

PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT

PLANNING COMMITTEE: 1 March, 2006

APPLICATION NUMBER: DC05-334

PROPOSAL: Erection of residential development of 12 flats and 8 dwellinghouses with associated parking and landscaping

SITE: Vacant land at Arthur Street/Albert Street/Victoria Street, Alexandria

APPLICANT: Turnberry Homes Ltd

AGENT: Ark Architecture and Design
14 Royal Terrace
Glasgow
G3 7NY

WARD: 17

DATE REGISTERED: 13/12/05

PUBLICITY:

Category	Published	Expiry	Publication
Neighbour Notification	28/12/05	11/01/06	Reporter

REPORT:

A. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site comprises a rectangular site 0.5ha in size, the surrounding roads which bound the site, and a length of the road and footway at Main Street. The main part of the site is a mix of shrubs and trees and gently slopes down in a west to east direction. The west boundary is shared with the rear gardens of traditional red sandstone flats facing onto Main Street. To the north of the site is Alexandria Methodist Church, a car workshop and a modern 3-storey block of flats. To the south is vacant ground and the B857 Renton-Alexandria road runs along the eastern edge.

B. DEVELOPMENT DETAILS

Planning permission is sought for the erection of a single building block which comprises a 3 storey block of flats at either end of a row of 8 terraced houses. The flats consist of 12 two-bedroomed flats with full-length feature windows to the front and side, and private garden space to the front and rear of the properties.

The terraced properties are all 3-bedroomed with a porch feature on the front elevation, off-street parking to the front and private garden space to the rear.

A lane is being formed beyond the rear gardens which would share the rear boundary wall of the flats on Main Street. Off-street parking including visitor parking is being provided to the side of the flats at Arthur Street and Albert Street. The area of shrubs and trees at Victoria Street is to incorporate further off-street parking and landscaping including retaining some of the trees. New footpaths are being provided and the footpath at Main Street is being upgraded.

C. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

The site is identified by the Dumbarton District Wide Local Plan as a Residential Development Opportunity (Ho18) site. Policy H1 states that such sites represent the main opportunity for housing development in the council area.

Policy H4 sets out housing development standards against which new housing should conform including open space provision, design in terms of layout, appearance and landscaping, retention and enhancement of existing features, roads and parking standards and density in respect of surrounding areas.

D. CONSULTATIONS

Housing and Technical Services No objections.

E. REPRESENTATIONS

Five letters of objections have been received, all from the flats at Main Street whose rear gardens bound the development site. They can be summarised as follows:

- concerns about loss of privacy through the new properties overlooking into gardens and windows of properties on Main Street;
- the buildings will block natural sunlight into gardens and properties;
- the proposal is overdevelopment and the site has never had 3 storeys buildings on it;
- no play area is provided;
- noise pollution;
- concerns over traffic access and parking; and
- loss of wooded area.

A number of non-planning issues were also raised including disturbance of rat nests on the site, the lack of demand for this type of housing and loss of value of property and view.

F. ASSESSMENT

In assessment of this application the main issue for consideration is whether the proposal complies with the local plan policies for this site (Policy H1 and H4). Of material consideration are the issues raised by the objectors.

Land Use

The proposal for a residential development in this location conforms to Policy H1 in the local plan which identifies it as a housing site.

Design and Layout

Against the housing development standards set out in Policy H4 the proposal is sympathetic to surrounding properties in terms of siting, scale and form. The proposed flats and houses are well-sited, being set back from the road on three sides and with long rear gardens and a rear lane which separates them from existing flats.

The density reflects similar densities in the area which has a mix of 3 storey flats, terraced houses (on O'Neil Terrace off Albert Street) and a traditional church building and single storey car workshop.

The design of the proposal is a symmetrical layout with good window proportion and detailing. There are features on the front elevation including mock balconies on the flats and porches on the houses. The windows on the flats are returned on the corner which provides natural surveillance over the parking areas on Arthur Street and Albert Street as well as adding an interesting design feature.

Open Space and Roads Provision

Open space provision is proposed on the other side of Victoria Street and would provide a semi-mature landscape with a children's play area and seating.

As part of the proposal new footways are being formed which will link up with the existing footways on Main Street. This will be a significant improvement for pedestrians and includes areas not directly adjacent to the development site. The roads into the site will also be upgraded to adoptable standards and sufficient parking is being provided for the development which complies with Roads Standards.

Material Consideration – Objections

There are concerns about loss of privacy and overlooking into the gardens and windows of existing flats. However the proposed houses and flats are a minimum 30 metres away from them and there is therefore no window-to-window overlooking issue. The privacy of the existing gardens will also be maintained given they are slightly elevated over the proposed rear gardens, have a 2.2metre high boundary wall to act as a screen and will have a lane between both sets of gardens.

The applicant has provided a cross-section of the site which shows the proposed flats to have a finished height 2½ metres below the height of the flats on Main Street. This height is lower than some of the trees and given this and the distance from the existing flats it is not considered that the buildings will block sunlight or create shading beyond that already experienced from the trees.

It is not considered that the proposal is overdevelopment as it reflects densities of the surrounding area and includes a large element of open space provision and a play area. Historical maps have shown the site to previously be housing with the same footprint as the flats on Main Street and it is likely that these were the 2-3 storey flats found commonly in this part of Alexandria.

Noise pollution has been raised as a concern and although no further explanation was given for this it should be noted that it is standard practice to include conditions to limit noise from construction where it would be carried out adjacent to existing residential areas.

The traffic access and parking has been subject to negotiations with Roads Services and meets the Roads Standards. In addition the creation and upgrading of the footway will be a great improvement on the existing situation.

Finally, it is accepted that the proposal would lead to the loss of trees and shrubs. However, the trees have grown out of ground that has been left undisturbed for the last 30-40 years, with no trees that are either mature or semi-mature with particular individual or group value. The developer has indicated their willingness to carry out a survey of the area to determine what trees could be retained and what landscaping could be planted to supplement what is already there. The proposal would therefore introduce an element of active management into an area that has been left to self-seed.

G. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The proposal complies with Policy H1 and the criteria set out in Policy H4 used in assessing the standards of housing developments. It is sympathetic to the surrounding area in terms of density, scale of the buildings and its relationship with the existing flats on Main Street. The proposal would involve the loss of some trees but this is balanced with the provision of an improved and managed open space in the remaining area. The design of the buildings makes a positive contribution to the existing residential setting.

With regard to the concerns expressed about how the proposal will impact on the existing flats, there is sufficient separation to have no impact on privacy, overlooking or shading. The parking, roads and new footways are to Roads Standards and will improve the current situation for existing residents and new residents to the area. An improved area of open space will increase the amenity value of the area.

In view of the above it is considered that the proposal complies with local plan policy and the issues raised within the objections are not sufficient to warrant refusal.

The council currently owns the site and is in the process of its disposal. The application does not need to be referred to the Scottish ministers as the proposal accords with the adopted development plan and there is not a substantial level of objection.

It is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

H. CONDITIONS

- 1. The development hereby permitted shall commence within a period of 5 years from the date of this permission.**
- 2. Exact details and specifications of all proposed external finishing materials (including roofing materials) shall be submitted for the further approval of the Planning Authority prior to any work commencing on the site.**
- 3. Prior to commencement of works, full details of the design and location of all fences and walls to be erected on the site shall be submitted for the consideration and written approval of the Planning Authority.**
- 4. Subject to the owners consent, any works involved in taking down and reconstructing sections of the boundary wall on the western edge of the site marked blue on Drawing NO. AL (0) 03 A shall be carried out by hand to ensure the minimum disruption to the wall. Any new or infill materials introduced shall match those of the existing wall.**
- 5. Prior to commencement of works, full details of all hard surfacing to be provided on the site shall be submitted for the consideration and written approval of the Planning Authority.**
- 6. Prior to commencement of development, the developer shall submit a detailed survey of all trees on the site. This survey shall be displayed on a site layout plan and be carried out in compliance with British Standard BS 5827 "Trees in Relation to Development" (2005). Those trees which it is proposed to fell and remove shall be clearly identified on the plan.**
- 7. The development shall be landscaped in accordance with a scheme which shall be submitted to and approved by the Director of Development and Environmental Services before development commences. The scheme shall indicate the siting, numbers, species and heights (at the time of planting) of all trees, shrubs and hedges to be planted and the extent of any areas of earthmounding, and shall ensure:-**
 - a. completion of the scheme during the planting season next following the completion of the building(s), or such other date as may be agreed in writing with the Director of Development and Environmental Services; and**

only between the hours of 08.00 and 18.00 Monday to Saturday inclusive, and not at all on Sundays or Public Holidays.

15. To minimise nuisance in the surrounding area from noise and vibrations, during all demolition and construction works the plant and machinery used shall be in accordance with the relevant codes of practice specified in the Control of Noise (Codes of practice for construction and open sites) Scotland Order 2002. All reasonably practicable steps to minimise the formation of dust in the atmosphere and in the surrounding area must be taken.
16. The applicant/operator shall provide and maintain on the site suitable means for the washing of vehicle wheels at all times during the hours of operation to prevent mud being deposited on the public road.
17. Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved, full details of all proposed finished floor levels shall be submitted to the Planning authority in writing for approval. The development shall thereafter be implemented in accordance with the approved levels.



Dan Henderson,
Director of Economic, Planning & Environmental Services
Date: 16 February 2006

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

1. Application form and location plan;
2. Ownership Certificate and Neighbour Notification Certificate;
3. Consultation response from Commercial and Technical Services received 5 January, 2006.
4. Objection letters received:
 - C M Dawson, 317 Main Street, Alexandria
 - Mr & Mrs Craig, Flat 0/2, 321 Main Street, Alexandria
 - A & G Jump, Top Right, 321 Main Street, Alexandria
 - S Wrethman, 319 Main Street, Alexandria
 - K Wrethman & C Coubrough, 317B Main Street, Alexandria

Person to Contact: Jameson Bridgwater, Section Head, Development Management, Development & Environmental Services, Council Offices, Clydebank G81 1TG. 01389 738656.

