

DELEGATED

**AGENDA NO
PLANNING COMMITTEE**

DATE 12TH APRIL 2008

**REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR,
DEVELOPMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD
SERVICES**

07/3438/FUL

**Land 35 Metres To West Of British Legion Club, Queens Avenue, Thornaby
Revised application for development of 33 no. apartments for student accommodation,
providing 175 no. en-suite bedrooms and associated parking and means of access.**

Expiry Date 12 March 2008

SUMMARY

Planning permission is sought for the erection student accommodation in the form of self-contained apartments on the car park of British Legion Club, Queens Avenue, Thornaby. This application seeks to address the design concerns raised by Officers to a previous submission in 2006.

Previous planning permissions on the site relate to 10 dwellings and a scheme of 46 apartments.

The site would provide areas of landscaping, but no dedicated amenity space. In view of this, a legal agreement has been secured for a contribution to open space at Victoria Park in Peel Street.

Car and cycle parking is proposed, and the scheme retains parking for patrons of the Club. Access to the site is via Gilmour Street and Queens Avenue. In accordance with the requirements of the Head of Technical Services, a financial contribution has been secured to assist in the provision of pedestrian facilities on Westbury Street.

Waste recycling facilities are proposed along side those for general refuse.

The main planning considerations relate to planning policy implications and the principle of development, need for student accommodation, impact on the amenity of the occupants of neighbouring premises and future residents, drainage, scale and design of the proposed building, landscape and visual amenity, access and highway safety considerations.

The application has been publicised by means of site and press notice and individual letters. Four letters of representation have been received from neighbours, objecting to the proposal. No comments have been received from Ward Councillors.

In view of the fact that the principle for high-density development has been accepted on this site previously, it is considered that this form of development is acceptable in this location. In terms of need, there is no firm evidence to confirm there is no need for student accommodation of the type proposed and it is not for the Planning Authority to consider competition between

differing forms of accommodation. Given the relative orientation, disposition of the apartments flats in relation to neighbouring properties, and that levels can be controlled, it is not considered that the proposed development would have an adverse impact on the amenity of the users of neighbouring properties. The design is unique and a feature and now addresses Officers concerns. Overall it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in landscape and visual amenity terms. In access and highway safety terms, the applicant has responded to the Head of Technical Services concerns, and a response is awaited.

In conclusion it is considered that subject to a satisfactory response from the Urban Design Manager and Northumbrian Water that planning permission be granted.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that subject to a satisfactory response from the Urban Design Manager in terms of highway safety and Northumbrian Water in terms of drainage that planning application 07/3438/FUL be APPROVED subject to conditions in respect of time limits, approved documents, materials, levels, amendment to balconies, noise insulation, hours of operation, details of cycle storage, soft and hard landscaping and maintenance, lighting strategy, Green Travel Plan, drainage, and other conditions as appropriate.

LEGAL AGREEMENT

A Unilateral Undertaking has been received from the applicant in respect of a financial contribution of £5,000 towards works to provide a pedestrian route to the bus stops on Westbury Street, and £14,000 towards works to Victoria Park on Peel Street, in lieu of open space provision within the site.

BACKGROUND

1. Outline planning permission was granted in January 1997 for 10 dwellings on the southern part of the existing car park at the Ex-Servicemen's Club. That scheme proposed two terraces of four dwellings and one pair of detached houses aligned parallel to Gilmour Street with parking to the frontage. This permission has subsequently lapsed.
2. On 22 February 2004, planning permission was granted for 46 apartments on land adjacent to, and forming part of the Thornaby Ex-Servicemen's Club and Institute (reference number 04/3026/OUT). The indicative scheme showed a modern "L" shaped building fronting both Queens Avenue and Gilmour Street. To the Gilmour Street frontage, the building provided car and cycle parking at ground floor, with flats and maisonettes on first and second floor. The Queens Avenue frontage provided parking at ground floor and flats on three floors. Vehicular access would be to Gilmour Street, with pedestrian access to Queens Avenue and Gilmour Street. The scheme retained 24 parking spaces for the Club and 66 spaces for the residential accommodation. The permission was subject, amongst others to a condition which restricted the height of the Gilmour Street block to a height of 10 metres above the existing ground level measures from the carriageway of Gilmour Street.
3. In 2006, planning permission (application number 06/2673/OUT) was sought for the erection of 33 apartments to accommodate 175 student en-suite bedrooms. The building as proposed framed Queens Avenue and Gilmour Street, with a three storey elevation to Gilmour Street, to a maximum height of 10 metres above ground level. To the west facing Queens Avenue, a five storey building to a height of 15 metres was proposed, and to the

north and facing the A66(T) a block to a maximum height of 19 metres. The applicant withdrew the application in the light of the view that the proposed development constituted a monotonous and monolithic building out of character and scale with nearby properties, which would have an unacceptable detrimental impact on the local visual amenity.

THE SITE

4. The application site comprises 0.44 hectares, currently occupied by a car-park serving the Ex Serviceman's Club on Queens Avenue. The car park comprises tarmacked parked bays with maturing trees, shrub planting and access to the north onto Queens Avenue. To the west of the site is Thornaby Road, to the north A66 Trunk Road, and immediately to the east is the Club building. Generally to the south and east are residential properties and associated facilities.

PROPOSAL

5. The current application seeks planning permission for 33 no. apartments for student accommodation, providing 175 no. en-suite bedrooms and associated parking and means of access to address the design concerns raised in 2006, and in doing so addressing the concerns of the Officers in respect of design.
6. Vehicular access to the site is via Gilmour Street and Queens Avenue. Car parking (44 spaces) would be provided in an undercroft garage facing Gilmour Street and internal courtyard. Thirty-five (35) cycle parking spaces, both internal and external are to be provided spaces within the internal courtyard. Parking would be retained for the Club house
7. In terms of design and layout, the building is modern and the proposed elevations show a mix of materials and styles but cohesive. At ground floor the building would accommodate 25 apartments, first floor 52 apartments, second floor 54 apartments, third floor 22 apartments and fourth floor 22 apartments.
8. The elevation opposite properties in Gilmour Street is restricted in height to measure no more than 10 metres from carriageway level. Towards Queens Avenue, where ground levels fall away from Thornaby Road and the A66, the building rises to five storeys and an external stairwell provides a distinctive corner feature, which will be visible from the A66.
9. The application proposes the removal of all existing vegetation from the site, and its replacement with a scheme of planting more suited to the site and the area in general.

Accompanying Documents

10. The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement, Supporting Document to Design and Access Statement, Traffic Assessment and documents addressing the following matters: Viability Assessment, Report on Existing Car Park Demand, Parking Provision Proposals, Proposed Access, Parking and Servicing Provisions, and Landscape Proposals.

CONSULTATIONS

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

Urban Design Manager – Highways Engineers

11. The development should be designed and constructed in accordance with the Council's Design Guide and Specification (Residential and Industrial Estates Development) current edition and 'Supplementary Planning Document 3: Parking Provision for New Developments, November 2006', and to that end I comment as follows:-
12. The applicant notes that following discussions with the highways officers a parking ratio of 1 space per 4 residents was agreed. This ratio is also in accordance with the Council's parking standards. For 175 residents this equates to 44 bays which the proposed site layout accommodates. The applicant must ensure that a sufficient number of spaces are at least 3.3m wide in order to accommodate disabled users and located on a level surface near to the entrance. Sufficient parking is also provided for cycles, motorbikes and scooters.
13. An existing social club within the site is to be retained and requires parking facilities. The club currently has approx 100 spaces and the proposed site layout reduces this to 24. The applicant has provided traffic counts which were carried out in 2004 and show that the maximum number of vehicles parked at any time was 23.
14. As the traffic counts were taken four years ago it is possible that parking demand has changed significantly. Without details of the clubs floorspace it is difficult to determine if the 24 proposed spaces for the club is in accordance with the Council's parking standards. As such I require details of the floorspace to fully assess if the parking provision is sufficient. A lack of parking within the site will lead to on-street parking on Queens Avenue and Gilmour Street to the inconvenience of local residents and to the detriment of highway safety.
15. I also have concerns that the internal layout will lead to residents parking on Queens Avenue along the west of the site. The entrance and foyer to the northern section of the development faces Queens Avenue whereas the parking area is behind the flats. As there are no restrictions preventing on-street parking on Queens Avenue it is likely that residents will park on-street as it is more convenient for the entrance. From the plans submitted it is not clear if there is pedestrian access through the site to the northern entrance other than walking around the development.
16. Existing access to the car park is from Queens Avenue and this will be retained. Whilst the width of the access is sufficient, the internal road narrows to accommodate the development and car parking. The internal access road should be a minimum of 4.1 metres wide and the applicant must provide a plan that demonstrates that large vehicles can manoeuvre within the site and exit in a forward gear.
17. A new vehicular access is also proposed off Gilmour Street to access the parking area towards the south of the site and the applicant will need to enter into a Section 278 Agreement for the required works to the two access points.
18. The bins are located within the centre of the site but nearer to Gilmour Street. The applicant proposes that refuse collection is via Queens Avenue. The developer must ensure that the minimum distance from the public highway to the point of refuse collection does not exceed 25 metres. The submitted drawing is not to scale making it difficult to determine if the proposed refuse storage area is within 25 metres. If it is not, the applicant will need to provide hardstanding nearer to the Queens Avenue access for refuse collection.

19. The submitted site layout does not show all the parking bays for the club (only 14 spaces are shown). The applicant must submit a plan (to scale) which shows the full site layout proposals.
20. The applicant has demonstrated that the site is accessible by sustainable modes of transport. However a £5k contribution is required to provide a satisfactory pedestrian route to the bus stops in Westbury Street.
21. It is recommended that a residential travel plan be introduced for this development, since the accommodation is for students it may be possible for the developer to include this scheme within the University's Travel Plan, it is therefore suggested that the developer contact the University.

Environmental Health Unit

22. I have no objection in principle to the development, however, I do have concerns regarding the following environmental issues and would recommend the conditions as detailed be imposed on the development should it be approved.

Noise disturbance between living accommodation

23. Due to the probability of noise complaints resulting from the intensified use of these residential premises, the building shall be provided with sound insulation, prior to being used, to ensure that adequate protection is afforded against the transmission of noise between living accommodation and bedroom in adjacent flats in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Noise disturbance from adjacent road traffic

24. Before the use commences, any living rooms or bedrooms with windows affected by traffic noise levels of 68 dB(A) L10 (18 hour) or more (or predicted to be affected by such levels in the next 15 years) shall be insulated in accordance with a scheme approved by the Local Planning Authority for the protection of this proposed accommodation from road traffic noise.

Construction Noise

25. I am concerned about the short-term environmental impact on the surrounding dwellings during construction, should the development be approved. My main concerns are potential noise, vibration and dust emissions from site operations and vehicles accessing the site.
26. Should the application be approved, the developer should apply for consent under Section 61 Control of Pollution Act 1974. This would involve limiting operations on site that cause noise nuisance.
27. I will recommend working hours on site to be restricted to 8.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m. on weekdays, 8.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m. on a Saturday and no Sunday working.

Countryside & Greenspace

28. It is this sections view that the proposed block is over-development of the space, with extremely limited amenity planting and no on-site open space for active recreation.
29. To accommodate the size and scale of the building existing amenity shrub-planting beds would have to be removed and very limited peripheral planting reinstated. Consideration should therefore be given to require a reduction in the scale of the proposed building.
30. Should this application be approved there is a requirement for an off-site contribution to open space, which in this case would be in the region of £14,000.00.

Waste And Fleet Services Manager

31. Whilst there is sufficient storage area for general refuse there is no provision for recycling containers. There needs to be an area large enough to accommodate another three 1100-litre containers for the collection of recyclable materials. The Local Authority has a duty under the Household Waste Recycling Act 2003 to provide for the collection of at least two recyclable materials by the year 2010. A central collection facility similar to the one provided for the collection of refuse would be adequate. I would suggest making the refuse storage area larger to accommodate the extra containers.

The Environment Agency

32. No objections but whilst noting a desk study, site investigation and risk assessment will not be commenting on that aspect of the proposal.
33. Comments are made in respect of safe and suitable working having regard to previous contamination, pollution of water resources, that the site is not within 250 metres of an area known to have received waste or refuse in the last 30 years, and that it is the site operators responsibility to ensure that there is no possibility of contaminated water entering and polluting surface or underground waters.

Highways Agency

34. We have reviewed the Traffic Statement and would wish to comment that it has not been prepared in accordance with the latest Guidelines for Transport Assessment published by the DfT in March 2007.
35. However we have undertaken some initial studies and would agree with the conclusion in the report that the proposed student accommodation would not result in a material impact upon the Strategic Highway Network. We would therefore not wish to offer any objection to this planning application. We would wish to comment that no travel plan has been submitted as part of the planning application and we would consider that one should be provided in order to promote alternative modes of travel to the single occupancy car trip. The travel plan should include baseline person trip generation and modal splits, a firm commitment to the implementation of measures and appropriate targets and timescales, and an effective monitoring strategy.

Joint Public Transport Group

36. No response received.

Thornaby Town Council

37. No response received.

Care For Your Area

38. No response received.

Stockton Police Station - Eddie Lincoln

39. No response received.

Durham University

40. The University has provided the following information:

Please find below as requested, information regarding student numbers at Queen's Campus, the demand for accommodation and comments on the current student housing market. Please note, all figures shown are approximate and may change in the future.

Number of full time undergraduate students at Queen's Campus	2,000
Approximate number of students require accommodation	1,500
Number of rooms available in Stephenson and Snow Colleges (mainly first year students)	500
Number of rooms acquired for Head Tenancy from private Sector landlords 07/08 (first year students)	50
Number of rooms in private sector still being advertised summer 07 (i.e. surplus rooms – note, some landlords may not have informed Office that house has been let)	170
Number of rooms advertised at start of house hunting for 08/09 (note- this does not include houses which are retained by students for 08/09)	900
Approximate no of rooms still available (note:- some landlords may not have informed Office that house has been let . Majority of students have now signed up for accommodation for 08/09)	500

As you can see from the above information, there will be a surplus of student housing in the private sector market in the short to medium term in Stockton and Thornaby.

Development And Regeneration

41. No response received.

Tees Valley Regeneration

42. No response received.

One North East

43. The application presents the proposal as flexible apartments providing 175 student beds to serve students, graduates and the wider community. The applicants have stated that should unforeseen circumstances arise in terms of student numbers the accommodation would be capable of use by the wider community. Parking provision for the site has been calculated on this basis.
44. As you are aware North Shore is one of the Tees Valley Regeneration and the Agency's five strategic regeneration sites in Tees Valley. Amec and Urban Splash have been selected as preferred developers to deliver a mixed-use master plan that has outline planning permission. The development includes the provision of student accommodation for the University of Durham.
45. Whilst One North East has no objections in principle to the proposed development, the Agency would encourage the Local Planning Authority to give careful consideration to the impact of the proposal upon the regeneration proposals for North Shore.
46. As outlined in the letter dated 4 April 2007 prepared in response to the consultation on the previous application for the site, the Agency has concerns that the proposed development, on a less integrated site in terms of physical relationship to the University has the potential to undermine established regeneration objectives for North Shore. Furthermore, in the event that that this accommodation becomes residential use for the wider community, this may also affect Stockton's strategic regeneration sites.

47. As you aware the RES promotes the need for quality of place within existing and proposed development with this in mind, should the application be viewed favourably, the Agency would request the Local Planning Authority to encourage the developer of this site, e.g. BREEM, Building for Life and Secured by Design.
48. In line with Government objectives to generate 10% electricity from renewable energy sources by 2010 the application details regarding the provision of renewable energy measures within the scheme should also be provided.
- North East Assembly
49. No response received.
- Durham And Tees Valley Airport
50. No response received.
- Environment Project Manager - Mike Chicken
51. No response received.
- Tristar Homes
52. No response received.
- Northumbrian Water Limited
53. Thank you for consulting Northumbrian Water on the above proposed development. We have the following comments to make:
54. The application has been examined and Northumbrian Water has no objections to the proposed development. It is important that Northumbrian Water is informed of the local planning authority's decision on this application.
- Northern Gas Networks
55. No objections to the proposal and encloses main records for the area.
- NEDL
56. Provides mains records for the area and safety advice.
- Councillors
57. No response received.

PUBLICITY

The application has been publicised by means of a site notice, press notice and individual letters to neighbours. Four letters of representation have been received, objecting to the proposal. Those comments are set out below.

- Mr B Pearce, 18 Gilmour Street Thornaby
58. I object most strongly to the proposed erection of the five storey thirty three apartment - one hundred and seventy five bedroom building with four or five beds to each bedroom on the land thirty five metres west of Thornaby ex-service men's club 69 Queens Avenue.
59. On Friday 21 December 2007 I visited the Planning and Services Dept., in Church Road Stockton on Tees and inspected the proposed development App. No. 07/3438/FUL I saw no reference to the new main sewage system which would bring the present existing public danger and unhygienic combined sewage and storm drain up to public safety standard, the line would then accommodate thirty three apartment new kitchen and bathroom waste and

sewerage disposal system. There is a lethal methane noxious gases seeping form the combined surface water sewerage gullies the entire length of Gilmour Street.

60. The sewerage from Palmerston Court Council estate runs into an inspection chamber located in rear Gilmour Street the line does a 45 degree turn causing the line to the west running into another inspection chamber in Walker Street. The line frequently has a blockage at the 45 degree turn causing the line to back up in the inspection chambers and gullies of lower Gilmour Street backyards causing noxious gas to emit from the gullies into the waste piping seeping past the waste traps and contaminating the air in bathroom and kitchen.
61. The back Gilmour Street sewage lines joins the storm gully line before crossing under Thornaby Road according to the water board map.
62. I am shocked and amazed at the mass of students you want to impose on this Council estate, which you originally proposed ten family houses with off road parking commensurate with the existing estate layout.
63. A staff to run this large hostel will use all parking spaces proposed, students and visitors will seize any space locally vacated by residents. Dissidence will ensue over parking rights, large vehicles unable to approach (fire engines etc)
64. Overcrowding megalithic structures on small council estates is ethically and morally wrong putting residents and their families at risk. This is a bad proposition.

Miss Jeannie Taylor, 6 Cardwell Walk, Thornaby (Summarised)

65. This is a small piece of ground well established with trees and bushes. In springtime it is a haven for nesting birds. The trees provide benefits to the polluted air from the traffic on Thornaby Road and the nearby A66. The proposal would disenchant the area, which is residential where many old and disabled people live. The proposal would reduce and light and privacy, and be the cause of noise and disturbance from the comings and goings of students.

SEG Bradley, 5 Brisbane Crescent, Thornaby

66. I do not object to the principle of this proposal but to its scale. At five storeys high this would be overpowering for the site in general but also for those living in close proximity to the flats. Two and a half storeys would be more in keeping with the area. I also consider the building footprint to be excessive for the size of the site and consideration should be given to reducing this and increasing the green area of the project. As car parking also appears to be inadequate for the number of flats, a basement car park should also be included. When considering the merits of this development, its proximity to one of the gateways to the borough and therefore the image it will create, should not be overlooked.

PLANNING POLICY

19. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that if regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the relevant Development Plans are the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), Tees Valley Structure Plan (TVSP) and the Stockton on Tees Local Plan (STLP).

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.

Development which is likely to detract from the setting of a listed building will not be permitted.

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.

Supplementary Planning Guidance 4: High Density Development Flats and Apartments

Supplementary Planning Document 3: Parking Provision in New Developments

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development lists design as one of the fundamental ways of delivering sustainable development and states that planning authorities should prepare robust policies on design and access. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its present defining characteristics.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing identifies the priority given to different housing sites and states that Local Planning Authorities should avoid developments, which make inefficient use of land.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport seeks to integrate planning and transport by reducing the reliance on the motor car, encouraging the use of more sustainable transport

choices, reduce the need to travel, and promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, cycling and walking.

Planning Policy Statement 23 Planning and Pollution Control advises on the role of the Local Planning Authority in terms of development and the quality of land, air and water.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 24 Planning and Noise gives advice and guidance on noise protection for development affected by noise pollution.

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

67. The main planning considerations relate to planning policy implications and the principle of development, need for student accommodation, impact on the amenity of the occupants of neighbouring premises and future residents, scale and design of the proposed building, landscape and visual amenity, access and highway safety considerations.

Planning Policy Implication and the Principle of Development

68. The application site is previously developed land within the limits to development. At such a location residential development, in principle is acceptable subject to the consideration of details. The application proposes high density accommodation and is therefore subject the considerations set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4, however a precedent for this type of development has been established through the previous approval for flatted development on the site.
69. The applicant has submitted information, which confirms that, a local supermarket, doctors surgery, a local bus route, Thornaby Station and Stockton Town Centre are within walking distance of the site. Of significance is that the University is within 15 minutes walking distance.
70. In light of the above, it is considered that in principle, high-density development is acceptable at this site.

Need for Student Accommodation

71. Beyond the discussion of the principle of high density development, is the matter of the need for student accommodation. In response both the applicant, and the University have submitted information and a different picture of the provision and need for student accommodation in Stockton.
72. The University has provided figures set out in paragraph 40 that appears to indicate that sufficient student accommodation is available.
73. The applicant in support of the application argues, in summary, that in the past any residual requirements for student accommodation beyond that provided by the University has been fulfilled by private accommodation with complaints of poor standards, and that the students are removing housing from local people, and that the lifestyles conflict with the local population.
74. The new development of 380 beds at Bridge Road, addresses some of the problem, and the proposed development would further reduce the reliance on the private sector. Furthermore, the development by virtue of the relatively high parking standards would be attractive to those students who need to commute to the University at Durham.

75. The applicant argues that as far as the available beds registered at the accommodation office is concerned, the numbers are likely to be unreliable as often landlords do not bother or forget to de-register once beds are taken. A far more reliable figure is that for rooms advertised at the start of the house-hunting season for 2008/2009. This figure (900) is very similar to that noted for students requiring private accommodation (1100). It needs to be pointed out that the University undergraduate figures do not include overseas students or Post Graduates, which would therefore indicate that the number requiring private accommodation is higher than stated. It must be emphasised that the accommodation available per se is not the important factor, but the quality and the desirability to students of the accommodation available is of major importance.
76. It is clear from the parties involved that at the moment, there is no clear consensus of the amount and type of accommodation that is required and it is likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. Many of the towns and cities that have a student population have adopted policy in respect of student accommodation. The Local Plan contains no specific targets or precise allocations for this particular use and therefore the need or lack of it cannot be addressed through the provisions of the Local Plan. The University (the generator of need) has in place a strategy designed to meet its own needs and indeed the North Shore Outline approval contains provision for student accommodation for the University of Durham. However it must be noted that the University does not have a statutory requirement to provide accommodation for its own students and the thrust of ministerial guidance advises that it is not the role of the planning system to restrict competition. In response to the concerns of One North East, in the absence of evidence to suggest that the overall requirement for student accommodation within the Borough has been met then the proposed use is acceptable in principle subject to satisfying other planning requirements.

Impact on the Amenity of the Occupants of Neighbouring Properties

77. The site lies within the predominantly residential area of Victoria Ward in Thornaby, and new residential is being constructed to the west on the Sun Street and Reedblast sites.
78. In respect of those dwellings on Gilmour Street, the amended scheme shows a three-storey building at a distance of approximately 21 metres from the front elevations of properties at 12 to 30 Gilmour Street and 26 metres to those of 32 to 38 Gilmour Street. In respect of the height of the building, a condition will be imposed to ensure controls to proposed ground levels.
79. The proposed elevations fronting Gilmour Street containing small balconies, which would allow residents to spend extended periods in a position overlooking existing properties on Gilmour Street. This arrangement is considered unacceptable and a condition will be imposed to ensure that the balconies are deleted or are reduced to Juliet balconies only.
80. An objection has been received from the occupant of 6 Cardwell Walk, specifically concerned with a loss of privacy from the flats. The property is 81 metres from the site boundary and will not be adversely affected in this way.
81. To the east of the site are the Sure Start/Community Centre and properties on King Street. The properties are over 21 metres distant from the nearest elevation of the apartment building, and whilst there would be some overlooking of the rear yard of the community centre, this loss of privacy is not considered sufficient to warrant refusal of planning permission.
82. There is little doubt that some increase in disturbance can be expected from the increased traffic movements emanating from the vehicular access onto Gilmour Street, however, it is not considered that this would be sufficient to warrant refusal in this respect.

Scale and Design

83. The design and scale of the building whilst unique and with an intention to be a feature towards the road A66 respects the scale of immediate buildings. In terms of wider views, the applicant has stated that the building would mimic the visual impact of the apartments on Thornaby Road (Sun Gardens). The design and proposed use of materials is unlike any other building in the area and coloured elevations clearly show that the building is not monolithic or monotonous. The Urban Design Manager has no objection to the proposal in this respect and the Built Environment Officer also raises no objection subject to the imposition of conditions in respect of materials, palette of colours and a lighting strategy.

Landscape and Visual Impact

84. Whilst it is regrettable that the proposal would remove the existing maturing planting, it would give an opportunity to introduce new species in a form more appropriate to this location. As the species to be lost reflect those in the landscape bank to Thornaby Road, it is not considered that this loss is unacceptable. The Urban Design Manager raises no objections to the proposal in respect of landscape.
85. Overall, it is considered that the proposal has addressed the previous design concerns expressed by Officers and is not objectionable in this respect.

Access and Highway Safety

86. There are a number of residual concerns arising in respect of access and highway safety. An assessment in this respect cannot be made, and will be reported if possible in an update report.

Other Matters

Drainage

87. Objection has been received in respect of the capacity of the local drainage system to accommodate future demands. Whilst Northumbrian Water in their initial response raised no objection to the proposal in this respect, a further consultation setting out specific concerns. No response has been received to date.

Waste Management Arrangements

88. The Waste and Fleet Services Manager has raised concerns in respect of recycling facilities. The applicant has confirmed that three separate areas adjacent to the cycle parking on the Gilmour Street wing of the building provides space for recycling containers.
89. The Head of Technical Services recommends a distance of 25 metres from the highway as a maximum for the retrieval of refuse containers. The proposal allocates space at a distance in excess of that prescribed. It would therefore be for the management of the apartments to ensure that proper arrangements are made within the site to facilitate collection, and not an issue that warrants refusal of planning permission.

Green Travel Plan

90. The Highways Agency notes that a Green Travel Plan does not accompany the application. This matter can be adequately secured by condition.

Anti-Social Behaviour and Security

91. The applicant has confirmed that in owning and managing 200 beds in Stockton, the company has an office on Mandale Road, with a manager, secretary and maintenance personnel. The new block, once developed, would be added to the portfolio.
92. The Council's Head of Security Services has advised that a number of security issues can be addressed, such as cctv (Monitored 24/7) inside and outside the flats, advise on electronic door entry system, also linked to the control room personal attack alarm facilities for vulnerable female students.

CONCLUSION

93. In view of the fact that the principle for high-density development has been accepted on this site previously, it is considered that this form of development is acceptable in this location. In terms of need, there is no firm evidence to confirm there is no need for student accommodation of the type proposed and it is not for the Planning Authority to consider competition between differing forms of accommodation. Given the relative orientation, disposition of the apartments flats in relation to neighbouring properties, and that levels can be controlled, it is not considered that the proposed development would have an adverse impact on the amenity of the users of neighbouring properties. The design is unique and a feature and now addresses Officers concerns. Overall it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in landscape and visual amenity terms. In conclusion it is considered that subject to a satisfactory response from the Urban Design Manager and Northumbrian

Corporate Director of Development and Neighbourhood Services

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Financial Implications.

None

Environmental Implications.

As Report.

Community Safety Implications.

Not Applicable.

Human Rights Implications.

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

Background Papers.

Adopted Stockton on Tees Local Plan (June 1997)

Planning Application Reference Numbers 96/1560/P, 04/3026/OUT, 06/2673/FUL and 07/3438/FUL

Planning Policy Statement 1 Delivering Sustainable Development

Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing

Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport
Planning Policy Statement 23 Planning and Pollution Control
Planning Policy Guidance Note 24 Planning and Noise
Supplementary Planning Document 3: Parking Provision for New Developments
Supplementary Planning Guidance 4: High Density Development Flats and Apartments

WARD AND WARD COUNCILLORS

Ward	Mandale And Victoria
Ward Councillor	Councillor Mrs A Trainer
Ward Councillor	Councillor S F Walmsley
Ward Councillor	Councillor T Large