

ITEM NO. 6**COMMITTEE DATE:** 05/12/2016

APPLICATION NO: 16/1068/03 FULL PLANNING PERMISSION
APPLICANT: Mr Kightley
The Charlie Edward Property Company LTD
PROPOSAL: Construction of a 6 bed annex to the existing Hope Court
Student Accommodation block
LOCATION: Hope Court, Prince Of Wales Road, Exeter, EX4 4PN
REGISTRATION DATE: 26/08/2016
EXPIRY DATE: 29/10/2016

HISTORY OF SITE

85/01041/03 -	Garage extension	PER	09/09/1985
80/0874/03 -	Double garage	PER	18/08/1980
77/0111/02 -	House and garage	PER	07/03/1977
75/0133/01 -	Erection of detached dwelling	PER	24/03/1975
06/1790/03 -	Redevelopment to provide 14 student flats, bicycle store, refuse area and associated works	WDN	06/11/2006
06/2026/14 -	Demolition of dwelling	REF	26/01/2007
06/2276/03 -	Redevelopment to provide 12 student flats, bicycle store, refuse area and associated works	REF	26/01/2007
07/0463/03 -	Redevelopment to provide 12 student flats, bicycle store, refuse area, parking and associated works	PER	03/05/2007
07/0464/14 -	Demolition of dwelling	PER	03/05/2007
08/0622/03 -	Ancillary site maintenance/management office (18 sq. m.) on west boundary	PER	04/06/2008
09/0263/03 -	Ancillary site maintenance/management office and bike shelter on west boundary	PER	27/04/2009
09/1197/03 -	Ancillary site maintenance/management office for overnight accommodation for support warden/nurse and bike shelter on west boundary	PER	14/09/2009

DESCRIPTION OF SITE/PROPOSAL

Hope Court is a student cluster flat development located on the junction of Prince of Wales Road and Pennsylvania Road located within close walking distance of the Exeter University Campus. The site for the proposed development is an area of raised grassland within the grounds of Hope Court. The site is bounded by roads on three sides (Lower St Germans Road to the south, Pennsylvania Road to the east and Prince of Wales Road to the north). The nearest residential dwelling is Glenhayes which marks the sites western border. At present there is a two storey building with accommodation in the roof and one single storey building on site with recycling and refuse bins and a secure cycle store. The proposed new building would be located in the south western corner of the site.

The application site is located within the Longbrook Conservation Area and approximately 28 metres to the rear of 5 Grade II* Listed Buildings on Pennsylvania Crescent. The existing Hope Court is an attractive modern design. The proposal intends to replicate this pattern and style of development in the new build.

The development subject to this application is the construction of a 6 bed cluster flat. The proposed accommodation would be set over two storeys and would be finished in white render with a single ply membrane sloping roof in grey. The boundary walls would be retained but the hedge which currently fronts Lower St Germans Road would need to be removed to ensure adequate light enters the rooms. Internally the building would provide 6

bedrooms each with its own bathroom pod. Each room is at least 12sqm. The 6 rooms would share a lounge/kitchen area measuring 29sqm.

The building would be constructed 2.1 metres from the boundary with Glenhayes. There would be no windows in the elevation facing Glenhayes. The maximum height would be 6 metres.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY THE APPLICANT

This application has been accompanied by plans and elevations and a design and access statement.

REPRESENTATIONS

Two objections have been received from local residents. The reasons that are material to planning are as follows:

- This residential area has already been extensively given over to student accommodation;
- The courtyard is already used by students which results in late night drinking, shouting, swearing and playing of ball games which causes noise disturbance;
- Permission should never have been granted for the original development as the design is out of character for the area;
- The proposed development is out of character with the Conservation Area and not appropriate for the residential location;
- The development would have an impact on the Grade II* Listed Buildings;
- New dwelling would lead to further loss of privacy in rear garden;
- Further light pollution;
- High levels of litter associated with students;
- Lack of parking availability for local people.

Neighbours were re-consulted following the revised description and amended plans. One neighbour confirmed that their original objections still stand and also objected to the removal of the hedge.

CONSULTATIONS

Exeter St James Forum - The Forum have identified the relevant policies in the Exeter St James Neighbourhood Plan as EN4 (Gardens), D1 (Design), C3 (Small Scale Student Accommodation) and H1 (Heritage). The Forum concluded that EN4 is not relevant in this case as the space subject to this application does not contribute to ecological value.

Policy C3 relates to small scale student accommodation and accepts the principle of some small scale development. Any further student development will further increase the imbalance of the community. However, it is noted that this proposal is in the grounds of an existing student accommodation development. The site is on Pennsylvania Road which, together with its continuation as Longbrook Street, has a high concentration of student accommodation and it is close to the University. Although the further imbalance in the community would be created by this development is regretted, the special circumstances of the site location means that in this instance it would be inappropriate to object to the grounds of Policy C3.

The Forum also raised concerns regarding the description of the development as an HMO. The description was subsequently amended to take account of this.

Policies D1 and H1 require high standards of contextual design. The site is in the Longbrook Conservation Area and is in an attractive and characterful location comprised of villas, rear lodge houses and more recent development. Lower St Germans Road is leafy and attractive,

and its character enhanced by the stone wall and established hedge to the rear of Glenhayes and Hope Court.

The design is simple and utilitarian in form. It results in the removal of a substantial proportion of wall and hedge and has an impact on the character of Lower St Germans Road. It has a simple shallow sloping roof form which bears little relationship to the form of buildings and roof lines around it. Although the materials proposed reflect the contemporary buildings of Hope Court, they lack character when viewed against the rear lodge buildings of nearby properties. The design does little to achieve one of the central aims of policies H1 and D1 which is to lift the design quality in St James.

Contemporary design does not mean that the development need not be characterful. This scheme misses the opportunity to make a modest and important enhancement to the character of St James and the Longbrook Conservation Area. Its design quality does not compensate for the loss and diminution of the character of Lower St Germans Road caused by the loss of the established hedge, neither is it clear how it responds to the design and heritage policies in this particular context.

Environmental Health - Recommends a condition to restrict construction and demolition hours.

DCC Highways - Refers to standing advice.

PLANNING POLICIES/POLICY GUIDANCE

Central Government Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework 2012:

- 7. Requiring good design
- 12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Exeter Local Development Framework Core Strategy

- CP5 – Student Accommodation
- CP17 – Design and Local Distinctiveness

Exeter Local Plan First Review 1995-2011

- AP1 – Design and Location of Development
- AP2 – Sequential Approach
- C1 – Conservation Areas
- 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.*

- T3 – Encouraging use of sustainable modes of transport
- DG1 - Objectives of Urban Design
- DG7 – Crime prevention and safety

Exeter St James Neighbourhood Plan (March 2013)

D1- Good quality design

C3 - Small scale purpose built accommodation

H1 - Heritage

Exeter City Council Development Delivery DPD (Publication Version)

DD1 – Sustainable Development

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

DD21 - Parking

DD25 - Design Principles

DD26 - Designing out Crime

DD28 - Heritage Assets

OBSERVATIONS

The proposed development would provide accommodation for 6 further students within a site already used for these purposes. The current site already has 13 cluster flats. The site is located in close proximity to the University and as such is a sustainable location for students. The Exeter Core Strategy recognises the importance of purpose-built accommodation and has indicated that this 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. The proposed accommodation block is of a high quality design and complements the existing buildings on site. The positioning of the building is such so as not to have a detrimental impact on the neighbouring property at Glenhayes and the windows are arranged in such a way so as not to result in a loss of privacy for the existing students.

Whilst it is acknowledged that this development would result in a further concentration of student accommodation in this area, it is considered that this is a unique case in that the proposal is for a small extension to an existing purpose-built student facility with excellent links to the main University Campus. The proposed development would allow a further 6 students to be accommodated within the existing Student Development. Purpose-built accommodation such as Hope Court helps to ease the pressure on the market housing stock.

In terms of heritage, the proposal site is located within the Longbrook Conservation Area and to the rear of the Grade II* Listed properties located on Pennsylvania Crescent. It is considered that the proposed student development is located a sufficient distance from the Listed Buildings so as not to be detrimental to the setting of the listed buildings. Whilst the loss of the hedge is regrettable, the low level brick wall be retained. It is considered that loss of the hedge alone is not a sufficient reason to warrant a refusal of planning consent. Removal of this section of hedge and windows fronting on to Lower St Germans Road would also help to improve natural surveillance of the road. The original Hope Court development

was considered suitable for the Longbrook Conservation Area and as such the new block (which is similar in terms of its architectural design and pallet of materials) is also considered an appropriate design. In accordance with the NPPF (Section 12, Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) it is considered that the proposed development would not cause harm to designated heritage assets.

The Exeter St James's Forum is now a statutory consultee. The agent has held pre-application discussions with the Forum and have taken on board some of their comments in relation to the design of the new building. This included submitting revised plans to 'round-off' the corner of the building adjacent to the gate facing Lower St Germans Road, to reflect the design of the existing two storey elements of the main block. The Forum also made comment regarding the materials and roofline of the new building saying that it bears little relationship to the form of buildings and roof lines around it. This view is not shared by the planning authority as it is considered that the building material and style relates well to the existing buildings on the Hope Court site.

It will be secured by planning condition that the new development would be run purely as ancillary to the existing Hope Court not to be used as a separate dwelling and will be subject to the same management tools and conditions as the existing Hope Court student accommodation. The development will continue to be car free.

It is considered that on balance the scheme for additional student accommodation in this location is acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to the following conditions.

- 1) C05 - Time Limit - Commencement
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in strict accordance with the submitted details received by the Local Planning Authority on 26 August 2016 and the revised plans received on 01 November 2016 (*dwg. no(s).2022/16/001, 2022/16/010 Rev D, 2022/16/011 Rev D, 2022/16/002*), as modified by other conditions of this consent.
Reason: In order to ensure compliance with the approved details and drawings.
- 3) The building hereby permitted shall not be occupied at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the student residential use of the dwelling known as Hope Court and shall not be run as a separate facility.
Reason: To prevent the creation of an additional separate dwelling and to ensure that the new accommodation is run in accordance with the existing conditions and management plan for Hope Court.
- 4) C75 - Construction/demolition hours

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