
2024/1000

Alpha Dora Property Group

Erection of 2no. two-storey residential blocks for use as assisted living accommodation, consisting of 14no. apartments across the two blocks with shared amenity space, parking, cycle storage and bin stores, with associated highways/access works.

Land between Cromford Avenue and Blackheath Road. Athersley South, Barnsley, S71 3SZ

Site Location & Description

The application site is a brownfield, rectangular shaped site located between Blackheath Road and Cromford Road. Historic images indicate that the site has been vacant for over 25 years, though the ground is mostly concrete with vegetation and informal planting growing through. The overall extends to circa 0.15ha.

The northern and western boundaries are defined by a tall red brick wall, with a lower wall of similar material to the eastern boundary. Two large metal gates then secure the site at both the north-east and north-west corners. A separate low metal gate is located on the south-eastern corner. The existing boundary treatments are in poor condition, with sections of wall missing and gaps between concrete posts. Some flytipping has also occurred within the site.

To the south is a detached building, used as a retail unit and a flat. The building has a wide frontage, extending almost the full length of the application site and is finished in buff brickwork. The rear elevation of the building is positioned 5m to the south of the application site boundary, though there is no existing boundary treatment to define this. Access to the flat is via the rear of the building, whilst the retail unit is accessed off Haddon Road to the south.

Blackheath Road borders the application site to the east. This street consists of bungalows, with dwarf walls to the front. The bungalows have fairly generous gardens to the front with gaps between each property. To the immediate north, there is a parcel of grassed open space (designated Greenspace). Cromford Avenue wraps around this open space and to the west of the site. Cromford Avenue again consists of bungalows and similar style semi-detached dwellings. The neighbouring properties are finished in brick with gable style roofs. Together the open space, low boundary treatments, low density development and generously sized residential frontages create a sense of openness within the locality. Though the deterioration and poor maintenance of the application site currently detracts from the appearance of the street scene.





Site History

2011/0140 - Erection of two blocks of six apartments (Resubmission) (2007/1772 Extension to time limit), GRANTED, 12/4/2011

2010/1459 - Re-development of site to form 18 two and three storey apartments with four retail units at ground floor level (Extension of time limit 2006/0037), GRANTED, 14/4/2011

2007/1772 - Erection of two blocks of six apartments (Resubmission), GRANTED, 6/2/2008

2006/0037 - Re-development of site to form 18 two and three storey apartments with four retail units at ground floor level, APPEAL ALLOWED, 20/2/2007

B/75/3451/BA - Alteration to existing premises and extension of land to form concrete yard/loading area, UNKNOWN DECISION, 5/2/1976

B/75/0197/BA - Change of use of supermarket to amusements with prize bingo, HISTORIC DECISION, 9/10/1975

Proposed Development

The application seeks permission for the erection of 2x detached 2-storey buildings. Across the two buildings, 14 apartments will be provided, 8 in Block A and 6 in Block B. All the apartments are 1 bedroom with an open living/kitchen/dining area and separate shower room.

Block A is proposed at the north-western corner of the site and Block B is proposed in the north-eastern corner. Both buildings will have a hipped roof and be finished in brickwork. Window head and cill stone details are also proposed, with modern black gutters and fascia's.

The apartments will be accessed internally via a central hallway and stairwell. A main entrance lobby with office is proposed within Block B.

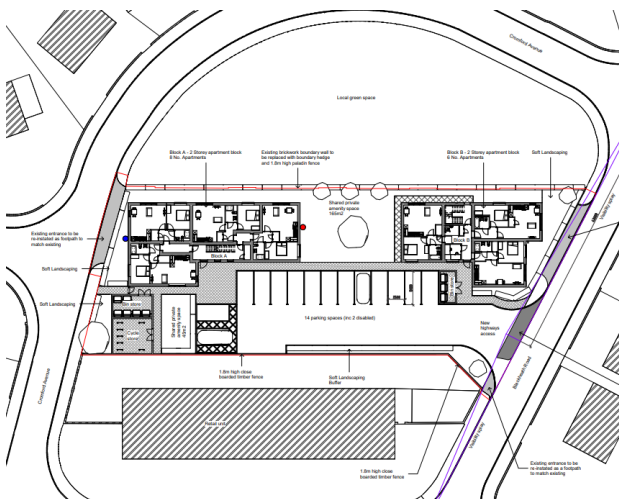
An area of outdoor amenity space is proposed within the centre of the site sandwiched between the two buildings, with a footpath linking the two. The path will then lead onto a bin store/cycle store which is proposed in the south-western corner, and a second smaller area of open space. A second bin store is proposed to the south of Block B. A new vehicular access is proposed in the

south-eastern corner of the site, to replace and widen the existing access. A car park would be provided to the south of the buildings (and open space) which provides a total of 14 spaces.

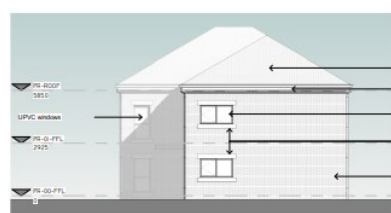
A new pedestrian gate would be provided in the south-western corner (adjacent to the bin store) with a footpath also connecting to Blackheath Road adjacent to the vehicular access. The existing accesses in the north-western and north-eastern corners would be stopped up and a footpath reinstated.

The site would be secured using a mixture of close boarded timber fence (along the southern boundary) and a paladin mesh fence along to the northern boundary. To the east and west, a knee-high rail would be erected. A landscaping scheme has also been submitted which indicates a mixture of lawn, hedging and trees.

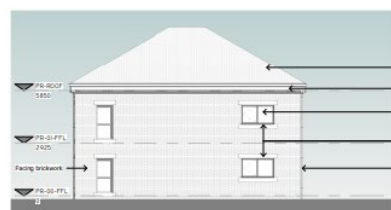
The proposed apartments would provide assisted living accommodation for adults recovering from mental health illnesses who require additional support transitioning from institutional care facilities to independent living. The applicant/agent have liaised with the relevant Council departments in regard to the need for this type of accommodation.

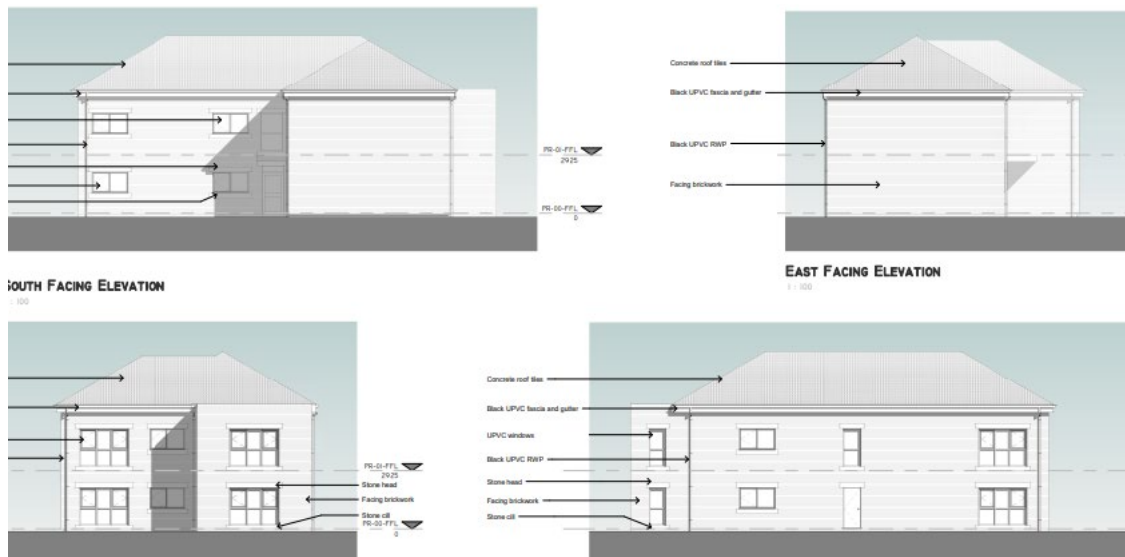


PROPOSED SOUTH FACING ELEVATION



PROPOSED EAST FACING ELEVATION





Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning decisions to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Local Plan was adopted in January 2019 and is also now accompanied by seven masterplan frameworks which apply to the largest site allocations (housing, employment and mixed use sites).

In addition, the Council has adopted a series of Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans which provide supporting guidance and specific local policies and are a material consideration in the decision-making process.

The Local Plan review was approved at the full Council meeting held 24th November 2022. The review determined that the Local Plan remains fit for purpose and is adequately delivering its objectives. This means no updates to the Local Plan, in whole or in part, are to be carried out ahead of a further review. The next review is due to take place in 2027 or earlier if circumstances, require it.

Allocation/Designations

The site is allocated as Urban Fabric as defined in the adopted Local Plan, which has no specific land allocation. The land to the above is designated Greenspace (Cromford Avenue North).

The site is within a low-risk area as per the Mining Remediation Authority maps. The site is in Flood Zone 1 thus at low risk of flooding.

National Planning Policy Framework – December 2024

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was revised in December 2024, replacing the previous versions. The NPPF is a material consideration when assessing planning applications. The following sections are relevant to this application proposal:

Section 5 – Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes

Section 8 – Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities

Section 9- Promoting Sustainable Travel
Section 11- Making Effective Use of Land
Section 12- Achieving Well-designed Places

Barnsley Local Plan

The following Local Plan policies are relevant:

Policy GD1: General Development
Policy D1: High Quality Design and Place Making
Policy SD1: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development
Policy T4: New Development and Transport Safety
Policy LC1: Landscape Character
Policy POLL1: Pollution Control and Protection
Policy H1: The Number of New Houses to be Built
Policy H4: Residential development on small non-allocated sites
Policy H6: Housing Mix and Efficient Use of Land
Policy BIO1: Biodiversity & Geodiversity
Policy I2: Educational and Community Facilities

Supplementary Planning Documents

The Council have adopted SPDs to provide further guidance about the implementation of specific planning policies in the Local Plan. The adopted SPDs should be treated as material considerations in decision-making and are afforded full weight. The following SPDs are relevant to this proposal:

Parking, November 2019
Sustainable Travel, July 2022
Design of Housing Development, July 2023
Residential Amenity and the Siting of Buildings, May 2019
Biodiversity & Geodiversity, March 2024
South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide, 2011

Consultations

Adult Care Homes – Additional information has been submitted regarding the proposed client group and the type of care being provided. The Commissioning Manager acknowledged that there is a need for the proposed type of accommodation and supports the proposed location of the development. It is understood that the proposed landlord has not yet been secured and the Commissioning Manager states that the service will only be utilised by the Council if a compliant landlord (as per the provider framework) operates the site.

Children & Adolescent Care Homes – Covered above.

Biodiversity Officer – The application has been supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment. the development will achieve a +12.26% net gain in biodiversity as a result of the proposed landscaping. No objection subject to the standard BNG conditions. A condition securing bat and bird boxes was also suggested, but this has instead been added to the proposed plans.

Local Ward Councillors- No objection to the development.

Demolition – No response.

Forestry Officer – The site is currently devoid of trees and therefore any planting will provide a gain. No objections on this basis.

Drainage - No objection subject to pre-commencement condition in relation to full drainage details.

Highways DC – The application has been supported by a Transport Statement which confirms that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the local highway network nor highway safety. On this basis the development is acceptable subject to conditions relating to the visibility splay; surfacing; parking layout; surface water run-off; and pre-commencement submission of a construction method statement; highway survey and full details of the reinstatement of footways.

Pollution Control- No objection subject to pre-commencement condition requiring submission of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and hours of construction.

South Yorkshire Police – No objection, informative proposed relating to secure by design standards.

Strategic Housing – Initially raised some concerns regarding the fallback position of the apartments being used for affordable rent. The agent has since confirmed that the apartments will be secured by a care provider on a 25year lease. No further comments received on this basis.

Yorkshire Water- No objection subject to conditions relating to separate foul and surface water drainage, and the piped discharge of surface water.

Urban Design Officer- Amended plans have been submitted to address concerns relating to residential amenity; internal space standards; boundary treatments and overall appearance of the two buildings. The Urban Design Officer has confirmed that the updated proposals are acceptable subject to conditions relating to the finishing external materials and details of the bin and cycle store.

Representations

This application has been advertised in accordance with the Development Management Procedure Order (DMPO) 2015, as follows:

- Neighbour notification letters sent to adjoining properties
- Site Notice (Major development) displayed adjacent to the site
- Press Advert (Major development).

Overall consultation expiry date: 10/1/2025

0 neighbour comments were received in response to the above publicity.

Assessment

For the purposes of considering the balance in this application the following planning weight is referred to in this report using the following scale:

- Substantial
- Considerable
- Significant
- Moderate
- Modest
- Limited
- Little or no

Principle of Development

The site falls within urban fabric which has no specific land allocation. New developments are considered acceptable where they do not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of surrounding residents, visual amenity or on highway safety and accord with the relevant policies quoted below.

NPPF Paragraph 63 states when establishing need, the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed. These groups should include housing with care and/or people with disabilities.

Local Plan Policy H6: Housing Mix and Efficient Use of Land states that proposals are expected to provide a broad mix of house size, type and tenure to help create mixed and balanced communities. Homes must be suitable for different types of households and be capable of being adapted to meet the changing needs of the population.

The surrounding area is residential nature, with dwellinghouses surrounding the site to the north, east and west. The Local Plan is silent on supported living accommodation. However, Policy H6 and NPPF Paragraph 63 acknowledge that a variety of housing and tenure types are required in order to create mixed communities. The Adult Care Home consultee has confirmed that the application site is a suitable location for the purposed development and on this basis, the proposal is acceptable in principle subject to the considerations assessed below. This weighs in substantial favour in the overall planning balance.

Design, Appearance & Impact Upon Character of Area

NPPF Paragraph 135 relates to high quality design and states that developments should function well and add to the overall quality of the area; are visually attractive; sympathetic to local character; maintain a strong sense of place whilst optimising the potential of the site and create places which are safe and inclusive and promote well-being.

Local Plan Policy D1 states that development is expected to be of high-quality design and should respect and reinforce the distinctive, local character and features. Development should contribute to place making and make the best use of materials, as well as display architectural quality and

express proposed uses through its composition, scale, form, proportions and arrangements of materials, colours and details.

The Urban Design Officer has reviewed the application submission, both in terms of residential amenity and design. In regard to design, the proposed plans have been updated to address initial concerns regarding the proposed boundary treatments and the window detailing. To ensure that none of the elevations appear blank or flat, the windows design has been amended to include a 50mm recess. The northern boundary treatment also been amended to a paladin fence to securely enclose the site.

The Urban Design Officer considers that the overall scale and height of the proposed buildings are acceptable. Both buildings will be two-storey in height and therefore will reflect the scale of the neighbouring semi-detached properties. Concerns raised regarding the finishing materials at pre-application stage have also been addressed within this submission. Although apartments are not characteristic of the street scene, the development of 2x two storey buildings will not overdevelop the site or appear dominating within the street scene.

The proposal will redevelop and utilise an existing vacant brownfield site, which currently detracts from the appearance of the street due to its hard landscaping and lack of maintenance. The development will integrate into the surrounding built form, yet significantly enhance the site's contribution to the area. Together the position of the buildings and the use of landscaping will soften the appearance of the site.

The use of brickwork reflects the local building traditions, with the landscaping and central open space reinforcing the surrounding specious character. Although hipped roofs are not used within the street scene, this is not considered to detrimentally harm the prevailing character. The application has been supported by a detailed landscaping scheme, which sets out the species and numbers of planting. The proposed landscaping is welcomed by the Forestry Officer.

Further design details are required which will be secured via condition. This includes final external material specifications and details of the cycle and bin store. Overall, the Urban Design Officer is in support of the scheme noting the improved appearance of the site and its positive contribution towards the character of the local area. The development accords with the requirements of Local Plan Policy D1 and NPPF Paragraph 135, and is afforded substantial weight.

Impact upon Residential Amenity

Local Plan Policy GD1 states that proposals for development will be approved if there are no significant adverse effect on the living conditions and residential amenity of existing and future residents. Proposals should be compatible with neighbouring land and should not significantly prejudice the current or future use of neighbouring land.

Local Plan Policy POLL1 states that development will be expected to demonstrate that there would be no unacceptable affect or cause a nuisance to the natural and built environment or to people.

The SYRDG sets out the minimum internal space standards for a 1 bedroom 1 person home as 46sqm. The internal space standards of the apartments have been amended to accord with this requirement, with the standards set out on the proposed plans.

At pre-application stage, the applicant was advised that at least 190sqm of outdoor area would be required as per the Design of Housing Development SPD. The proposed development achieves this, consisting of a large central grassed space and a separate smaller space towards the west of the site.

Each apartment is served by large windows in both the bedroom and living space, meaning residents will have good access to natural light. At pre-application stage, the Urban Design Officer initially raised some concerns regarding the outlook from south facing windows towards the existing shop building. However, the application scheme has minimised the number of windows on the southern elevation as well as added a close board fence and planting along the southern boundary to screen any oppressive views.

The Design of Housing Development SPD requires a development of 14 dwellings to provide 4x M4(2) accessible dwellings and 1x M4(3) wheelchair accessible dwelling. This proposal will provide the required 4x M4(2) dwellings, however the proposed layout cannot accommodate a wheelchair accessible apartment. Given that this development is a supported living proposal rather than open market apartments, the lack of 1 wheelchair accessible flat is acceptable on balance.

There are sufficient separation distances between the proposed flats and the neighbouring residential properties. The two-storey height of the proposed buildings will not cause harmful overshadowing upon nearby properties or gardens. Whilst there may be some overshadowing to the north, this would impact the adjacent Greenspace rather than the amenity of existing residents.

It is acknowledged that the development of 14 apartments will introduce some disturbance in terms of comings and goings, which would primarily impact the residents to the east (opposite the proposed vehicular access). However, there are non-residential uses within the vicinity, including a shop and a Working Mens Club which incur a number of movements. Any disturbance caused by the development is unlikely to cause detrimental harm upon existing amenity. It is also noted that no representations have been received from neighbouring residents.

The Environmental Health Officer has reviewed the application and raised no objections subject to a condition relating to hours of construction and the pre-commencement submission of a CEMP. The requirements of the CEMP replicate those required by the Construction Method Statement and therefore the two conditions have been condensed (explained further below). On this basis, the development is not considered to harm either existing or future residential amenity and is therefore acceptable, which is afforded substantial weight in the planning balance.

Highway Considerations

NPPF Paragraph 116 states that 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.

Local Plan Policy T4 states that new development will be expected to be designed and built to provide all transport users within and surrounding the development with safe, secure and convenient access and movement. It follows on state if a development is not suitably served by the existing highway or would add to problems of safety or the efficiency of the highway, developers will be expected to take mitigating action to make sure the necessary improvements go ahead.

Table 1 of the Parking SPD (November 2019) sets out the adopted parking standards for new developments.

The Highways DC Officer has reviewed the application submission and has no objection to the proposed works. The development will provide a sufficient number of car parking spaces as well as cycle storage.

The current vehicular access off Blackheath Road will be reconfigured, with the other former accesses to be reinstated as footways. The submitted Transport Statement is satisfactory, with the vehicular access design also providing suitable arrangements for refuse collection. Overall, there is no objection to the development subject to full details regarding the formation of the access and reinstatement of the footway being submitted prior to commencement, as well as a Construction Method Statement (which will cover the noise and dust issues raised by the Environmental Health Officer). Other compliance conditions are also attached.

The development is acceptable in terms of highway/parking arrangements subject to the conditions attached. This is afforded significant weight in the planning balance.

Ecology & Biodiversity Considerations

Local Plan Policy BIO1 states that development will be expected to conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity features by protecting and improving habitats; maximising biodiversity opportunities in and around new developments and encouraging provision of biodiversity enhancements.

BNG became mandatory for all applications in April 2024 except where one of the exemptions (as set out in the PPG) are met.

The application has been supported by an Ecological Impact Assessment as well as BNG information. The development will achieve a +12.26% net gain in biodiversity through the planting of species-rich wildflower turf grasslands, amenity grasslands, ornamental shrubs and small trees. The development exceeds the +10% requirement and is therefore acceptable subject to discharging the necessary standard conditions.

The Ecological Impact Assessment suggests the installation of bird and bat boxes into each of the buildings. These have been shown on the proposed landscaping plan and therefore the suggested condition (securing the enhancements) has been omitted.

Overall there is no objection in terms of biodiversity subject to strict accordance with the attached conditions. This is afforded significant weight in the planning balance.

Drainage

NPPF Paragraph 170 states that inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided.

Paragraph 171 states that advice from relevant flood risk management authorities such as lead local flood authorities and internal drainage boards should be taken into account.

Local Plan Policy CC3 states that new development should not be permitted where there would be an unacceptable risk of flooding.

Both Yorkshire Water and the Council's internal drainage department have reviewed the application submission and have no objection subject to the conditions attached. This is afforded significant weight in the planning balance.

Other Considerations

The Adult Care Home team have reviewed the application submission given the nature of the proposed use. Within the consultation response comments, the Commissioning Manager has confirmed that there is a need/demand for the proposed type of accommodation, with the location of the application site also being considered suitable for the intended client group.

The Commissioning Manager did raise some queries regarding the proposed landlord and suggested that the Council will only utilise the service if the landlord is on the Council's provider framework. Discussions regarding the landlord/operator is not a material planning consideration and therefore is afforded limited weight.

Strategic Housing also queried the suggested fallback position of the apartments being used as social rent. The agent confirmed that the landlord/operator will agree a 25year lease for the proposed assisted living accommodation, and no further comments from Strategic Housing have been received on this basis.

Conclusion

The principle of redeveloping this brownfield site for supported living accommodation is acceptable. Existing residential properties surround the site to the north, east and west and provide a suitable setting for the proposed accommodation. Whilst apartments do not form part of the prevailing character, the buildings will be two-storey in height and therefore will not appear out of place when viewed in the context of the street scene.

The site is currently vacant and appears unmaintained. The proposed development will therefore improve the contribution the site makes to local area and enhance the appearance of the street. The proposed buildings are of an appropriate scale and appearance, and will provide adequate residential accommodation, whilst not overdeveloping the site.

The development includes a suitably sized outdoor amenity area; car parking and sufficient bin and cycle store. The development will not harmfully impact existing neighbours by virtue of overlooking, overshadowing or disturbance.

There are no outstanding consultee concerns subject to strict accordance with the conditions attached in relation to highways, design, drainage and ecology/BNG. Overall, and taking into account the planning balance, the proposed development acceptable.

Recommendation

Granted