

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 24

REPORT TO: PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE
DATE : 26 NOVEMBER 2008
REPORT BY: ACTING HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES
SUBJECT : FULL APPLICATION - DEMOLITION OF EXISTING HOTEL BUILDINGS AND THE ERECTION OF 21NO. APARTMENTS AT "BRYN AWEL HOTEL", DENBIGH ROAD, MOLD, FLINTSHIRE

This application was deferred at Planning Committee on 29th October 2008 for a Members site visit.

1.00 APPLICATION NUMBER

1.01 045180

2.00 APPLICANT

2.01 Graham Fender

3.00 SITE

3.01 Bryn Awel Hotel,
Denbigh Road,
Mold,
CH7 1BL

4.00 APPLICATION VALID DATE

4.01 19/06/2008

5.00 INTRODUCTION

5.01 This is a full planning application for the erection of 21 apartments on the site of the Bryn Awel Hotel, High Street Mold. Since submission of the application officers have been involved in detailed discussions with the applicant and the scheme has undergone amendments which reduced the number of apartments from 24 to 22 and more recently to 21 apartments. However, due to the late submission of the changes to the scheme and the nature of the changes these have not undergone public consultation, therefore the comments on the scheme for 24 apartments are reported and are still considered relevant. The scheme for consideration in this report is the latest amendment for 21 apartments.

6.00 CONSULTATIONS

6.01 Local Member

Councillor C Cattermoul

Original comments withdrawn - Further observations awaited at time of writing.

Mold Town Council

No objections in principle to this proposal provided that sympathetic consideration is given to the buildings proximity to the conservation area and the historical site of Bailey Hill. The Council has concerns about drainage arrangements due to the existing problems faced by residents of Henffordd adjoining the application site. Concerns were also raised about the effect on the neighbouring property (sharing a party wall) need to ensure privacy.

Chief Highways and Transportation Engineer

No response at the time of writing.

Chief Environment and Resources Officer

No adverse comments to make.

Welsh Water

No objections subject to standard conditions.

Countryside Council for Wales

No objection in principle to the proposal, however the application does not provide sufficient information to inform the decision making process. Advise that the application should not be determined until a satisfactory ecological survey of the buildings for bat and breeding birds has been carried out and submitted.

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

Although the development lies close to areas of archaeological significance it appears that no known features would be affected by the works.

Ancient Monuments Society

This is a very prominent site and it is essential that the new build is worthy of it. The proposed design does try to marry with the townscape in borrowing from the language of Victorian design and in the variety of fenestration and roofscape, although it is certainly larger and stodgier as a composition than is predecessor which (even if butchered) still reads in essence as a Victorian villa in its own grounds. We can appreciate its virtues compared with many similar redevelopments and raise no formal concerns.

7.00 PUBLICITY

7.01 Press Notice, Site Notice, Neighbour Notification.

The application was advertised as development affecting the setting of a Conservation Area.

5 representations were received. These comments were on the original scheme for 24 apartments. Objections were made on the following grounds;

- proposed building would dominate surrounding bungalows due to height
- loss of privacy and intrusion into private gardens
- overlooking
- loss of light
- would be sandwiched between two construction sites
- the height and siting of the building would have an adverse impact on Bailey Hill and the Mount
- impact on surface water drainage
- impact on foul sewage drainage
- increase in traffic

8.00 SITE HISTORY

8.01 3/MO/275/78

Alterations and extensions. Approved 07/07/78

03/35467

Illuminated hanging sign. Approved 21/05/03

04/26/38267

Change of use from 10 bed hotel block to 4 apartments, construction of pitched roof to existing flat roof. Refused 31/01/06

06/42746

Change of use from 10 bed hotel block to 4 apartments, construction of pitched roof to existing flat roof. Approved 30/08/07.

9.00 PLANNING POLICIES

9.01 Clwyd Structure Plan First Alteration

Policy B2 - Location Housing Development

Policy B3 - Scale of Housing Development in Main Settlements

Policy B5 - Allocation of Land for Housing Development

Policy C3 - Safeguarding Service Accommodation

Policy G4 - Conservation Policies

Structure Plan Second Alteration: Flintshire Edition

Policy GEN1 - General Development Policies

Policy GEN2 -General Development Policies

Policy GEN3 - General Development Policies

Policy CONS21 - Conservation Areas and their Settings
Policy CONS24 - Scheduled Ancient Monuments and their Settings
Policy HSG2 - Location of Housing Development
Policy HSG3 - Scale of Housing Development in Main Settlements
Policy HSG5 - Allocation of Land for Housing Development

Delyn Local Plan

Housing Policy 1 - Housing Density
Housing Policy 2 - Residential development in main settlements and main villages
Development Control Policy 2 - Design and Layout of Residential Estate Development
Transportation Policy 7 - Car parking Standards
Conservation Policy 2 - New Development and Alterations to Existing Buildings in or Adjacent to Conservation Areas
Tourism and Leisure Policy 2

Draft North Flintshire Local Plan

Policy d1 - design quality
Policy d2 - design guidance
Policy d3 - location and layout
Policy ac12 - parking provision
Policy ac14 - access and traffic impact
Policy w1 - protected species
Policy he1 - development affecting conservation areas
Policy h3 - housing on unallocated sites
Policy h7 - housing density

Emerging Flintshire Unitary Development Plan

Policy STR1 - New Development
Policy STR4 - Housing
Policy STR8 - Built Environment
Policy GEN1 - General Development Considerations
Policy GEN2 - Development Inside Settlement Boundaries
Policy D1 - Design Quality
Policy D2 - Location and Layout
Policy D3 - Design
Policy D4 - Landscaping
Policy TWH2 - Protection of Hedgerows
Policy HE1 - Development Affecting Conservation Areas
Policy HE6 - Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other Nationally Important Sites
Policy HSG3 - Housing on Unallocated Sites Within Settlement Boundaries
Policy HSG8 - Density of Development
Policy HSG9 - Housing Type and Mix
Policy HSG10 - Affordable Housing within Settlement Boundaries
Policy SR5 - Public Open Space and New Residential Development
Policy EWP2 - Energy Efficiency in New Development

Policy AC13 - Access and Traffic Impact
Policy AC18 - Parking Provision and New Development
Policy WB1 - Species Protection

The site is within the settlement boundary of Mold and opposite the Conservation Area boundary for Mold within the adopted and emerging development plans. Policies require developments in such locations to have a high standard of design and to protect and enhance the character of the Conservation Area respecting its surroundings. It is not considered that the proposal is in accordance with development plan policies in this regard.

10.00 PLANNING APPRAISAL

10.01 Proposal

This is a full planning application for the demolition of the existing Bryn Awel hotel and the erection of 21 apartments (as amended). The proposed scheme includes 2 one bedroom, 18 two bedroom and 1 three bedroom units. The scheme makes provision for 34 car parking spaces, 4 in underground garaging and 30 in the grounds of the site. The development takes the form of two to three storey development, varying across the site due to the changing levels, with living accommodation in the roof using dormers and rooflights. Amendments to the scheme have separated the apartments into 2 blocks, namely Block A with 14 apartments and Block B with 7 apartments.

10.02 As a result of this application the hotel use would close but the existing restaurant which operates within the hotel is to be relocated to the town centre subject to planning approval (045443) which is currently under consideration by the Council.

10.03 Planning permission was granted for alterations to the existing flat roofed block to add a pitched roof and to convert the serviced accommodation into apartments which has not been implemented.

Site Description

10.04 The site is in a prominent location on the edge of Mold Conservation Area in proximity to Bailey Hill, a scheduled ancient monument and is seen from a number of significant viewpoints. The current buildings on the site are of poor architectural quality due to previous adaptations and extensions onto the former 19th century house, with no thought to the impact on the character of the area. The current buildings vary in height from single to two storey. The re-development of the site is generally supported and presents an opportunity to improve and enhance this area of the town.

10.05 The site is in a predominantly residential area, outside the defined town centre boundary. It is bounded to the eastern boundary partly by low density residential development in the form of bungalows and partly by Denbigh Road. To the north the current buildings share a party wall with the two

storey traditional stone residential dwelling house 'Ffynnonfa' and to the south it adjoins the residential development of Shire View which is characterised by two storey dwelling houses. The site is bounded by High Street to the west, with the Conservation area boundary and residential property of the The Mount and the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Bailey Hill on the opposite side of the High Street. The topography of the site is varying with a significant difference in levels between High Street on the western boundary of the site and Denbigh Road on the eastern boundary.

Principle of Development

- 10.06 The proposed scheme would lead to the loss of hotel accommodation within Mold town centre where there is a limited range of such accommodation. Policies in the Clwyd Structure Plan First Alteration and the Delyn Local Plan aim to safeguard serviced accommodation where this would lead to a reduction in the range of tourist accommodation available in an area. These policies were in place particularly to safeguard rural hotel accommodation in certain areas as stated in the reasoned justification. These policies have not been carried through in more upto date development plans, as it is difficult to sustain such uses if they are not commercially viable. While the loss of town centre tourist accommodation is regrettable there is no development plan policy specific to town centres to retain the use. The principle of residential use on the site is therefore acceptable in policy terms.

Overdevelopment

- 10.07 The proposal is for 21 apartments on a 0.248 hectare site. The indicative density threshold in the emerging Flintshire Unitary Development Plan for a category A settlement within which Mold is categorised is 30 dwellings per hectare. Applying this density to this site equates to 7-8 dwellings. While it is expected that developments of brownfield sites in settlement boundaries should make an efficient use of the land, to achieve a higher density layout or type of development, there is a concern that the proposed scheme is driven by the desire to achieve a high density rather than a sensitive development proposal. The density of the proposal is not considered reflective of the surrounding residential area and is detrimental to the visual amenities of the area.

Scale and massing

- 10.08 The site is in a predominantly residential area, outside the defined town centre boundary. A street scene and computer modelling of the proposal was requested and provided in order for an assessment to be made of the impact of the proposed development on the local environment and in particular the adjacent residential properties. Only a street scene has been provided for the current amended design.
- 10.09 It is considered that the street is characterised by buildings at regular intervals, some of which are close to the footway, with intervening spaces. The majority of the buildings in the area are a mixture of low rise development with two storey houses and dormer bungalows.

- 10.10 The proposed scheme has a variation in roof height, which in the central section is greater in height than the existing building. The proposal did have a connecting block containing two apartments to allow vehicle access through to the rear. Following discussions with the applicant this block was removed to reduce the massing of the building. This addition in the built form created the visual impression of a continuous wall across the frontage of the site from important viewpoints. The applicants recently amended design lowers the roof height of block A which fronts the High Street, by removing the accommodation from the roof, but still allows for some variation in the roof line.
- 10.11 As well as local setting of the scheme due to the prominent position of the site and the long range views, the proposal also needs to be considered from the Denbigh Road/northern viewpoints and the impact of the proposal on the setting of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Bailey Hill. However, even with the removal of the link element, it is not considered that the current siting and form of development follows the existing street pattern and therefore would be detrimental to the visual amenities of the area.
- 10.12 The applicants have indicated the scheme under consideration is one with the removal of the link element, a reduction in the roof height as outlined above and a change in the overall design. The revised option without the link block does have some merits. The two storey 'annex' is more appropriate as a stand alone building in terms of its scale, however this does accentuate the difference between the bulk and height of the main block. The reduction in height of Block A on the High Street elevation by removing does reduce this impact somewhat, but the height and massing of the building from the Denbigh Road elevation remains the same. It is therefore considered that the massing of the main block in this location remains overbearing due to the elevated sloping nature of the site above the Mold Ring Road. Although the current buildings are far from attractive they do not possess the height and massing of the proposed buildings. The impact of the proposed buildings would appear undesirably striking when viewed from the High Street and the Ring Road. The proposed main block projects forward closer to the Ring Road in physical built form, introducing an urban feel which adversely affects the character of the area. This area is currently characterised by a scattering of buildings ranging in scale from bungalows to the current hotel buildings on the site. While the current form of buildings has been extended incrementally, the nature of the form of the buildings retains a domestic rather than commercial feel. The long distance views of the site are therefore dominated by a concentration of trees which forms the surroundings of Bailey Hill. The proposed building even without the link and the slight reduction in height introduces a form of development which is significantly visually dominant.
- 10.13 It is considered that the height of the proposed building when viewed in the context of the existing bungalows and the adjacent buildings is over

dominant and out of scale with its immediate surroundings and does not relate well to adjoining buildings or enhance the character of the street scene. It is also considered that the submitted scheme by virtue of its height and massing would have a detrimental impact not only on the local street scene and the surrounding residential properties but also the wider townscape, adjacent Conservation Area and the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Bailey Hill.

- 10.14 While it is appreciated that there are other forms of apartment buildings within the vicinity of the site, it is considered that these locations do not have the same site characteristics or constraints as the application site. The application site requires a sensitive scheme to reflect the site topography, surrounding development and Bailey Hill.

Design

- 10.15 The design statement submitted with the application fails to provide a detailed contextual analysis for the chosen architectural style. The previous Victorian style with gables, decorative barge boards and turrets were not considered characteristic of the area. This has been replaced with a more modern, plainer external appearance. While some elements such as the use of glazing would reduce the impact of some elements by breaking up the building, overall it is not considered that the amended design is acceptable. The elevations from Denbigh Road and the north have a proliferation of gables, roof dormers and roof lights which have no obvious pattern or rhythm. The number and style of the windows are monotonous and the overall design lacks any interest or character. The site is very prominent from a number of viewpoints and is also viewed in the context of the Scheduled Ancient Monument. It is not considered that the design of the scheme is compatible in relation to the properties in the immediate vicinity and the character of the wider Conservation Area, furthermore it does not contribute to, or enhance the local distinctiveness of the area.

Parking, affordable housing and open space

- 10.16 The proposed provision of 34 spaces is in excess of the Council's Standards for parking provision which require 1.5 spaces per apartment for 21 units. The views of the Council's Highway Engineer will be reported on the day of planning committee. The size of the site and the number of units does not meet the Council's threshold for affordable housing requirement. The proposal would require a contribution to off site open space provision.

Ecological issues

- 10.17 CCW advise that as the application involves the demolition of existing buildings a bat and breeding bird survey should be submitted prior to the determination of the application. This information has not been included with the planning application.

Conclusion

- 10.18 While the re-development of this key site is welcomed as an opportunity to improve the current built form and the townscape of Mold, it is not considered that the proposals in their current form are acceptable in the context of the surrounding area. It is considered that the bulk, massing and height of the main block are incompatible with the neighbouring properties and its wider surroundings. While attempts have been made to revised and maned the current scheme, it is not considered that the proposed amendments address the key issues. A revised scheme would therefore need a significant reduction in scale across all dimensions to achieve a successful scheme, which would inevitable lead to a further reduction in the number of units.

In considering this planning application the Council has acted in accordance with the Human Rights Act 1998 including Article 8 of the Convention and in a manner which is necessary in a democratic society in furtherance of the legitimate aims of the Act and the Convention

11.00 RECOMMENDATION

11.01 Refusal

Reasons

1. The proposed development is in the opinion of the Local Planning Authority overdevelopment of the site. It is considered by virtue of its scale, siting, massing, height and design the proposed development does not harmonise with the site and its surroundings and would have a detrimental impact on the townscape and the surrounding landscape. The proposal does not protect the character and amenity of the locality nor does it add to the quality and distinctiveness of the local area. The proposed development is therefore contrary to policy B5 of the Clwyd Structure Plan First Alteration, policies GEN1, GEN2 and Policy HSG5 of the Structure Plan Second Alteration: Flintshire Edition, Development control policy 2, Housing Policy 1 and Housing Policy 2 of the Delyn Local Plan, policies d1, d2, d3 and h7 of the Draft North Flintshire Local Plan and policies GEN1, D1, D2, D3, HSG3 and HSG8 of the emerging Flintshire Unitary Development Plan.
2. The proposed development would have an adverse impact by virtue of its scale, siting, massing, height and design on the setting and integrity of the historic environment. The scheme does not constitute good design and in particular it would not preserve or enhance the setting of Mold Conservation Area and the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Bailey Hill. The proposed development is therefore contrary to policy G4 of the Clwyd Structure Plan First Alteration, policies CONS21 and CONS24 of the Structure Plan Second Alteration: Flintshire Edition, Conservation Policy 2 of the Delyn Local Plan, policy he1 of the Draft North Flintshire Local Plan and policies

STR8, GEN1 and HE1 of the emerging Flintshire Unitary Development Plan.

3. Insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate that the proposed development would not effect European Protected Species. In the absence of suitable details the proposed development is therefore contrary to policy w1 of the Draft North Flintshire Local Plan and policy WB1 of the emerging Flintshire Unitary Development Plan.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Planning application
Consultation replies
Representations

Contact Officer: Emma Hancock
Telephone: 01352 703254
E-Mail: emma_hancock@flintshire.gov.uk

