

Agenda Item A9	Committee Date 12 November 2018	Application Number 18/00900/FUL
Application Site Melling House Hala Road Lancaster Lancashire	Proposal Change of use of former managers house (C3) to 2 self-contained 1-bed flats (C2) and installation of a new external door	
Name of Applicant Mr Thomas Richardson	Name of Agent	
Decision Target Date 10 October 2018	Reason For Delay Submission of additional information and committee cycle	
Case Officer	Ms Charlotte Seward	
Departure	No	
Summary of Recommendation	Approval with conditions	

1.0 The Site and its Surroundings

1.1 Melling Housing is sheltered housing scheme for retired persons over the age of 60. Classed as a category two elderly residential housing scheme, no care is provided at this site. Built in the early 1970s the scheme provides 20 1 x bed flats. The site is located within immediate access of bus stops, a number of smaller retail shops and takeaways, and within 50m of a designated public open space. Within 150m walking distance there is a supermarket and a pub, and within 300m a bowling green. Lancaster Royal Infirmary is 2.1km away and there are bus routes that run from the site to the hospital. The former scheme manager's property is currently vacant and no longer needs to be retained for this purposes.

2.0 The Proposal

2.1 The proposal seeks to convert the existing vacant former scheme manager's 2 bed 2 storey house into 2 x 1 bed flats to form part of the wider category two elderly sheltered housing scheme at the site. To facilitate the proposed change of use, a new external door will be provided and a new entrance formed for the first floor flat. Internally at ground floor a new entrance will be created and the stairs blocked off, partition walls will be removed and amended to create a shared living room and kitchen, and create a bathroom at ground floor. At first floor a new corridor partition will be created to enclose the stairwell, internal partitions will be removed and amended to create a shared living room and kitchen, a smaller bedroom and a larger bathroom.

3.0 Site History

3.1 The most relevant planning history is set out below:

Application Number	Proposal	Decision
17/00577/FUL	Erection of a detached outbuilding to store mobility scooters	Permitted

1965 LA.89	Erection of Old Peoples Flatlets, Wardens House, 3 Storey Flats and lock up garages	Permitted
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4.0 Consultation Responses

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

Consultee	Response
County Highways	No highway objection.
Housing Strategy Officer	The proposed units are of a similar size and style to typical single person's sheltered housing found across the district. Units are constrained by the size of existing building and as a result do not meet accessibility standard, but this scheme will generate additional income and make the scheme more viable in terms of management costs and apportionment of services charges.

5.0 Neighbour Representations

5.1 The consultation period has expired. No representations have been received.

6.0 Principal National and Development Plan Policies

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 6.1.2
- 8-11 – Sustainable development
 - 59 – Sufficient supply of homes
 - 127 – Achieving well-design places

6.2 Local Planning Policy Overview – Current Position

6.2.1 At the 20 December 2017 meeting of its Full Council, the local authority resolved to publish the following 2 Development Plan Documents (DPD) for submission to the Planning Inspectorate:

- (i) The Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD; and,
- (ii) A Review of the Development Management DPD.

This enabled progress to be made on the preparation of a Local Plan for the Lancaster District. The DPDs were submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 15 May 2018 for independent Examination, which is scheduled to commence in early January 2019. If the Inspector finds that the submitted DPDs have been soundly prepared they may be adopted by the Council in mid-2019.

The Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD will replace the remaining policies of the Lancaster District Core Strategy (2008) and the residual 'saved' land allocation policies from the 2004 District Local Plan. Following the Council resolution in December 2017, it is considered that the Strategic Policies and Land Allocations DPD is a material consideration in decision-making, although with limited weight. The weight attributed to this DPD will increase as the plan's preparation progresses through the stages described above.

The Review of the Development Management DPD updates the policies that are contained within the current document, which was adopted in December 2014. As it is part of the development plan the current document is already material in terms of decision-making. Where any policies in the draft 'Review' document are different from those adopted in 2014, and those policies materially affect the consideration of the planning application, then these will be taken into account during decision-making, although again with limited weight. The weight attributed to the revised policies in the 'Review' will increase as the plan's preparation progresses through the stages described above.

6.3 Lancaster District Core Strategy (adopted July 2008)

- 6.3.1
- SC1 – Sustainable Development
 - SC4 – Meeting the District's Housing Requirements
 - SC5 – Achieving Quality in design

6.4 Development Management DPD

- 6.4.1
- DM22 – Vehicle Parking Provision

- DM35 – Key Design Principles
- DM44: Residential conversions
- DM45 – Accommodation for Vulnerable Communities
- Appendix B – Car Parking Standards
- Appendix E – Flat Conversions

7.0 Comment and Analysis

7.1 The key considerations arising from the proposal are:

- Principle of the use
- Scale, design and landscape impact
- Residential amenity
- Highways and Parking

7.2 Principle of the use

7.2.1 The proposal forms part of the wider sheltered housing scheme at Parkside Court, and proposes to provide two additional self-contained residential units through the conversion of the former scheme manager's house. This house is now vacant and redundant to the sheltered housing scheme. The proposal to provide two additional units for housing vulnerable communities within and managed as part of an existing sheltered housing scheme is considered to be acceptable in principle, and would make a modest contribution to meeting the districts housing needs for those requiring sheltered residential units. Furthermore, the proposed additional units are in a location that can be considered sustainable with good links to public transport, and access to services within 150m walking distance on the site on level footpaths.

7.3 Scale, design and landscape impact

7.3.1 The building will remain externally very similar to existing, with proposed changes being limited to a new external door proposed as access to both properties. Internally a new entrance formed at ground floor providing access for the first floor flat from the internal shared corridor. The proposed changes will be indiscernible in the wider street scene being confined to the rear part of the existing buildings, and with the first floor flat door being screened behind the existing enclosed external walkway area. As a result the proposal is considered to be of acceptable design and will have no undue impact upon the streetscene or wider landscape.

7.4 Residential amenity

7.4.1 Appendix E of the Development Management DPD sets out the space size requirements for flat conversions. The proposed flats meet the internal space standards for living rooms, kitchens, bedrooms and bathrooms. The existing windows provide adequate light and an acceptable outlook. There will be a degree of overlooking between the bedroom/bathroom windows of the flats and the adjacent existing flats as a result of the location of the windows and the short distance between the buildings. Whilst such a relationship would not be acceptable in a new build development, this proposal would not materially worsen and existing established overlooking arrangement between the manager's house and the existing flats, and therefore would not warrant a refusal in this case. Externally there is no allocated private space for each of the flats, however the flats sit within a landscaped grounds in size cumulatively exceeds the required 9.3 sqm for each flat, providing more than adequate external space.

7.4.2 Development Management Policy DM45 requires that accommodation for older people meets the genuine needs of older people and is wheelchair accessible. In consultation with the Housing Strategy Officer the accommodation is considered to be similar to existing provision for this user group in the District. In relation to wheelchair accessibility, the proposals do not meet the required standards. The applicant has stated that the proposals are not intended for a wheelchair user to live in them, but notwithstanding this have been made as accessible as possible (given the constraints of the existing building) through the widening of doors to 850mm and provision of level access to showers. It is also stated that adaptations could be made in the future where required. While the creation of new elderly persons homes without wheelchair access is not normally supported and is contrary to Policy DM45 Criteria III, this proposal would use a part of scheme which is now redundant for its former use, would positively make a small increase in units for an existing scheme and would be managed to ensure that the occupants are appropriate for the accommodation. Given

constrained existing circumstances and the benefits of utilising a redundant building from increasing elderly housing provision in the District, it is considered that a lack of wheelchair accessibility can be accepted in this case.

7.5 Highways and Parking

7.5.1 Appendix B of the Development Management DPD sets out parking requirements. C2 uses should provide a maximum of 1 car park per 2 beds, 3 disabled bays, and 1 bicycle space per 20 beds and 2 motorcycle spaces. There is no parking provision for the existing scheme and no provision is sought to be made for the additional 2 units. County Highways has raised no objection to the lack of parking, and has advised that there would be no adverse impact on the public highways network as a result of parking on the road network in this area due to the unrestricted highways surrounding the site. If this were a new build proposal parking would be required as part of the scheme, however given that there is no on-site parking for the scheme at present, the close proximity of bus stops, and the location of the scheme within short walking distance to a supermarket and local shops, it is considered that in this case the provision of no parking can be accepted without any adverse impact on highways safety or the operation of the local highways network.

8.0 Planning Obligations

8.1 There are no planning obligation to consider as part of this application.

9.0 Conclusions

9.1 The proposed conversion of an existing scheme manager's house to 2 x 1 bed flats for elderly accommodation can be considered to be acceptable in principle, providing a modest increase to accommodation available for elderly persons in a sustainable location within the District. The accommodation would meet required internal and external space standards without change to the amenity of the existing properties. The physical alterations to facilitate the change of use are modest and will appear inconspicuous. The lack of provision of wheelchair accessibility or parking are a dis-benefit of the scheme, but given the existing physical constraints of the building, the sustainability of the location, the lack of any highway safety impact and the benefits from the provision of additional elderly accommodation in an appropriate location, it is considered that a lack of wheelchair accessibility and parking can be accepted in this case.

Recommendation

That Planning Permission **BE GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. Standard time condition
2. Development to be carried out in accordance with approved plans
3. To be owned and operated as part of the sheltered housing scheme at Melling House only

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

In accordance with the above legislation, 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 made 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 officer 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