

DELEGATED

AGENDA NO  
PLANNING COMMITTEE

8 August 2007

REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR,  
DEVELOPMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD  
SERVICES

07/1606/FUL

St James Church, High Newham Road, Stockton-on-Tees  
Residential development of 35 no. one and two bedroom apartments

Expiry Date 24 August 2007

**SUMMARY**

Planning permission is sought for the demolition of an existing disused Church and for the carrying out of a development of 35 residential apartments housed within 2no. three storey blocks of development. The scheme includes parking, cycle and bin storage together with grassed areas and indicative planting.

The application site is a brownfield site located within the limits to development and adjacent to a defined local centre where the principle of residential development is accepted. The site is located within close proximity to a range of services and public transport routes.

Objection has been raised from the occupiers of the adjoining building with regard to the overall scale and intensification of the site and its possible impacts on traffic and congestion.

The Councils Urban design Team have advised that there is insufficient parking is provided, that access visibility has not been proven and that landscaping on the site would be impacted upon. Furthermore it is advised that the scheme has excessive areas of hard surfacing, has a weak landscaping proposal whilst would be an over development of the site and that a reduction in bulk is required.

It is considered that the general principle of residential development on the site accords with Policy HO3 of the Local Plan as well as national guidance in the form of PPS3. However, it is considered that the layout of the scheme and its overall density result in a development which is out of keeping with the surrounding area and would be unable to adequately provide parking, privacy or amenity for the future occupiers. It is appreciated that the aim of the scheme is to provide low cost housing, however, this should not be done at the expense of all essential provisions required for the future occupants to achieve a reasonable standard of living.

**RECOMMENDATION**

Planning application 07/1606/FUL be Refused for the following reasons

01. *In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the design of the proposed development would result in the development appearing to be a large monolithic block of development with little relief across elevations, being out of keeping with its immediate surroundings and not achieving a high quality of built environment, being contrary to Policy HO11 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.*

- 02. In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority it is considered that the development provides insufficient intervening space between parking and apartment windows, therefore providing insufficient levels of amenity and privacy for the future occupiers, contrary to Policy HO11 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.**
- 03. In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority it is considered that the position of block 3 to the rear of the site is located in too close proximity to the boundaries of the site resulting in this block being unable to achieve adequate levels of privacy for the future occupants of the development. As such, the proposed development is considered to be contrary to Policy HO11 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.**
- 04. In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority it is considered that the proposed scheme would have an unacceptable impact on the existing natural features of the site and its immediate surroundings in that the development would unduly compromise existing trees as a result of being built within the canopy spreads of trees and having hard surfacing beneath canopy spreads. As such, the proposed development is considered to be contrary to Policy GP1 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.**
- 05. In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the proposed development does not adequately provide for formal and informal open space as a result of there being limited on site provision and there being no legal agreement securing off site provision in lieu of on site provision. As such, the proposed development is considered to be contrary to the requirements of Policies HO3 and HO11 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.**
- 06. In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the proposed development does not adequately provide for affordable housing as a result of no on site provision being made and there being no legal agreement securing off site provision in lieu of on site provision. As such, the proposed development is considered to be contrary to the requirements of Planning Policy Statement No. 3 Housing.**
- 07. In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the proposed development does not adequately provide provision of parking being contrary to Policies GP1 and HO11 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.**

## **BACKGROUND**

1. Planning permission was granted for the erection of 18no apartments and associated works under application reference 04/3762/REV. Subsequently a further application was approved to provide an additional 3no. apartments within the roof space of the previously approved scheme, thereby taking the overall development on the site to 21no. units. The scheme provided a total of 30. no parking spaces. See appendix reference 1.

## **PROPOSAL**

2. Planning permission is sought for the redevelopment of a site currently occupied by a vacant Church building. The redevelopment scheme proposes the erection of 35 one and two bedroom apartments with associated parking and other details.
3. The application was submitted with a Design and Access Statement, a transport Statement, Site Investigation report and the relevant plans and elevations. Minor amendments to the

scheme were made with regard to its overall layout, the reduction of one unit and the incorporation of an internal bin and cycle store.

4. The scheme is based around a standardised block form of development, having 2 joined blocks to the front of the site and a single block to the rear set at a right angle to the main frontage block. The access to the site is at the location of one of the existing access into the church car park. Parking is provided immediately to the rear of the main block, centrally within the site and adjacent to the access.

## **CONSULTATIONS**

The following Consultations were notified and any comments received are set out below:-

### NEDL

5. Have made general comments with regard to connections and location of existing apparatus.

### Northern Gas Networks

6. No objections

### Northumbrian Water Limited

7. No objections

### Cleveland Archaeologist Section

8. No objection as there are no known archaeological sites in the area.

### Urban Design - Engineers

9. The application does not mention or consider the SPD Parking Provision for New development and provides 32 spaces for 35 apartments which consist of one and two bed units. This is the equivalent of 0.9 spaces per dwelling. This is unacceptable and I therefore do not support the departure from standard as detailed. An excess of adequate cycle parking has been provided within the development. A visibility splay is not detailed on the drawings in order for it to be checked. It is also necessary for a bin store hard standing area off the footway to be provided off High Newham Road in order to allow for refuse collections.

### Urban Design - Landscape

10. There is limited amenity space within this scheme and much of what exists will be under the canopy spread of the existing trees so this is shown as shade loving planting- there are no areas for seating or grass in the scheme. There are large areas of tarmac to accommodate the parking provision which are not aesthetically pleasing. Some area of planting such as the strip just south of block 1 and 2 are too narrow to accommodate successful planting.
11. There is limited room on the north east corner of the estate to plant trees to help soften the impact of the building when viewed from the eastern approach along High Newham road largely on account of the existing water main easement - the planting plan shows only 1 tree a hornbeam which will only give limited screening of the buildings proposed. The eastern boundary in general is quite weak in terms of space for new planting and any existing planting will be removed and while this is not of a high quality it does afford some screening.
12. The trees on the hospital site mainly beeches and alders will have a future benefits for further screening the development so pruning of these trees or root damage should be avoided – I note that block 3 is very close to the branch spread of several trees and there

will be demands for pruning as the trees development stunting their growth and future structural stability.

### Urban Design Built Environment

13. Previous discussions centred on the possible inclusion of the block 3 within block 1 & 2, this has not been achieved and therefore the site is still over developed. I would recommend that block 3 is omitted from the development or at least reduced in height so as to not cause such a visual impact on the adjacent housing. I would also recommend that the applicant explore variations in building heights to the facades of blocks 1&2. This will break up a very linear flat frontage which currently doesn't contribute positively to human scale, or the street scene.
14. No comments have been received from the following consultees;-  
Contaminated Land Officer  
Joint Public Transport Group  
Stockton Police Station - Eddie Lincoln  
Councillors  
Environmental Health Unit

### PUBLICITY

Neighbours were notified and comments received are summarised below :-

#### Enterprise And Initiative Centre High Newham Road Hardwick

15. Have major concerns over the number of proposed apartments, being far higher than the previous scheme approved for the site. It is considered that this was over intensification of the site which might lead to congestion and problems of parking which is already an issue in the area.

### PLANNING POLICY

16. The relevant development plan in this case is the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan.  
Where an adopted or approved development plan contains relevant policies, Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that an application for planning permissions shall be determined in accordance with the Development Plan(s) for the area, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the relevant Development Plans are :- *the Tees Valley Structure Plan (TVSP) and the Stockton on Tees Local Plan (STLP)*.

The following planning policies are considered to be relevant to the consideration of this application:-

#### Policy GP1

Proposals for development will be assessed in relation to the policies of the Cleveland Structure Plan and the following criteria as appropriate:

- (i) The external appearance of the development and its relationship with the surrounding area;
- (ii) The effect on the amenities of the occupiers of nearby properties;
- (iii) The provision of satisfactory access and parking arrangements;

- (iv) The contribution of existing trees and landscape features;
- (v) The need for a high standard of landscaping;
- (vi) The desire to reduce opportunities for crime;
- (vii) The intention to make development as accessible as possible to everyone;
- (viii) The quality, character and sensitivity of existing landscapes and buildings;
- (ix) The effect upon wildlife habitats;
- (x) The effect upon the public rights of way network.

#### Policy HO3

Within the limits of development, residential development may be permitted provided that:

- (i) The land is not specifically allocated for another use; and
- (ii) The land is not underneath electricity lines; and
- (iii) It does not result in the loss of a site which is used for recreational purposes; and
- (iv) It is sympathetic to the character of the locality and takes account of and accommodates important features within the site; and
- (v) It does not result in an unacceptable loss of amenity to adjacent land users; and
- (vi) Satisfactory arrangements can be made for access and parking.

#### Policy HO11

New residential development should be designed and laid out to:

- (i) Provide a high quality of built environment which is in keeping with its surroundings;
- (ii) Incorporate open space for both formal and informal use;
- (iii) Ensure that residents of the new dwellings would have a satisfactory degree of privacy and amenity;
- (iv) Avoid any unacceptable effect on the privacy and amenity of the occupiers of nearby properties;
- (v) Pay due regard to existing features and ground levels on the site;
- (vi) Provide adequate access, parking and servicing;
- (vii) Subject to the above factors, to incorporate features to assist in crime prevention.

#### NATIONAL POLICY

PPS1: Delivering sustainable development - February 2005

PPS3: Housing - November 2006

### **SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

17. The application site is located within the north western area of Stockton, immediately adjacent to the North Tees Hospital. The site is adjacent to and accessed off High Newham Road. Opposite the site lies blocks of three storey buildings having shops at ground floor level and flats above as well as a public house. Two storey residential properties lie to the rear of the site, beyond a narrow landscaped corridor whilst a single storey flat roofed building which is used as an enterprise centre adjoins the western boundary. Open space adjoins the eastern boundary. The rear and eastern side boundary to the site are dominated by mature landscaping in the form of trees.
18. The site is currently occupied by a church which would be demolished in order to allow the development to take place.

### **MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

19. The application relates to a brownfield site within the limits of development as defined within the adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan. Policy H03 guides in respect to new

residential development and the proposed scheme generally meets the requirements of the policy in that the site does not lie under electricity lines and should not result in the loss of a site used for recreational purposes. The key considerations with respect to the proposed development are therefore whether the site is suitable for locating flatted development, the site layout, design, access and parking, impact on surrounding properties and provision of amenity space.

20. Planning permission was granted for the erection of 21no. units on the site, which is also a material consideration. However, in view of National Planning Policy being updated in respect to housing, specifically with regard to the introduction of PPS 1 and PPS 3 Housing, and as a result of these documents having an increased focus of quality of design and layout of sites, and the previous scheme being for a much reduced number of units, it is considered that the new policy context would apply to the consideration of this new application.

#### Location of Flatted Development

21. Supplementary Planning Guidance Note no. 4 relating to the locating of flatted development requires new flatted development schemes such as this to be located on brownfield land within the defined limits to development and within 500m of a stop on a main bus route with a regular service. The site is located directly opposite the Local Centre of High Newham Court, relates to the reuse of brownfield land, is located within the limits to development and is within 100m of a bus route. As such, it is considered that the development accords with the guidance of Supplementary Planning Guidance Note no. 4.

#### Site Layout

22. The scheme provides 35 units on a 0.2ha site, thereby achieving a density of 175 dwellings per hectare. The main block to the front of the site is stepped in front of the adjacent building, however, in view of the road corridor width and the varied nature of the street scene this is considered to be in keeping with the street scene. Parking is located particularly close to the elevations of buildings and includes a band of parking immediately adjacent to the access which would be particularly visible within the street scene. There is limited provision of meaningful amenity grassed space and insufficient consideration given to the trees surrounding the site which are shown with their trunks immediately adjacent to and overlapped by car parking whilst the block of development to the rear of the site is shown being built into the canopy of the trees. (see appendix ref. 2). It is considered that the overall development would be dominated by hard surfacing and would not positively contribute to the appearance or character of the area. Further, it does not adequately take into account existing features of the site. As such the proposal is considered to be contrary to Policy GP1 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan.

#### Design of apartment buildings

23. The apartment blocks are based on a block design, with effectively three blocks of identical development. The development proposes a dual block to the front of the site and a single block to the rear. Elevational treatments are relatively basic, having a projecting gable to the front and window openings and render panels offering the only areas of relief. The rear of the blocks are entirely unbroken except for the provision of windows. It is considered that this detail would result in a monolithic form of development which offers no specific sense of place and would not appear to be designed for this location. As such, it is considered that the design of the buildings would be contrary to Policy GP1 of the Stockton on Tees Local Plan as well as the Key principles of PPS 3 Housing with regard to providing a high quality of built environment.

### Access, parking and general highways matters

24. The site is proposed to be accessed at the same point as the existing church and although it appears that adequate visibility can be achieved, there has been no evidence submitted to support this. The site provides a total of 32no. parking spaces for the 35 units, thereby achieving less than one space per unit and although the site is located adjacent to shops, areas of employment and within reasonable walking distance of bus routes, it is considered that a ratio of less than one space per unit for future residents and any visitors is wholly inadequate and would result in on street parking on High Newham Road.
25. The Head of Technical Services has advised that the level of cycle parking exceeds that required by the design guide, however, in view of the nature of the units, having no internal space for cycle storage individually, it is considered that an over provision of communal cycle parking would be acceptable. Furthermore, the Head of Technical Services has advised that an area of hard standing would be required for bins to stand on for refuse collection. This is not specifically detailed, however, it is considered that there is adequate space to achieve such provision.

### Impact on surrounding properties and uses

26. The proposed is generally considered to be sited sufficient distance from opposing residential and commercial properties on High Newham Road as well as those residential properties to the rear of the site. The proposed block 3 to the rear of the site lies adjacent to an Enterprise and Initiative Centre and although in particularly close proximity it is considered that the scheme should not unduly compromise this building in its current use.

### Formal and Informal Open Space

27. The proposed development incorporates a mix of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments and in accordance with Local Plan Policy HO11 is required to provide open space for both formal and informal use. As discussed earlier within the report, it is considered that there is insufficient amenity green space within the site and the area that is provided would be particularly difficult to use without seriously compromising the privacy of residents of ground floor flats. In addition there is no open space provided for formal use and no legal agreement to provide a commuted sum in lieu of on site provision.
28. Although PPS3 advocates high density developments, it also requires developments to provide or enable good access to green and open amenity and recreational space (including play space) as well as private outdoor space such as residential gardens, patios and balconies and be well integrated with, and complement the neighbouring buildings and the local area more generally in terms of scale, density, layout and access. It is considered that this proposal fails these requirements and is, therefore, contrary to the guidance of PPS 3.

### Affordable Housing

29. Local Plan Policy H04 requires the provision of affordable housing on sites over 2 hectares, however, PPS 3 (Housing) has been published since the adoption of the Local Plan which offers updated guidance on the delivery and requirement for affordable housing. PPS 3 has a presumption that the housing will be delivered on site, facilitating the governments objectives of creating sustainable, mixed communities. The guidance also requires that policy sets out justification for off-site provision, or an equivalent financial contribution in-lieu of on site provision, providing these continue to make a contribution to the delivery of mixed communities. Para 29. of PPS 3:Housing states that the minimum site size threshold for affordable housing provision should be 15 dwellings, although this may be lower in

some areas, where this is viable and practicable. PPS 3 is required to be taken account of as a material consideration in determining planning applications after the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007.

30. The Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) recommended that 9% of all new housing development over the next five years be classed as affordable, which equates to 200 actual dwellings over the same period. However, since some smaller sites may be unable to deliver any affordable dwellings, it is recommended that overall, 15% of all new residential development is affordable. This figure is solely concerned with newly arising need, and will be updated annually. Although this figure appears to be low, it has to take account of some permissions taking a long time to progress from application stage to a built and occupied stage.
31. Given the advice in PPS3 and the LHNA, the Councils Housing Team have advised that they will actively pursue a target of 15% affordable housing on sites with 15 or more dwellings proposed. The request for the provision of on site affordable housing has been made, although there is no legal agreement in place to achieve this. As such, in view of the lack of provision being made, it is considered that the proposed development would be contrary to the guidance of Planning Policy Statement 3 Housing.

## **CONCLUSION**

32. It is considered that the general principle of residential development on the site accords with Policy HO3 of the Local Plan as well as national guidance in the form of PPS3. However, it is considered that the layout of the scheme and its overall density result in a development which is out of keeping with the surrounding area whilst would be unable to adequately provide parking, privacy or amenity for the future occupiers. It is appreciated that the aim of the scheme is to provide low cost housing, however, this should not be done at the expense of all essential provisions in order for the future occupants to achieve a reasonable standard of living.

**Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services**  
**Contact Officer Mr Andrew Glossop Telephone No 01642 527796**

### WARD AND WARD COUNCILLORS

Ward	Hardwick
Ward Councillor	Councillor Mrs E.A. Nesbitt
Ward Councillor	Councillor W H Noble

### Human Rights Implications

The provisions of the European Convention of Human Rights 1950 have been taken into account in the preparation of this report

### Financial Implications

None

### Community Implications

None



Previously approved scheme – site layout and frontage elevation

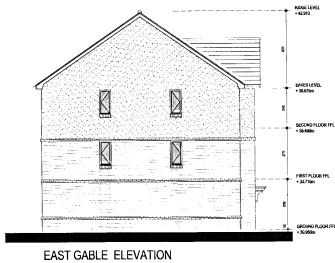


PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION SHOWING DORMERS TO ROOF AREA

05/3342/--



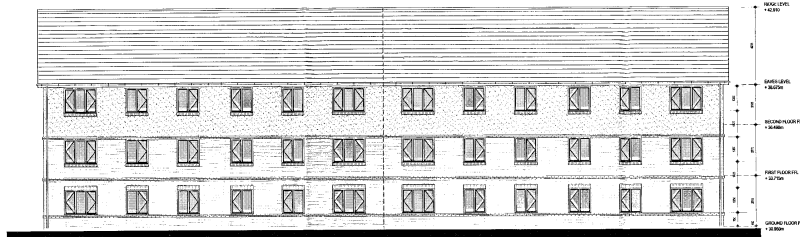
Appendix ref. 3  
 07/1606/FUL  
 Proposed elevation details (blocks 1 and 2)



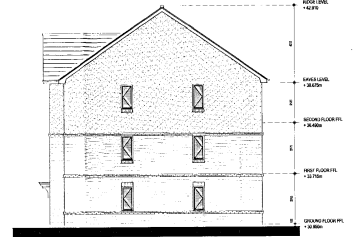
EAST GABLE ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION

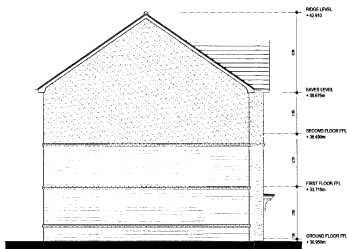


SOUTH ELEVATION



WEST GABLE ELEVATION

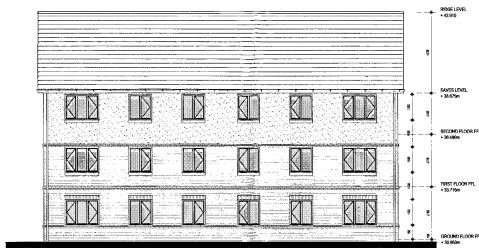
Proposed elevation details (block 3)



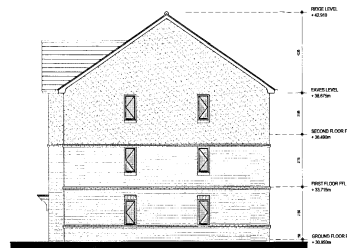
SOUTH ELEVATION



EAST ELEVATION



WEST ELEVATION



NORTH ELEVATION