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| Agenda Item | A10 |
| Application Number | 20/01402/FUL |
| Proposal | Change of use of a garage into one single storey dwellinghouse (C3) with the erection of a front extension, associated access and parking. |
| Application site | Garage, The Greaves, Greaves Road, Lancaster, Lancashire |
| Applicant | Lancaster City Council |
| Agent | Mason Gillibrand Architects |
| Case Officer | Miss Aimee Whitehead |
| Departure | Yes |
| Summary of Recommendation | Approval |

(i) Procedural Matters

This form of development would normally be dealt with under the Scheme of Delegation. However, Lancaster City Council is the applicant, and as such the application must be determined by the Planning Regulatory Committee.

1.0 Application Site and Setting

1.1 The property subject of this application relates to the garage within the grounds of Greaves House. The site is accessed from Belle Vue Terrace, with parking provision provided adjacent to the existing house and along the driveway to the garage. The existing garage is unused at current and in somewhat of a state of disrepair. The site is owned and managed by Lancaster City Council.

1.2 The main dwelling at The Greaves is a Non- Designated Heritage Asset, both the dwelling and associated garage are situated within Greaves Park Conservation Area. Greaves Road Conservation Area is characterised by early Victorian suburban development, with large villas which were built by the wealthy middle class outside the boundary of the city. The lush greenery, sparse grain of buildings and architectural grandeur create a contrast to the centre of Lancaster. Historically, the 'pointer' marked the boundary of the old town of Lancaster and the villas and detached houses which were built south of this are referred to as 'The Pointer Houses' on the c.1840s Ordnance Survey map.

1.3 The landscaped area now known as Greaves Park and used as public recreation space is formed from the former landscape gardens of several of the villas. The Jacobean style Greaves Park is now in use as a pub and is listed at Grade II. The others, Parkfield and the Greaves, as well as their surviving ancillary buildings, are of high significance and should be treated as Non-Designated Heritage Assets [NDHAs]. Both Parkfield, formerly known as West Bank, and The Greaves are neoclassical villas in sandstone ashlar with a hipped slate roofs and large sliding sash windows. The Greaves is a former home of E.G. Paley, a prominent local architect, who designed the building himself. Paley, in partnership with Edmund Sharpe and Hubert Austin, was responsible for the design of many of the most prominent buildings in the district. Greaves Park forms the shared setting of these assets, contributing to their significance by reinforcing their aesthetic and illustrative values.

These proposals concern an ancillary building to The Greaves which first appears on the Ordnance Survey map of c.1910. The building is of dressed blonde sandstone with slate roof.

2.0 Proposal

- 2.1 The application proposes the change of use of the existing garage/ workshop (use class C3) to form a 3-bedroom dwelling that is fully adapted and accessible. Two extensions are proposed to the existing garage to facilitate the change of use – one is essentially an 'infill' beneath the existing roof canopy and a side extension to the western elevation. Internal alterations are proposed to form 3 bedrooms, one bathroom and a living/dining room.
- 2.2 Larch cladding is the proposed material finish for the walls and a metal sheet roof is also proposed for the extension elements, the existing garage will remain as existing. The Conservation and Heritage Officer has confirmed that the proposed materials would sympathise with the existing dwelling, however further details and samples will be required prior to commencement of the scheme.
- 2.3 102 sq.m of garden space is proposed within the front and rear gardens of the dwelling, and the future occupiers would also have access to the allotments owned and controlled by Lancaster City Council, situated adjacent to the site.
- 2.4 Whilst 3 parking spaces are provided, which exceeds the requirements set out within Appendix E of the Local Plan DPD, the intended use of the dwelling is for disabled individuals who will need multiple carers 24 hours a day.
- 2.5 The proposed house is for Lancaster Council's social housing stock and will be retained for this use in perpetuity. The specific individual this house is intended for at this moment in time, requires 2/3 carers on an hourly basis 24 hours a day. The main bedroom is proposed for the individual with special needs and bedrooms 2 and 3 are intended for use by the carers when providing overnight care.

3.0 Site History

- 3.1 No previous applications relating to this site have been received by the Local Planning Authority.

4.0 Consultation Responses

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

| Consultee | Response |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| County Highways | No objection |
| Natural England | No objection subject to specific conditions being attached to any subsequent permission |
| Environmental Health Officer | No objection subject to specific conditions being attached to any subsequent permission |
| Fire Safety | Advice only received - it should be ensured that the scheme fully meets all the requirements of part B5 of the Building Regulations |
| Tree Officer | No objection |
| Public Realm | No objection |
| Conservation and Heritage Officer | No objection subject to specific conditions being attached to any subsequent permission |
| Lancaster Civic Society | No objection , welcomes the proposal to bring the derelict building back into habitable use however would have expected a better design. |
| Property Services | No comments received. |

- 4.2 2 public comments were received which objected to the proposal and stated that the dwelling had never been used as a dwelling before, and that within a conservation area they know that previous scheme has been refused previously. Comments also raised concern with respect to the historical building and the loss of important features such as the large coach doors.

5.0 Analysis

5.1 The key considerations in the assessment of this application are:

- Principle of the Use
- Impact on Conservation Area
- Scale and Design Impacts
- Residential Amenity
- Loss of Public Open Space
- Habitat Regulation Assessment
- Drainage

5.2 **Principle of the Use (NPPF Section 5 (Delivering Supply of New Homes) & DPD Policy DM1)**

5.2.1 The existing garage is currently vacant and in a state of disrepair. The proposal is to provide one social, affordable or intermediate rent dwelling. This is considered to be acceptable in principle and the proposal would make a modest contribution to meeting the District's housing needs for those social or affordable housing. Significant weight is attached to the provision of affordable housing element of the proposal but also to the type of accommodation to assist with those within the community that have complex needs as noted within paragraph 2.5 of this report.

5.3 **Scale and Design (NPPF Section 12 (Achieving Well-Designed Places) & DPD Policies DM29 & DM30)**

5.3.1 The property would remain externally similar to the existing, with the addition of new windows at the northern elevation and the addition of the extension elements. The Conservation and Heritage Officer was consulted on the application and noted that whilst the proposals would result in an increase in size of the existing building and in principle this has some potential to result in harm in the context of the Conservation Area and the setting of the NDHAs, the proposed alterations are respectful of the existing structure and the context while clearly delineating between old and new, and the scale and massing of the proposed extension is sensitive and would not compete for dominance with any of the surrounding NDHAs. The proposed material palette is high quality and appropriate to the character of the Conservation Area. For these reasons, the proposals are not likely to result in harm to either the Conservation Area, or the neighbouring NDHAs.

5.3.2 Policy DM38 (Development Affecting Conservation Areas), which additionally requires that proposals affecting Conservation Areas should: *'...respect the character of the surrounding built form and its wider setting, in terms of design, siting, scale, massing, height and the materials used;...not have an unacceptable impact on the historic street patterns / boundaries, open spaces, roofscape, skyline and setting including important views into and out of the area;...not result in the loss or alteration of features which contribute to the special character of the building and area; and uses are sympathetic and appropriate to the character of the existing building and will not result in any detrimental impact on the visual amenity and wider setting of the Conservation Area.'*

5.3.3 Paragraph 197 of the Framework concerns Non-Designated Heritage Assets, and requires any harm to be considered in the decision making process. DM DPD policy DM41 (Development Affecting Non-Designated Heritage or their Settings), requires 'Proposals affecting the setting of a Non-Designated Heritage Asset...to give due consideration to its significance and ensure that this is protected or enhanced where possible.'

5.3.4 The proposal is considered to accord with DM38 and DM41 and would not cause any undue harm to the existing heritage asset.

5.3.5 Given the matching materials proposed, the proposal is considered to be of an acceptable design and will have no undue impact upon the street scene, wider landscape or Greaves Park Conservation Area.

5.4 **Residential Amenity (NPPF Section 12 (Achieving Well-Designed Places) and DPD policy DM29)**

5.4.1 The proposed three-bed dwelling is relatively spacious. Policy DM2 states that all new residential units should meet the standards set out in the Nationally Described Spacing Standards (NDSS). When considering the standards set out in NDSS, the bedrooms proposed are for single occupancy. These measure over 8sq.m, 3m in width and have a 2.4m floor to ceiling height, which exceed the requirements set out in NDSS (7.5 sq.m, 2.15m. and 2.3m respectively). In addition, the proposed storage facilities also exceed NDSS requirements (2.5 sq.m) and this is considered acceptable. The overall floor space also accords with the requirements set out in the NDSS (74 sq.m) and equates to circa 90 sq.m. The proposed dwelling would provide sufficient space and storage facilities for future occupiers.

5.4.2 The flat demonstrates some wheelchair accessibility and manoeuvrability, the proposed accommodation is considered to be sufficient to meet the needs of tenants and will offer acceptable residential amenity to future occupants. Furthermore, as the property is intended to be used for an individual with specific care requirements the property has been designed to comply with the requirements of M4(2) building regulations, to include the following:

- Level access to the property and within the property
- Low profile door thresholds throughout
- Suitable turning spaces to all principal areas
- Provision for specialist hoist connecting principal rooms
- Fully accessible shower room with DocM fittings
- Underfloor heating to minimise obstruction and avoid heat hazards

5.4.3 The site currently benefits from a modest external area, which is to be used for bin storage as existing. 102 sq metres of garden space is to be provided at both the front and rear of the dwelling, as well as the potential for future residents to have access to the adjacent allotments controlled and owned by Lancaster City Council. The proposed dwelling is considered to offer a satisfactory level of residential amenity and will not cause any adverse impacts to the amenity of neighbouring properties.

5.5 **Highways and Parking (NPPF Section 9 (Promoting Sustainable Transport & DPD Policy DM62.))**

5.5.1 3 parking spaces are proposed as part of the development, situated to the north of the garage/ proposed dwelling, as well as the provision of on-site turning space and refuse storage. Lancaster County Highways were consulted on the application and concluded that the proposal would not give rise to an unacceptable impact on pedestrian/ vehicular movements over surrounding lengths of the public highway. County Highways therefore raised no objection to the proposal.

5.5.2 Whilst 3 parking spaces are proposed, which exceeds the requirements (2 spaces) as set out within Appendix E of the Local Plan, the intended use of the dwelling is for an individual who has specific needs that requires 2/3 carers an hour on a 24/7 basis. Therefore, the proposed parking provision is required in this instance and as such is considered to be acceptable.

5.5.3 The application site is situated in a sustainable location with good bus links and walking distance from services and facilities in the wider area. The proposal is considered to accord with DM62.

5.6 **Public Open Space (DPD Policy DM27)**

5.6.1 Part of the site is designated as public open space, the public realm officer was consulted on the application and concluded that whilst there will be a very small loss of some form of public open space, as the loss is very small and the current open space technically not accessible by the public, the proposal is not considered to have a significant impact on the function and provision of open space. Therefore, the public realm officer has no objection to the proposal.

5.7 **Habitat Regulation Assessment**

5.7.1 Natural England has advised that, for residential development in this area, a proportionate Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required to assess the recreational disturbance impacts on the

coastal designated sites resulting from the development. This relates to Morecambe Bay, which is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Ramsar site and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). They have gone on to say that if the authority can be satisfied that the HRA concludes no likely significant effects, there is no need to re-consult Natural England. The Recreational Disturbance Study that was carried out as part of the evidence base for the emerging local plan found that visitors to Morecambe Bay who were on a day-trip/short visit from home travelled a median distance of 3.454km to get to the European site. The HRA for the Local Plan therefore considered that increased disturbance to birds (as a result of recreational pressure) at a European site could occur, particularly for allocations/proposals within 3.5km. The proposed development is located approximately 1.4km from the bay/Lune estuary.

- 5.7.2 The potential impacts from increased recreational pressure are considered to be limited by the small size of the proposed development and the distance from the designated areas and other options for recreation in closer proximity. However, to mitigate any potential increase in recreational pressures caused by the development, a homeowner pack can be provided for the dwelling, as identified within the HRA for the Local Plan. The homeowner packs would be expected to include details of the adjacent designated sites (and the wider Morecambe Bay coastline), their sensitivities to recreational pressure and promote the use of alternative areas for recreation, in particular dog walking areas. This can be adequately covered by a condition on a planning consent, as agreed by Natural England.

5.8 **Drainage (DPD Policy DM34)**

- 5.8.1 A sequential approach must be adopted for wastewater based on the hierarchy of drainage options, whereby the option at the top of the hierarchy should be fully considered first, and only where it is adequately evidenced that this is infeasible, should the second option be considered. Likewise only if it is adequately evidenced that this second option is infeasible, should the third option be considered. The first presumption is to provide a system of foul drainage discharging into a public sewer to be treated at a public sewage treatment works. If connection to the public sewer is not feasible, a package sewage treatment should be considered. Septic tanks should only be considered if it can be clearly demonstrated by the applicant that neither of these aforementioned sewage systems are feasible (taking into account cost and/or practicability).

- 5.8.2 Surface water should be managed sustainably, the Council expects that all new development will use Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems in accordance with the Surface Water Drainage Hierarchy. The hierarchy is as follows:
1. Into the ground (infiltration at source);
 2. Attenuated discharge to a surface water body, watercourse or the sea;
 3. Attenuated discharge to surface water sewer, highway drain or another drainage system; and as a last resort
 4. Attenuated discharge to a combined sewer (only in exceptional circumstances where it can be demonstrated that no other options higher up the hierarchy are feasible).

The application form stipulates that foul drainage will be dealt with via the mains sewer and surface water will be drained via a soakaway, as shown on the proposed site plan. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with DM34, however a condition is recommended to cater for this.

6.0 **Conclusion and Planning Balance**

- 6.1 The proposed dwelling is considered to provide suitable levels of residential amenity whilst not detracting from the residential amenity of neighbours. The physical alterations to facilitate the change of use are modest and will appear subordinate to the existing building, an NDHA, having an overall neutral impact. The site will benefit from the existing parking provision as well as 1 additional parking space and refuse storage, resulting in no severe highway or parking impact. The scheme will also provide an adequate level of accommodation that has been designed to accord with the NDSS. The proposed dwelling will make a modest contribution to Lancaster City Council's social housing stock, where there is an identified need for 3 bedroom fully adapted dwellings, and whilst a departure from the plan it is considered that overall the proposal is considered to amount to sustainable development and is offered support to councillors.

Recommendation

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

| Condition no. | Description | Type |
|---------------|---|------------------|
| 1 | Standard 3 year timescale | Compliance |
| 2 | Development to be carried out in accordance to approved plans | Compliance |
| 3 | Electric vehicle charging point | Compliance |
| 4 | Removal of permitted Development Rights | Compliance |
| 5 | Affordable unit to be within an agreed scheme | Pre-commencement |
| 6 | Details of windows, hard surfacing, boundary and landscape treatments | Pre-commencement |
| 7 | Homeowner pack | Pre-commencement |
| 8 | Surface Water drainage | Pre-commencement |

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