

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Executive Director of Infrastructure and Regeneration

Planning Committee: 29 January 2014

DC12/235 Erection of no.10 Residential Units Comprising of Mixed House Types, Associated Landscaping, Access Road and Boundary Treatments at Site of Dunclotha House, Off Parkhall Road, Clydebank by Parkhall Developments Ltd.

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1** This report relates to an application which has received a significant body of objection, and under the terms of the approved Scheme of Delegation it therefore requires to be determined by the Planning Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1** Grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out in Section 9.

3. DEVELOPMENT DETAILS

- 3.1** The application site is located on the west side of Parkhall Road close to the junction with Clark Street. At this point Parkhall Road sweeps round in a U-shaped bend, and the site occupies the outside of the curve. It was previously occupied by a large detached villa which was demolished some years ago, and the site is now overgrown with trees and shrubs. The site slopes down from Parkhall Road towards Dalmuir Golf Course which borders the site to the north and west, and which is screened from the site by a belt of mature trees. To the south of the site are the back gardens of houses on Clark Street and Overtoun Drive, which are also lower than the site. To the east of the site, inside the curve of Parkhall Road, is a landscaped area of grass, trees and bushes. Along the south side of Parkhall Road to the east of the site are a row of 1960s/70s style houses, most of which are bungalows or split-level houses with a single storey at road level. The site itself is approximately 0.27 hectares in area and is generally level adjacent to Parkhall Road before sloping down significantly to the west. There is a difference of approximately 6 metres in height from the ground level of Parkhall Road and the western boundary with the Dalmuir Golf Course.
- 3.2** The proposed development would consist of a three storey block of six 2-bed flats, a pair of 3-bed semi detached houses, and two 4-bed detached houses. These properties would be arranged in a cul-de-sac with one of the detached houses fronting Parkhall Road, and the flats positioned at the westernmost corner of the site. An area of open space containing existing mature trees would be provided along the south side of the cul-de-sac. Buildings would be finished in facing brick and render, with concrete roof tiles. All access to the

site would be from Parkhall Road, where a new entrance would require to be formed as the original driveway entrance would not be suitable. The cul-de-sac would use a single carriageway shared surface design in order to maximise the amount of open space which could be retained. Ground levels would be altered to create a consistent, gentle slope through the site. This would include some lowering of ground near the centre of the site, and landraising of up to 2.55m at its western end.

- 3.3** The site contains a number of trees, and is covered by a Tree Preservation Order. This was originally imposed in order to protect the larger mature trees around the boundaries of the site; however the majority of the site is now covered in young trees which have grown within the site since the dwellinghouse was demolished. A large number of these immature trees would require to be removed from the site to make way for the development. Efforts have been made to minimise the impact upon the mature trees, however some of the mature trees at the western end of the site (i.e. furthest from Parkhall Road) would be removed, as would some smaller trees along the road boundary which would need to be removed in order to create a suitable road access. The majority of the mature trees along the southern boundary, including a notable monkey puzzle tree, would be retained, and the belt of mature trees which wraps around the north and west of the site would not be affected as these trees are within the golf course. Some new trees would also be planted on the site as part of the landscaping scheme to replace those felled.

4. CONSULTATIONS

- 4.1** West Dunbartonshire Council Roads, Greenspace and Environmental Health Services, Scottish Natural Heritage and Scottish Water all have no objection to the proposed development subject to appropriate conditions.

5. REPRESENTATIONS

- 5.1** Twenty representations have been received in relation to the proposal, from 19 individuals/households and Parkhall, North Kilbowie and Central Community Council. All object to the proposal for the following reasons:
- Out of character with surroundings as there are no flats in area;
 - Over-development of the site with inappropriate density;
 - Adverse impact on nearby conservation area;
 - Increased traffic;
 - Inadequate access for bin lorries and bins would be left on Parkhall Road;
 - Overlooking of nearby residential properties;
 - Loss of view / outlook from nearby homes;
 - Loss of protected trees;
 - Previous applications and appeals have been refused for similar proposals on the site;
 - Impact on bats;
 - Risk of golf balls hitting properties/people within the site

6. ASSESSMENT AGAINST THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

West Dunbartonshire Local Plan 2010

- 6.1** The application site is designated as a Housing Opportunity Site, which Schedule H2 lists as being suitable for private sector housing with an indicative capacity of 12 units. Policy H1 indicates that such sites are the main opportunities for private housing development within the plan area. The proposal would be in accordance with this policy.
- 6.2** Policies H4 and GD1 set out standards expected of new residential development, which is expected to be of a high quality in terms of scale, form, layout and materials. Policy H4 sets out a number of criteria against which new residential development should be assessed including providing a range of house types, open space provision, landscaping and natural features, road and parking standards, plot setting and residential densities. Policy GD1 includes these criteria and others such as massing, height, aspect, crime prevention and privacy, historic and natural environment and drainage through SUDS. Detailed consideration of the design, scale, form, layout and materials is contained in section 7 below, and it is concluded that the proposal would accord with Policies H4 and GD1.
- 6.3** Policy R2 sets out open space standards and developers are required to provide open space in accordance with the targets set out. Flexibility regarding location, need and extent of open space provision may be acceptable if existing areas of open space are readily accessible from the development site and developers contribute to the provision or improvement of facilities in these areas. This application is for a relatively small development of ten dwellings, and provides approximately 620m² of green space within the site, whereas the standard for amenity open space is only 11m² per dwelling. It is not considered appropriate to require the provision of a play area for a development of this scale, especially when ample open space is provided within the site.
- 6.4** Policy E4 indicates that the Council will protect trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders. Where consent is granted for felling of such trees appropriate replanting will be required. Policy E5 requires that developments which affect existing trees should be subject to a tree survey and should seek to retain and protect trees wherever appropriate. The impact of the proposal on trees is considered in Section 7 below, and it is considered that the proposal would comply with these policies.

7. ASSESSMENT AGAINST MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan (WDLDP) Proposed Plan

- 7.1** The site is located within a residential area of Clydebank and is defined as an Existing Neighbourhood under Policy BC3. This policy seeks to protect the residential amenity, character and appearance of existing neighbourhoods. New residential development on gap sites within such areas is acceptable subject to the design and impact on the local area being appropriate.

- 7.2** New residential development should accord with the draft supplementary guidance on residential development. This guidance seeks to ensure that housing developments give importance to the local context, are design-led, promote the six qualities of good design and are accompanied by supporting documents including Design and Access Statements. These matters are discussed fully below. It is considered that the proposal would accord with the guidance.

Planning History

- 7.3** The site has been subject to three previous planning applications for residential development:

- DC02/436, for 30 flats, was withdrawn prior to determination after officers advised the then applicant that they would be unlikely to support the application.
- DC03/319, for 25 flats, was refused in June 2004 due to concerns that it would have a detrimental impact upon the amenity of residents. An appeal against that decision was dismissed by a Scottish Government Reporter, who considered that the site was suitable for residential development but not of the scale/density then proposed.
- DC06/143, for 16 flats, was refused in December 2006 for similar reasons, and an appeal was also dismissed for the same reasons as previously.

Principle of Development

- 7.4** The application site is a brownfield gap site within a residential part of the town, and its redevelopment for residential purposes is acceptable in principle. This has already been established by the allocation of the site as a Residential Development Opportunity in the adopted local plan, and by the comments of reporters at the two earlier appeals, both of whom agreed that the site was suitable for residential development. The principal issue for this application is therefore considered to be whether the design and density of the proposed development would be appropriate for the character and amenity of the area.

- 7.5** Previous applications on this site have involved 16 to 30 units, as part of wholly flatted developments, which were all found to be overdevelopment of the site. The local plan allocates the site a notional capacity of 12 units, although such figures are indicative only and in this case it is assumed that the figure was based on an expectation that the development would comprise only flats. The current proposal reduces the number of units to 10, although these would be a mixture of houses and flats and therefore involve a larger number of individually smaller buildings than was previously envisaged. This has implications for the layout of the site, but in principle the number of units is not considered excessive and the use of lower rise detached and semi-detached houses, particularly at the front of the site, would be more in keeping with the existing development in the surrounding area.

Design and Appearance

- 7.6** The main urban design issues for this site are considered to be the need to retain as many mature trees as practicable, and the need to provide an appropriate frontage onto Parkhall Road. The site is located on a prominent corner which is currently marked by mature landscaping, whilst the housing along the south side of Parkhall Road nearby are reasonably spaciouly laid out. The proposed development seeks to address this by retaining the most important group of mature trees located on the south-eastern boundary of the site, which would screen most of the development when viewed from the east along Parkhall Road. One of the detached houses would be positioned in the northern corner of the site fronting Parkhall Road, and it is considered that this arrangement would reflect the existing pattern of development along the south side of the road. Within the site, the highest building (i.e. the three storey flats) would be positioned at the westernmost corner of the site, where ground levels would be lowest, and therefore the ridge level of the flats would be at a similar level to that of the two storey house at the front of the site. It is considered that the appearance of the site when viewed from Parkhall Road would be acceptable, subject to suitable landscaping and boundary treatment.
- 7.7** When viewed from the south of the site (i.e. Overtoun Road and Clark Street), the removal of trees in the southern corner of the site along in order to facilitate underbuilding to reduce the gradient of the site would mean that the house that is proposed in this corner would be visible, especially as it would be elevated above the streets to the rear, but it is not considered that it would be unduly prominent. The flats would be less prominent because they would have less underbuilding, and would continue to be screened by trees outwith the application site.
- 7.8** In terms of the style of buildings, the surrounding area is not characterised by one particular style, containing a mixture of inter-war and post-war two-storey villas, bungalows and terraced houses, including a number of private-build houses of unusual or contemporary design. Whilst most of the houses along the south side of Parkhall Road are single storey or split level properties, it is not considered that a two storey house would appear out of place fronting this street. All of the new houses and flats would be of a modern suburban character which is considered to be appropriate to the appearance of the area. Within the site, the properties would form an informal cul-de-sac terminating in small parking court, and it is considered that this would provide a pleasant and attractive residential environment.

Privacy and Overlooking

- 7.9** There are no existing properties to the north or west of the site, and the south eastern boundary would largely be screened by retained trees. The only new property which has potential for overlooking is the single detached dwellinghouse in the southern corner of the site, which as noted above would be elevated above the houses to its rear. However, the proposed house would be positioned such that it would not directly face any of the neighbouring houses on Clark Street or Overtoun Terrace, and there would be no window to window distance issues. There would be some overlooking of

gardens of Overtoun Terrace, but these gardens are of an unconventional shape and are already overlooked by existing houses, and it is not considered that the proposal would make this significantly worse. A condition could be imposed requiring the agreement of suitable boundary treatments including a combination of fencing and planting in order to minimise the impact on neighbouring houses.

Impact on Trees

- 7.10** A tree survey has been carried out by a qualified tree surgeon, detailing the locations and conditions of trees on the site, and identifying measures to protect trees during construction. The survey recorded 30 individual trees around the perimeter of the site and a large group of small self-seeded trees in the centre of the site. All of the small self-seeded trees and a few dead trees would be removed, and the proposals for the living trees around the perimeter are as follows:
- Along the **south-eastern boundary**, the four largest trees on the site (a beech, two limes and a monkey puzzle) would be retained. Four smaller trees which have been unable to grow healthily due to density would be felled to thin the group (beech, silver birch and two poplars);
 - Around the **southern corner**, all three mature trees would be removed. Two of these trees (rowan and ash) are in poor condition, whilst the third (a silver birch) appears to be in medium condition, but cannot be retained due to the proposed landraising in this corner;
 - Around the **north-western corner**, there are six trees within the site boundary as part of a much larger group of trees (most of which are outwith the site). None of the six trees is in particularly good condition and it is proposed to remove four of them as part of the levelling work (small rowan and sycamore, larger sycamore and beech), whilst retaining two (horse chestnut and small beech);
 - Around the **north-eastern corner**, a row of eight small and medium sized trees would be removed from the Parkhall Road frontage to create the new access (two Norway Maple), create a front garden and thin out small trees under the crown of a larger oak (five Lawson cypress and a sycamore). The oak tree and a small sycamore on the northern boundary would both be retained, albeit with trimming of branches. The large number of trees growing outwith the site to the north would not be affected.
- 7.11** It is considered that these proposals would retain the most important trees within the site. Discussions have taken place with the applicant to ensure that the prominent monkey puzzle tree and neighbouring mature trees on the southern boundary are not impacted upon by the proposal. The small self-seeded trees in the centre of the site are of little landscape value, and thinning of smaller trees around the site boundary is needed because they are too close together to grow properly. The loss of trees at the north-western corner would have little landscape impact because other trees outwith the site would be retained. The most significant loss would be the small cluster of trees at the southern corner of the site, but retention of these trees would be incompatible with changes to site levels which are necessary to make the site

developable. It would be desirable to provide “soft” boundary treatments (i.e. hedges and post and wire fences), and this could be controlled by a condition. Overall, it is considered that the proposed works to the trees are acceptable.

European Protected Species

- 7.12** A bat survey was undertaken at the request of SNH. The survey did not find any evidence of bats roosting on the site, and noted that of the 30 trees inspected only 4 appeared to have any potential as bat roosts. These trees are unfortunately located at the western end of the site and are amongst those which it is proposed to remove, however in the absence of any evidence of current use by bats this would not have any impact upon the species. A previous bat survey undertaken during 2006 also found no evidence of bat roosting but did record brief foraging by a common pipistrelle bat. However, SNH have noted that in order to comply with wildlife law the site will require to be re-surveyed before development. Whilst the site has become overgrown and is doubtless providing a habitat for wildlife, there are no other protected species which are likely to be affected by its redevelopment.

Access and Road Safety

- 7.13** The position of the driveway of the original house is not considered suitable for re-use, and a new access would be formed in the centre of the site frontage to create a safe and convenience junction. Following discussions the road layout within the site was modified to a single carriageway shared-surface design, to maximise the amount of open space retained and to keep the road as far as possible from the trees. Off street parking would be provided for all of the properties and there should be no requirement for on-street parking on Parkhall Road. A turning head would be provided within the site, which would be capable of accommodating bin lorries and large delivery vehicles.

Other Issues

- 7.14** Other issues raised by objectors include the relationship of the site with a nearby Conservation Area and with adjacent golf course. On the former point, the site is not immediately adjacent to the Conservation Area and it is not considered that the proposal would have any impact upon its setting. The Council’s Greenspace Service has been consulted on the application, and has noted that the existing belt of trees which separates the site from the golf course is within the golf course boundary and would not be affected. It is therefore considered that there is minimal risk of the development being struck by stray golf balls.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1** The proposed redevelopment of this site for residential development is in accordance with the adopted and emerging local plans. The proposed layout has been devised in order to maintain as many of the important trees on the site as is practical, and to provide an appropriate frontage onto Parkhall Road. It is considered that the impact upon neighbouring houses would be

acceptable and that the development would be in keeping with the appearance and character of the surrounding area.

9. CONDITIONS

- 1. Prior to commencement of works, full details of the design and location of all fences and walls, including any retaining walls, to be erected on the site shall be submitted for the consideration and written approval of the Planning Authority. Such details shall thereafter be implemented as approved.**
- 2. Exact details and specifications of all proposed external finishing materials shall be submitted for the further written approval of the Planning Authority prior to any work commencing on the site. Such details shall thereafter be implemented as approved.**
- 3. A landscaping scheme for the amenity open space and boundaries of the site shall be submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority prior to commencement of development on site and shall be implemented not later than the next appropriate planting season after the occupation of the first residential property. The scheme shall include details of the maintenance arrangements and the landscaping shall thereafter be maintained in accordance with these details. The landscaping shall include the replacement tree planting and the use of hedgerows to mark perimeter boundaries.**
- 4. The car parking spaces shown on the submitted layout plan (Drawing No 2012/187/02) shall be constructed , surfaced and delineated on the site prior to the dwellings which they serve being first occupied, and shall thereafter be retained for the purposes of parking.**
- 5. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, full details of all proposed ground and finished floor levels throughout the site shall be submitted for the written approval of the Planning Authority. The details shall include the extent of any under building involved. The levels shall be taken from a Fixed Datum Point which shall be clearly identified on the plans. The proposed levels shall generally accord with the levels shown in cross section on drawing number 2012/187/02B. Thereafter the development shall be constructed in accordance with the agreed levels unless otherwise agreed with the Planning Authority.**
- 6. During the period of construction, all works and ancillary operations which are audible at the site boundary, or at such other places as may be agreed with the Planning Authority shall be carried out only between the hours of 08.00 and 18.00 Monday to Saturday inclusive and not at all on a Sunday or Public Holiday.**

7. Prior to the commencement of development details of the Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and its maintenance following installation shall be submitted for the approval of the Planning Authority. The SUDS shall be designed to ensure that that contaminants are not mobilised and that pollution pathways are not created. The Sustainable Urban Drainage System shall thereafter be formed and maintained on site in accordance with the approved details.
8. No development shall commence until the trees marked for retention on the approved plan 2012/187/02B have been protected by suitable fencing around the extremities of their crowns. Details of the fencing shall be submitted for the further written approval of the Planning Authority and shall be implemented as approved. None of these trees shall not be lopped, topped, felled, lifted removed or disturbed in any way without the prior written consent of the Planning Authority.
9. All tree works required shall be carried out by a qualified arboriculturalist, and the Planning Authority shall be notified of the person/company appointed to carry out any works, prior to any development commencing on site. All tree works shall be carried out in accordance with the submitted Method Statement for tree protection measures along with Drawing 2012/187/02B as approved, as part of this consent.
10. During all construction works on site, including the provision of services, any excavation works through root areas of the trees to be retained shall only be undertaken by hand.
11. No tree felling shall take place within the bird breeding season of March to July (inclusive).
12. No development shall commence until such time as the site has been re-surveyed for bats by a qualified bat surveyor and the results submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority. Any agreed mitigation works shall thereafter be implemented as approved.

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Date: 14 January 2014

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Appendix:

None

Background Papers:

1. Application forms and plans.
2. West Dunbartonshire Local Plan 2010
3. West Dunbartonshire LDP Proposed Plan(2013)
4. Consultation Responses
5. Representations

Wards affected:

Ward 5 (Clydebank Central)