

P/2010/1389/MPA

Tormohun Ward

**Land Rear Of Edinburgh Villas, Off McKay Avenue And Newton Road, Torquay
Redevelopment to form 74 assisted living extra care units with associated communal and care facilities, car parking, landscaping and servicing**

Site Details

This vacant site originally formed part of the old South Devon College before it was redeveloped for housing purposes. It is located to the north-west of Edinburgh Villas with the Foyer Project to the east, Kwik Fit to the south-west and the completed streets of Torre Marine to the north. These comprise 2 storey terraces on McKay Avenue with taller bookend buildings which terminate the junction with Richardson Walk.

This site was included in the Master Plan for Torre Marine and was to provide 61 category II Sheltered units in a building that extended up to seven stories with office floorspace on the ground floor and in a discrete block to the north and included 42 car parking spaces.

The site is at a key location in terms of views and routes through the wider development site and key areas of public realm about its boundaries.

McCarthy and Stone purchased the site soon after development was commenced on the wider site and although they did make a start on construction, this stalled due to difficulties in the market. The site has remained vacant since.

As the permission for the wider development has been implemented, the permission to construct the 61 sheltered units and office floorspace remains live in perpetuity and can be built out at any time.

Relevant Planning History

P/2005/0138: Redevelopment of South Devon College to provide 258 residential units, 61 Sheltered units and 1500 m2 office floorspace. Approved: 30.09.05

P/2007/0968: Amendments to the approved scheme comprising changes to balconies, fenestration and roof detail. Approved: 9.08.07

Relevant Policies

PPS1 Delivering Sustainable Development

PPS3 Housing

PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment

Saved Torbay Local Plan 1995-2011

BES Built environment strategy

BE1 Design of new development

BE5 Policy in conservation areas

BE6 Development affecting listed buildings.

CF6 Community Infrastructure contributions

CF15 Accommodation for people in need of care

ES Employment strategy

E6 Retention of employment land

T25 Car parking

Proposals

This is a detailed application for the construction of 74 Extra care apartments with communal facilities, 32 car parking spaces and space for 19 mobility scooters. The building scales up from 4 to a maximum of 7 stories in height. It is largely rendered, with balconies, a brick plinth and curved metal roofs.

Consultations

Torbay Development Agency: No observations received

Representations

Objections received from near neighbours concerned at the size and scale of the building and the relative shortage of car parking. The representations have been reproduced at page T.200 of this agenda.

Key Issues/Material Considerations

a) The provision of extra care accommodation in place of sheltered accommodation and loss of office floorspace

In order to accommodate the additional 14 units, the office space is deleted. The original approval, in trying to deliver a suitably balanced mixed use scheme involved the provision of commercial floorspace in this part of the site that had to be delivered as part of a phasing plan. The applicant has supplied marketing information to confirm that attempts have been made to find occupiers, but that such attempts have failed. The TDA have been asked to comment on the quality of the marketing exercise and the likelihood of letting this floorspace, but a response has not yet been received.

It is the opinion of officers, that in the current market delivery of this space looks increasingly less likely. It also has to be weighed in the balance that the extra care accommodation, with its higher level of care and associated staffing levels will to some extent compensate for the loss of the employment related office floorspace.

The number of car parking spaces within the scheme has been reduced, largely to provide some external amenity space although there is storage space for 19 mobility scooters which will compensate to some degree for this reduction. It is noted that the loss of office floorspace coupled with the provision of higher dependency units will significantly reduce the demand for car parking, which will address some of the concerns raised by residents about lack of car parking and local congestion.

b) The size and scale of the building and impact on amenity

The proposed building ranges in height from 4 stories adjacent to Kwik Fit to a maximum of seven stories towards the junction of McKay Avenue and Richardson Walk. It will be about 2 stories higher than the bookend buildings which terminate these streets. However, the scheme is, in terms of size mass and footprint, similar to that approved under previous applications and, by virtue of the overall implementation of P/2005/0138, a similar size, mass and footprint remains extant in perpetuity. Comparative plans have been requested which will better illustrate the close similarities between the proposed scheme and the extant permission.

Concerns have been expressed by residents in McKay Avenue and Richardson Walk about the impact that a building of this size will have on their amenity. Whilst it is the case that they will suffer a loss of their existing amenity, there is an extant permission which was in place contemporaneously with the approval for these properties and which can be built out at any time.

c) Design

There are a number of changes to the appearance of the building. These comprise modifications to the elevational treatment, to the overall shape of the building, to the form of the roof, to the fenestration and to the balcony treatments. Additional roof terraces are introduced and there are changes to the ground floor treatment which result in a more closed aspect and a poor relationship with the public realm. The quality of the relationship between this building and the public realm was considered an important feature of the approved building and does require some further thought. Ground floor terraces encroach onto what was shown to be a public thoroughfare in the original scheme and there are modifications to the hard and soft landscaping which are a retrograde response to the setting to the building and the quality of the public space.

In addition, in some key locations blank elevations are introduced which will need to be remedied in order to retain attractive frontages onto the street. Comparative plans have been requested so that the degree of change can be properly understood. The applicants have been advised of concerns and a meeting has been arranged with officers to resolve these concerns. Progress on this will be reported verbally at the meeting.

It is also important that there is a clear contextual relationship with the wider site. The design changes have diluted the relationship between this and the adjacent development. It is contended that, for a building of this size to be readily absorbed into the built environment, it is important that the design does relate to the wider context in terms of architectural features, public realm, overall approach and use of materials.

d] S106 Requirements

The implemented permission for the redevelopment of the former college site delivered a range of S106 contributions.

As the scheme for 61 flats can be built out with no further contributions, it is thought appropriate in this case that contributions should be sought in respect of the uplift only, i.e. the 13 additional units.

Therefore the s106 should achieve infrastructure contributions for those additional units in respect of waste, sustainable transport, greenspace and lifelong learning. It should also deliver 30% affordable housing across the development and the applicants have been requested to deliver 4 on site units. It is also thought appropriate that a contribution towards the loss of employment floorspace is made.

Sustainability

The proposed development makes effective use of brownfield site within a sustainable location near to local amenities and services at Torre.

Crime and Disorder

The development will conform to the secure by design principles espoused within the wider scheme, provided that the design changes mentioned above are achieved.

Disability Issues

The proposal is set within a level and accessible site, well suited to the proposed use, which provides suitable facilities and care for those with mobility and other disability problems.

Conclusions

The broad principles of the scheme are thought to be acceptable in terms of the use and broad disposition of the building on site which accords closely to the live permission. However there are design concerns that need to be addressed and progress on this will be reported to the meeting.

Recommendation

Site Visit: Conditional Approval; subject to the receipt of amended plans that resolve the design concerns identified and; subject to the signing of a S106 agreement to achieve the contributions described above, the s106 to include terms acceptable to the Executive Head of Spatial Planning and to be resolved within 6 months of the date of this committee meeting.

Conditions delegated to the Head of Spatial Planning to resolve.

Condition(s):

