

DECISION DATE 1 November 2007	APPLICATION NO. 07/01144/FUL A17	PLANNING COMMITTEE: 8 October 2007
DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED PROPOSED DEMOLITION OF SINGLE STOREY FLAT ROOFED EXTENSION AND REPLACEMENT WITH 3 STOREY PITCHED ROOF EXTENSION, ERECTION OF AN ARTS AND CRAFTS STUDIO AND CHANGE OF USE OF LAND TO FORM NEW CAR PARKING AREA		SITE ADDRESS SLYNEDALES LANCASTER ROAD SLYNE LANCASTER LANCASHIRE LA2 6AW
APPLICANT: Cancercare Slynedales Slyne Road Hest Bank Lancaster Lancashire LA2 6ST		AGENT: Michael A Harrison

REASON FOR DELAY

None

PARISH NOTIFICATION

No comment received at the date of writing the report, comments will be reported verbally.

LAND USE ALLOCATION/DEPARTURE

The Lancaster District Local Plan indicates that the application site is within a Countryside Area and forms part of the North Lancashire Green Belt.

STATUTORY CONSULTATIONS

County Highways Department - The additional parking provisions are in accordance with the parking standards in the Lancashire Joint Structure Plan. It is important that additional on-site parking is provided in this location as there are issues with on-street parking on the A6. In accordance with the submitted Travel Plan a condition relating to the provision of bicycle and motorcycle parking is recommended.

Environmental Health - No objections to the proposal in principle but recommend appropriate conditions be imposed to control hours of construction and prevent burning of waste on site should planning permission be granted.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS RECEIVED

No representations received at the date of writing the report.

REPORT

Site Description & Proposed Development

The application site is Slynedales, a detached three storey property of stone construction with slate roof over, situated approximately 140m to the west of Slyne Road on higher ground at the end of a shared driveway. The property has a significant amount of associated external space which for the most part is established garden, housing a large proportion of mature trees. There is also an existing parking area immediately to the south of the building which accommodates 33 vehicles.

The application property operates as a Cancer Care Service offering patient/ family support and specialist professional therapies. The area is mixed in character with the land to the south of the site access road occupied by St Johns Hospice and the land to the north by Beaumont College, a residential further education centre.

The application seeks to expand and improve the current facilities to create an additional 388 sqm of floorspace. The proposed works involve the demolition of a single-storey flat roofed extension within the courtyard to the north of the main building, and its replacement with a three storey pitched roofed extension to form a reception and waiting area, administration office and toilets to ground floor, therapy rooms to first floor, with a bridge link to the adjoining garden area at the rear of the site, and a further office room within the roof space. A linking covered walkway is also proposed within the confines of the courtyard to the north of the main building, this will be of slate roofed construction and will provide a covered access from the main building to the existing child therapy unit sited immediately to the north.

In addition to this, the application also involves the creation of a new parking area on garden land adjoining the northern boundary of the child therapy unit and the replacement of a detached timber arts and crafts portakabin to the rear of the site with an new arts and crafts studio providing larger studio facilities that will enable storage of materials and archives.

The planning application has been accompanied by a Supporting Planning Statement and a Travel Plan.

Planning History

Slynedales was originally built as a private residence set in the middle of approximately 14 acres of open pasture. In the early 1960's it operated as a Convent Primary School followed by a Residential Secure Unit for girls with educational and emotional difficulties between 1970 and 1999. The site was then acquired by the applicant in 1990 in a semi derelict condition and was opened as a Support Centre for cancer patients, their carers and families in 1991 following refurbishment.

Relating to the current use the most relevant planning applications are as follows;

91/01039/HST Creation of a car park area for Patient Support Centre

95/00726/FUL Erection of a temporary portable type building for use as a Craft therapy centre. This permission was subsequently renewed.

04/01120/FUL Erection of a first floor extension to the courtyard therapy centre.

Planning Policy

The following Lancaster District Local Plan Policies are particularly relevant to this application;

Policy E1 sets out the criteria for assessment of development proposal within areas of Green Belt and will not allow development that will result in the expansion of settlements beyond their present boundaries into open countryside. Within the Green Belt itself new development will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances.

Policy E2 relates to the erection of new buildings within the Green Belt, stating that limited extension and alterations may be permitted where there is not a materially greater impact than the present use on the openness of the Green Belt.

Policy E4 sets out the criteria for assessment of development within the Countryside Area. Stating that proposal must be in scale and keeping with the character of the landscape.

Lancashire Structure Plan Policy 6 - Development within Green Belts is also relevant to this case.

Assessment

Local Plan policies seek to protect the openness of the Green Belt in order to safeguard the character of the countryside and check the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas.

The principle of extending the main building and replacing the arts and crafts studio in the manner proposed is considered acceptable in relation to Green Belt and Countryside Area policies of the Local Plan, in so far as the proposal relates to previously developed section of the site that fall well within the established curtilage of the property meaning the development will not adversely effect the quality of the landscape or the openness of the green belt.

The alterations to the main body of the building will result in the removal of an existing unsympathetic flat roofed extension sited within the courtyard to the north of the building and will secure its replacement with a larger but more sympathetic addition that has been designed to respect the character of the main property and the wider countryside area. The proposal is considered appropriate in terms of its scale and massing, utilising external materials of natural stone and slate to match existing, as well as, vertical sliding sash windows with details to match those existing on-site. The extension will result in the removal of one of the three stone chimney stacks on site, and whilst this is regrettable the removal of this stack is essential to the viability of the proposal and given its siting to the rear of the building, on balance, its loss is not considered to have a detrimental impact on the character of the application property.

A more contemporary design solution has been chosen for the new entrance, which consists of a fully glazed curtain wall formed behind the existing stone courtyard archway. This access will form the main entrance to the centre and has been sensitively designed to enable effective use and access to this area whilst maintaining the appearance of archway, which forms an important architectural feature of the building. In the interest of the appearance of the building appropriate conditions are recommended to ensure that all external materials and surface finishes are agreed by the LPA, as well as, all window/door recesses.

The proposed arts and crafts studio whilst larger in scale constitutes a replacement structure and utilises the same site as the existing structure, adjacent what is at present the main car park. Due to the significant difference in land levels to the rear of the application site this building is part single storey, part two-storey in height. The change in levels between the car park and the garden enables a basement to be formed which will provide the main entrance to the studio from the car park and accommodate an archive store and toilets. The upper floor will form the main studio space which will have a level access to the lawn area and footpath to the north.

For the most part the external materials proposed for the studio contrast with the main building but are complementary in nature. The basement is of render finish with vertical timber boarding and metal window frames. The roof is pitched and hipped in order to reduce the overall bulk of the building and finished in natural slate in order to maintain a visual link with the main building.

As a whole the site benefits from extensive tree cover with a number of individual, mature tree specimens and groups of trees established in and around the boundaries of the proposed development area. Following an Arboricultural assessment of the site the arts and craft building was re-sited approximately 1.9 metres to the west to ensure that the replacement structure does not threaten the health or viability of the mature trees on site. In light of this and in the interest of appearance of the locality a condition is recommended to ensure the protection of trees during construction works including

the mature Purple Leaf Beech tree to the east of the arts and crafts building and a group of Board Leaf Sycamores between the existing building, proposed development and the car park area. Further to this a condition is also recommended requiring a landscaping scheme for the site, relating particularly to the area of banking and footpaths surrounding the arts and crafts studio and the new parking areas.

The site is considered to be of low accessibility and has a current parking provision of 33 spaces, 3 of which are disabled bay. The application proposes at total of 50 spaces, 6 of which are disabled bays, these will be accommodated within the existing area of hardstanding to the south of the main building and within a garden area immediately to the north of the property.

There is a significant need to provide improved access and additional parking spaces for Cancer Care clients, most of whom can only reasonable gain access by car. The increase in referrals to the unit in recent years has resulted in more visitors to the site which has in turn increase parking pressures. Provisions are also needed for staff that are required to use their vehicles to perform their job role.

The new parking area is sited to the north of the building on an area of garden within the established curtilage of the property. Whilst its construction in this location will result in the removal of a large proportion of garden area, local plan policy enables the expansion of facilities within Green Belt in exceptional circumstances. In this instance the proposed parking area is sited within the established curtilage of the property and is not considered to materially affect the openness of the Green Belt, nor will it result in the unrestricted extension of development into the open countryside. The additional parking provision are in accordance with the Lancashire Structure Plan parking standards and in light of the exceptional need for additional parking it is considered that in this instance there is sufficient justification for the creation of additional parking facilities in this location. In the interest of highway safety appropriate conditions are recommended to ensure implementation of the Travel Plan and the provision of bicycle and motorcycle stands on site.

Conclusion

The application seeks to improve the existing facilities on site and provide enhanced access through the development. The proposal is well screened and contained within the established curtilage of the property. The Local Planning Authority is satisfied that the proposed extensions, alterations and the new parking area are acceptable in relation to their impact upon the Green Belt and Countryside Area. Members are therefore advised that this application can be supported, subject to appropriate conditions.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

This application has been considered in relation to the provision of the Human Rights Act, in particular Article 8 (Privacy/Family Life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of Property). Having regard to the principles of proportionality, it has been concluded that there are no issues arising from the proposal which appear to override the responsibility of the City Council 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 the following conditions:-

1. Standard 3 year consent.
2. Development as per approved amended plans.
3. External materials and surface finishes to be agreed.
4. Provision and retention of parking layout in accordance with plans.
5. Prior to the commencement of the development the implementation of the Approved Travel Plan (or implementation of those parts identified in the Approved Travel Plan as capable of being implemented prior to occupation). Those parts of the Approved Travel Plan that are identified therein as being capable of implementation after occupation shall be implemented in accordance with the timetable therein and shall continue to be implemented as long as any part of the development is occupied.

6. Bicycle and Motorcycle parking to be provided in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and agreed in writing with the local planning authority.
7. Tree protection scheme to be submitted to and agreed in writing by the local planning authority.
8. Development to be carried out in accordance with a submitted Agriculture Report.
9. Submission and implementation of landscaping scheme.
10. A scheme for surface water shall be submitted and agreed.
11. Restricted hours of construction.
12. No materials produced as a result of the site development or clearance shall be burned on site.