water supply for each unit will need to be provided for each unit at the developer's expense.

**Arnside/Silverdale AONB Executive** - Do not support the development in its submitted form. The garden area in the centre of the village should not be lost lightly. If a building is allowed here, they are concerned about overintensive development. They are concerned at the limited amount of parking and that this may cause problems on Emesgate Lane and outside the Gaskell Hall, also that the access drive has poor sightlines on to Emesgate Lane. They query the need for additional accommodation for elderly people in the village. While they accept that the architects have tried to blend in with the vernacular architecture of the village they draw attention to the application forms which specify artificial stone on the external walls (this has now been corrected to limestone). If consent is granted, they would like to see provision made in the design for nesting swallows and bats.

## **OTHER OBSERVATIONS RECEIVED**

An objection has been received from the Secretary of the Gaskell Hall, on the opposite side of Emesgate Lane - no parking has been provided for the use of residents and this will mean that they will use the parking outside the Hall, which is intended for use by its patrons only. Members of the Hall's management committee are also concerned that the site is close to a bend in the road next to a special needs school - consequently they consider that it is unsuitable for on street parking.

An email in support of the proposal has come from the occupier of the adjoining property to the north of the site.

Any other representations received will be reported orally at Committee.

## **REPORT**

This site is garden land in the centre of Silverdale village. There is a two storey house to the north at no. 22, and a three storey building containing a doctors' surgery and a pharmacy immediately to the south at no. 20. The opposite side of the road is occupied by the Gaskell Hall and, to the north west, Silverdale branch library. Behind this is garden land used by Bleasdale House Special School.

The proposal is for a three storey building of traditional appearance, containing six two bedroom flats. The accommodation would be served by a lift as well as stairs. The building would be finished externally in local stone and white render, with a slate roof. All these materials are found on other buildings in the immediate vicinity.

The development site also includes some garden land which would be acquired from the adjoining property. This would be used to provide both a small garden for the enjoyment of residents, and three parking spaces: two to serve the new development, and one to replace the existing provision for the property at number 20.

The application is accompanied by supporting statements including a description of the care system which the developers intend to provide, with a non-resident warden. A report on the demographic background has also been prepared. This points out that Silverdale is a relatively affluent area with a disproportionately high number of retired and professional inhabitants. Some 7.5% of the population of Silverdale is retired, compared with 2.5% of that of Lancaster and just 2.2% of the population of Britain as a whole. It argues that the housing stock needs to reflect its population structure.

The following policies in the Lancaster District Local Plan are particularly relevant:

- **E3**, which states that development within and adjoining Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty has to respect their character

- **H7**, which sets out criteria for new residential development in specified villages, including Silverdale
- **H17**, which states that proposals for sheltered housing will only be permitted where the site is convenient for a major bus route, local services and facilities
- **R21**, which requires that development should make appropriate provision for people with disabilities.

SPG16 on the Supply of Land for Residential Development is also relevant. It requires that the development should offer some form of community benefit, which can include regeneration benefits, securing the future of a historic building, and meeting a specific local housing need.

Because of its character and the excellent opportunities it offers walkers and bird watchers Silverdale attracts a large number of "active retired" people. It is inevitable that over time the active retired will become less active so it is not difficult to establish a local need for sheltered accommodation. The site is within easy walking distance of almost all the community facilities the village has to offer. Public transport is available primarily in the form of the Silverdale Shuttle, which provides a connection with the local railway station. From this point of view the site is very located for the use proposed.

So far as the detail of the development is concerned, full account has been taken of the character of nearby buildings and in terms of its appearance, the design is appropriate to this part of the AONB. The forms specified the use of artificial stone but the proposal has been amended so that they will be faced in natural limestone. The internal layout as submitted is however open to criticism. Manoeuvring space for wheelchair users is extremely tight and none of the units would be suitable for occupation by disabled people.

This matter has been raised with the applicant's architects and they have agreed to amend the layout so that one of the two ground floor flats will be rearranged as a one bedroom flat laid out to wheelchair access standard. This will also allow some improvements to make the lift more accessible to wheelchair users. At the same time the developers have confirmed that they will provide a sewage treatment plant to meet the Environment Agency's standards.

So far as the general issue of density is concerned, the site is in the most urban part of Silverdale and it is one where this form of development will not appear out of place with its surroundings. The use of a village centre site in this way is consistent with central government advice as set out in PPS3 (Planning Policy Statement: Housing).

The comments on behalf of the Gaskell Hall will be noted. However the accommodation is clearly designed to meet the needs of people who do not see the availability of parking spaces as a priority. It is the responsibility of the Hall's management to police the use of their parking spaces. The constraints of the site mean that it would be very difficult to provide additional off street parking except by eliminating the rear garden area, or else turning the whole of the ground floor area into a car park. Neither of these options is desirable for a scheme intended for occupation by elderly people.

Taking all these factors into consideration, it is recommended that subject to the County Council's highway engineers raising no objections, permission should be granted, provided that amended plans incorporating the layout changes referred to above are received in time for the Committee meeting.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

Two sections of the Human Rights Act are relevant: Article 8 (privacy/family life), and Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property). There are no special issues arising from this proposal which appear to override the responsibility of the City Council as local planning authority to regulate land use for the benefit of the community as a whole, in accordance with national law.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That **PERMISSION BE GRANTED** subject to no objections from the County Council as highway authority and the receipt of satisfactory amended plans, with conditions as follows:

1. Standard three year condition.
2. Amended plans showing alterations to internal layout, limestone facings and site for foul sewage treatment plant.
3. Development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.
4. Accommodation to be occupied only by people over 55.
5. Samples of materials to be agreed.
6. Details of foul sewage treatment plant to be agreed.
7. Nesting boxes for swallows and bats to be provided.
8. Construction work to take place only between 08:00-18:00 Mondays to Fridays - no work on Sundays or officially recognised public holidays.
9. As required by County Council Highways (if appropriate).