

**ITEM NO. 6****COMMITTEE DATE:** 05/09/2016

**APPLICATION NO:** 16/0949/03      **FULL PLANNING PERMISSION**  
**APPLICANT:** Sterling Globus Ltd  
Sterling Globus Ltd  
**PROPOSAL:** Part demolition (rear wing only), alteration and extension of existing building for use as 81 bedroom student housing accommodation (sui generis) with associated external cycle store and landscaping works.  
**LOCATION:** 79 Heavitree Road, Exeter, EX1 2HZ  
**REGISTRATION DATE:** 01/08/2016  
**EXPIRY DATE:** 31/10/2016

**HISTORY OF SITE**

None.

**DESCRIPTION OF SITE/PROPOSAL**

The application site (0.25ha) is located on Heavitree Road, adjacent to the Waitrose Supermarket on the North and West and a large building (No. 81) to the East. It also lies within the Mont Le Grand Conservation Area and is adjacent to the Grade II Listed Almshouses on Grendon Road. The building is identified within the Conservation

The building was historically part of the hospital site that was subdivided when Waitrose was developed. It was originally used as a children's home but more latterly has been used by the NHS for Occupational Health uses. It is in very close proximity to the University of Exeter St Lukes Campus and is within 15 minutes' walk of the city centre, bus station and is on main bus routes in and out of the city.

The application proposes to create Purpose Built Student Accommodation. In order to achieve this, it is proposed to demolish the rear wing of the existing building only, retaining the existing frontage building as is with minor elevational changes and to build an extension constructed of red brick to the rear. The main landscaped frontage would be retained to Heavitree Road and smaller private amenity space accessible only to the students provided to the rear. The scheme proposes 81 units of student housing development with communal common room, laundry facilities, kitchens and a management office. The accommodation comprises:

- 66 cluster units (en-suite but no kitchen facilities)
- 15 studio apartments (en-suite and kitchen facilities)

**SUPPORTING INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY THE APPLICANT**

The following reports have been submitted as supporting information with the application:

Planning & Heritage Statement, Design & Access/Transport Statement; Environmental Noise Survey & Noise Impact Assessment Report; Preliminary Ecological Appraisal; Air Quality Screening Report and Pre-planning Arboricultural Report.

**REPRESENTATIONS**

Two letters of objection have been received concerned with the following points:

- Loss of amenity value and overlooking of the rear garden at 81 Heavitree Road

- Overdevelopment of the site and increased movements to and from the property impacting the amenity value of 81 Heavitree Road
- Addition of further student accommodation instead of residential accommodation
- Loss of existing large rooms for community projects

## **CONSULTATIONS**

### **The Design Review Panel:**

The application was presented before the final design evolved. The comments were as follows:

- Generally the Panel is supportive of the proposals presented.
- The Panel considers that the current proposals presented at the DR session represent an improvement on the previous version. Generally supportive of the approach to the juxtaposition between the existing building and the proposed. The proposals may benefit from exploration of alternative design options.
- Supportive of the desire to regularised the shape of the rear boundary of the site.
- Some concern regarding the top storey when viewed from the north western approach is out of keeping with the existing building and is overly dominant. Supportive of the proposals when viewed directly from the rear. New build element can be and should be contemporary in its proposed form. Not supportive of the faux/pastiche extension indicated. Would benefit from a break/gap between the old and the new when viewed on approach from the west.
- Supportive of the proposal to reduce the parking, drop off & delivery hard standing area and to relocate this to the side of the building. Supportive of the provision of a large south facing lawn area to the front of the building. Main entrance should be provided through the existing building entrance on the front elevation. Provision of a low level planted evergreen hedge along the front street boundary would be welcomed. Additional secure amenity space at the rear of the building is supported.
- Consideration should be given to what makes the proposals uniquely identifiable as Exeter.

### **Environmental Health:**

The air quality assessment submitted with the application concludes that no mitigation measures are required. Conclusion is accepted.

Additional information required on what mechanical building services plant will be installed and where it will be located - *this information has been requested and an update will be provided at the Committee meeting.*

Subject to the above, approval is recommended subject to the following conditions:

Submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan;

Noise;

Mechanical plant noise (if required).

### **South West Water:**

No objection

### **DCC Highways:**

Awaiting comments.

### **Devon & Cornwall Police:**

The southerly elevation is very open and permeable. It is crucial to have the southerly elevation more managed and form defensible private space through a combination of decorative measures/defensive planting to create a managed private space. This will avoid sneak/walk in thefts and suspicious activity.

**Recycling Officer:**

Provision for a bin store has been made, they will need 5 x 1100 refuse bins and 8 x 1100 recycling bins so the size of the bin store needs to be checked to ensure it can house this number of bins.

**PLANNING POLICIES/POLICY GUIDANCE****Central Government Guidance**

National Planning Policy Framework 2012:

4. Promoting Sustainable Transport
7. Requiring good design
8. Promoting healthy communities
11. Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

**Exeter Local Development Framework Core Strategy**

CP2 – Retention of Employment Land or Premises

CP5 – Student Accommodation

CP15 – Sustainable design and construction

CP17 – Design and Local Distinctiveness

**Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995-2011**

AP1 – Design and Location of Development

AP2 – Sequential Approach

C1 – Conservation Areas

C2 - Listed Buildings

C5 - Archaeology

H1 – Housing land search sequence

H2 – Location Priorities

H5 – Diversity of Housing

*Relevant text – Student housing will be permitted provided that:*

- a) *The scale and intensity of use will not harm the character of the building and locality and will not cause an unacceptable reduction in the amenity of neighbouring occupiers or result in on-street parking problems;*
- b) *The proposal will not create an overconcentration of the use in any one area of the city which would change the character of the neighbourhood or create an imbalance in the local community;*
- d) *Student accommodation is located so as to limit the need to travel to the campus by car.*

T1 – Hierarchy of modes of transport

T2 – Accessibility criteria

T3 – Encouraging use of sustainable modes of transport

EN2 – Contaminated land

DG1 - Objectives of Urban Design

DG2 – Energy conservation

DG7 – Crime prevention and safety

**Exeter Development Delivery Document – Publication Version 2015**

DD1 – Sustainable Development

DD7 – Allocated Housing Sites

DD12 – Purpose Built Student Accommodation

*This policy seeks to protect residential amenity and to ensure that purpose built student accommodation is fit for purpose;*

*Purpose built student accommodation will be permitted provided the proposal:*

- a) *Respects, and contributes positively towards, the character and appearance of the area;*
- b) *Does not result in unacceptable harm to the amenity of the neighbouring residents;*
- c) *Provides sufficient internal and external space for future occupiers;*
- d) *Makes appropriate provision for refuse storage, operational and disabled persons parking, servicing and cycle parking;*
- e) *Reduces the need to travel and would not cause unacceptable transport impacts; and,*
- f) *Is accompanied by a suitable Management Plan secured by planning obligation to demonstrate how the property will be managed in the long term.*

DD13 – Residential Amenity  
 DD20 – Sustainable Movement  
 DD21 - Parking  
 DD25 - Design Principles  
 DD26 - Designing out Crime  
 DD28 - Heritage Assets

### **Exeter City Council Supplementary Planning Documents**

Sustainable Transport SPD March 2013  
 Development Related to the University June 2007  
 Archaeology & Development SPG 2004

### **OBSERVATIONS**

#### **Student Use**

The principle of student accommodation in this location is supported by the Core Strategy and the emerging Development Delivery Development Plan Document. Policy CP5 of the Core Strategy states that purpose built student accommodation should be provided to meet housing need. Paragraph 6.28 states that '75% or more of additional student numbers should be accommodated in purpose built student housing. New purpose built student housing should be located on, or close to, the University campuses, at sustainable locations at or near to major transport routes, or in the City Centre'.

It is considered that the application site meets these locational criteria, being almost immediately opposite the St Lukes Campus and in walking, cycling or bus distance to the other campus sites across the City. Although planning permission for other PBSA schemes have been granted recently, it is still considered likely that some of the future increase in student numbers would be housed in further shared student houses unless more PBSA is delivered.

#### **Design Principles**

There has been considerable pre-application discussion and a collaborative approach to the overall design of this site between the developer/agent and the Local Authority. An initial scheme was submitted which overwhelmed the existing building through its size and design. Further development and a presentation to the South West Design Review Panel led to a revised design which was contemporary and created a strong feature to the rear of the building but with a recognition of the separation between old and new. Following this, the proposals were also presented to the Planning Member Working Group on 19 July 2016 where it was generally well received. Advice coming from the Group included that if possible, a hydraulic lift is better than an electric lift; it was considered that the project should not make a big difference in terms of footfall in the area as it is a relatively small project and is

located in a good area for students because of the proximity to the St Lukes Campus, the University bus route and the bus routes in general.

The principle of the redevelopment of the rear of the site is considered to be acceptable. In the site's history, there have previously been buildings located to the rear, which were removed as part of the redevelopment of the site for Waitrose and the associated car park.

The final proposed scheme seeks to remove the existing rear wing and replace with a varied height extension. To the west end of the existing building, which is most visible from Heavitree Road, a two storey section is proposed (G + 1 floor - 7.5m), to create a common room at ground floor with kitchen/dining room above. This is connected to the original building by a glazed link to create the important separation between the old building and the new extension. To the central section of the site, the extension would be 5 storeys (B + G + 3 floors - 15.1m). The basement section replaces the existing basement area and provides a laundry area, eight cluster rooms and a kitchen/diner. The area outside this area would be dug out to create a light well for this accommodation. The top floor would be clad with zinc with glazing to the rooms. The addition of the zinc roof further reduces the visual appearance of the new extension by helping to reduce the overall mass of the building. This central section would also house the lift core, stairs and disabled refuge areas. The lifts provide disabled access to all floors. To the east end of the building the extension would be 3 storeys in height (G + 2 floors - 10.7m), the end of which glazed as it is a further staircase to the second floor. The glazing reduces the impact of the new build at this end by reducing the visual massing of the building. It is not easy however, to see this end of the building except glimpses from Grendon Road.

The extension is proposed to be constructed of brick to match the existing building. Rather than trying to create a pastiche copy of the building, the fenestration is proposed to be contemporary, large panels. The elevations also show a louvre placed over part of the window, this is to allow the windows to be opened internally but without requiring window opening restrictors.

The frontage of the building is left intact with only minimal alterations. Four windows would be realigned so that they sit in line with the rest of the windows, where they are currently at varying heights which do not work with the design moving forward. This alteration is minor and serves to balance out the front elevation. An existing door at the east end of the façade at ground level will also be converted back to a window. All existing wooden sashes to the front elevation are to be retained.

The overall setting of the building has been well preserved through the design by only extending to the rear of the building and maintaining vehicle access to the western end. This is key as this building and its context is recognised in the Conservation Area Appraisal and the Conservation Area was extended to incorporate this building in 2009. The rear extension will be taller than the main roof line of the existing building by between 2.4m and 3.2m, but remain lower than the tallest part of the existing roof level. The increased height is considered to be acceptable as the extension is set back behind the existing building and will only mainly be visible when approaching the building from the city centre. The depth of the extension will still allow views through to the upper half of the Listed Almshouses on Grendon Road, which were previously completely obscured before older hospital buildings were demolished to allow the construction of Waitrose.

The front garden area is proposed to be further improved through formal landscaping to highlight the main entrance to the building, which will enhance the building's setting at the edge of the Conservation Area. Disabled Access will be secured

through a ramp to the main entrance. To the rear of the building, two small and secure communal gardens will be provided for student use only. These form a buffer between the building and the Waitrose car park behind.

An external bin store is proposed to the western edge of the site, behind the delivery parking area with easy access for collection without the bins having to be placed on the street. The comments from the Recycling Officer were discussed with the Applicant and it has been confirmed that the bin store has been sized to accommodate bins with a weekly (commercial) collection as is common practice amongst student accommodation providers. The commitment to arrange a minimum of weekly collection in the management strategy has been noted.

### **Relevant Planning History**

The building has been standing empty for some time now with a new owner being sought. No other planning applications have been received. Policy CP2 seeks to retain employment but this site lies outside of these specific areas and it is considered that the loss of these offices will cause no harm to employment opportunities.

### **Impact of Residential Amenities**

The application site does lie immediately adjacent and opposite to residential dwellings. However, the plans and additional information provided indicate that an on-site management presence would be available at all times, which given the size of the proposed development is to be expected. A Student Management Plan would be required as part of the Section 106 Agreement if planning permission is granted, to control such things as safety and security matters, arrivals/departments arrangements and type of on site management presence, as well as providing local residents with contact details for potential student disturbance issue if they were to arise. It is therefore considered that the site does provide a suitable location for student accommodation in terms of its impact on residential amenity.

### **Highways**

The site is within a 15 minute walk of the centre of the City and the Bus Station, well connected by footpaths and a number of bus services passing the site both in and out of the city. There is no parking provision proposed on site other than 2 disabled places and 2 delivery bays and students will be excluded from joining the residential permit scheme. Cycle parking (50 no. spaces) is proposed to be provided in secure buildings to the side of the building.

The existing vehicular/pedestrian entrance off Heavitree Road would be re-utilised to access the parking/delivery spaces and the main entrance of the building with limited incursion into the front landscaping area.

### **Flood Risk/Drainage**

The site is within a Flood Risk Zone 1, at low risk of flooding. South West Water has confirmed that storm water run-off from the development can continue to discharge into the public surface water sewer beneath Heavitree Road. SWW has also confirmed that the existing sewerage network has capacity to accommodate foul flows from the proposed development.

### **Landscaping**

There is currently a large area of landscaping to the front of the site but it is mainly grass with a few trees. The trees are all protected by a group TPO but one of the cypresses on the boundary adjacent to No. 81 is in poor condition. This is backed up by the Arboricultural Report which confirms it is dying and should be removed. The

proposal is to improve the landscaping to the front, creating a formal garden area, with private and secure amenity spaces for students to enjoy to the rear of the property. Additional planting would be undertaken to include native hedge, trees and shrubs with a variety of flowering plants.

The comments from the Devon & Cornwall Police are noted and the landscaping plan identifies that there will be a planted border along the southern edge of the site, adjacent to the footpath where trees and bushes will be located, providing a soft buffer, but also reducing the ability to gain access directly over the boundary wall.

### **Ecology**

A report has been undertaken to investigate bats, breeding birds, great crested newts and reptiles. The report confirms that there are low numbers of common and self-seeded plants across the site. This landscaping will be upgraded as part of the landscaping works.

There is a breeding colony of house sparrows in the existing swift boxes on the building and it is important to ensure that swift boxes are placed as part of the new building. There is negligible potential to support roosting bats. There was no evidence of newts or slow worms.

The invasive butterfly bush is present and it is recommended to remove this in its entirety.

### **Section 106**

A Management Plan for the day to day operation of the Student Accommodation is required to be implemented by way of a legal agreement. There is also a requirement for CIL contributions amounting to £65,561.00. New Homes Bonus will be payable to the Council on new homes appearing on the Valuation Office list. On the basis the 15 studios are Band A (£767.64 each, total £11,514.60) and the 10 cluster flats Band C (£1023.52 each, total £10,235.20) the Council will receive a total of £21,749.80 if the award continues to be paid for six years.

### **Summary**

The principle of student use in this location is appropriate. The overall height, scale, massing and design approach is considered to be acceptable. In particular it is considered that the proposed buildings will provide a positive contribution to the townscape, this part of the Conservation Area and the street scene. The importance of this site in the context of its setting is recognised and it has been paramount therefore to develop a respectful design, which relates to the existing building without overwhelming it and which takes into account the setting of the listed buildings to the rear of the site but which also allows the buildings to be reflective of the current architectural period. The application is therefore recommended for approval.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

**APPROVE** subject to the completion of a Section 106 Agreement for the Operational Management Procedures, the CIL provision and the following conditions:

- 1) UN7 - Unique Condition 7
- 2) C05 - Time Limit - Commencement
- 3) C15 - Compliance with Drawings

- 4) The development hereby approved shall be constructed with centralised space heating and hot water systems that have been designed and constructed to be compatible with a low temperature hot water District Heating Network in accordance with the CIBSE guidance "Heat Networks: Code of Practice for the UK". The layout of the plant room, showing provision for heat exchangers and for connection to a District Heating Network in the Highway shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved details shall be implemented on site unless otherwise agreed in writing.  
**Reason:** In accordance with the requirements of policy CP13 of the Exeter Core Strategy 2012 and in the interests of sustainable development.
- 5) The materials it is intended to use externally in the construction of the development shall be in accordance with details submitted to the Local Planning Authority on 1 August 2016 unless otherwise agreed in writing.  
**Reason:** To ensure that the materials conform with the visual amenity requirements of the area.
- 6) No part of the development hereby approved shall be brought into its intended use until secure cycle parking facilities have been provided and maintained in accordance with details that shall have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority and retained for that purpose at all times.  
**Reason:** To provide for sustainable transport and ensure that adequate facilities are available for the traffic attracted to the site.
- 7) Travel Plan measures including the provision of sustainable transport welcome packs and details of the arrangements of how student pick up/drop off will be managed, shall be provided in accordance with details agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority and Local Highway Authority in advance of occupation of the development.  
**Reason:** To promote the use of sustainable transport modes and in the interest of highway safety, in accordance with paragraphs 32 and 36 of the NPPF.
- 8) No development shall take place until a Construction and Environment Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. Notwithstanding the details and wording of the CEMP the following restrictions shall be adhered to:
- a) There shall be no burning on site during demolition, construction or site preparation works;
  - b) Unless otherwise agreed in writing, no construction or demolition works shall be carried out, or deliveries received, outside of the following hours: 0800 to 1800 hours Monday to Friday, 0800 to 1300 on Saturdays, and not at all on Sundays and Public Holidays;
  - c) Dust suppression measures shall be employed as required during construction in order to prevent off-site dust nuisance;
  - d) Details of access arrangements and timings and management of arrivals and departures of vehicles.
- The approved CEMP shall be adhered to throughout the construction period.  
**Reason:** In the interests of the occupants of nearby buildings.
- 9) In the event of failure of any trees planted in accordance with any scheme approved by the Local Planning Authority, to become established and to prosper for a period of five years from the date of the completion of implementation of that scheme, such trees shall be replaced with such live specimens of such species of such size and in such number as may be approved by the Local Planning Authority.  
**Reason:** To safeguard the rights of control by the Local Planning Authority in these



respects and in the interests of amenity.

- 10) Prior to occupation of the development hereby approved details of provision for nesting birds and swifts shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the RSPB. Upon written approval of the details, the scheme shall be fully implemented as part of the development and retained thereafter.

**Reason:** In the interests of preservation and enhancement of biodiversity in the locality.

- 11) C57 - Archaeological Recording.

- 12) The buildings hereby approved shall achieve a BREEAM 'good' standard as a minimum, and shall achieve 'zero carbon' if commenced on or after 1 January 2019. Prior to commencement of such a building the developer shall submit to the Local Planning Authority a BREEAM design stage assessment report, the score expected to be achieved and which standard this relates to. Where this does not meet the minimum required standard the developer must provide details of what changes will be made to the development to achieve the minimum standard, and thereafter implement those changes. A post completion BREEAM report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within three months of the substantial completion of any such building hereby approved. The required BREEAM assessments shall be prepared, and any proposed design changes approved prior to commencement of the development, by a licensed BREEAM assessor.

**Reason:** To ensure that the proposal complies with Policy CP15 of Council's Adopted Core Strategy and in the interests of delivering sustainable development.

Local Government (Access to Information) 1985 (as amended).

Background papers used in compiling the report:

Files of planning applications available for inspection from the Customer Service Centre, Civic Centre, Paris Street, Exeter: Telephone 01392 265223