

Ward: Peppard
App No.: 190040
Address: The Gardeners Arms, Surley Row, Caversham
Proposal: Demolition of existing public house and erection of 8 new dwellings.
Applicant: Greene King Retailing Ltd
Date valid: 4/4/2019
Agreed Extension date: 30/6/2020
26-Week date: 3/10/2019

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The site contains a public house and outbuildings with car parking to the front and large garden area to the rear. The site is located on the east side of Surley Row in Caversham and the surrounding area is predominantly residential. The site is located within the Surley Row Conservation Area and the rear garden area of the site is identified as a 'green link' within the Sites and Detailed Policies Document (2012, 2015).



Figure 1 - Location Plan

2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 Planning permission is sought for the demolition of the public house and associated buildings, and erection of 7 dwellings (2 x 2-bed, 2 x 3-bed, 3 x 4-bed) with covered vehicle parking, access, and associated works.

Plans Considered

- 2.2 The application has been determined based on the following amended plans received:

Drawing No: 6816_04D Proposed Site Layout
Drawing No: 6816_15A Plot 7 Car Barn Plans
Drawing No: 6816_16A Plot 7 Car Barn Elevations
Drawing No: 6816_17B Proposed Streetscenes
Drawing No: 6816_18B Proposed Cross Sections
Drawing No: 6816_23A Plots 1 & 2 Plans
Drawing No: 6816_24A Plots 1 & 2 Elevations
Drawing No: 6816_25 Plot 3 Plans
Drawing No: 6816_26 Plot 3 Elevations
Drawing No: 6816_27 Plot 4 Plans
Drawing No: 6816_28 Plot 4 Elevations
Drawing No: 6816_29 Plots 5 & 6 Plans
Drawing No: 6816_30 Plots 5 & 6 Elevations
Drawing No: 6816_31A Plots 3 - 6 Car Barn
Drawing No: 6816_32 Plot 7 Proposed Plans
Drawing No: 6816_33 Plot 7 Proposed Elevations
As received 10/2/2020

Drawing No: 6816_03D - Proposed Block Plan
As received 26/5/20

3. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

110471 (11-01248-FUL) - Erection of a smoking shelter to the rear, removal of existing front entrance lobby and replace with a small pitched roof and install wheel chair ramp

110472 (11-01249-CON) - Erection of a smoking shelter to the rear, removal of existing front entrance lobby and replace with a small pitched roof and install wheel chair ramp.

110904 (11-01582-ADV) - Double-legged free-standing internally illuminated totem sign to replace existing

111716 (11-01822-ADV) - 1 fascia sign, 1 letters/logo sign, 1 pole mounted sign panel and 2 double-sided promotional board signs (part retrospective)

120916 (12-00925-ADV) - Internally illuminated replacement fascia sign

172287-PRE - The proposal is for the complete redevelopment of the existing Gardeners Arms Public House site to create 10 residential dwellings.

4. CONSULTATIONS

Internal

- 4.1 RBC Transport Strategy - TBC
- 4.2 RBC Environmental Protection - No objection subject to conditions
- 4.3 RBC Consultant Ecologist - No objection subject to conditions
- 4.4 RBC Natural Environment - No objection subject to conditions

5. Public consultation:

- 5.1 CAAC - Object to loss of public house. Loss of open space within conservation area.
- 5.2 A site notice was erected on site, and letters sent to adjoining properties, 11 responses have been received, and can be summarised as follows:

Support

- Support for the application if it includes retention of the Grade II listed barn, and appropriate sewer improvements/connection
- Support for loss of pub

Objections

- Objection to loss of public house
- Concerns over local infrastructure, parking, traffic
- Overdevelopment within the conservation area
- Materials are not in keeping with conservation area
- Impact on wildlife
- Impact on residential amenity

Concerns

- Realignment of rear fence and effect of retaining wall

6. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

National and Local Policy

National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)

CC1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2: Sustainable Design and Construction

CC3: Adaptation to Climate Change

CC5: Waste Minimisation and Storage

CC6: Accessibility and the Intensity of Development

CC7: Design and the Public Realm

CC8: Safeguarding Amenity

CC9: Securing Infrastructure

EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment

EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas

EN6: New Development in a Historic Context

EN7: Local Green Space and Public Open Space

EN10: Access to Open Space

EN12: Biodiversity and the Green Network

EN14: Trees, Hedges and Woodland

EN15: Air Quality

EN16: Pollution and Water Resources

EN18: Flooding and Drainage

H1: Provision of Housing

H2: Density and Mix

H3: Affordable Housing

H5: Standards for New Housing

H10: Private and Communal Outdoor Space

TR1: Achieving the Transport Strategy

TR3: Access, Traffic and Highway-Related Matters

TR4: Cycle Routes and Facilities

TR5: Car and Cycle Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging

RL6: Protection of Leisure Facilities and Public Houses

Relevant Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents

Revised Parking Standards and Design (2011)

Sustainable Design and Construction (2019)

Affordable Housing SPD (2015)

Planning Obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, (Revised 1/4/2015).

7. APPRAISAL

7.1 The main issues in consideration of this application are:

- Principle of Development
- Design and Impact on Conservation Area and Listed Building (including setting)
- Housing Mix
- Trees and Landscaping
- Highway Matters
- Residential Amenity of Future Occupiers and Neighbours
- Permitted Development Rights
- Section 106 Matters
- Community Infrastructure Levy
- Other Considerations

Principle of the Development

- 7.1 Paragraph 70 of the NPPF states that to deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should:
- Plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments;
 - Guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs;
 - Ensure that established shops, facilities and services are able to develop and modernise in a way that is sustainable, and retained for the benefit of the community; and
 - Ensure an integrated approach to considering the location of housing, economic uses and community facilities and services.
- 7.2 Policy RL6 (Protection of leisure facilities and public houses) of the Local Plan (2019) which in defining 'community facilities' sets out that this can encompass a wide range of facilities including pubs. The policy goes on to state that 'proposals involving the redevelopment of existing community facilities for non-community uses will not be permitted, unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there is no longer a need to retain that facility.
- 7.3 A neighbourhood pub is considered to be of value as a local community facility and therefore any proposal for its loss must clearly demonstrate that there is no longer a need to retain this facility.
- 7.4 Policy RL6 sets out specific criteria required to be considered in assessing the loss of Public Houses and states that outside of a defined centre (the site is not located within a district, major or local centre) development involving the loss of leisure facilities or a public house will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that:
- a) There is no need for this type of facility in this area; or
 - b) The function of the facility can be adequately fulfilled by an existing facility, or a facility proposed as part of the development, where that facility would be at least as accessible to the same catchment; or
 - c) The impacts on amenity of residents of retaining the facility could not be dealt with through other measures, and would be so severe as to outweigh the benefits to the wider community of retaining the facility.
- 7.5 The supporting information submitted includes a viability assessment, which supports that there has been a long term downturn in trade at the public house, and that the surrounding facilities are sufficient to offset the loss of this facility. In addition, the applicant has demonstrated that the catchment of the facility is provided with sufficient alternative facilities. In this particular instance, there has not been significant local interest in retaining the pub, with a number of residents in support of the loss of the pub. As such, in this instance, it is considered that there is no need for this type of facility in this area, and the function of the facility can be fulfilled by existing facilities within the area.

- 7.6 In addition, The National Planning Policy Framework (2019) encourages the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed (brownfield land) and seeks that all housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The accessibility of the site is considered acceptable for the proposed development (CC6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)) whilst the proposal would align with the broad objectives of Policy H1, in assisting in meeting the annual housing targets.

Design and Impact on the Conservation Area, and listed building (including setting)

- 7.6 The site is located within the Surley Row Conservation Area and no. 46 Surley Row, a grade II listed building is located directly adjacent to the southern boundary of the site.
- 7.7 When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.
- 7.8 The Gardeners Arms Public House, Surley Row:
- The Gardeners Arms Public House is a two storey mock-Tudor Gothick, timber-framed building.
 - Built between 1913 and 1936, to replace the original Gardeners Arms Public House, not the Grade II Listed, 46 Surley Row.
 - The Gardeners Arms Public House is located within the Surely Row Conservation Area and development within it must 'preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area'.
 - The Gardeners Arms Public House is located next door to the Grade II Listed 46 Surley Row and development within the grounds would potentially affect its setting.
- 7.9 The Public House currently includes a large area of hard-standing to the front which is detailed in the Council's Surley Row Conservation Area Appraisal as being a negative feature which could therefore be subject to enhancement. The open green space to the rear of the site is however considered a positive feature of the Conservation Area given the limited amount of this type of space present within the Conservation Area boundary.
- 7.10 The Gardeners Arms Public House is a well-built and potentially a purpose-built public house, erected in the 1920s or 30s. It is built form includes timber framing, finished in black and white, and is well-proportioned and has some presence in the street-scene. However, due to its late date of origin and lack of definite architectural quality or provenance, it is not identified as being of townscape merit within the Conservation Area appraisal.

- 7.11 The red line area for the development includes an outbuilding attached to the Grade II Listed 46 Surley Row and would therefore be included within the Listed Building protection. The proposal includes repurposing this building to form a garden storage to serve plot no.7, with no external changes identified. Any future changes would require separate listed building consent (and possible planning permission).
- 7.12 The removal of large areas of hard-standing and replacement with built-form including areas of greenery would be a positive to the Conservation Area. Demolition and replacement of the public house would not necessarily harm the Conservation Area. The proposed replacement design is good quality and materials will be secured by condition and detailing which attains the statutory requirement to 'preserve or enhance the character and appearance' of the Conservation Area.
- 7.12 Based on the scale, massing and location of the proposed development, the proposals are considered to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation and the significance of the Listed Buildings. There is, therefore, no objection in principle to the proposals subject to conditions.

Redevelopment of the site and impact on the Green Link

- 7.13 The rear part of the site is a designated green link which connects two areas of designated Public and Strategic Open Space Major Landscape Feature Areas to the north and south of the site. The area of land to the south of the site is also identified as a wildlife site.
- 7.14 Reserves, Areas of Biodiversity both within and outside the Borough) and either link these areas or have the potential to do so (e.g. through re-development or management). The Green Network may also include lines of trees, particularly when in close proximity to the Network. Lines of trees can play an important role in contributing to biodiversity.
- 7.15 The proposed development would result in the loss of some of the existing vegetation along this route.
- 7.16 The site offers habitat of high suitability for use by nesting birds. As such, any vegetation removal should be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (March - August inclusive), to ensure that no birds are harmed during the development. This should be secured via a planning condition.
- 7.16 In addition, in accordance with paragraph 175 of the NPPF, which states that "opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged" a condition should be set to ensure that enhancements for wildlife are provided within the new development.

Housing mix

- 7.17 Policy H2 of the RBLP states that "*As a minimum, on new developments for 10 or more dwellings will ensure that 50% of dwellings will be of 3 bedrooms or more, having regard to all other material considerations*". As such, there is no specific requirement for a mix of dwelling sizes in this instance. Notwithstanding, the proposal includes: 2 x 2-bed, 2 x 3-bed, 3 x 4-bed. This is considered an

appropriate mix of dwelling sizes that aligns with the identified needs within the Strategic housing market assessment (2016) (SHMA).

Trees and landscaping

- 7.18 The site which is situated within a conservation area and contains significant individual trees in addition to trees on adjacent land in fairly close proximity to the site boundary. Within the conservation area trees are given significant protection. There are also groups of younger trees within the site which contribute to the visual character of the area and act as screening. The site has the potential to incorporate some significant landscaping.
- 7.19 The application has provided details of all trees on-site which includes a number of low level trees on the Northern edge of the site to be removed, and trees to the rear of the site to be removed. To compensate for the loss of individual trees, the proposal includes substantial tree planting and landscaping. This is considered acceptable and appropriate protection for trees (during construction phase) to be retained will be secured by condition.

Highway matters

- 7.20 The proposed development would include the stopping up of the access to the site from the northern end, and the formation of a singular access for the proposed dwellings in a similar position to the existing access.
- 7.21 The formation of a single access point servicing the site is considered an improvement and allows more space on site for soft landscaping to the frontage. The access has been demonstrated to be sufficiently safe with appropriate visibility splays, and would not result in any significantly harmful traffic generation onto the surrounding road network. Subject to conditions ensuring the access is constructed as proposed, appropriate amounts of Electric Vehicle charging points, cycle parking, waste storage, and provision of parking as shown on plans, the scheme is acceptable in transport terms.

Residential amenity of future occupiers and neighbours

- 7.24 The proposed development is surrounded on three sides with residential uses. There are a number of properties (to the East of the site) which are elevated above the site level of the subject property.
- 7.25 The proposed development, by virtue of its spacious nature, allow a significant distance (28m) between existing and proposed dwellings (in terms of direct back to back distances). In addition, due to the layout of the proposed plots minimise any potential for privacy impacts of any of the proposed dwellings upon one another.
- 7.26 All proposed dwellings have been designed to meet the nationally described space standards as outlined in policy H5. There are no potential impacts on daylight/sunlight reaching existing dwellings, nor would there be any impact on the proposed dwellings by virtue of their proximity to existing or proposed trees.
- 7.27 overall, the proposed scheme is considered not to impact upon the amenity of existing or future residents and complies with the requirements of policy CC8 or the RBLP.

Permitted Development Rights

- 7.28 The proposed development is subject to a degree of reduced outdoor space for a number of plots due to the inclusion of replacement trees, or existing trees to be

retained. In addition, the design of all dwellings has been carefully considered, as such it is considered appropriate to restrict permitted development rights under Class A only (as Class B is restricted by conservation area status).

Section 106 Matters

- 7.28 In accordance with Policy H3, the proposed development would be required to contribute toward off-site affordable housing provision elsewhere in the Borough. The applicant has provided valuations, and has agreed to enter into a section 106 to provide a policy compliant contribution.

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 7.29 The proposed development would be CIL liable. There would be some offset against the liability from the existing floor area which has been in use for 6 months of the last 3 years.

Other matters

Sustainability

- 7.30 In accordance with Policy H5, the proposed development will be required to meet improved sustainability standards for energy efficiency, water efficiency, and accessibility. This will be secured by condition.

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The loss of the public house in this location has been sufficiently demonstrated to be acceptable in that there is sufficient alternative provision accessible to the catchment. The proposed development responds positively to the surrounding pattern of development and provides large well designed dwellings within close proximity to the conservation area and listed building. As such, the proposed development is considered acceptable in accordance with the RBLP.

Case Officer: Anthony Scholes