

Applicant: Mr Omar Sharif

Description: Erection of single storey extensions to existing care home building and erection of 2 storey block providing additional bedrooms and ancillary accommodation.

Site Address: Orchard Views, 39 Gawber Road, Old Town, Barnsley, S75 2AN

Site Location & Description

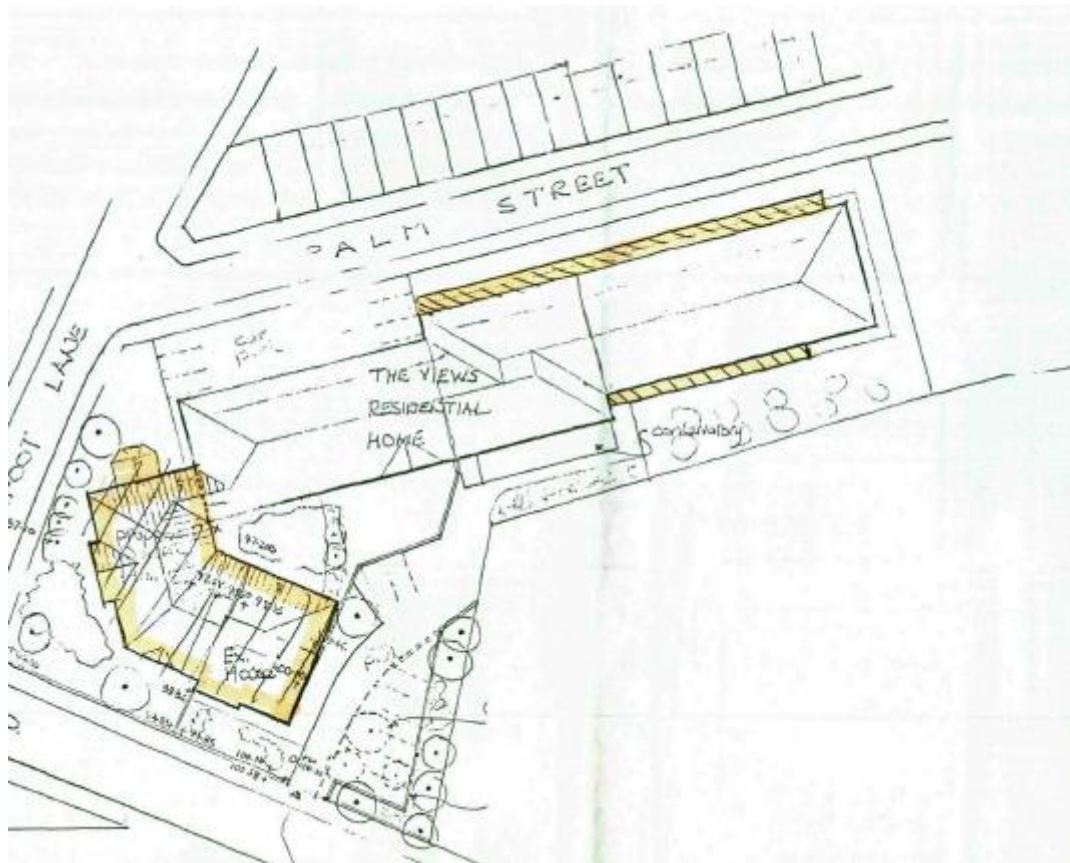
The application relates to a part single storey part 2 storey 1960's care home. It previously had a flat roof but has recently had a hipped roof retro fitted. The site is on a corner plot with Gawber Road to the front (South), Greenfoot Lane to the West and Palm Street to the rear (North). The main vehicular and pedestrian access is off Gawber Road and there is a car park and area of landscaping situated between the front elevation and the highway. The soft landscaping continues around the corner of Gawber Road and Greenfoot lane and includes mature hedges and trees on the boundary. To the rear of the site the rear elevation is relatively close to Palm Street with just a servicing area and small amount of car parking separating it.

The surrounding area consists of terraced dwellings to the North fronting Palm Street, a detached dwelling and apartments to the East, a play area, school and dwellings to the South and an NHS building and dwellings opposite Greenfoot Lane to the West. Barnsley General Hospital sits to the South West of the site opposite the signalled junction.



Site History

2008/0523 – Erection of extensions to nursing home, and erection of pitched roof to building – approved



2011/0523 – Erection of extensions to nursing home, and erection of pitched roof to existing building (2008/0523 extension of time limit) – approved

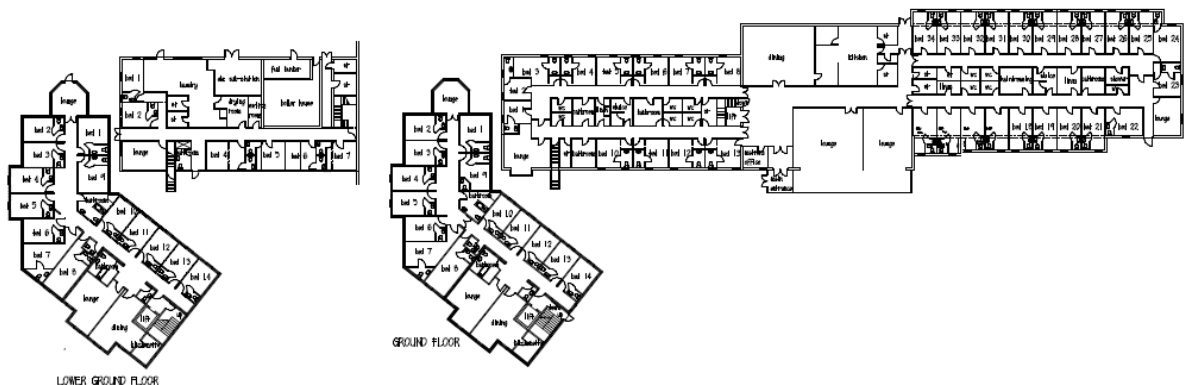
2014/0834 – Erection of pitched roof over existing flat roof - approved

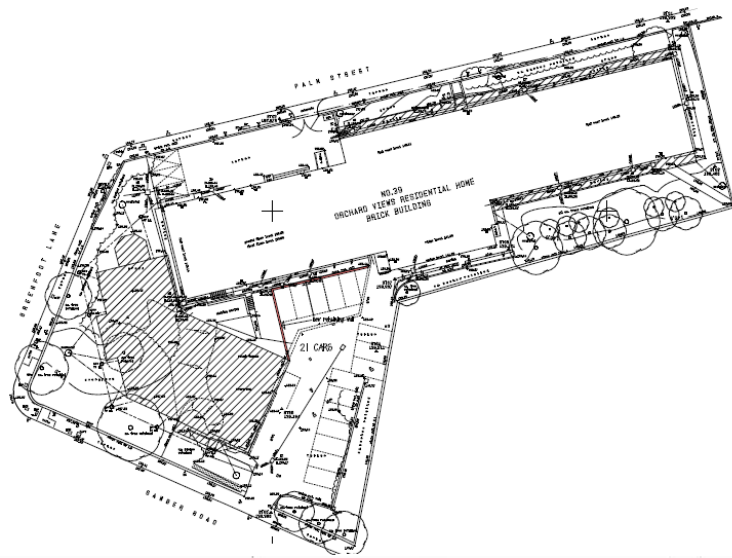
Proposed development

The applicant seeks permission to erect single storey extensions on the Northern and Southern elevations of the existing single storey wing of the building to enable en-suites to be provided in the existing rooms. Further internal works would also take place within the existing building to provide en-suite rooms and reconfigured accommodation. The applicant also seek permission to build an L Shaped, 2 storey building to the West of the site to provide additional en-suite bedrooms and ancillary accommodation for the residents.

The existing care home has 48 bedrooms and the proposals would result in an additional 21 bedrooms. The staff currently work on a shift pattern and currently there are 10 staff on site at any one time, this is anticipated to increase to 14-15 staff on site at anyone time following the works, retaining the current 0.2 staff per bedroom ratio.

The existing car park off Gawber Road currently consists of 8no. parking spaces. This is proposed to increase to 18 spaces to accommodate additional staff and visitors. A dedicated ambulance bay is also proposed.





Policy Context

The site is allocated as Urban Fabric within the Local Plan Proposals Maps and therefore the following policies are relevant:

Policy T4 New development and Transport Safety

Policy GD1 General Development

Policy D1 High Quality Design and Place Making

Policy E4 Protecting Existing Employment Land

Policy Poll1 Pollution Control and Protection

Policy LG2 The Location of Growth

Policy CL1 Contaminated and Unstable Land

Policy CC1 Climate Change

Policy CC2 Sustainable Design and Construction

Policy CC4 Sustainable Drainage Systems

BIO1 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

NPPF

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. At the heart is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Development proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole; or where specific policies in the Framework indicate development should be restricted or unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Paragraphs of particular relevance to this application include:

Para 81 - 'planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity'.

Para 92 - Planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places

Para 111 - Development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Para 126 - The creation of high-quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Para 131 - trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments and can also help mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Para 134 - 'Development that is not well designed should be refused, especially where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance on design, taking into account any local design guidance and supplementary planning documents such as design guides and codes.

SPD's

The following Supplementary Planning Documents are relevant to this application;

- Parking
- Sustainable Travel
- Trees and Hedgerows

Consultations

Drainage – Building Control to check

Highways – No objection following additional information and subject to conditions

Air Quality – No objections subject to EVCP condition

Coal Authority – No objections subject to conditions

Regulatory Services – No Objections

Tree Officer – No objections, similar to previous approvals

SYMAS - No objections subject to conditions

Adult Joint Commissioning – the service has raised questions regarding the need for the development taking account of care home bed vacancy rates in December 2020.

Ward Councillors – 1no. Cllr requested the extensions are not overbearing on the residents of Palm Street.

Representations

Consultation letters were sent to 40 neighbouring properties, a site notice was erected within the immediate area and a press notice placed in the Barnsley Chronicle. 4no. objections have been received, the main points of concern are;

- Lack of consultation
- Loss of light
- Overbearing
- Loss of privacy/increased overlooking
- Increased traffic on already busy roads
- Lack of car parking for staff and visitors

Assessment

Principle of Development

Local Plan Policy LG2 'The Location of Growth' states priority will be given to development in Urban Barnsley. That is because it is the most sustainable location in spatial policy terms. The site is located immediately adjacent to existing infrastructure and is within a well-positioned sustainable location.

Policy E4 'Protecting Existing Employment Land' goes on to state 'land or premises currently or last used for employment purposes will be retained in order to safeguard existing or potential jobs. Furthermore, the NPPF paragraph 81 states that 'planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity'.

Local Plan Policy GD1 'General Development' requires that there will be no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing and future residents. Furthermore, any adverse impact on the environment, natural resources, waste and pollution is minimised and mitigated.

As outlined in the consultee section above, the Adult Joint Commissioning Service raised questions over the need for the additional beds. Since that response in December 2020 the council has released the Barnsley Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2021 (June 2021). The assessment identifies that between the period 2019-2033 the number of residents aged 65 and over is expected to increase by around 34.2%, with the proportion aged 75 and over expected to increase by 45.8% and the proportion aged 85 and over expected to increase by 70.7%. As a result, given the ageing population, the need for specialist older person accommodation, such as care homes, is expected to increase.

It is noted a similar development has been approved on the site previously under application 2011/0523, however, since that approval there have been a change in local and national policies and guidelines, as such, the current development will be assessed against the latest policies and guidelines under the following headings;

Residential Amenity

The single storey extensions to the North and South of the existing building only project circa 1.7m from the original elevations and are just required to provide en-suite toilets to the existing rooms to bring them up to more modern standards and requirements.

The Southern extension would just project into the existing site towards the car park. The Northern extension would project towards the dwellings on Palm Street but would be orientated to the South and would not introduce anymore habitable room windows. There would still be a separation distance of circa 12m which is acceptable across a road, as set out in SPD 'Design of Housing Development'. As such, the extensions would not result in significant overshadowing or be overbearing features. In addition, privacy levels would be maintained to a reasonable degree, in accordance with Local Plan Policy GD1.

There are no buildings immediately to the East of the proposed extensions but there is a bowling green. Given the modest projection and height of the extensions it would not significantly impact on the use of the bowling green or the enjoyment of its users.

In terms of the proposed 2 storey block, that would be located to the West/South West of the existing building. It would be located between the building and both Gawber Road and Greenfoot Lane. Given its positioning it would be set away from neighbouring buildings and separated by the neighbouring highways. In addition, there is mature planting along the Western and South Western boundaries. As such, the proposed block would not significantly increase overshadowing of neighbouring buildings or be an overbearing feature. Given the boundary treatments and separation there would also be limited overlooking from the proposed habitable room windows, as such, privacy levels would be maintained, in accordance with Local Plan Policy GD1.

In terms of the existing residents of the care home and the future residents of the proposed block, there would be some overshadowing between the two buildings given the orientation and close proximity. However, the internal arrangements of buildings have been arranged to allow bedrooms and shared living spaces to have adequate levels of light and outlook. A small number of rooms on the South West corner of the existing building and the internal angle of the proposed 'L' shaped building are relatively close, however, they are angled away from each other and would not have direct views.

It is noted the block would be positioned on a current area of landscaping and would reduce outdoor space for the residents, however, this is not currently used as formal garden area and is subject to a slope. In addition, the redevelopment of the site would allow for a more formalised landscaping scheme, more usable for residents, many of which have limited mobility. It should also be noted that a block with a similar footprint was previously approved on the site, occupying a similar area of space.

Design & Visual Amenity

The proposed extensions to the existing building are relatively minor single storey additions with a modest projection of circa 1.7m. They would be viewed against the backdrop of the existing building and adopt a similar appearance with a similar rhythm of fenestration. The materials would also match the existing building. As such, visual amenity would be maintained in accordance with Local Plan Policy D1.

With regards to the proposed 2 storey block, that is a far larger addition and would be located on a prominent corner plot adjacent to Gawber Road and Greenfoot Lane. However, it would be positioned adjacent to the two storey element of the existing building and viewed within the same context. The design of the new building would reflect the existing building in terms of its scale and appearance, in accordance with Local Plan Policy D1.

The building would be set in from the site boundary and largely obscured from vantage points from the adjacent highways by the existing mature trees and hedges that would be retained (see below). Furthermore, within the context of the immediate area there is a 2 storey NHS building immediately to the West (albeit on a lower level), opposite Greenfoot Lane, a 3 storey block of apartments on a higher level to the East and the multi storey Barnsley Hospital opposite the signalled junction to the South West.



As such, despite the relatively prominent position, given the surrounding context and the retention of the mature trees and planting, the proposed building would not be an overly prominent feature on the corner plot and would maintain the visual amenity of the streetscene, in accordance with Local Plan Policy D1.

In terms of the other alterations proposed, the extended carpark would be a larger and more formalised arrangement of the existing parking area and again would be softened by existing and proposed soft landscaping.

Highway Safety

The existing vehicular access point off Gawber Road would remain but the existing carpark would be extended to accommodate the additional staff and visitors generated by the proposed development.

Further information submitted by the applicant/agent regarding the proposed parking arrangements for the extended care home would suggest that the total of 18 off-street parking spaces for staff and visitors will be sufficient based on figures known from how the site currently operates. An ambulance parking bay is also to be provided and swept path manoeuvres show that this can be adequately accessed.

Swept path manoeuvres have also been undertaken for the majority of the car parking spaces. All spaces are accessible although several of the manoeuvres are rather tight despite a hatchback sized vehicle being used rather than the typical large saloon car. A large car would therefore likely have to perform a further back-and-forth shunting manoeuvre to access/egress some of the spaces but this would unlikely be detrimental to the safe operation of the site.

Highways have been consulted on the application and following on from the submission of the additional information and the swept path details, they have raised no objections subject to conditions.

Trees

The application has been accompanied by a Tree Report. 8no. individual trees and 4no. small groups of trees have been included. 1no. of those trees and the 4no. groups have been included within category C and the remaining 7no. trees have been categorised within category B as they are in good condition and have high amenity value on the site frontage. None of the trees are subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

2no. individual trees (T4 and T8) and one group (G3) would need to be removed to accommodate the building and the soakaways but there is adequate space within the redline boundary to plant several replacement trees along the Gawber Road and Greenfoot Lane frontage. As such, a condition for a full landscaping scheme will be recommended in order to compensate for the loss.

Given the modest impact on the existing trees and the scope for further tree planting it is considered there would only be a limited impact on the existing tree cover and potential for improvement. Furthermore, a previous scheme on a similar footprint was supported, albeit not subject to current policies and guidelines.

Conditions will also be required to protect the existing trees during the construction phase.

Mining

The applicant has obtained appropriate and up-to-date coal mining information for the proposed development site and has used this information to inform the Coal Mining Risk Assessment (29 September 2020, prepared by Lyons CMC), which accompanies this planning application.

The report correctly identifies that the application site may have been subject to past coal mining activity, namely that the site is likely to have been subject to probable shallow coal workings and probable shallow coal workings associated with a thick coal seam outcrop.

On account of the above, and because the report confirms a potential risk posed by shallow coalmine workings, appropriate recommendations are included for intrusive site investigation works to confirm ground conditions to identify any necessary remedial measures.

The Coal Authority and SYMAS concur with the findings of the report and have raised no objections subject to a condition requiring further investigations.

Conclusions

Taking into account the relevant development plan policies and other material considerations the application is in accordance with the development plan (most notably policies LG2, GD1, D1, & T4) and is assessed to be a suitable and sustainable form of development that accords with Local Plan Policy SD1 Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development in overarching terms. Similarly in National Planning Policy terms (NPPF) the presumption in favour of sustainable development is considered to apply also (para 11) which is that proposals that accord with an up to date development plan should be approved without delay. The recommendation is one of approval therefore subject to the conditions listed below.

Recommendation

Approve subject to conditions