

<b>Agenda Item</b> A11	<b>Committee Date</b> 12 December 2016	<b>Application Number</b> 16/01248/FUL
<b>Application Site</b> Burrowbeck Grange Nursing Home Scotforth Road Lancaster Lancashire	<b>Proposal</b> Demolition of existing care home and outbuilding and erection of a replacement 63 bed care home with associated landscaping, car parking and alterations to the existing access	
<b>Name of Applicant</b> Active Pathways	<b>Name of Agent</b> Condy Lofthouse	
<b>Decision Target Date</b> 5 January 2017	<b>Reason For Delay</b> N/A	
<b>Case Officer</b>	Mrs Eleanor Fawcett	
<b>Departure</b>	No	
<b>Summary of Recommendation</b>	Approval subject to the receipt of amended plans	

## **1.0 The Site and its Surroundings**

- 1.1 The site is located at the southern end of Lancaster, between Scotforth Road (A6) and Collingham Park. There is a large two storey building on the site which is set back from the highway, in an elevated position. This has been most recently used as a care home, although is not currently in use. There is also an associated single storey building located towards the southeast corner of the site. Vehicular access is from Scotforth Road and there are large numbers of mature trees along the site boundaries which are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. There is a public footpath running along the eastern boundary, but outside the site.
- 1.2 The site is located on the edge of a residential housing estate. To the north is a detached bungalow, which is sited at a higher level and has a large domestic curtilage. To the south is another detached bungalow which is situated lower than the application site and is used as a home for children and young people with disabilities. There are also some two storey dwellings to the east of the site, separated by a highway, Collingham Park.

## **2.0 The Proposal**

- 2.1 Planning permission is sought for the demolition of the existing buildings on the site and the erection of a purpose built care home for the elderly, containing 63 bedrooms. This is proposed to be U-shaped, with one side of the 'U' facing towards the A6, and the open element facing to the south, providing a central courtyard. The accommodation will be over three floors, although the building will mainly have the appearance of two storeys, with a steeply pitched roof and dormers providing accommodation in the roof space. The land levels are proposed to be significantly reduced which will decrease the height of the proposal in relation to the existing building. The building is proposed to be positioned approximately 10 metres closer to Scotforth Road than the existing one, and a new driveway, utilising the existing access (albeit altered), and parking will be created in front of the building.

## **3.0 Site History**

- 3.1 There is an extensive planning history on the site which is set out below:

Application Number	Proposal	Decision
16/00833/PRETWO	Demolition of existing building and erection of 60 bed care home with associated parking and landscaping	Principle, scale and design considered to be broadly acceptable
16/00212/FUL	Demolition of existing care home and outbuilding and erection of a replacement 60 bed care home with associated landscaping, car parking and alterations to the existing access	Withdrawn
15/01198/PREONE	Demolition of existing building and associated bungalow. Erection of 60 bed care home with accommodation over three floors with associated car parking and landscaping	Principle is considered acceptable
13/00892/RENU	Renewal of Planning Permission 10/00598/FUL (see below)	Approved
10/00598/FUL	Erection of a two storey extension	Approved
09/00997/FUL	Extension of time limit on application 06/00994/FUL for the erection of a two storey extension	Withdrawn
06/00994/FUL	Erection of two storey extension	Approved
01/01039/FUL	Erection of a two storey bedroom block extension	Approved
01/00141/FUL	Erection of an extension to provide an additional communal lounge (constructed)	Approved

#### 4.0 Consultation Responses

4.1 The following responses have been received from statutory and non-statutory consultees:

Consultee	Response
Environmental Health	No comments received during the statutory consultation period.
Strategic Housing Officer	<b>Comments.</b> The Commissioning Lead at the County Council has confirmed that there is an urgent need for affordable good quality residential beds supporting dementia, EMI and nursing requirements in Lancaster, and that this scheme could support the needs of the ageing population in Lancaster. The applicant is to be encouraged to continue dialogue with the County Council to ascertain where the actual type of provision best aligns to local needs and fits with the County's priorities and budgets for residential care.
Tree Protection Officer	<b>No objection</b> subject to conditions requiring development carried out in accordance with the Arboricultural Implications assessment and a scheme of tree planting.
County Highways	<b>No objection</b> subject to conditions requiring scheme for the construction of the site access, wheel cleaning facilities, a construction management plan and provision of cycling and motorbike facilities.
Lead Local Flood Authority	<b>No objection</b> subject to conditions requiring a surface water drainage scheme and surface water maintenance and management plan.
Public Rights of Way Officer	<b>No comments to make.</b>
County Social Services	No comments received during the statutory consultation period.
Natural England	<b>No comments to make.</b>
Lancashire Constabulary	<b>No objection</b> – subject to full CCTV coverage of the main communal & circulation areas, window restrictors to ground floor windows, boundary treatments to resist access to the north, east and south external areas, and an access control system at the main entrance.
Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service	<b>Comments.</b> It should be ensured that the scheme fully meets all the requirements of Building Regulations Approved Document B, Part B5 'Access and facilities for the Fire Service' and is provided with suitable provision of Fire Fighting water.
Lancaster Civic Society	<b>Comments.</b> Modifications to the earlier application are welcomed. With the greater detail now provided, the Society are more positive that the design is appropriate and that good use is being made of this elevated prominent site.
United Utilities	<b>No objection</b> subject to conditions requiring foul and surface water to be drained on separate systems and submission of a surface water drainage scheme.

## **5.0 Neighbour Representations**

- 5.1 One letter of objection has been received which raises concerns that alterations to the access will result in the loss of protected trees.
- 5.2 A letter has been received from the adjacent property, Burrowbeck Grange, which raises no objections to the application and sets out that privacy will not be affected due to dense boundary growth and the additional accommodation will be welcome to the community.

## **6.0 Principal National and Development Plan Policies**

### **6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

Paragraphs 7, 14 and 17 – Sustainable Development and Core Principles  
Paragraph 32 – Access and Transport  
Paragraphs 49 and 50 – Delivering Housing  
Paragraphs 56, 58 and 60 – Requiring Good Design  
Paragraph 135 – Non-designated Heritage Assets

### **6.2 Lancaster District Core Strategy (adopted July 2008)**

SC1 – Sustainable Development  
SC5 – Achieving Quality in Design

### **6.4 Development Management Development Plan Document (adopted July 2014)**

DM20 – Enhancing Accessibility and Transport Linkages  
DM22 – Vehicle Parking Provision  
DM27 – The Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity  
DM29 – Protection of Trees, Hedgerows and Woodland  
DM35 – Key Design Principles  
DM39 – Surface Water Run-Off and Sustainable Drainage  
DM45 – Accommodation for Vulnerable Communities

## **7.0 Comment and Analysis**

7.1 The main issues to be considered in the determination of this application are:

- Principle of replacement care home
- Scale, design and impact on the character and appearance of the area
- Residential amenity
- Highway safety
- Impact on trees
- Ecological Impacts
- Drainage

### **7.2 Principle of development**

7.2.1 There is an existing care home on the site which is currently vacant, although it is understood that the smaller building is still being utilised. Consent has been previously granted for a large extension to the building to provide an increase in the level of accommodation. The site has a long established use as a care home and is in an accessible location adjacent to the A6, on a bus route. Providing that the accommodation meets the genuine needs of older people and is wheelchair accessible, the principle of a larger care home is considered to be acceptable and complies with policy DM45 of the Development Management DPD.

7.2.2 The scheme proposes to provide a 63-bed space residential care facility for the elderly. The Council's Strategic Housing Officer has consulted Lancashire County Council's "Age Well" Commissioning Team. Whilst they are not in a position to provide very detailed feedback on the proposals, and are not directly commissioning this service, they have spoken directly with the applicant in terms of the delivery model which appears to offer flexibility in terms of the physical

design and layout of the building to adapt to mainstream residential care provision, nursing care or dementia provision. It has been confirmed that there is an urgent need for affordable, good quality, residential beds supporting dementia, and nursing requirements in Lancaster, and that this scheme could support the needs of the ageing population in Lancaster.

7.2.3 The existing building dates from the early 20th century and has a positive appearance, although it has undergone a number of changes over the years, including several extensions, which have eroded its original character and appearance to some degree. Given this, it is not considered to be worthy of retention and its replacement is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle, given the need to provide a building which is fit for the purposes of a care home.

### 7.3 Scale, design and impact on the character and appearance of the area

7.3.1 The existing property is considered to be an important gateway building, given its elevated position at the entrance to the built up area of Lancaster. Although there are a number of mature trees surrounding the building, it is still visible from public vantage points particularly in winter months. The submitted proposal relates to a two storey building arranged in a U shape with a central garden area. The design of the building has taken inspiration from the existing structure in that it will have a fairly steep hipped roof with dormer windows. However, the existing ground level is proposed to be reduced, by around 3m at its maximum, resulting in the ridge height being just under the existing eaves level. This will obviously significantly decrease the prominence of the building from the highway. The building would be approximately 37m long across its west elevation, 40m on its north elevation and 32m along the east elevation. The depth of each section of the 'U' will be between approximately 12m and 15m. The building will be positioned approximately 10m closer to the highway, than the existing building, but still set back by approximately 28m.

7.3.2 One side of the U shape is proposed to face towards the A6. This elevation is long but has been broken up with a central element which is set back and has a lower ridge height, which would be glazed at ground floor with grey cladding above. The design of this elevation is relatively traditional in form but has large modern openings and flat roof dormers. Most of the building is proposed to be faced in red brick with some areas of cladding proposed. There was some concerns regarding the use of copper cladding to the front elevation, and on other parts of the building, and it was not clear whether this would sit comfortably next to the brick. This has now been changed to be grey cladding which will complement the flat roof dormers. Given that no heads or cills are proposed around the windows, as the applicant wished to take a more modern approach, it was considered that grey windows would be more appropriate and these should be suitably recessed. The plans have been amended to address this, in addition to providing more consistency with window design and a more vertical emphasis.

7.3.3 Some concerns have also been raised with regards to detailing on the other elevations and, as such, alterations have been made. This has included increasing the depth of the roof on the northern section of the building, which was particularly shallow, and reducing the pitch of a gable. Areas of cladding have also been increased around windows to help break up the elevations and windows are more consistent in their design. Concern was raised about a flat roof element to house the lift shaft as it was considered to be a poor addition to the overall design. This has now been amended to have a hipped roof but it is not clear if and how this will be viewed outside the site. Floor and roof plans are awaited in order to be able to fully assess this. Given the large expanse of roof slope, the agent has been advised that the use of slate would be appropriate. Although it is close to more modern housing developments, they are not prominent from the highway, and much of the development which fronts the A6, leading into the centre of Lancaster, has slate roofs. In response to this the agent has proposed a thin slate type tile and, on balance, it is considered that this could be acceptable, subject to the precise details.

7.3.4 Overall the scale and design is considered to be acceptable, subject to the precise detailing and materials which can be controlled by conditions. It is a large building, but changes in materials and the size and positioning of windows help to break up the overall mass. It takes a slightly more modern approach to the building that is currently on the site.

### 7.4 Residential amenity

7.4.1 There are two neighbouring properties that have the most potential to be affected by the proposal. These are Burrowbeck Copse to the north, and Aroona to the south. There is currently a large hedge

along much of the boundary with Burrowbeck Copse, and the eaves of the existing building projects just above this. The proposal will increase the amount that the building extends along the boundary, but the ridge height will be lower than the existing eaves level. As such, it is not considered that there would be a detrimental impact on light, outlook or privacy to this property.

7.4.2 The property to the south is a bungalow and is located at a lower level than the application site. The development will bring the building much closer to this neighbouring property. The section shows this at a distance of approximately 18m between the buildings, although this would vary given the shape of the proposed development. Given the reduction in site levels, it is not likely that there would be a significant loss of outlook or daylight. There are some windows in the southern elevation but these are not proposed to serve bedrooms. As such, it is not considered that there would be a significant adverse impact on the privacy of this neighbouring property.

## 7.5 Highway Safety

7.5.1 There is an existing access to the highway which is proposed to be widened to 6m. A new footway is also shown from the highway, across the grassed area, to the front of the building. In terms of parking, 16 car spaces, two cycle stands and motorcycle spaces have been shown. It may be more appropriate to have some cycle stands close to the main entrance for visitors and some secure cycle facilities for staff. It is considered that this could be incorporated into the scheme.

7.5.2 The Highways Authority has raised no objection but some concerns were raised about the number of staff indicated on the application form which suggested that there will be 70 equivalent full-time posts at the site. The agent has confirmed that this number included the Domiciliary Care Business which was an error as the office for this service will be permanently moved to another location when construction on the site is commenced. The revised number is 43.5 full time equivalent employees. The agent has set out that the maximum number of staff on site at any one time would be 25 and would be working the following shift patterns - 0745 to 2000 and 1945 to 0800. Given the sustainable location of the site (on a number of regular bus routes and very close to the strategic cycle network) the level of car parking is deemed acceptable.

## 7.6 Impact on Trees

7.6.1 The site benefits from a range of relatively large, mature landscape trees, which are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. Many of these trees can be seen from a range of locations within the wider public domain. In addition, their canopies make physical and visual links to other similar sized trees within the wider locality. Trees established to the west of the main building make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the site and the wider area. A total of 72 individual trees have been identified in relation to the proposed development, in addition to 4 groups and 4 hedges. Species include pine, oak, holly, sycamore, beech, maple, ash, elm and hawthorn. 7 trees have been identified as category "U", and, as such, require removal because of their poor overall condition, regardless of whether planning consent is granted. 38 trees have been identified as high amenity trees "A" and "B", and the remaining 35 trees have been categorised as "C", which are those that should not represent an obstruction to development.

7.6.2 There are 10 category C trees and 1 category B tree to be removed to accommodate the development, in addition to some category U trees that are in poor condition. There are also implications for existing trees on site in relation to the proposed new infrastructure, including the new access, additional car parking and proposed new route towards the main building. An Arboricultural Method Statement has been provided in relation to "no dig" and "root friendly" materials and methods of working in relation to works within root protection areas of retained trees. Overall it is considered that the development can be accommodated on the site without having a detrimental impact on protected trees and the amenity of the site and surrounding area. A landscaping scheme would be requested by condition to ensure that the loss of some trees is adequately mitigated.

## 7.7 Ecological Impacts

7.7.1 An ecological appraisal was submitted with the previous application which outlined the need for a number of additional surveys to fully assess the implications on various species. This report has now been updated and a supplementary bat survey report provided.

7.7.2 In relation to bats, the original survey identified that the proposal may result in the destruction of a

roost likely to support low numbers of common species of bat, assessed as a transitional roost. Two old bat droppings were found in the loft space, and have been assessed to have fallen through the roof lining and deposited by a common pipistrelle that used the external features of the building as an occasional roost on a low number of occasions. Bat emergence and activity surveys have been carried out and confirm that there are no bat roosts at the site. The report sets out that the condition of the building has changed now that it is unoccupied which reduces the likelihood of bats using the internal roof void of the building as a roost. There is no evidence to suggest that a current roost is present, or that the building has been used regularly in the past. It does recommend that if bats are unexpectedly found during any stage of the development, work should stop immediately and a suitably qualified ecologist should be contacted to seek further advice. It also sets out that the tree line to the east of the existing care home should be retained as much as possible as it is an important commuting and foraging resource for common pipistrelles. This will be the case, as covered by the tree assessment. It also states that bat boxes should be installed on retained trees and the new building, and should be of the type known to be used by pipistrelle species.

7.7.3 In terms of reptiles, the report sets out that, although suitable habitat for common reptiles is present on the site, it is unlikely that reptiles will be harmed as the extent of habitat removal has been significantly reduced in the new proposed plans, with only a small area of the close mown amenity grassland being impacted by the development. Additional parking spaces will be added along the existing driveway and a turning area with parking spaces will be constructed on the western side of the new building. There is considered to be negligible impact on great crested newts given the separation that the A6 provides from suitable ponds. It is therefore considered that the development will not have a detrimental impacts on protected species and the introduction of bat boxes could help to increase the roosting potential of the site.

## 7.8 Drainage

7.8.1 The proposal will increase the amount of built development on the site and therefore has implications on surface water drainage. However, not all of the site is proposed to be development and, as such, there should be opportunities to provide adequate drainage. The Lead Local Flood Authority has requested that conditions be added to request a surface water drainage scheme, in addition to maintenance and management of this. It is considered necessary that this is provided before works start of the construction of the new building to ensure that it is adequately designed into the overall scheme.

## **8.0 Planning Obligations**

8.1 There are none to consider as part of this application.

## **9.0 Conclusions**

9.1 The proposal will meet an identified need for care accommodation in relation to the elderly population, and will replace an existing facility with a larger one, constructed specifically for this purpose. Following amendments, the modern replacement building is considered appropriate in terms of its scale, siting and design. The proposal will also ensure that mature trees are retained and protected and there will be no adverse impacts on ecology, residential amenity or highway safety.

## **Recommendation**

That Planning Permission **BE GRANTED** subject to the receipt of appropriate amended plans and the following conditions:

1. Standard timescale
2. Approved plans
3. Surface water drainage scheme
4. Surface water lifetime management and maintenance plan
5. Materials – details and samples including brick, cladding, roofing material, eaves verge and ridge details, rainwater goods, windows and doors, surfacing
6. Landscaping scheme
7. Works to the access and creation of parking and turning, including for cycles and motorbikes.
8. Works in accordance with Arboricultural Implications Assessment
9. Bat mitigation – including details of bat boxes and location

10. Restriction of use to care home within use class

**Article 35, Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015**

In accordance with the above legislation, the City Council can confirm the following:

Lancaster City Council has made the recommendation in a positive and proactive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development, working proactively with the applicant to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. The recommendation has been taken having had regard to the impact of development, and in particular to the relevant policies contained in the Development Plan, as presented in full in the report, and to all relevant material planning considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Practice Guidance and relevant Supplementary Planning Documents/ Guidance.

**Background Papers**

None