

Application Number

P/2013/1342

Site Address

Land Adj. Brixham Hospital
Greenswood Road
Brixham
Devon
TQ5 9HW

Case Officer

Mrs Helen Addison

Ward

St Marys With Summercombe

Description

Provision of 36 bedroom residential care home (Use Class C2), with associated car parking and landscaping; following demolition of existing building and outbuildings

Executive Summary/Key Outcomes

The application is to relocate the St Kilda care home in Drew Street from its outdated building to provide improved facilities. The proposal would constitute a 36 bedroom care home (use class C2) to provide dementia care, intermediate care and residential care. In addition the building would accommodate a day care centre for up to 18 visitors and provide office space for up to 10 people.

The application includes enlarging the existing car park accessed from Penn Meadows to provide 14 additional spaces. It also provides an improved pedestrian link through the hospital site from Penn Meadows to Greenswood Road that would be available for the wider community to use.

The proposed building would be located on an area of open space currently laid to grass. It would be part two storeys and part three storeys high (although the first floor would be within the roof space) as a result of ground level changes on the site. The design approach would be relatively simple based around a south facing courtyard. The proposal would provide 21 full time jobs and 7 part time jobs on the site. It would deliver improved facilities for people in need of care.

There would be a distinct advantage to co-locating the facility next to the hospital. The operation of the proposed building would provide intermediate care which would effectively be a 'stepping stone' in the care process for patients moving from the hospital to their own homes.

The proposal would be consistent with the objectives of Policies CFS, CF1 and CF15 in the Torbay Local Plan 1995-2011 in that it would provide new facilities in a sustainable location and would make a positive contribution to the character of the neighbourhood.

Recommendation

Conditional Approval; Subject to the receipt of satisfactory further information relating to landscaping, pedestrian movement through the whole hospital site and drainage, and; subject to the receipt of a unilateral undertaking to fund a Traffic Regulation Order to control parking around the Penn Meadows entrance of the site. Conditions are identified at the end of the report.

Statutory Determination Period

The thirteen week target date for determination of the application is 18th March 2014. The decision will be issued within this timescale.

Site Details

The application site relates to an area measuring approximately 45m by 110m within the curtilage of Brixham Hospital, to the south of the main hospital buildings. The site is bounded by Penn Lane along the southern boundary and Penn Meadows on the eastern boundary. The majority of the site is covered in grass and has an open character. It has no specific use of this land and it is seen as ancillary space within the curtilage of the hospital.

There is a building at the western end of the site known as 'the bungalow' which has a residential appearance but is used as part of the hospital. This building would be demolished as part of the application. An area in the south west corner of the site is currently fenced off and used for site maintenance. This would also be incorporated into the application site.

There is a steep raised bank between the application site and the original hospital buildings, with a low timber rail fence adjacent to the bank. Along the boundary to Penn Lane and Penn Meadows there is a chainlink fence. A section of mature hedge runs along the boundary with Penn Lane. The boundary fence and hedge are low, resulting in the site being clearly visible in the street scene. There is a notable difference in levels on the whole hospital site, with the lower levels on the western side of the site, towards Greenswood Road. The application site slopes down towards the west. From the site there are long distance views towards the Windmill Hill and Parkham areas of the town. Similarly there are views of the site from these nearby hillsides.

There are two points of access to the Brixham hospital site. The closest access to the application site is from Penn Meadows. This access currently serves a car park, the hospital wards, the Zone Team building and the ambulance station. The principal access to the hospital is from Greenswood Road which is to the west of the application site. This access is at a lower level than the application site. It serves the minor injury unit, out/day patient facilities and the largest

parking areas on the site.

Due to the difference in levels there is no vehicular connectivity on the site between the eastern and western areas. There is a footpath link between the two levels of the site which includes a slope to navigate the changes in level.

To the south and east of the site is residential development which largely comprises two storey semi detached and detached dwellings. In the Torbay Local Plan 1995-2011 there is no specific allocation relating to the site. The boundary of the Higher Brixham Conservation Area runs along the northern boundary of the hospital site.

Detailed Proposals

The application is to replace the current St Kilda Care home which is located to the south west of the site in Drew Street. The applicant advises that this property is no longer fit for purpose. The application is for a 36 bedroom care home for dementia care, intermediate care and residential care with private gardens for residents use. In addition the proposal would accommodate a day care centre for up to 18 visitors and associated office space for up to 10 people.

The proposal is for a two storey building with vehicular drop off space and landscaped outdoor space. The building would be orientated around a south facing courtyard. The applicant advises that this layout would maximise resident access to external space and views of the nearby church at St Marys square. As part of the application the connectivity through the hospital site will be improved through the provision of a new ramped pedestrian route. The main entrance to the proposal would be on the northern side of the building. There would be a plaza area adjacent to the entrance with a coffee kiosk. Garden areas would be provided on the south, east and west sides of the building. The western gardens would be private and accessed directly from the resident's rooms. The southern and eastern courtyards would provide communal space.

It is proposed to enlarge the existing car park accessed from Penn Meadows. This would provide 34 parking spaces to include two disabled parking spaces. There are currently 20 spaces in the car park. On site cycle parking is also proposed.

The following accommodation would be provided within the building;

Lower ground floor- This would be the dementia wing and would provide 12 bedrooms with associated kitchen and facilities. The applicant has advised this space would be most appropriate for these patients as it would be more difficult for patients to exit the building. Wandering dementia patients presents a problem for carers. Five of the bedrooms would have direct access to the lower garden area.

Ground floor- Both the residential wing and the intermediate care wings would be provided at this level. They would be separated by the central circulation area. 12 bedrooms would be provided in the residential wing along with a shared living/dining area. 7 of these bedrooms would have direct access to the garden area. In the intermediate care wing 12 bedrooms would be provided. The principle behind locating these uses to this floor is to provide high levels of garden access to long term residents. Residents in the intermediate wing would be short term and would be mobile and therefore able to access garden areas.

First floor- The day care centre would be located at this level along with staff facilities and a meeting room. The principle for this use being in this location is that the day care centre would only be used from 10 to 3 daily. The space would be attractive as it would be double height. It would afford views over Brixham. There would be carers with the visitors who would be able to assist with access to the garden areas.

The applicant has worked with the University of Stirling to design the building, particularly to address the needs of residents with dementia. It is noted that getting design right can make a fundamental difference to the lives of people with dementia. Good design can improve their life experiences and can increase their life expectancy.

In addition, a detailed landscape plan has been submitted in support of the application. In the Design and Access statement it is recognised that access to open space has a positive effect on health. The provision of open space has been designed as an integral part of the development.

The proposed building would utilise the topography on the site and would have a single storey appearance at the higher eastern end (closer to Penn Meadows) with a two storey appearance at the lower western end. The roof space would be utilised to provide the first floor accommodation. The form of the building would be 'U' shaped around a courtyard with a central gable feature running through the middle of the building. The applicant advises that the design of the development would have a simple pitched roof form to respond to the scale of the immediate neighbours. The central core gable would assist in breaking up the perceived length of the building. The proposed materials would be rendered walls with a brick plinth, grey foil coated windows and the roof would be finished in concrete interlocking tiles in smooth grey.

Summary Of Consultation Responses

South West Water: No objection subject to foul and surface water discharges being kept separate and connected to the respective public foul and surface water sewers.

Drainage: Requests further information relating to soakaways on the site.

Arboricultural Officer: Advises that the scheme be suitable for approval on arboricultural merit subject to conditions relating to tree protection and submission of a detailed landscaping plan.

Senior Transport Planner No highway objection. Requests the applicant funds a traffic regulation order to ensure the access around the Penn Meadows entrance is kept clear of vehicles and a condition requiring submission of a Travel Plan for the entire site.

Summary Of Representations

Prior to the submission of the application an open afternoon was held at Brixham Hospital where the proposed plans were on display for stakeholders and the public to view.

Following the advertisement of the application one letter of objection has been received. This has been reproduced and sent electronically for Members consideration.

The following issues are raised;

- Impact of traffic for visitors and staff
- Building would dwarf existing hospital building
- Loss of large green space

Relevant Planning History

There is an extensive previous planning history on the site. The most recent applications are;

P/2009/0759	Minor revision to previous application (ref P/2009/0342PA) fire escape door in existing window opening approved 28.9.09
P/2009/0527	Detached permanent store for the storage of lifting equipment for adjacent hospital wards approved 28.7.09
P/2009/0342	Alterations to existing building to rebuild existing day room, provide new external pram shelter and works to main entrance approved 8.6.09
P/2008/1062	Enclosed walkway between main house and the Briseham unit approved 5.9.08

Key Issues/Material Considerations

The main issues are;

1. the principle of development on this site
2. whether the design and scale would be appropriate in this location
3. highways and parking
4. landscaping
5. drainage
6. impact on residential amenity
7. ecology

1. Principle and Planning Policy -

In the Torbay Local Plan 1995-2011 Policies CFS and CF1 support new development that would meet the needs of and enhance the quality of life of residents. Policy CF15 relates to the provision of accommodation for people in need of care. This policy requires new development to be accessible to public transport and within walking distance of everyday facilities, to have adequate amenity space, provision for servicing and parking and not to be detrimental to the character or amenities of the neighbourhood. These issues will be considered below. Para. 70 in the NPPF promotes the delivery of services that the community needs to enhance the sustainability of communities.

There is no specific allocation relating to the site in the Torbay Local Plan 1995-2011. The site is within the built up area of Brixham and therefore the principle of placing a building on the site would be consistent with the character of the area.

The proposal would result in the loss of an open area, with views across the site. There is no public access to the site and it is not used for recreational purposes, so there would be no loss of recreation facilities used by the community. The proposal would inevitably have an impact on the character of the area by reason of the size of the building and the loss of open space on the site.

The issue to be considered in this instance is what is the value of the open space to the character of the area, and what impact does the proposed development have on it? In response to this matter there are a number of considerations.

Firstly the site does provide legibility to the area due to its distinctive character, however, a new well designed building would also make a positive contribution towards legibility in the area. The open space provides visual relief to the built up area, and a notable gap in buildings in the street scene. This break between buildings would be reduced. However, the proposed building would not extend across the entire site and the area with the highest ground level to the east of the site would be used as a car park with no buildings on it. This would continue to

provide some relief to the built form in Penn Lane.

The proposed footprint would also ensure that a break in the built form is retained and the proportion of building on the site would not harm the overall character of the area.

The final issue to be considered is the impact on views across the site and how important this is to the character of the area. As the site is on a hillside views from the east of the site to hillsides on the opposite side of the valley would be retained in part. There would inevitably be a loss of public view across the site, however this would be of moderate impact as some visibility of the surrounding hillsides would be retained.

The overall impact on public views and legibility and character of the area needs to be balanced against the benefit to the community from the provision of the proposed facilities on the site.

The applicant has advised that there are a number of shortcomings in the current St Kilda care home which include the following;

- Bedrooms are too small to allow for residents needs
- No en-suite facilities
- Due to age of building maintenance is costly
- Lounge and dining areas do not provide appropriate levels of amenity.
- Poor circulation routes reduce resident's privacy
- No reception desk
- Unable to accommodate people with mental health issues

In response to these shortcomings the proposal will deliver purpose built facilities that would clearly benefit the community through provision of care and improved facilities on the site.

The application involves the demolition of a detached building on the site that is known as 'the bungalow'. There would be no objection to the loss of this building on the site. It has no architectural merit and its siting and form do not relate to the main hospital building. It makes little contribution to the character of the site and therefore its demolition would be acceptable.

In conclusion it is considered that the role and function of the space makes a positive contribution to the character of the area. However there are no overriding reasons why it should be retained in its current form. The proposed development would make effective use of a sustainable site within the town. Its impact on the character of the space is considered to be acceptable given the retention of some open space to the east and given that the design will fit with the character of the area.

There would also be a distinct advantage to co-locating the facility next to the hospital. The operation of the proposed building would provide intermediate care which would effectively be a 'stepping stone' in the care process for patients moving from the hospital to their own homes.

2. Design and scale of building -

Considerable pre-application discussion was carried out prior to the submission of the proposal. The DRP comments on a previous scheme are reproduced with the agenda. The DRP suggested the following opportunities existed on the site;

- A smaller footprint through increasing the height of the building,
- The internal circulation should be efficient, pleasant to use and clear,
- The architectural form should be less complicated and more future proof,
- The scale of the building should be more sympathetic to the modest residential properties in the area, and;
- The pedestrian route should be clear and direct 'an internal street'.

The proposed building would inevitably be large and would be of a notably greater scale and have a different character than the form of residential development that is located to the south, east and west of the site.

The applicant has given thought to this issue and has addressed the existing form of development by following the existing building line in the footprint of the proposed building. In addition, the siting of the proposed development has been chosen to exploit the existing topography.

It would be located at the lower part of the site which is on the western side. The ridgeline of the building would remain constant throughout the length of the building. It would effectively 'step' down the hillside through the provision of a lower ground floor level at the western (lower) end of the building. This would result in a single storey appearance to the eastern side of the building as the first floor accommodation would be within the roof space.

In order to respond to the residential character of the surrounding area, the proposal would have a simple pitched roof form to respond to the scale of the immediate neighbours and would create a residential feel to the development. The ends of the gables would have simple articulation. The central core gables would further aid in breaking up the perceived length of the building.

A simple palette of materials is proposed to help reinforce the domestic scale of the building. A brick plinth and detailing to the main entrance is intended to tie the building to the existing hospital, whilst white render walls and grey roof tiles would relate to neighbouring residential properties. Officers consider that it would be preferable for the building to be visually 'broken up' through the use of different colours. A prime example of this is where there are two gable ends side by side on the south elevation. These would be better treated through being

painted in two separate colours.

In the proposed building consideration has been given to designing for people with dementia. The applicant has worked with the Dementia Services Development Centre at the University of Stirling to include measures that would improve the quality of the environment for residents and visitors. A detailed report by the University of Stirling has been submitted which contains a number of recommendations.

The commitment by the applicant to taking professional advice in this matter assures officers that efforts are being made to appropriately design the building for the end users.

3. Accessibility -

An important part of the proposal is the provision of pedestrian accessibility to the building from both Penn Lane and Greenswood Road. The proposed development also presents an opportunity to improve the existing pedestrian link through the site that is informally used by local residents.

The most direct and shortest route to the proposed building would be from Penn Meadows. A direct segregated pedestrian path to the building entrance would be provided. This would involve narrowing the existing access to the site from Penn Meadows. The entrance to the proposed building would be visible from Penn Meadows. There would also be pedestrian access to the building from Greenswood Road.

A new ramped access would be created between the east and west parts of the overall hospital site. The applicant has been requested to clarify the route through the Greenswood Road end of the site, because this is not clear from the submitted plan.

As a result of this proposal pedestrian accessibility through the site would be improved. The route through the application site would be clearer than existing and relatively direct. It would also be largely segregated from vehicular traffic.

There is some concern about how the 'plaza' area would function and whether the proposed coffee kiosk is located in the optimum position on the site as there are substantial changes in ground levels in this area. This part of the application would benefit from further work on how to maximise the opportunity for this area. It would be appropriate to impose a condition requiring submission of a detailed layout plan post planning decision.

The proposal includes the car park accessed from Penn Meadows being extended to provide 34 spaces (an increase of 14 spaces). The applicant advises that as a result of the proposal 21 full time jobs and 7 part time jobs would be provided on the site. The Transport Statement advises that an

assessment of TRICs data has established that the proposal would be likely to generate a maximum of 16 additional movements during the peak hour periods. It is noted that the site has good links to public transport with bus services to both Greenwood Road and Penn Meadows. The applicant proposes to provide a travel plan which will encourage walking, cycling and public transport usage.

Two areas of cycle parking are proposed on the site. One of these is adjacent to the building entrance. The other is on the far side of the new ramped path. The applicant has been requested to review whether this second area of cycle parking should be brought closer to the building entrance.

The Senior Transport Officer has requested the applicant fund a Traffic Regulation Order to ensure that the access around the Penn Meadows entrance is kept clear of parked vehicles. This can be addressed by means of a unilateral undertaking prior to the issue of planning permission.

4. Landscaping -

The quality of the external environment should be an integral part of the development. In the Design and Access statement it is recognised that access to outside space benefits health, particularly through contact with direct sunlight. There are health benefits for elderly people to increase vitamin D levels from sunlight. It is recognised that people congregate in outdoor spaces, particularly sunny spaces. This improves social interaction which improves overall well being and avoids isolation and loneliness which can happen when people remain in their bedrooms.

The proposal includes the provision of small garden/courtyard areas on the south, east and west sides of the building. Seating areas are proposed together with raised planters for growing fruit and vegetables. The proposal would make effective use of outdoor space for residents. There would be direct access from a number of rooms to the outside space. The applicant has been requested to review the boundary treatment around the southern and eastern boundaries. There is currently a hedge along the boundary with Penn Lane and it would be preferable for a soft landscape treatment to be provided along this boundary, to reflect the green appearance of the existing open space on the site.

The Council's arboricultural officer advises that the proposal is suitable for approval on arboricultural merit subject to a condition requiring submission of details of tree protection and submission of a landscape scheme.

5. Drainage -

In support of the application, a proposed drainage strategy has been submitted. In respect of surface water the drainage strategy notes that several infiltration tests have been undertaken on the site which indicates that infiltration systems would be viable on the site however there would be significant constraints on their possible location due to the presence of a public sewer. Due to the

presence of a public sewer on the western side of the building it would not be possible to use infiltration systems to serve the lower part of the building. The applicant therefore intends to provide a positive outfall to the public sewer with an attenuation system located below the garden. It is intended that the eastern end of the building would discharge via an infiltration system. This would be dependent on achieving suitable infiltration rates at a depth of approx. 3.5m below existing ground level. If this is not suitable it would be necessary to construct a positive discharge from the building to the public sewer with an attenuation tank to accommodate a restricted flow. It is intended that the car park would be designed to discharge to an infiltration system. It is proposed that foul water would be discharged into the public sewerage system that crosses the site.

In their consultation response SWW advise that they have no objection to the proposal. The Council's drainage engineer has requested information regarding details of the infiltration tests that have been undertaken and the submission of detailed designs for the proposed soakaways. This has been submitted and his response is awaited.

6. Impact on residential amenity -

The proposed development would be closest to properties in Penn Lane. By placing the entrance to the building on the northern side activity associated with the building ie. movements to and from the building would be on the opposite side to the properties in Penn Meadows and therefore would result in limited noise disturbance to these properties.

The proposed building would sit alongside 14 Penn Lane, and would be two storeys with additional accommodation in the roof space at this point. The footprint of the building would be positioned so that it would be stepped away from the dwelling but would be sited approx. 7m from the rear garden. Locating the proposed building away from 14 Penn Lane would assist in preventing an overbearing relationship of buildings. There is currently a tall line of trees within the rear curtilage of the property along boundary of the site, which would make an effective contribution to screening the proposal from the rear garden. It is noted that the proposal would be on the northern side of this dwelling and therefore would not overshadow the property.

The proposal would have an impact on the outlook from 7a Penn Lane which faces across the application site, although it is sited on the opposite side of Penn Lane. The outlook from this property would be changed by the development as the proposed building would be 11 metres from this property. There would be two ground floor windows in the proposed development facing this property which would be partly screened by the boundary treatment. In this case it is considered that this relationship of buildings would be acceptable and would not result in a loss of residential amenity because the building line of the proposal would be staggered along the Penn Lane boundary and therefore would not

result in an overbearing relationship of buildings.

7. Ecology -

A bat survey of the bungalow (which is to be demolished as part of the application) has been submitted. This states that no evidence of bats was recorded during an inspection of the bungalow. The building is considered by the applicants ecological consultants to have low bat roost potential. It was noted that a starlings nest was recorded within the loft space of the building. In the light of this the ecologist recommended that demolition be undertaken outside of the main bird-breeding season (ie between October and February) or subject to a pre start check by an ecologist to ensure that no active nests are present. The ecologist also recommends that an ecologist undertakes a hand search for the flower beds prior to site clearance to check for slow worms which would minimise the potential risk of them being injured or killed during site clearance.

S106/CIL -

The applicant has submitted TRICS data in support of the application, which advises that for the peak hours the proposed development would result in an increase of 16 trips in the morning and 15 trips in the afternoon.

In accordance with the Council's SPD "Planning contributions and Affordable housing: Priorities and Delivery" the impact of the proposal on the transport network has been considered. Taking into account mitigation for the creation of the 21 full time jobs and 7 part time jobs on the site no contribution towards sustainable transport would be required from this development.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the proposal would result in the provision of new facilities that would provide a benefit to the community, which would be consistent with Policies CFS, CF1 and CF15 in the Torbay Local Plan 1995-2011. The proposed building would be in a sustainable location with good links to public transport. It would be sited adjacent to Brixham Hospital which would be beneficial to the operation of the proposed development as there would be direct links between the delivery of healthcare and the role of the hospital in the community.

The proposed building would be of a large size. The applicant has considered the design and siting of the building in order that it relates to the form of development in the surrounding area. Landscaping and the provision of garden space for residents and visitors would be an integral part of the design of the building. An additional 14 car parking spaces would be provided on the site.

The proposed building would be designed to make effective use of the level changes on the site and minimise the visual impact of the building. A building of this size would inevitably have some effect on the appearance and character of

the area. It is considered that the design approach would be appropriate in this location and the impact on the character of the area would be acceptable.

Condition(s)/Reason(s)

01. Schedule of materials and paint colours
02. Parking and cycle parking provided before commencement of use
03. Landscape scheme submitted
04. Landscape scheme implemented
05. Building constructed in accordance with finished floor levels
06. Travel plan submitted
07. Alterations to access and provision of footpath through site provided prior to commencement of use
08. Detailed plan showing layout and levels of plaza area
09. Section to be submitted through the two courtyard areas on south side of building
10. Detailed plan for servicing
11. Tree protection
12. Details of drainage

Relevant Policies

- H2 New housing on unidentified sites
- H9 Layout, and design and community aspects
- H10 Housing densities
- E5 Employment provision on unidentified sit
- CFS Sustainable communities strategy
- CF1 Provision of new and improved community
- CF6 Community infrastructure contributions
- CF15 Accommodation for people in need of care
- L10 Major development and landscaping
- NC5 Protected species
- EP1 Energy efficient design

BES Built environment strategy
BE1 Design of new development
BE2 Landscaping and design
T1 Development accessibility
T2 Transport hierarchy
T7 Access for people with disabilities
T25 Car parking in new development
T26 Access from development onto the highway
T27 Servicing