

ITEM NO.**COMMITTEE DATE:**

02/02/2015

APPLICATION NO:

14/2016/16

FULL PLANNING PERMISSION**APPLICANT:**Mr Stenning
Exeter City Council**PROPOSAL:**

Demolition of existing two storey car parking and erection of a new block of flats (3/4 storeys) containing 26 flats, including on site car parking, amendments to existing access and relocation of telecoms equipment cabinet.

LOCATION:

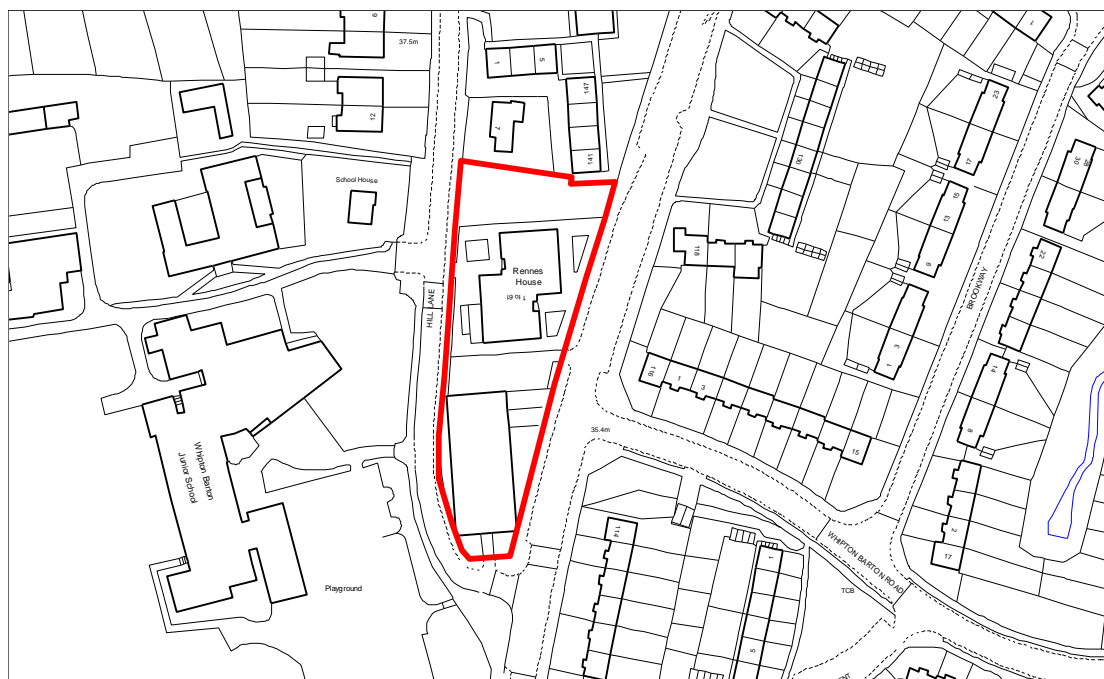
Land adjoining Rennes House, Vaughan Road, Exeter, EX1 3JW

REGISTRATION DATE:

21/08/2014

EXPIRY DATE:

20/11/2014



Scale 1:2000

This map is based on Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction**HISTORY OF SITE**

89/0165/03	Erection of 33 flats	PER	02/10/1989
10/1278/16 -	Redevelopment to provide four storey building comprising 21 self contained flats with basement parking, access to highway and associated works	PER	28/10/2010
13/4078/16 -	Redevelopment to provide four storey building comprising 21 self contained flats with basement parking, access to highway and associated works (Extension of Time application of extant Planning Permission Ref No 10/1278/16 granted 28 October 2010)	PER	29/11/2013

DESCRIPTION OF SITE/PROPOSAL

The application site comprises Rennes Tower surrounding land to the north and south, and an existing 2 storey concrete frame car park. The site is bounded to the north by existing

residential development, to the east by Vaughan Road and the west by Hill Lane which joins Vaughan Road at the southernmost point of the site. The land north of Rennes House consists of a maintained lawn with trees while the area between the tower block and the concrete frame car park is devoted to open parking. Whipton Barton School is situated opposite the site on the other side of Hill Lane and the remainder of the surrounding area is predominantly characterised by two storey housing. The total site area extends to just over 3000m².

Planning permission originally sought to demolish the car park and replace it with a new block comprising 27 flats (3 x 2 bed, and 24 x 1 bed), now reduced to 26 following negotiations. One of the ground floor flats is designed as a mobility unit.

The building is a curved shape with living rooms and kitchen windows facing onto a shared communal garden space on the west side of the building. All of the non-ground floor flats are provided with balconies which form an integral part of the overall design. The proposed materials comprise render finish for walls, standing seam metal roof, and timber framed aluminium clad powder coated windows and doors.

At its highest point the building is almost 16m high reducing to 10.5m at the lowest point at the southernmost end. Rennes House itself is around 29m high, and the houses in Vaughan Road are approximately 7m high. At the closest point the gap between the proposed building and the existing Rennes House is 14m. There is a minimum distance of 22m between the proposed building and the nearest existing residential neighbours on Vaughan Road.

Parking to serve the new units, and the existing Rennes House, will be provided in two locations. The area between the proposed building and Rennes House, which is already hard surfaced and used for car parking (currently providing 8 spaces), will be reconfigured to provide 18 parking spaces served by an existing access off Vaughan Road. The remainder of the parking will be provided north of Rennes House with the redevelopment of the existing communal landscaped space to provide 24 parking spaces served by a new vehicular access off Hill Lane. Overall 42 parking spaces are provided, 27 for the new flats (i.e.1/flat) and 15 to serve the existing accommodation within Rennes House. 27 cycle parking spaces are also proposed in a secure area within the building.

All trees on the southern part of the site will be removed as part of the development with their loss mitigated as part of the landscaping scheme for the new development. The existing trees along the northern boundary with existing residential properties will be retained.

Bin storage areas are provided within the communal open space which can be serviced directly from the adjacent public highway. An existing substation serving Rennes House, and a telecommunications cabinet, will be relocated as part of the development and sited next to each adjoin the new vehicular access off Hill Lane.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY THE APPLICANT

The application is accompanied by the following supporting documents -

- Planning Statement
- Design and Access Statement
- Phase 1 Habitat Survey and CSH Ecology Credit Assessment
- Arboricultural Impact Assessment
- Geotechnical and Geo-environmental Investigation

REPRESENTATIONS

4 representations have been received raising the following issues -

- lack of secure parking for residents of Rennes House
- loss of multi-functional parking area i.e. used by parents of Whipton Barton Primary school, families attending the children's centre and location for Police speed alert tests with children - consequent safety implications
- full traffic survey should be undertaken prior to determination
- lack of consultation generally and in particular with people renting existing parking facilities
- increased traffic congestion as a result of lost parking and additional residential units
- potential use of parking area as school rat run
- loss of outdoor amenity space for residents of Rennes House

CONSULTATIONS

County Head of Planning, Transportation and the Environment - Comments on access issues as follows - "In isolation, a new access onto Hill Lane in such close proximity to the school is not desirable. Nevertheless, this access is outside the extent of the School Keep Clear markings and will serve regular users who will be aware of the school. Further, considering that the whole application includes the removal of two existing accesses onto the highway, on balance, access to the proposal is considered acceptable." In respect of the level of parking provision proposed it is acknowledged that provision is on the low side but given the understanding that existing parking provision is under utilised by residents of Rennes House, the lower car ownership associated with 1 bed units and level of cycle parking concludes that on balance this is acceptable. Recommends conditions to secure provision of intended parking, and closure of redundant accesses.

Environmental Health Officer - Recommends conditions relating to construction hours, Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), contaminated land and plant noise.

Police Architectural Liaison Officer - Makes various detailed comments in relation to the design and layout of the scheme aimed at minimising the potential opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour. Essentially these relate to boundary treatments, creation of secure private areas within the site, defensible space between windows and public street, lighting, types of windows and doors, entrance security systems and security/ownership of parking areas.

PLANNING POLICIES/POLICY GUIDANCE

Central Government Guidance - NPPF - Particularly Paras 11-16 Presumption in favour of sustainable development, Para 17 Core Planning Principles, Paras 29-41 Promoting sustainable transport, Paras 47-55 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes and Paras 56-68 Requiring Good Design.

Exeter Local Development Framework Core Strategy

CP3 – Housing development

CP4 – Housing density

CP5 – Meeting housing needs

CP14 – Renewable and low carbon energy

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

H1 - Search Sequence

H2 - Location Priorities

H5 - Diversity of Housing

H6 - Affordable Housing
H7 - Housing for Disabled People
T1 - Hierarchy of Modes
T2 - Accessibility Criteria
T3 - Encouraging Use of Sustainable Modes
T10 - Car Parking Standards
EN2 - Contaminated Land
DG1 - Objectives of Urban Design
DG4 - Residential Layout and Amenity
DG2 - Energy Conservation
DG6 - Vehicle Circulation and Car Parking in Residential Development
DG7 - Crime Prevention and Safety

Supplementary Planning Document
Residential Design
Sustainable Transport
Affordable Housing
Planning Obligations
Trees and Development
Draft Development Delivery DPD

OBSERVATIONS

Policy H1 of Exeter Local Plan First Review prioritises the use of previously-developed land for the development of new housing. Policy H2 states that "priority will be given to meeting housing needs on previously-developed land by applying the search sequence set out in Policy H1 and by permitting residential development at the highest density that can be achieved without detriment to local amenity, the character and quality of the local environment and the safety of local roads, whilst having regard to the need to provide a variety of housing provision which is accessible to a range of employment, shopping, education, health and social care, leisure and community facilities." The application site is previously-developed land.

Consent was granted in October 2010 for the redevelopment of the existing two storey concrete car park and surrounding land with a four storey building containing basement car parking and 21 flats (predominantly 2 beds). Since this scheme was approved housing needs in Exeter have changed with an increased demand for 1 bed units for over 55s. Consequently the scheme has been redesigned based on the same principles in terms of footprint, massing, and building position. Although the total gross internal area of the redesigned scheme has remained similar to the approved scheme because the units are smaller the total number of flats has increased from 21 to 27 (now 26). The existence of a valid consent for a building of similar footprint/massing is a material consideration in respect of this revised proposal. The proposed design is unusual and not of a scale or appearance which is directly comparable with other buildings in the vicinity. However, it is of a high quality which will not detract from the character of the area or the quality of the local environment.

In assessing this revised proposal the key issues are not therefore the principle of the redevelopment and general massing of the building as this has effectively already been determined as acceptable by virtue of the previous consent. Rather the main considerations are the amenity standards (both internal and external) in respect of the revised accommodation, any change in the relationship between existing surrounding properties and the proposal, and the revised parking arrangements.

The revised scheme has been designed to ensure that the internal space standards of the proposed flats are largely compliant with the standards set out in the Council's adopted Residential Design SPD. As with the previous proposal a secure shared private amenity space is provided around the building to serve the residents. The previous proposal also

incorporated a roof terrace as additional communal amenity space which has been omitted from the revised proposal. The consequence of this is that there are a greater number of flats with less overall communal amenity space than the previously approved scheme. This was a significant concern and negotiations have taken place to secure a reduction in the number of flats by 1 (i.e. to 26 units) with re-introduction of a communal roof terrace. Whilst this would not result in the total area of shared external amenity for the proposed flats being completely compliant with the standard set out in the Residential Design SPD it is considered to represent an acceptable level of provision, in the context of the extant approval and given the significant affordable housing need that the proposal would meet. The level of amenity space provision represents a significant compromise on the levels of provision referred to in the Residential Design SPD. It is only considered acceptable in the interests of achieving a viable scheme delivering a solely affordable housing scheme for people aged 55 or over on a challenging site. Revised plans reflecting this have now been received.

The proposed parking arrangements for the revised scheme provide surface level parking rather than the expensive basement parking incorporated within the previous approval. In order to provide 1 space/flat within the scheme, and 16 spaces for the existing flats in Rennes House (which is a level of provision reflective of the current take up of parking spaces by existing Rennes House residents) it has been necessary to provide some of this parking on the current communal landscaped space north of Rennes House. This will result in a marked reduction in the level of communal open space to serve the existing residents, to such an extent that the provision would fall significantly short of the standards that would be sought for a new flat development in compliance with the Residential Design SPD standards.

Aside from the use of basement parking which has been ruled out there is no scope to achieve a level of parking provision that would be acceptable without utilising this amenity area. Therefore it is necessary to consider the merits of the current scheme in the full knowledge that the consequent reduction in external amenity space to serve the existing residents of Rennes House is significant and represents a negative impact of the proposal and compromise on standards of amenity space that would be sought in respect of any new development. However the fact that the existing units within Rennes House are also aimed at those over 55 years of age rather than families is also relevant in terms of considering the likely use of the existing amenity space and its loss. This negative aspect of the development has to be weighed against the delivery of much needed sustainably designed down-sizing accommodation and affordable housing. Whilst the relative proximity of existing public parks is not an acceptable as a routine justification for reduced on site amenity standards it is noted that there are public parks and open spaces within reasonable proximity of the site.

The proposal has been carefully designed to minimise overlooking or overbearing of neighbouring properties. Habitable room windows are at least 22m apart in accordance with the Residential Design SPD apart from between the new flats and Rennes House where the distance is slightly less. However the relevant windows are bedroom/kitchen windows as opposed to living room ones, and are at a slightly oblique angle to Rennes House. Therefore it is not considered that the proposal will give rise to any undue overlooking of dwellings within Rennes House.

Houses in Vaughan Road are the most likely to be affected because the nearest ones are modest in scale and occupants may feel that the new higher building opposite is overbearing. However, the proposal will not reduce the amenity of the private areas of these dwellings, and will not have sufficient impact to justify refusal. These properties are also separated from the application site by Vaughan Road itself and are considered to have sufficient separation distance between them, especially given that this relationship is between the front elevations and not the rear where these properties have their private amenity space.

The parking provision for the 26 new flats equates to 1 space/unit and this is provided on land between the site and Rennes House, and on the current landscaped area north of Rennes House which will become hard surfaced for parking. A total of 42 parking spaces will be provided (including 16 to serve the existing Rennes House units). Information has been

submitted stating that of the existing parking spaces available on the site only 9 spaces are currently let to residents of Rennes House and this, together with the fact that Rennes House provides accommodation for aged 55+, has informed the level of provision of spaces within this revised scheme that will be available to Rennes House (16 spaces). The site is well located in terms of proximity to bus stops which provide convenient links to the local and national railway network and there are local shops and facilities within the nearby parade on Pinhoe Road (within easy walking distance). The scheme incorporates secure cycle parking. Given the relatively sustainable location of the development, and the nature of the scheme, the level of parking provision proposed is considered acceptable.

The views of the Police Architectural Liaison Officer have been put to the applicant's agent and will be incorporated into the detailed design where possible.

In order to comply with Policy H6 of Exeter Local Plan First Review, it will be necessary for a legal agreement to be completed in accordance with Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to secure 35% of the proposed housing as affordable in perpetuity.

SUSTAINABILITY

The highly sustainable nature of the design is welcomed. The building design is based on 'Passiv-Haus' principles. A passive house is a building in which a comfortable interior climate can be maintained without active heating and cooling systems. The buildings heats and cool themselves. The principles were developed in Germany and are used to achieve the highest levels of energy efficiency and ecological design standards. Increased insulation standards, exceptional levels of air tightness and a compact building skin mean that heat losses can be reduced to a minimum resulting in a requirement for very low space heating. By choosing the best orientation for the buildings and by optimising solar gains, the energy performance of the proposed design has been improved so that a conventional heating system is not required.

Delegation Briefing (07/10/14)

Members expressed some concern regarding the loss of the existing amenity space serving Rennes House and noted that this needed to be balanced against the provision of much needed affordable housing.

Conclusion

Very much on balance, whilst the impact on the open space to serve Rennes House is a major downside to the scheme, the overall benefits in terms of delivery of affordable housing, and potential release of larger affordable housing properties as a result of tenants down-sizing to the proposed flats, are considered to outweigh this concern. The proposal will help to meet the huge demand and need for rented social housing in the city. As a down-sizing scheme, the proposal diversifies the range of accommodation available in the area. The site is well served by local shops and facilities, and by public transport. The proposal would generate approximate £180k in new Homes Bonus over the payable six year period.

RECOMMENDATION

Subject to the completion of a legal agreement (in the form of a Unilateral Undertaking) to secure provision of 35% of the units as affordable in perpetuity, and limitation on occupation to age 55 and over, APPROVE subject to the conditions below -

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 21st August and 13th November 2014 (dwg. nos. AL(0)500 Rev P4, AL(0)100 Rev P3, AL(0)110 Rev P3, AL(0)120 Rev P3, AL(0)130 Rev P3, AL(0)151 Rev P8 and AL(0)150 Rev P8), as modified by other conditions of this consent.

Reason: In order to ensure compliance with the approved drawings.

- 3) C17 - Submission of Materials
- 4) C35 - Landscape Scheme
- 5) C37 - Replacement Planting
- 6) The existing accesses onto Hill Lane and Vaughan Road shall be permanently closed and footway reinstated in accordance with details that shall previously have been submitted to, agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority as soon as the new access is capable of use.
Reason: To minimise the number of redundant accesses on to the public highway, in the interest of public safety.
- 7) No part of the development hereby approved shall be brought into its intended use until secure cycle parking facilities have been provided in accordance with the details specified on drawing no. AL(0)100 Rev P3. Thereafter the said cycle parking facilities shall be retained for that purpose at all times.
Reason: To ensure that adequate facilities are available for the traffic attracted to the site.
- 8) No part of the development hereby approved shall be occupied until the access and on-site parking facilities have been provided surfaced and marked out in accordance with the requirements of this permission. Thereafter they shall be retained for those purposes at all times.
Reason: To ensure that adequate facilities are available for the traffic attracted to the site.
- 9) Construction/demolition work shall not take place outside the following times: 8am to 6pm (Mondays to Fridays); 8am to 1pm (Saturdays); nor at any time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays.
Reason: In the interests of local amenity.
- 10) No development shall take place on site until a full survey of the site has taken place to determine the extent of contamination of the land and the results, together with any remedial works necessary, have been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The building(s) shall not be occupied until the approved remedial works have been implemented and a remediation statement submitted to the Local Planning Authority detailing what contamination has been found and how it has been dealt with together with confirmation that the site is in such a condition as to be suitable for the proposed use.
Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the occupants of the building hereby approved.
- 11) Details of all building services plant, including sound power levels and predicted pressure levels at a specified location outside the building envelope, are to be submitted to and approved in writing, by the LPA. The predicted noise levels shall be submitted prior to commencement of the development and shall be demonstrated by measurement prior to occupation of the development.
Reason: In the interests of local amenity.
- 12) No development shall begin until a scheme for generating a proportion of the energy requirement of the development from on-site renewable sources which reduce the

predicted CO² emissions by 10% (or other proportion as agreed in writing), has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented before the development is brought into use and shall thereafter be maintained so that it provides the required level of generation.

Reason: In the interests of sustainable development.

- 13) No development shall take place until a Wildlife Plan which demonstrates how the proposed development will be managed in perpetuity to enhance wildlife has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the development shall be carried out entirely in accordance with the approved plan.
Reason: In the interests of protecting and improving existing, and creating new wildlife habitats in the area.
- 14) No development shall take place until a Construction Environmental Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter take place in accordance with the agreed details.
Reason: In the interests of local amenity.
- 15) Prior to the development hereby approved being brought into use a scheme of allocation for the parking spaces shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter the use of the parking spaces shall accord with the approved scheme unless otherwise agreed by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To minimise on street parking in the area.
- 16) Notwithstanding Condition 2, unless otherwise agreed on writing by the Local Planning Authority no development shall take place until revised drawings showing the details agreed with the Police Architectural Liaison Officer have been formally submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: In the interests of ensuring that the potential for crime and the fear of crime is minimised.

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