

Plan: C DC/04/00271/FUL River Ward (A)

Address: Allotments, Digby Gardens, Dagenham.

Development: Demolition of 72 and 74 Heathway and erection of 16 one bedroom bungalows, 19 two bedroom bungalows and 2 two storey 3 bedroom wheelchair houses.

Applicant: Stort Valley Housing Association.

Introduction and Description of Development

This application proposes demolition of 72 and 74 Heathway and erection of 16 one bedroom bungalows, 19 two bedroom bungalows and 2 two storey 3 bedroom wheelchair houses. The proposed scheme is intended to cater to the over 60's, 28 of the proposed units will be restricted to the over 60's age group.

The application site comprises a former non-statutory allotment plot enclosed on all four sides by residential dwellings on Arnold Road (1-49 odd), Digby Gardens (27-44), Heathway (64-84) and Broad Street (110-134). The site also includes no's 72 and 74. Heathway, the demolition of which would afford vehicular and pedestrian access to the site. The site benefits from a number of pedestrian access points which are currently closed.

Background

The site served as allotments up until 1989 and has remained vacant since that time. The change of use of this site would not have a negative impact on the level of allotment provision in Barking and Dagenham.

Outline planning consent was granted in June 2003 for use of former allotment gardens for residential purposes including 72 and 74 Heathway and land rear of 27-43 (odd) and 28-44 (even) Digby Gardens; 64-84 (even) Heathway; 1-49 (odd) Arnold Road and 110-134 Broad Street, Dagenham (DC/03/00298/OUT). This outline application established the principle of residential use on the site. The present planning application is for full planning permission rather than a follow up to the previous outline approval. Therefore, any commitments included within the outline application and pre-application public consultation process have no relevance to present application.

Consultations

a) Adjoining Occupiers.

Six people objected to the scheme believing that there was a risk to adjacent properties from new residents in proposed development; initial consultations made no mention of three bedroom properties; initial consultations indicating rental only properties ignored by applicant, one unspecified objection; loss of privacy resulting from overlooking, privately sold houses will result in additional vandalism; noise and litter; unconventional and incongruous design and materials; car parking and toilets in disabled housing will not be suitable for wheelchair users.

One consultee queried details of works, insurance and boundary treatment.

One person supports the proposal's provision for the elderly,

Many of the objections relate to the initial public consultation procedure undertaken by the Councils Housing Department and the Housing Association. The scheme now presented to the Board is substantially that presented for initial public consultation.

b) London Underground

No comment.

c) Access Officer –

No objection.

d) Transport for London

No objection.

e) Metropolitan Police Service

Scheme meets with approval.

f) Thames Water

No objection.

g) Essex and Suffolk Water

No objection.

h) English Heritage

No objection.

i) Environmental Management Division

No observations.

j) Traffic and Road Safety Division.

No objection.

k) London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority

No objection.

U.D.P. Policy

H1	Housing Supply
H4	Low cost housing
H6	Housing for People with Disabilities
H13 - H17	New Residential Development Standards
G40	Energy
G70	Allotments

No policy issue.

Analysis

Council Policy as contained in the Unitary Development Plan promotes the construction of high quality residential development that will improve the physical environment whilst contributing to the housing aspirations of the community. This development would create 37 new residential units, 27 of which will be affordable including 2 three bed wheelchair houses. This comprises 10 sale houses (seven of which will be subject to a system of sale which might result in their sale to any age group), 13 shared ownership, 14 rent. All sale units are concentrated in a terrace to the south of the site. The proposed scheme represents a significant contribution towards the Borough and regional housing targets for private and affordable housing as well as for elderly and disabled housing provision.

Use

The principle of the change of use of this land from an allotment site to land suitable for residential use is acceptable. The site served as allotment land up until 1989 and has remained vacant since that time. The site is no longer on the Council's list of temporary allotment sites and, therefore, the change of use of the site would not have a negative impact on the level of allotment provision in Barking and Dagenham.

Policy G70 stipulates that the development of such land for housing would only be supported if the following are already satisfied: (i) in areas of open space deficiency, the Council should encourage such provision (ii) the Council will encourage locally required community facilities. On this issue of Open Space provision, the site lies close to King Georges Field and Old Dagenham Park and other open spaces, notably Goresbrook Park, are within walking distance. In respect of local community facilities, the Council has adopted a programme for this area through the School development programme and the LIFT scheme in order to increase the level of education and healthcare facilities on offer to the existing and new residents.

To illustrate this, a planning application was approved on the 4.11.03 for a non-residential health centre (DC/03/00434/FUL) on Morland Road incorporating facilities for GP consulting rooms, nurse practitioners, x-ray and ultrasound examination facilities, chiropody suite and mental health clinic. Planning permission was also granted on the 26.5.04 for a health care centre and doctors surgery on Charlotte Road (DC/04/00258/FUL) and Ford Road clinic is within reasonable distance of the site.

Given the nature of the scheme, intended resident group and the small number of unrestricted units involved, there will be no appreciable affect on the level of education provision.

The proposed scheme primarily caters to the over 60's, 25 of the proposed units will only be sold/part sold/or rented to the over 60's age group, three will be sold to the over 60's and the remaining units comprise both two wheelchair accessible houses and seven open sale units. The seven units will be subject to a 3 stage disposal process. The initial stage represents open sale to the over 60's, the second stage would make the units available for shared equity to the over 60's and if a unit has still not been sold then stage 3 would be activated allowing the units to be sold to anyone. However, further sales of these units would be restricted to the over 60's. This application fulfils a substantial need within the borough for housing for the aged.

Amenity

It is considered that the low height of the bungalows which adjoin existing properties is sufficient to avoid any amenity impact in terms of loss of light/privacy.

Any future development normally allowed by Permitted Development (PD) rights which could result in a detrimental amenity impact, such as the construction of rear dormer windows, will be restricted by the removal of P.D.rights.

Due to the proposed courtyards many of the proposed units will have habitable windows directly facing each other. With distances between 2.5m – 4m. It is considered that this is a positive feature of the scheme promoting communal living and encouraging mutual support. Proposed gardens fulfil garden area sizes in accordance with UDP Policy.

Design

The scheme aims to create a new community, largely comprising accommodation for the over 60's. The bungalows are designed as subtle chalet style units, whilst the layout is intended to provide a series of small interesting spaces with a large communal square, providing a central focus and meeting space for residents. The detailed design of this square will be resolved by condition. Some units have small shared private spaces between residences to encourage a sense of community within the scheme. The two 2 storey dwellings/car ports will provide visual landmark from views within the site.

The buildings themselves are designed to combine a contemporary design utilising traditional materials and scale. Materials as proposed include brick, wooden part elevations and a traditional roof tiling system, these are considered acceptable. The design is seen as innovative, of a suitable quality and geared towards the intended residents. Boundary treatments will be dealt with as reserved matters.

The loss of the two dwellings while regrettable, is necessary and is not considered to be of significant concern as their loss will be compensated by the addition of many new dwellings on site. Current tenants will be moved to other comparable accommodation.

The proposed layout of the scheme is considered secure and safe. The two wheelchair houses proposed would comprise 10% of the overall number of habitable rooms within the scheme, both houses fulfil wheelchair accessible housing criteria. All units will be to Life Time Homes standard.

Access & Highways

Access will be gained from the Heathway. A traffic management scheme has been proposed which satisfies highways access and safety requirements. Road widths are sufficient to allow access by the emergency services, vehicular parking spaces are of a sufficient size and layout. 32 parking spaces are provided as part of the scheme, this represents 86% parking provision and is considered acceptable.

Ecological Implications

The site does not have any designation in terms of its ecological value and in that sense no specific policies apply. However, a wildlife survey is included as a condition.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this development will provide essential and appropriate accommodation for the aged in Barking and Dagenham and the development should offer quality of design without compromising neighbouring amenity. It is considered that the need for this form of housing outweighs the sites existing status and that planning approval should be granted.

Recommendation

That, subject to the completion of an agreement under Section S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in respect of the provision of 27 affordable housing units, planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions;

1. F1 b) Details of soft landscaping
2. F2 Implementation of Proposed Soft landscaping.
3. F4 Hard Landscaping.
4. F8 Landscape maintenance.
5. H1 No further domestic extensions.
6. I6 Completion of Parking Areas
7. I11 Cycle Parking
8. F6 Wildlife Survey.
9. T1 Programme of excavations.
10. O1 Details of Dustbin Enclosures
11. P1 Details of Boundary Treatment
12. Q1 Details/Samples of Facing Materials
13. U1 Land Contamination Survey
14. All dwellings are to be built to Lifetime Homes Standards in accordance with the specifications set out by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
15. M5 Construction work.
16. M4 Hours of construction work.
17. The proposed sheds in the rear gardens shall not be constructed until detailed plans have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The sheds shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details.