

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT

Application Ref: F/23/94885

Site Address: 175 WINCHESTER ROAD, CHANDLER'S FORD, EASTLEIGH, SO53 2DU

Case Officer: Gary Osmond

Description: Two and three storey rear extension to care home to provide 10 new bedrooms including additional communal facilities and alterations to car park following removal of existing conservatory.

Particular Site Constraints?	Yes ☒	No ☐
- Within the urban edge - Tree Preservation Orders on site - Site topography		

Planning History?	Yes ☒	No ☐
F/12/70986 – Renewal of extant planning permission F/09/65073 for: Two storey side and three storey rear extensions following removal of existing conservatory – Approved July 2012		
F/09/65073 – Two storey side and three storey rear extensions following removal of existing conservatory – Approved July 2009		
Z/27896/005/00 – Reserved Matters:- Extensions and conversion to rest home, new access and car parking. (outline ref. 27896/4) – Approved Nov 1993		

Publicity:	Letters ☒	Site Notice ☒	Newspaper ☐
Representations:	Five representations received, all objecting to the proposals and highlighting the following issues: - Overlooking and loss of privacy - Loss of mature trees - Overdevelopment - Close proximity to boundary with neighbours - Visually intrusive - Loss of light - Overbearing scale - Foul and surface water drainage - Noise and disturbance from fans, air-con, etc. - Noise, dust, and disturbance during construction - Impact on local ecology - Poor design - Increased traffic impact		
Chandler's Ford Parish Council:	No comments received.		
Trees:	Objection. It has not been demonstrated that the design of the development has suitably taken into account the site context. Concern that retained trees will be damaged and that there is insufficient space left to provide suitable replacements for those to be lost.		
Environmental Health (Land Contamination):	No objection in principle subject to conditions requiring further site investigations and potential mitigation measures being submitted to and approved prior to development.		

Environmental Health (Pollution):	No objection. Recommend that a construction management plan is submitted and approved prior to works commencing.
Ecology:	No objection subject to conditions requiring ecological enhancement measures to be incorporated.
Hampshire Highways:	No objection. Existing access is acceptable. New parking layout looks workable, although it is for the applicant to ensure the site can be adequately serviced. Parking provision is for EBC to assess given increased staff numbers.
Southern Water:	No objection.

Site Visit:	Yes ☒	No ☐
Details: 24/05/2023 – See separate site photographs.		

Policy:
National Planning Policy Framework Planning Practice Guidance Development Plan: The <u>Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036</u> The most relevant policies are Strategic Policies S1 and S2; and Development Management Policies DM1, DM2, DM6, DM8, DM11, DM13, DM14 and DM25. Supplementary Planning Documents: Quality Places; Accommodation for Older People and Those in Need of Care; Residential Parking Standards; Trees and Development; Character Area Appraisals.

Assessment:
Site Context: Challoner House is an existing care home currently with 47 bedrooms. It is a fairly modern two and three storey building set within a mature landscaped garden, including a number of trees which are subject to preservation orders. The site is accessed from the main Winchester Road, with parking to the front and landscaped gardens to the rear. The site is predominantly surrounded by residential housing of varying ages and architectural styles, albeit most properties are of a fairly traditional form and relatively modest scale in comparison to the care home building. The area is also fairly well treed, with the application site being of particular note in this respect. Immediately adjacent to the site is 'The King Rufus' Public House, the beer garden of which backs onto the site adjacent to the location of the proposed extension. The main local commercial/retail centre for Chandler's Ford is also in close proximity further south down Winchester Road, with good bus links to Winchester and Southampton. Proposals: The application seeks consent for the construction of a two and three storey extension to rear of the existing care home following removal of an existing conservatory. This would provide 10 additional bedrooms and new communal facilities in a new projecting wing. Proposals also include alterations to the existing car park to provide a better layout and additional spaces. Planning History:

Challoner House was built in the early-mid 1990s within what was once part of an extensive garden to a neighbouring property. Since first built, the building has remained unaltered, other than the addition of a sizable conservatory to the south-western elevation, which would be removed as part of that currently proposed. The planning approvals from 2009 and 2012 have not been implemented.

Policy & Principle:

The application site lies within the urban edge and within a generally residential area close to local facilities. As such, the basic principle of development is considered to be acceptable. In this instance the most relevant policies are DM1 and DM25 of the adopted Local Plan.

Policy DM1 requires all new development to be of a high design quality, to take appropriate account of the site constraints and its context, as well as ensuring limited impact upon neighbouring uses and occupiers. This policy is supported by the Council's 'Quality Places' Supplementary Planning Document.

Of specific relevance to the nature of the application is Policy DM25 which relates to the provision of older persons housing and states that:

"The Council will support the provision of accommodation suitable for the needs of older people. Proposals should be:

- a. located in sustainable locations with good access to the public transport network;*
- b. close to local facilities that residents can use, ideally Extra Care housing should be in or close to local centre; and*
- c. well integrated into the local community."*

In the case of the application site, it meets all the above requirements.

In principle therefore, extension and enlargement of the existing facility is acceptable in principle, with any formal planning approval being dependent on the details and impact of that proposed and how well it accords with the relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan and supplementary guidance.

Form, Layout, Design, Street Scene & Area Character:

The additional bedrooms would be accommodated in a new projecting wing, which due to the site's topography would be between two and three storeys in height and scale, albeit much of the 'ground floor' would not actually provide any useable accommodation. As opposed to the existing Challoner House, the new wing would be flat roof in form, set behind a raised parapet. The elevations would be finished in a buff colour brick to reflect that used on the existing building on its upper levels, with a dark brown brick to the lower floor. Elevational treatment would be very basic, only broken up by regularly positioned three quarter and full height windows. The exception to this would be the north-western elevation, which is blank, other than a fire exit door, presumably to maintain privacy for neighbouring properties in Westwood Gardens.

Whilst in principle there is no objection to enlarging the existing care home, or to a more 'contemporary' design aesthetic being used when of a high design quality, it is not considered that the design solution proposed in this instance is the most appropriate response to the site constraints and surrounding context.

In terms of height and scale, it is questioned why more accommodation is not provided at ground floor level, particularly when the site topography would appear to indicate that accommodation could at least be provided on the north-western side at garden level, which would provide a better outlook for residents whilst maintaining neighbour's privacy. Instead, much of the ground floor is unused, resulting in the new wing having a large three storey scale when in reality only two floors provide useable accommodation.

It appears that the flat roof form of the new wing is a response to this sizable scale. However, whilst lower than the ridge height of the existing building, the parapet wall and

lack of eaves results in the new wing appearing to be very bulky and visually greater in scale than the existing building. This is exaggerated further by the length of the wing and the blank north-western elevation which is presented to properties which back on to the site in Westwood Gardens. The structure would also be visible from further down Westwood Gardens due to the area's topography and orientation of the street, sitting at the top of the rise, potentially higher than the ridge heights of Westwood Gardens properties (site sections including Westwood Gardens were requested to establish this but not submitted).

The flat roof form does little to assist in reducing the visual bulk and presence of that proposed and is not considered to be the most sympathetic response in an area of relatively traditional pitched roof dwellings, certainly not for a development of the size proposed. Challoner House is already of a much greater scale than surrounding development. However, it benefits from good levels of tree screening and being set down within the site, something visually helped by its low pitched roof form. The location of the proposed extension does not benefit from the same levels of dense tree screening and will be more visible from the surrounding locality. Its large bulk and scale not being helped by its boxy flat roof form and use of bright buff brickwork.

To conclude on these aspects, it is considered that the proposed form, scale, mass, bulk and design of the proposed new bedroom wing would result in an excessively large, non-subservient and unsympathetic addition to the existing building, resulting in a detrimental impact to the existing attractive setting of the site, as well as the visual amenity and prevailing character of the locality, contrary to the requirements of Policy DM1 of the adopted Local Plan and the Council's 'Quality Places' SPD.

Amenity:

Existing Neighbours:

In terms of impact upon existing neighbouring properties, there are strong concerns in relation to the height, bulk, scale and appearance of the extension. Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposal should not result in any loss of privacy through the lack of or position of windows, unfortunately this results in a large blank and unattractive elevation being presented to Westwood Gardens properties. It is also accepted that there would probably be no detrimental loss of light to neighbouring gardens or properties. However, this does not mean that there would not be a real perception of light loss through the sheer scale of that proposed and its proximity to the boundary.

Notwithstanding that the proposal appears to meet requirements in terms of loss of privacy and light, this is not the case in terms of outlook. The proposal would result in a predominantly blank three storey flank elevation some 26 metres in length at an average distance of approximately 10 metres from the north-western site boundary. This would also be at a point where boundary planting/screening is much less dense than elsewhere along this boundary. The presence of the structure would therefore be far more prominent and would introduce a potentially oppressive form of built development which will result in an unacceptable impact upon the outlook for properties in Westwood Gardens, as well as being out of keeping with the prevailing spacious and soft landscaped character of the locality. This alone is considered sufficient grounds to refuse the application for being contrary to the amenity requirements set out in Policy DM1 of the adopted Local Plan and the Council's 'Quality Places' SPD.

Concerns have also been raised by neighbours as to overlooking and loss of privacy resulting from the proposed second floor terrace. Whilst accepting that the distances involved should prevent any unacceptable loss of privacy, again the perception of being overlooked will have an impact upon the amenity of neighbours. Although there may be scope to provide obscure privacy screens to the side of the terrace, this would not make it the most attractive space for care home residents to use.

In addition to the impact upon properties in Westwood Gardens, there are also concerns as to the impact upon the beer garden of the neighbouring King Rufus public house. Presently the beer garden is relatively secluded, is not overlooked and is not impacted by

surrounding development. This is a popular local pub and is well used by families. Whilst there may be no resultant overlooking of the garden, the height of the extension and its proposed materials will be clearly visible above and through the existing boundary hedge, which is becoming sparse in places. Although it is acknowledged that pub gardens are not officially offered any degree of protection in planning terms, that proposed would have a negative impact on the enjoyment of the garden by patrons.

Future Occupiers:

There are also concerns as to the amenity of existing and future residents of the care home and how they would be impacted by the proposals, principally in respect of light and outlook. Whilst acknowledging that existing bedrooms on the south-western elevation of Challoner House are in relatively close proximity to the site boundary and under the canopy of large trees, which does impact the levels of natural light available to them, they do at least have an attractive, albeit angled view out to the western part of the landscaped garden. This view would be blocked by the proposed extension, which would also likely reduce light levels to these rooms, to the detriment of the amenity of these existing residents.

There are similar concerns for residents of the new proposed rooms on the southern elevation, which again would be in close proximity to the site boundary where light levels and outlook would be impacted by the existing boundary planting. Whilst the availability of light and outlook is not so much of a concern for those rooms to the northern side of the extension, the outlook from these windows would generally be dominated by the length of flank wall.

Impact from the neighbouring beer garden upon residents is also something of a concern. However, it is accepted that this is already the current situation, and this pub is not known to be a source of antisocial behaviour.

Other:

A number of the neighbours representations received made reference to noise, dust and disturbance during the course of construction. These are very reasonable concerns, and while a degree of disturbance would be likely, this would be for a relatively temporary period and can be controlled to a reasonable degree through the use of appropriately worded conditions, were the application to be recommended for approval.

Parking, Access, Servicing & Highways:

The submitted supporting statement claims that reconfiguring the current car park would result in ten additional spaces. However, it was observed on site by the case officer that there are at least 24 spaces, with a couple of additional informal spaces obviously created by staff. The proposed 27 spaces of the proposed scheme would therefore only result in an additional three spaces, which given a 21% increase in bedrooms, appears somewhat minimal. The Council's 'Residential Parking Standards' SPD sets out that nursing and care homes are required to provide at least one space for every six bedrooms, plus a space per member of staff. Based on a resulting total of 57 rooms, this would equate to a parking requirement of 9.5 spaces, which would need to be rounded up to 10. This leaves 17 spaces for staff. The application form suggests that there would be just over 40 members of staff. However, without knowing how many staff are on site at any one time or how the shift patterns work, it cannot be determined if the remaining parking provision is sufficient to meet the SPD requirements (these details were requested but not provided). If adequate provision cannot be provided for the enlarged scheme, there is the potential that this would result in overspill parking in neighbouring residential streets or along the main Winchester Road and its wide grass verges. This would not be considered acceptable. As such a further reason for refusal is recommended relating to lack of clarification on staff numbers to determine parking requirements for the enlarged development, contrary to Policies DM1 and DM14 of the adopted Local Plan.

In terms of the reconfigured car park layout, there are no objections. However, it is questioned whether the level of engineering works required, including the loss of a sizable

tree which contributes to the visual amenity of the area, is really worthwhile to provide just three additional spaces.

Site access would remain unchanged, and it appears that the site could be adequately serviced by a small to medium size refuse vehicle, sufficient room being available to allow such a vehicle to turn around on site. No objection has been raised by the Highways Authority in these respects, or in relation to increased vehicle movements or highway impact.

Trees:

The Council's Tree Officer has objected to the application and has raised several concerns regarding the proposed development. For instance, they are not satisfied with the proposed installation of new services within the Root Protection Areas (RPAs) of two category "A" trees (1904, 1905) and the installation of hard standing within the RPA of a category "A" tree (1905). The provided arboricultural information does not suitably demonstrate that the proposals can be achieved.

It is also not proposed to provide any replacement trees, as is required by the Tree Replacement Policy set out in the 'Trees and Development' SPD. Further, the applicant has not suitably demonstrated that there is enough retained amenity area to provide space for replacement trees of a suitable species, or for them to be able to mature.

There are also concerns that it has not been demonstrated that the proposed protection measures are workable. There are pinch points where tree protection fencing and active construction zones are in close proximity. Further, ground protection does not appear to have taken into account site topography.

Ultimately, it has not been demonstrated that appropriate account of the context of the site has been given in designing the proposed scheme, which is contrary to Policy DM1 and the requirements of the 'Trees and Development' SPD. This will form a further reason for refusal.

Nature Conservation:

Despite the inadequacies of the submitted ecological assessment highlighted by the Council's Ecologist, no objection has been raised subject to conditions requiring the suggested mitigation and enhancement measures being incorporated into the development, such as bat and bird bricks, as well as suitable planting for pollinators, etc.

Habitats Regulations:

No Habitat Regulations Assessment has been undertaken for the proposed development, given the intention to refuse the application. However, were the application to be approved, there would be a need to secure mitigation towards designated nature conservation sites within and around The Solent and New Forest National Park which are being impacted by pressures from increased recreational use and increased nutrients from waste water associated with new residential development impacting water quality and effecting sensitive habitats. Failure to secure this mitigation will therefore be used as a further reason for refusal.

Drainage & Flooding:

Some concern has been raised by neighbours in relation to existing drainage issues, which they fear would be exacerbated by the proposed development. Whilst these concerns are noted, drainage impact has been considered by the applicant and a drainage strategy has been submitted in support of the application, which appears in principle to be acceptable. If the application were to be approved, then further details could be secured via condition.

With regards to flooding, the site is not within any areas of concern in this respect.

Climate Change:

In July 2019, the Council declared a Climate Change and Environmental Emergency. In doing so it agreed, among other things, to: (a) put in place measures to ensure the Council's own operations and functions achieve carbon neutrality by 2025; (b) work with partners to aim for all projects and services delivered in the Borough to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030; (c) ensure that the Council's procurement policy recognises carbon neutrality as one of its primary considerations; and (d) recognise the urgency of action to mitigate and adapt to climate change in every decision taken by the Council. This is underpinned by the Climate and Environment Emergency Strategy 2020–2030 and the supporting Climate and Environment Emergency Action Plan – Update June 2020.

The declaration of the Climate Change and Environmental Emergency demonstrates a strong commitment from the Council to achieve net zero. The NPPF, development plan and adopted local plan policy do not set this as a specific target, but it is a material consideration to be considered alongside all other material considerations. In any case addressing climate change is a core part of the NPPF and local plan policy. The need to support the economy is part of the Strategic Environmental Assessment for the adopted local plan, as is an assessment of climate impacts.

The NPPF aims for the need for housing to be met, and policy S2 of the Local Plan sets a target for 14,580 dwellings to be provided by 2036. The NPPF, Policies S1, DM2 and DM3 of the Local Plan and energy and water elements of the adopted Environmentally Sustainable Development SPD require development to be sustainable in terms of resource use, climate change and energy use. When considering the impact of climate change, the proposed development is expected to be resilient to the potential effects of climate change and is expected to reduce/limit impacts on climate emissions as a result of the development or its use.

Looking specifically at that proposed, no detail has been provided as to what if any specific sustainability measures are proposed over and above that required by Building Regulations. However, there would be scope to provide PV panels to the large area of flat roof hidden behind the parapet, together with possible grey-water recycling, etc.

Equalities Implications:

Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 created the public sector equality duty. Section 149 states:

- A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - a. eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b. advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

When making policy decisions, the Council must take account of the equality duty and in particular any potential impact on protected groups. It is considered that this application does not raise any equality implications.

Conclusion:

Recommendation:	PERMIT ☐	REFUSE ☒
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Whilst in principle there is no objection to expanding the accommodation at the current care home, and acknowledging the fact that there is a general shortage of bed-spaces across the region, any extensions or alterations need to be undertaken in a manner which balances as best possible the various planning and site constraints. The submitted scheme is not considered to achieve this in a manner which would not result in adverse harm to the amenity of neighbouring properties, future residents, or the general character of the locality. As such, the application is recommended for refusal for the following reasons.

1. The proposed development, by virtue of its scale, mass, bulk, height, form and appearance would result in an excessively large addition to the existing care home which does not acceptably respond to the site constraints or the prevailing pattern and nature of development in the locality, to the detriment of the visual amenity and character of the area. As such the application is considered to be contrary to Policy DM1 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) and the Council's 'Quality Places' Supplementary Planning Document.
2. The proposed development, by virtue of its scale, mass, bulk, height, form, appearance, orientation and proximity to neighbouring properties in Westwood Gardens would result in an overtly dominant structure and unacceptable loss of outlook, to the detriment of the amenity of occupiers of those properties. As such the application is considered to be contrary to Policy DM1 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) and the Council's 'Quality Places' Supplementary Planning Document.
3. The proposed development, by virtue of its scale, position and close proximity to the site boundaries and existing boundary planting would result in an unacceptable loss of light and outlook for existing and future residents of the care home, to the detriment of their amenity. As such the application is considered to be contrary to Policy DM1 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036) and the Council's 'Quality Places' Supplementary Planning Document.
4. It has not been adequately demonstrated that the design and layout of the proposed development has taken appropriate account of its resulting impact upon trees which are subject to Tree Preservation Orders, or that the resulting development can accord with the tree replacement policy as set out in the Council's 'Trees and Development' Supplementary Planning Document. As such the application is considered to be contrary to Policy DM1 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036), as well as the Council's 'Quality Places' and 'Trees and Development' Supplementary Planning Documents.
5. Insufficient information has been provided in relation to staffing numbers and shift patterns to establish if sufficient on-site parking can be provided to serve the enlarged care home. As such the application is considered to be contrary to Policies DM1 & DM14 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan (2016-2036), as well as the Council's 'Quality Places' and 'Residential Parking Standards' Supplementary Planning Documents.
6. The application fails to provide the required mitigation to offset the impacts of the development upon the European protected Solent Complex (SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites), River Itchen (SAC) and New Forest National Park (SPA, SAC and Ramsar sites) from additional recreational pressure and nitrogen loading generated by the population increase and additional sewage resulting from the development. The proposal is therefore contrary to the requirements of Policy DM11 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036, the provisions of the NPPF (2021) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.