

CHESTER-LE-STREET DISTRICT COUNCIL

DIRECTORATE OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

PLANNING COMMITTEE **10 April 2007**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

ITEM 1 District Matters Recommended Approval

1.

Reference: 07/00073/FUL

Proposal Proposed erection of 2 metre high wall with 2.5 metre high gate posts & new gates, plus erection of 1.5 metre (5ft) high fence (retrospective) to southeast of dwelling.(as amended 15.03.2007)

Location Morton House Morton Grange Terrace Woodstone Village Chester-le-Street Durham DH4 6QA

Applicant Graham Burnard

The Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the construction of a stone wall, pillars and gates at the entrance to Morton House, which is a Grade II Listed Building. In addition, retrospective planning permission is sought for the erection of a vertical close boarded fence to the southeast boundary of the property.

Consultation Responses

The application has been advertised by way of a site notice and direct letters of consultation. At the time of writing this report, no letters of response had been received.

Durham County Council - Rights of Way Officer has offered the following comments: -

Stone Wall and Gates - The proposed wall and gate will front directly onto the bridleway, this should not adversely affect the bridleway itself. However, it is recommended that a number of points regarding the construction, storage of building materials, vehicle movements along the bridleway and the making good of any damage to the bridleway be brought to the attention of the applicant.

Fence (Retrospective) - The fencing is of a type and height, which distracts from the open rural aspect of bridleway 56, although in time the fencing materials will weather and vegetation should soften the fence line. The fence line continues in a southerly direction

right up to the field entrance leading off the bridleway. At this point the fencing has been erected in such a fashion as to obstruct the north sight line of the bridleway from the field entrance, therefore creating an unnecessary hazard to bridleway users. The fencing at this point could also adversely affect the manoeuvrability of agricultural vehicles entering the field or exiting onto the bridleway. I would therefore recommend that the section of fence nearest the field entrance be considerably set back off the bridleway or removed completely.

The views of the County Council's Conservation and Design Officer are as follows: -

Stone Wall and Gates - The existing gate and picket fence are not appropriate for the scale and significance of the house and I have no objections to the erection of a stone wall with pillars and a more substantial timber gate.

Fence (Retrospective) - The fence is located around the edge of the garden to Morton House and behind it are trees and shrubs. The fence reinforces the sense of enclosure provided by these trees and shrubs and in this sense I consider that the fence does not harm the enclosed character of the bridle path. I consider that over time the timber construction will weather and will not look as stark as it presently appears, especially as it will be left untreated. The fence is located out of view of the listed Morton House and therefore has no impact on the setting of the listed building.

Relevant Planning Policies and Considerations

There is no specific policy within the Local Plan regarding the erection of means of enclosure, however the requirements of Policy BE17 - The settings of Listed Buildings, is considered of relevance given the Grade II listed status of Morton House.

The proposed stone wall feature, with pillars and new gates to the entrance to the grounds of the house is considered acceptable in scale and design and would provide a grander entrance feature, more in keeping with the scale and significance of Morton House. It has been confirmed that there would be no adverse impact on the bridleway and, given the position of the wall and relationship to neighbouring dwellings, there would be no impact on neighbours.

With regard to the 1.5 metre high fence (which is applied for retrospectively) it is not considered that it has any adverse impact on the openness of the area, as the fence is positioned directly in front of dense trees and shrubs within the curtilage of Morton House and merely reinforces the sense of enclosure. It should be noted that the new fence is a replacement fence, albeit of a different style and height. Whilst currently the new fence presently appears stark, it is considered that once the fence has weathered it will blend adequately into the landscape.

The most southern part of the fence is immediately adjacent to a field entrance gate. The Rights of Way Officer has expressed concern that the newly erected fence may restrict visibility onto the bridleway and potentially compromise the manoeuvrability of agricultural vehicles entering or exiting the bridleway at this point. Despite these comments it is not considered that the newly erected fence would unreasonably affect visibility onto the

bridleway. Even if the fence, at this point were removed, as suggested by the Rights of Way Officer, visibility would still remain restricted by the trees which extend up to the bridleway. In any event the visibility of any agricultural vehicle utilising this field entrance would not be restricted by the fence, given that Agricultural vehicles sit higher up from ground level and accordingly would be able to see over the top of the fence line. Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that the bridleway is used by a very limited number of vehicles. It is not considered that given the limited vehicle movements along the bridleway, that there is likely to be any significant hazard for bridleway users.

Conclusion

Bearing in mind the above, it is recommended that the proposals accord with the aims of relevant development plan policies and that accordingly planning permission be granted.

RECOMMENDATION CONDITIONS:-

Approve SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING

01A – Time limit

Extra 1.

Notwithstanding any description of the materials in the application, no development shall commence on site until samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the wall have been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority in order to ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development upon completion, in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with the provisions of Policy BE17 of the Chester-le-Street District Local Plan.

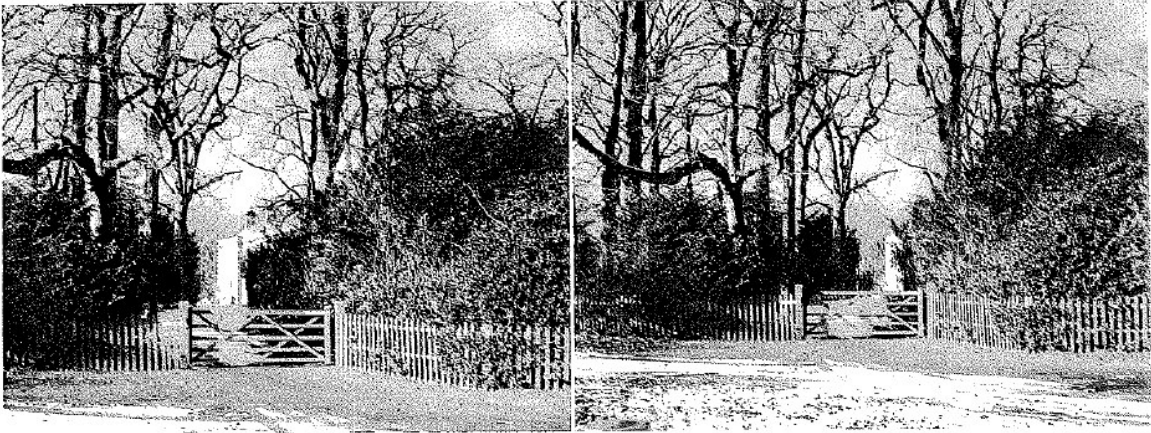
Application Summary

Case Officer: Sarah Bough

Contact Details: 0191 387 2145

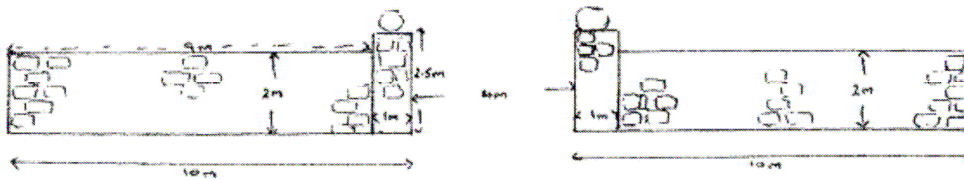
sarahbough@chester-le-street.gov.uk

Summary of Reason for Recommendation: This proposal would have an acceptable impact on the character of the property and area



Propose? Stone wall, Pillars and wooden gates to replace existing fence and gate at Morgan House Durham PHU GQA

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POST BOOK NO.	



1cm = 1m

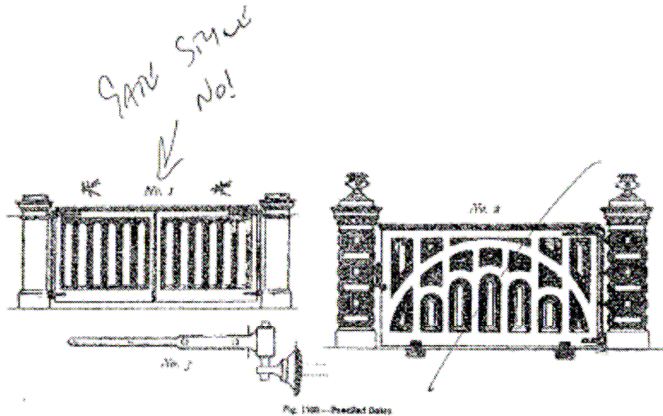


Fig. 1186—Pneumatic Gates

inserted in the bottom rail, which run on iron guides, laid on stone or concrete sleepers fixed in the ground. The hinge-pin is continuous between the top and bottom hinges, and serves merely as an axis on which the gate rotates, the whole of the weight being sustained by the rollers. It has sufficient play to allow the gate to rise as it opens. No. 3 is the strap of the top hinge, and the same construction of strap is applicable to all the previous examples, where the object is to extend the hold of the strap on the top rail. The length of the strap may with advantage be increased to rather more than half the width of the gate. The strap of the bottom hinge may be very short, although, for the sake of uniformity, it is often made the same length as the upper strap.

Fig. 1187 shows two pairs of gates with cast-iron panels. Details are given of the

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2.

Reference: 07/00076/OUT

Proposal Outline planning application for 2 no detached dormer bungalows in part of rear garden. Application includes access from Pelaw Grange Court (Re-submission of 06/00353/PUT)

Location Casa Carla Drum Road Chester-le-Street Durham DH3 2AF

Applicant I & J McGillivray

The Proposal

Outline planning approval is sought to construct 2 No. detached dormer bungalows in the rear garden of this existing dormer bungalow at Casa Carla, Drum Road, Chester le Street. Details of the layout, scale and means of access have been submitted for consideration at this stage, with the external appearance and landscaping being deferred for consideration at the 'reserved' matters stage. The frontage of the application site measures approximately 20 m whilst the depth of the application site varies between 15.0 - 19.5 m.

The application proposed the provision of two detached units within the site. Both units are located side by side with the front elevation of the properties facing in an easterly direction facing onto Pelaw Grange Court. The footprint of each bungalow measures 7.5m x 7.8 m.

Vehicular access to the site would be taken from the estate road serving Pelaw Grange Court to the east.

The remaining grounds of Casa Carla are located to the north and west of the application site. Pelaw Grange Court is situated to the east of the application site. Pelaw Grange Stadium is located to the west with a range of industrial and distribution operations are situated to the north and south.

Planning History

An outline planning application to demolish Casa Carla and construct 6 houses within the grounds (App. No., 06/00353/OUT) was submitted in June 2006. At this time it was proposed to utilise the existing vehicular access for Casa Carla onto Drum Road to the north of the site.

However, Durham County Council, as Highway Authority, recommended that this application be refused on highway safety grounds because of the sub standard visibility splay to the west of the access into the site. It was pointed out that Drum Road is a main road to and from Drum Industrial estate, is relatively busy, and carries a high proportion of HGV traffic. The existing visibility splay to the existing dwelling was sub standard and the

Highway Authority was of the view that a further intensification of use of this access was unacceptable in highway safety terms. The application was withdrawn by the applicant prior to this application being determined so as to allow a revised scheme to be prepared.

Consultation Responses

This application has been advertised via direct neighbour notification and the posting of a site notice. As a result, a 26-name petition and two letters of objection have been received objecting to this proposal.

The petitioners have stated that whilst they have no objection to the proposed buildings, they do object to the proposed access to the site being taken via Pelaw Grange Court. The petitioners have stated that access onto Newcastle Road is highly problematic at peak times because of heavy congestion. It is also pointed out that several residents living at Pelaw Grange Court have either two or three cars and, as such, the internal estate road serving the existing housing can often be congested. It was feared that this situation would inevitably worsen were two further dwellings to be accessed from this road.

Concern was also raised that the additional traffic resulting from this proposal may detract from highway safety for children who play in this area.

Cllr May has also written in regard to the application. Whilst he has no objection to the proposed siting of the dwellings he has stated that he has 'grave reservations regarding the proposed access to the site which will add unnecessary congestion and detrimentally change the appearance of Pelaw Grange Court'. He has stated that he is in complete agreement with the residents of Pelaw Grange who have petitioned against this application and has suggested that alternative access arrangements be made via the existing access onto Drum Road.

Cllr Proud advises she has met with the residents of Pelaw Grange Court and supports their concerns, as listed below;

- (a) Some residents with young children have purchased homes at Pelaw Grange Court because it is a safe, quiet cul-de-sac in which their children can play.
- (b) The applicant gives the reason for access through Pelaw Grange Court as being "safer" but this entails access onto a main road, whereas the road outside the front of "Casa Carla", Drum Road is a secondary road.
- (c) Whilst visiting the site I was taken to the far side of the bungalow named "Casa Carla" and there observed large double wooden double gates in the garden wall. Whilst appreciating that the side road is unadopted I wonder why consideration is not being given to access at this point. Vehicles would then be entering a quiet road and accessing Drum Road at a point not too near to the junction of Durham Road/North Road.
- (d) Pelaw Grange Court is a small cul-de-sac which is already quite congested with the vehicles of the owners with very little room for the parking of visitors' vehicles - therefore opening the access through Pelaw Grange Court will add to this congestion.
- (e) The owner mentions that there is only a "strip of grass" to be removed but there is also a garden wall.

The occupant of No. 10 Pelaw Grange Court has confirmed that he has no objection to the proposed building works. However, he has raised concern that access to his garage and driveway opposite the site may be impinged by the access arrangements serving the proposed dormer bungalows.

Durham County Council, as Highway Authority, have stated that they have no objection to the principle of accessing the proposed housing via Pelaw Grange Court. However, concern has been raised regarding the visibility splay for the most southerly of the two units. As such, it has been suggested that the driveway needs to be relocated in order to ensure that visibility will not be unacceptably impaired. It has, therefore, been suggested that the layout of this unit be 'handed'. It has also been stated that because of the limited driveway length available a specialist non-protruding garage door would need to be installed and retained thereafter in the proposed garages.

The Council's Regeneration Manager (technical) has raised no objection to this proposal.

The Health and Safety Executive have confirmed that they would not object to the development.

The views of Gateshead Council were awaited at the time of drafting this report.

Relevant Planning Policies and Considerations

The proposal raises a number of issues for consideration having regard to the relevant Policies contained in the County Durham Structure Plan and Chester-le-Street Local Plan.

County Durham Structure Plan

Policy 2 of the Structure Plan seeks to ensure new development is directed to locations that minimise the need to travel. Policy 3 expands on this approach by advising that the provision of new development should be well related to the County's main towns. Policy 9 seeks to ensure that new housing development is located within sustainable locations being well related to existing towns and transport infrastructure, and also seeks to ensure that priority is given to the redevelopment of derelict or redundant sites.

In assessing the proposals against these relevant Structure Plan Policies it is considered that they are acceptable in principle. The proposed site is located within the existing urban framework of Chester-le-Street and is situated in a location, which will reduce the need to travel by private car, being close to existing public transport routes. Furthermore, the site falls within the definition of previously developed land as this forms part of the curtilage of an existing residential property including a carport and associated hard standing. In principle, assessed against the relevant Structure Plan Policies, the site would be acceptable for residential development.

Chester-le-Street Local Plan

Policy HP6 of the Local Plan provides relevant advice on the subject of residential development within boundaries of settlements including Chester-le-Street. The Policy advises that proposals will be considered acceptable in principle provided the site comprises previously developed land and that the detailed criteria contained in Policy HP9 are met.

Policy HP9 of the Local Plan requires residential development to meet a number of detailed design criteria. Of particular relevance to this proposal are the requirements that the proposals must relate well to the character of the surrounding area respecting its predominant character, street pattern and density; provide adequate privacy to both proposed and existing adjacent residents and provide convenient and safe access.

In assessing the proposal against the requirements of the relevant Local Plan Policies, and taking into account all relevant material planning considerations, including the previous decisions reached by the Council, it is considered the following areas of the proposal require particularly careful assessment.

Highway Safety

Notwithstanding the concerns of local residents residing at Pelaw Grange Court Members will note that the County Council, as Highways Authority for the area, have confirmed they have no objections to the proposal, including the details of the access / egress proposed. Subject to the imposition of a planning condition to amend the layout of the properties to ensure that a satisfactory visibility splay is retained.

Accordingly, taking into account the advice received from the County Council, and the opportunity to impose a condition of approval to secure the visibility improvements (see extra 5), it is considered the proposals are acceptable when assessed against highway safety concerns.

Scale / Massing of Development

Policy HP 9 of the Local Plan requires new development to respect the character of the surrounding area. In this respect it is considered the proposals, for two detached dormer bungalows, are acceptable in the context of both the existing property at Casa Carla and Pelaw Grange Court.

In terms of the footprint of the development it is noted that this has been centrally located within the plot to provide off street parking for each property and some private amenity space at the rear of each property.

Privacy / Separation Distances

Policy HP 9 requires new residential development to respect the amenities of existing surrounding occupiers. This Policy is supported by Appendix 1 of the Local Plan, which provides guidelines in respect to separation distance to be achieved. This advises that a

minimum distance of 21 metres should be preserved between existing and proposed habitable window openings. The privacy distances between the front of the proposed dwellings and the housing opposite at Pelaw Grange Court would be in excess of 30 m. The buildings have been sensitively designed to minimise the bulk of the buildings when viewed from Casa Carla and to safeguard privacy between the proposed dwelling and the principle habitable rooms of Casa Carla.

In this respect the proposed layout meets the minimum separation distances in respect to all elevations. Accordingly it is considered the proposals are acceptable in this respect.

Conclusion

In conclusion, having regard to the above, it is considered that the proposals are acceptable when assessed against the provisions of the development plan and to all other material considerations.

RECOMMENDATION CONDITIONS:-

Approve

SUBJECT TO THE FOLLOWING

01A – Time Limit

02A - Materials

20A - Enclosures

Extra 1.

The garage doors shall be designed in such a manner that these do not protrude forward when in the open swing position or during the opening swing and retained thereafter in perpetuity, in the interests of highway safety and to ensure that this proposal complies with Policy HP9 of the Chester le Street Local Plan.

Extra 2.

Notwithstanding the submitted layout at illustrated on Drwg. No. LPA1 the footprint of southerly most unit shall be 'handed' in order to ensure that an adequate level of visibility is retained to the south, in the interests of highway safety and to ensure that this proposal complies with Policy HP9 of the Chester le Street Local Plan.

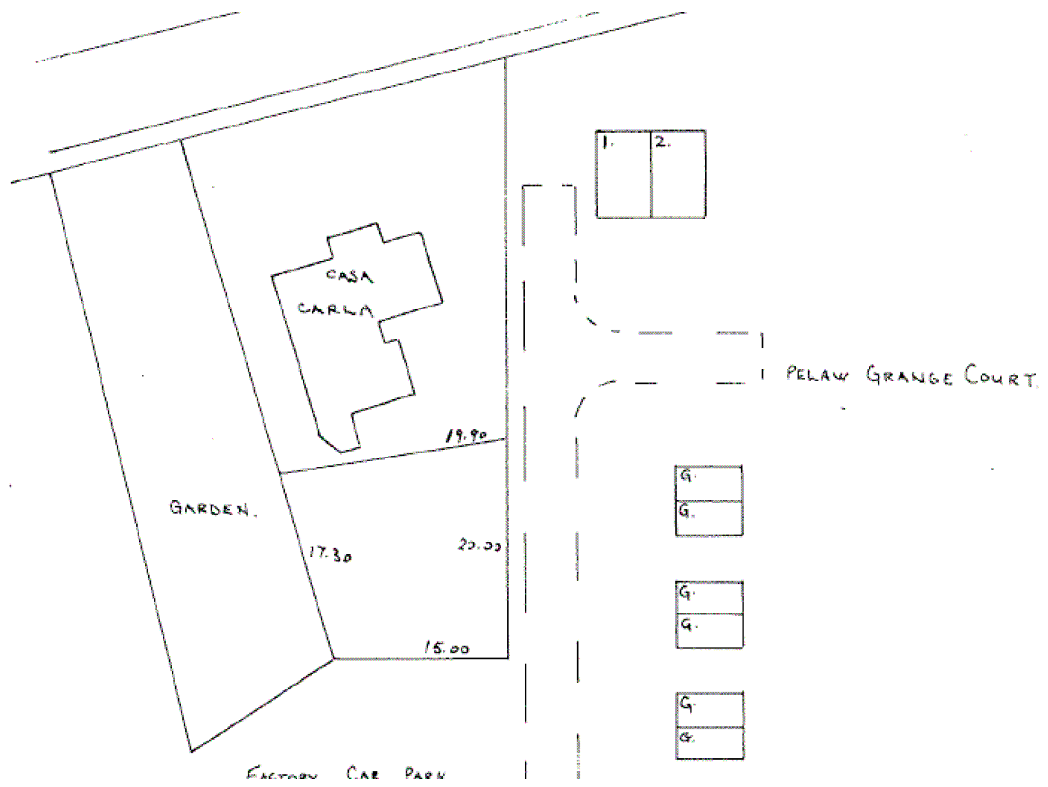
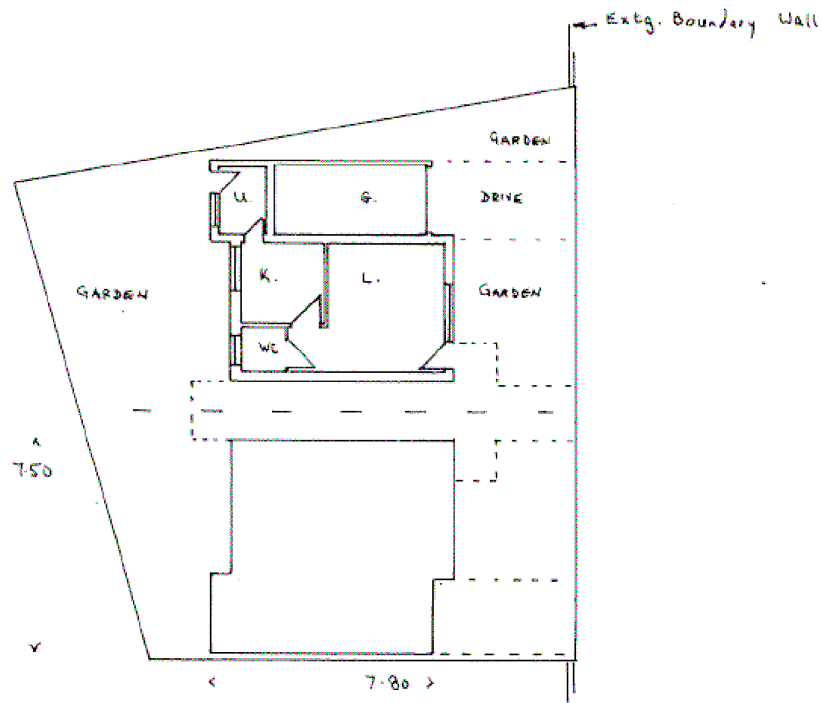
Application Summary

Case Officer: David Walker

Contact Details: 0191 387 2146

davidwalker@chester-le-street.gov.uk

Summary of Reason for Recommendation: This proposal would have an acceptable impact on the character of the area. It would also be acceptable in highway safety terms.



3.

Reference: 07/00081/FUL

Proposal Extension above existing garage to comprise of lift, bedroom and en-suite.

Location 7 Lunedale Close Great Lumley Chester-le-Street Durham DH3 4SS

Applicant Ian Miller

The Proposal

Detailed planning approval is sought for the construction of a first floor extension above the existing garage at a detached dwelling house situated in Lunedale Close, Great Lumley.

The development involves a part conversion of the rear of the existing garage to incorporate an internal disability lift to the proposed first floor level. At the first floor it is proposed to extend above the existing garage to provide a bedroom and en-suite. The proposal does not project any further from the footprint of the existing dwelling.

Consultation Responses

The application has been advertised via direct neighbour notification and as a result three letters of objection has been received to date.

The respondent from 8 Lunedale Close has raised concerns that the scale, form and character of the proposal will have an adverse effect on neighbouring buildings due to the existing size of the property. They also make the point that a second storey extension above the existing garage at no.7 will prevent natural light from reaching the conservatory at the rear of their property and duly cause overshadowing. Concerns are also raised about the affect the installation of a lift in terms of noise from the use of such an installation. Further objections raised include the issue of loss of privacy to no.8 as the proposed extension incorporates a window which will face onto the rear garden of no.7 and therefore have the possibility of overlooking the garden of no.8.

The respondent at no.6 Lunedale Close raises the main issues as outlook and privacy. Concern is raised about the two windows proposed for the front elevation of the proposal, one of which will be an en-suite and one a bedroom, overlooking the front of no.6 causing an unacceptable loss of privacy. In addition the objection is made that the proposal would create a 'byker wall' effect making the corner of the close dark and overbearing.

The respondent at no.4 Lunedale Close forms objections mainly based upon the adverse effect the proposals will have on the scale, form and character of the area. Concerns are

again raised that the proposal will alter the look and character of the street and also states that a precedent may be set in the area for similar extensions.

In support of the application the applicant has advised that the proposal is designed for their son who suffers from an incurable progressive muscle wasting illness. The proposals will allow him independence, and access to all areas of the house. The applicant's advise the development has been grant funded under the Disabled Facilities Grant Scheme.

Support has also been received from the consultant physiotherapist responsible for treating the applicant's son. He advised the works are required to meet the needs of his condition.

Similar support has also been received from a professor from the Institute of Human Genetics. She advises the works are necessary to meet the patients requirements.

The Council's Environmental Health Team comment (in relation to the stated noise concerns) that lifts are designed to produce a minimal amount of noise. Although it is acknowledged that some vibration may be transmitted, it is noted that the dwellings are detached and there is no direct building material path between no.7 and no.8. It is concluded that it is unlikely that the lift will cause any noise transmitting to the adjacent property and therefore no objections are raised.

Relevant Planning Policies and Considerations

As a residential extension, the provisions of Policy HP11 of the Chester-le-Street Local Plan are of direct relevance to the consideration of this application. This Policy advises that proposals will not be acceptable where they would have an adverse impact upon scale, form and character of the existing building, any neighbouring property or the locality in general, or where they would cause an unacceptable loss of light or privacy to adjacent properties or significantly affect their amenities.

To assist in the consideration of residential extensions such as this, Appendix 1 of the Local Plan also sets out advice and guidance in relation to potential impacts upon neighbouring properties.

When assessing the proposal against the requirements of the relevant Local Plan Policies, and taking into account all relevant material planning considerations including the comments received as part of the consultation process, it is considered the following areas of the proposal require particular assessment.

Impact on Privacy / Overshadowing

With regard to the issues surrounding overshadowing and privacy the proposed extension is designed to adhere to the existing footprint of the property therefore the building line will not protrude any closer to the common boundary with the adjacent property. Therefore, there will be no increase in projection from the rear or front of the dwelling meaning that

the provisions of Appendix 1 of the Local Plan that act as guidelines to protect the amenity of neighbouring properties are complied with.

Although building up to first floor level will invariably impact to some degree on the amount of light received into the existing conservatory located on the neighbouring property it is not considered this loss of light / overshadowing affect would be so great so as to warrant refusal. It is noted that this property will still receive the same amount of sunlight from other directions, including from the rear.

Noise

The concerns raised about the noise and vibration surrounding the proposed internal lift have not been supported by the Council's Environmental Health Team. They state that due to the siting of the properties and the separation distance as a result of the detached nature there is no clear transmittable path for noise or vibration. Accordingly it is not considered the proposals could be resisted on this ground.

Conclusion

In conclusion it is considered that the proposals fully comply with the aims of relevant development plan policies, which seek to ensure the provisions of neighbouring properties are not detrimentally effected by extension proposals. The design of the proposed extension is also considered satisfactory from a planning viewpoint. Accordingly it is recommended that planning permission be granted

RECOMMENDATION

Approve

01A - Time limit

02 Materials

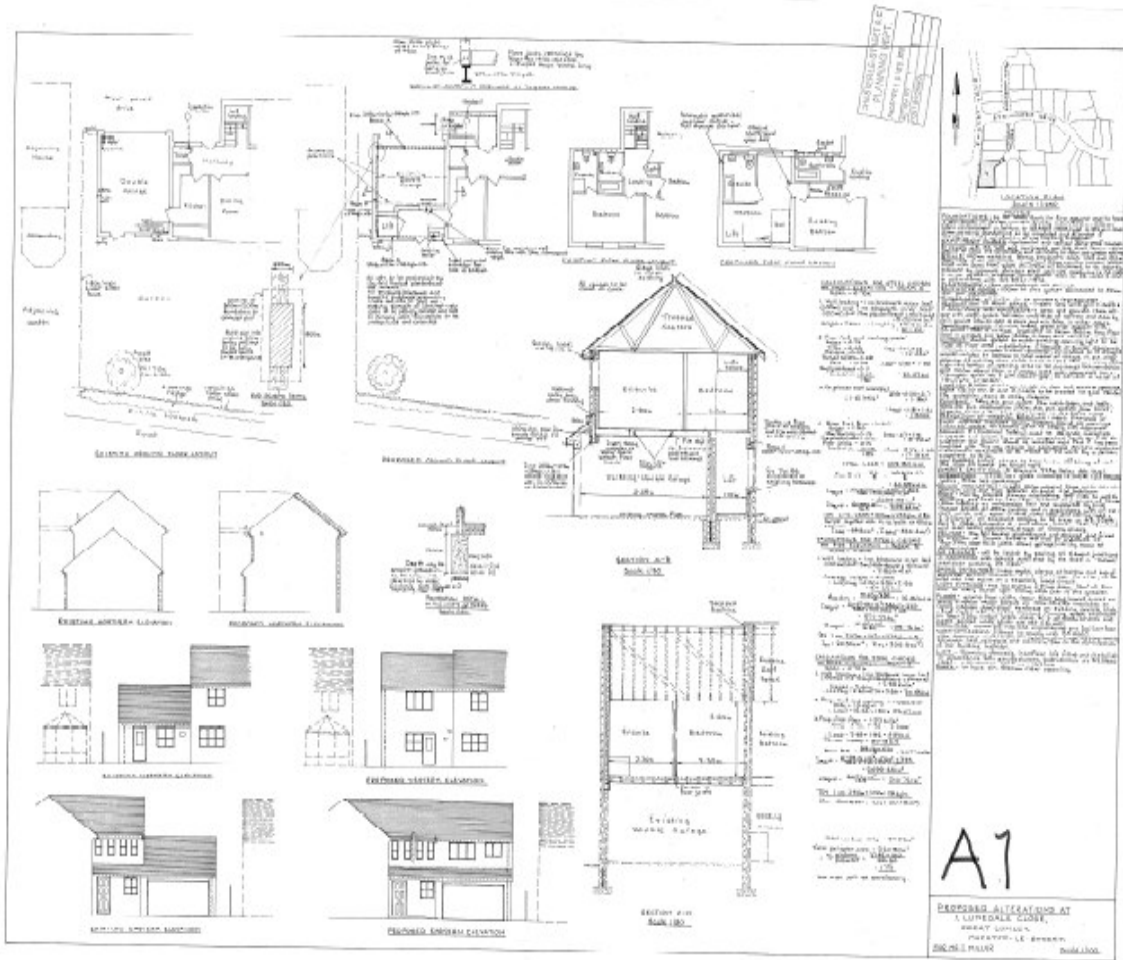
Application Summary

Case Officer: Mattew Gibson

Contact Details: 0191 387 2148

mattewgibson@chester-le-street.gov.uk

Summary of Reason for Recommendation: This proposal would have an acceptable impact on the character of the area and the amenity of neighboring occupiers. It complies with the aims of relevant development plan policies.



4.

Reference: 07/00088/FUL

Proposal Erection of workshop and offices with ancillary access and parking

Location Land West of Stella Gill Industrial Estate Pelton Fell Chester-le-Street
Durham

Applicant Mr David Potter

The Proposal

This report relates to an application for the erection of a workshop with ancillary offices on land at Stella Gill Industrial Estate, Pelton Fell. The proposed building would measure 73 metres by 36 metres, standing some 9 metres in height. The development would be accessed by a new road into the site and would be served by 54 car parking spaces and cycle parking facilities

The site comprises previously developed land. Surrounding uses are commercial to the east (the existing Stella Gill Industrial Estate) with Pelton Fell Memorial Park to the West. There are also 3 residential properties located in close proximity to the site (to the South and West)

Relevant Planning History

An earlier planning application was previously withdrawn by the applicant for a similar form of development on the land (Reference 06/265). The reason for this withdrawal was to allow further consideration to be given to acoustic issues.

Consultation Responses

A response is awaited from Durham County Council as Highways Authority for the area (although it should be noted that no objections were raised to the earlier, withdrawn application).

The Council's Regeneration Manager (technical) has no comments to make.

Durham County Council Rights of Way Officer notes that a Public Right of Way runs adjacent to the site; however no objections are raised on the grounds that improvements to this route have been agreed with the applicant.

The Ramblers Association have raised no objections, subject to the route of the footpath being kept clear during and after construction

The Council's Environmental Health Team have raised no objections to the proposals on the basis of an analysis of the acoustic data presented with the application to date (subject to further clarification from the applicant in some areas – Members will be verbally updated in respect to these issues) and subject to the imposition of the planning conditions as listed in the recommendation.

The application has been advertised by way of site notice and direct consultation with surrounding occupiers. In response 5 letters of objection have been received. Objections are raised on the following grounds;

- The development may impact upon the use of the nearby bowls club, by way of increased noise and disturbance
- The development will affect the peaceful enjoyment of the Memorial Park, including by way of increased noise nuisance and air pollution. This may jeopardise the implementation of a proposed picnic area within the park. It is pointed out that the park is a vital recreational resource in the area.
- The proposed storage tanks would be too close to the park boundary
- The development will prevent access to a neighbouring industrial users 'expansion land' by effectively land locking this site. It is claimed that the intentions of this business to expand have been known to the District Council for some time and that the proposal would jeopardise this expansion, putting employment growth at risk.
- The size of the proposed unit would be overbearing
- It is claimed some of the existing units on Stella Gill are empty therefore it is considered there is no need for this development
- The building will discourage use of the adjacent footpath by creating a hidden area
- The development will generate extra traffic movements in the area

Relevant Planning Policies and Considerations

The proposal raises a number of issues for consideration having regard to the relevant Policies contained in the County Durham Structure Plan and Chester-le-Street Local Plan.

County Durham Structure Plan

Policy 16 of the Structure Plan seeks to ensure that the economic development of the County is supported, by the allocation of adequate new employment land by District Authorities. Policy 21 expands on this approach by advising that the provision of new general industrial sites should be well related to the County's main towns.

In assessing the proposals against these relevant Structure Plan Policies it is considered that they are acceptable in principle. The proposed site is located within the existing urban framework of Pelton Fell, close to Chester-le-Street Town. In principle, assessed against the relevant Structure Plan Policies, the site would be acceptable for industrial development.

Chester-le-Street Local Plan

Policy IN4 of the Local Plan provides relevant advice on the subject of General Industrial Estates. The Policy advises that proposals for new industrial development will be considered acceptable in principle on sites allocated for this type of use in the Local Plan, including on Stella Gill. As such the proposals comply in principle with the aims of this Policy.

Policy IN4 also requires industrial development proposals to meet a number of detailed design criteria. Of particular relevance to this proposal are the requirements that the proposals must be of a good specification and appearance; provide for a clean environment; provide for good landscaping; ensure external storage is well screened and that access / parking provision is acceptable.

Whilst not specifically listed in Policy IN4 it is also considered of crucial importance to ensure that the development will not adversely affect the amenity of the area, including the living conditions of the nearby residents and users of the Memorial Park.

In assessing the proposal against the requirements of the relevant Local Plan Policies, and taking into account all relevant material planning considerations, including considering the comments received from the consultation exercise, it is considered the following areas of the proposal require particularly careful assessment.

Impact on Amenity of Nearby residents / Users of the Memorial Park

As will be noted from the consultation section above, a number of objections have been received to the proposal based around concerns about potential noise nuisance and other general amenity problems, including dust.

Bearing in mind these stated concerns, and the relatively close proximity of the site to sensitive land uses (the eastern boundary of the park is located some 17 metres to the west; the nearest dwelling some 50 metres to the north west) it is considered this is the most important material consideration raised by the proposal.

In order to enable this issue to be thoroughly assessed Officers requested the submission of a Noise Assessment report to accompany the application. This report assesses the likely noise impact of the development on the adjacent sensitive properties and has been used to predict the likely conditions that would prevail in the event of the development occurring. This report has been subject to a thorough appraisal by Officers from the Council's Environmental Health Team. As will be noted from the consultations section above they are satisfied that the development will not be likely to generate adverse conditions, subject to the imposition of the conditions listed below.

Members should also note that the development has been re-aligned some 5 metres away from the Memorial Park boundary, than was the case with the earlier withdrawn application. This re-siting will allow additional landscaping to be planted which will help screen / buffer the building from the park, and nearby dwellings.

It is also considered that the design details proposed will help mitigate against any undue noise concerns; these include the design of the building with a largely blank wall facing onto the park, and the fact that this allows for the loading area to be sited to the east, facing away from the park.

On balance, whilst the concerns of the objectors are noted the view is taken that subject to the imposition of the recommended conditions of approval the development will not generate undue noise problems sufficient to materially alter the character of the area and cause amenity problems to the nearby sensitive areas.

Highway Safety / Servicing

Members will note that the County Council, as Highways Authority for the area, have not provided comments at the time of report drafting. However they previously raised no objections to the earlier withdrawn application and as such there is no reason to believe the proposals could be resisted on this ground.

Impact on Public Footpaths

A public footpath runs to the immediate west of the site. However the development will not lead to any obstruction on this route. Indeed the applicant has also expressed a willingness to upgrade the condition of this route (although as this is not directly related to the development proposed and therefore it is not considered reasonable to make this a condition of approval).

As such the proposal is not considered to have any adverse impact on rights of way issues.

Landscaping

As discussed above, Policy IN4 of the Local Plan encourages the provision of good landscaping as part of new industrial development. In this respect the moving of the unit to the east will allow for landscaping enhancements to the existing area to be carried out. Members will note this is a recommended condition of approval.

Other Issues Raised

Members will note that an objection has been received from a nearby commercial operator, on the grounds that they claim to be in the process of purchasing nearby land from the Council, and that the development proposed would prevent access being taken to this land.

Members should be aware that this is not considered a material planning consideration, and rather would be an issue to be resolved separately between the relevant parties. However notwithstanding this Officers from the Councils Asset Management Team have confirmed that no such agreement does exist to sell the neighbouring land to this operator.

Accordingly the view is taken that little weight should be attached to the objection on this ground.

Similarly the concern about other units within the estate being empty is not considered of relevance to the application. The development is not speculative and the applicant has expressed a desire to pursue this bespoke design for his own needs.

The concern regarding potential safety hazards by the storage tanks is an issue that would be addressed by other bodies

Conclusion

In conclusion, having regard to the above, it is considered that the proposals are acceptable when assessed against the provisions of the development plan and to all material planning considerations. In particular it is considered that after a detailed assessment of the proposals, they will not have an adverse impact in relation to noise concerns. Accordingly it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve

01A - Time Limit

10A - Landscaping to be maintained

Extra 1.

Notwithstanding any description of the materials in the application, no development shall be commenced until samples or precise details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external walls and / or roofs of the building(s) have been submitted to, approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority in order to ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development upon completion, in the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with the provisions of Policy IN4; of the Chester-le-Street District Local Plan.

Extra 2.

The hereby approved development shall be carried out in accordance with a scheme of landscaping to be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of any development on site, and which scheme may provide for the planting of trees and / or shrubs (including species, sizes, numbers and densities), the provision of screen fences or walls, the movement of earth, the formation of banks or slopes, the seeding of land with grass, or other works for improving the appearance of the development. The works agreed to shall be carried out within the first planting season following completion of development of the site (or of that phase of development in the case of phased development) in the interests of visual amenity, the satisfactory appearance of the development upon completion and in accordance with the provisions of Policy IN4; of the Chester-le-Street District Local Plan.

Extra 3.

The development hereby approved shall not be open for business outside of the hours of 07:00 to 23:00 Monday to Saturday, with the exception of operations related to essential plant and equipment maintenance, in order to ensure the development does not adversely affect the amenities of nearby occupiers

Extra 4.

The door openings in the west facing elevation of the building hereby approved shall remain closed at all times the development is operational, except for instances of emergency, in order to ensure the development does not adversely affect the amenities of nearby occupiers

Extra 5.

Vehicular deliveries shall not be carried out outside of the hours of 08:00 to 16:30 with a maximum of 2 such visits per hour, in order to ensure the development does not adversely affect the amenities of nearby occupiers

Extra 6.

Notwithstanding the details contained in the application hereby approved precise details of the construction specification of the proposed building (to include appropriate sound attenuation measures) shall be submitted to and approved in writing prior to the commencement of development on site. Thereafter the development shall be constructed wholly in accordance with the approved details, in order to ensure the development does not adversely affect the amenities of nearby occupiers

Extra 7.

No more than 1 number loading bay door shall be open at any one time the development hereby approved is in use in order to ensure the development does not adversely affect the amenities of nearby occupiers

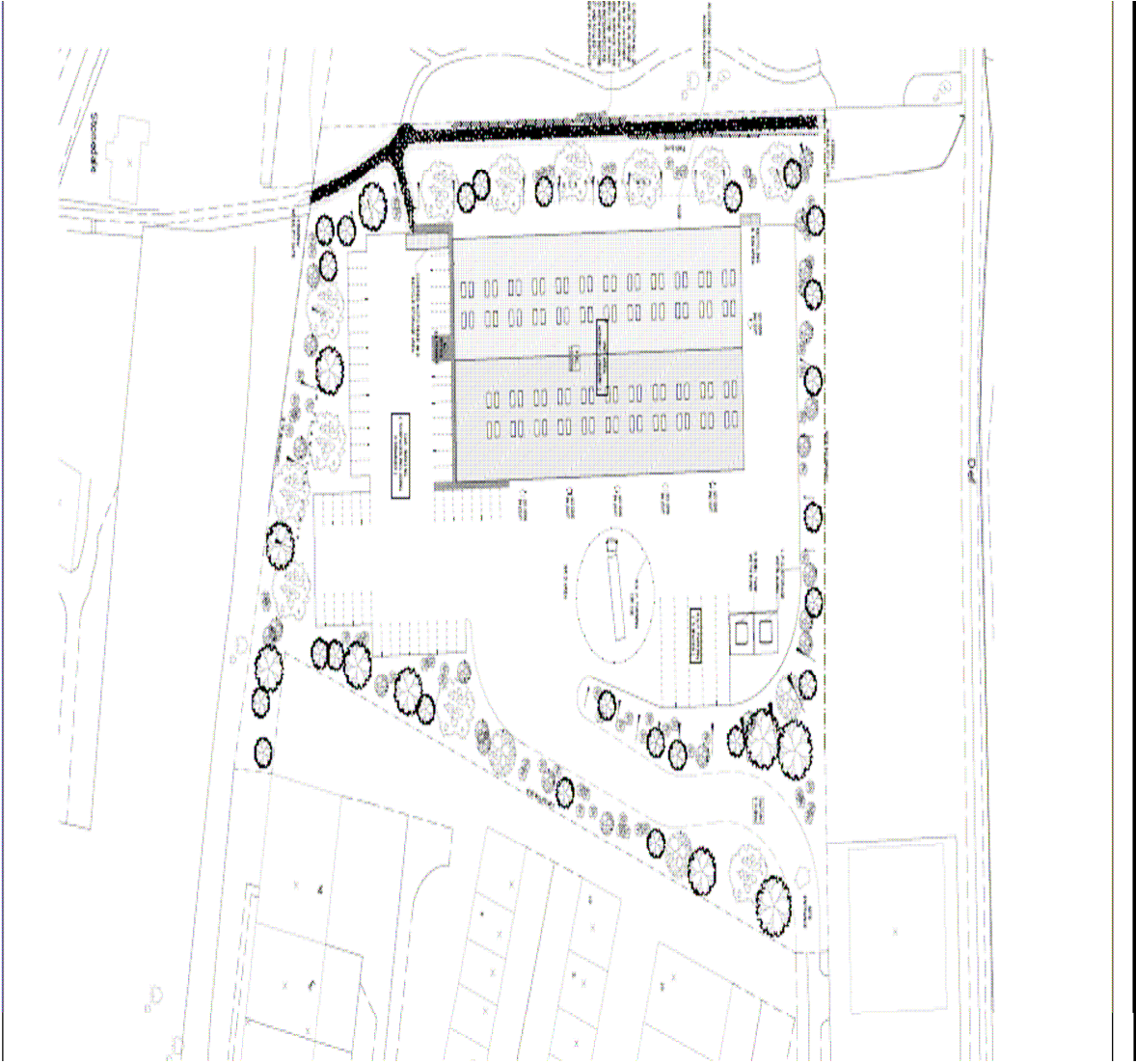
Application Summary

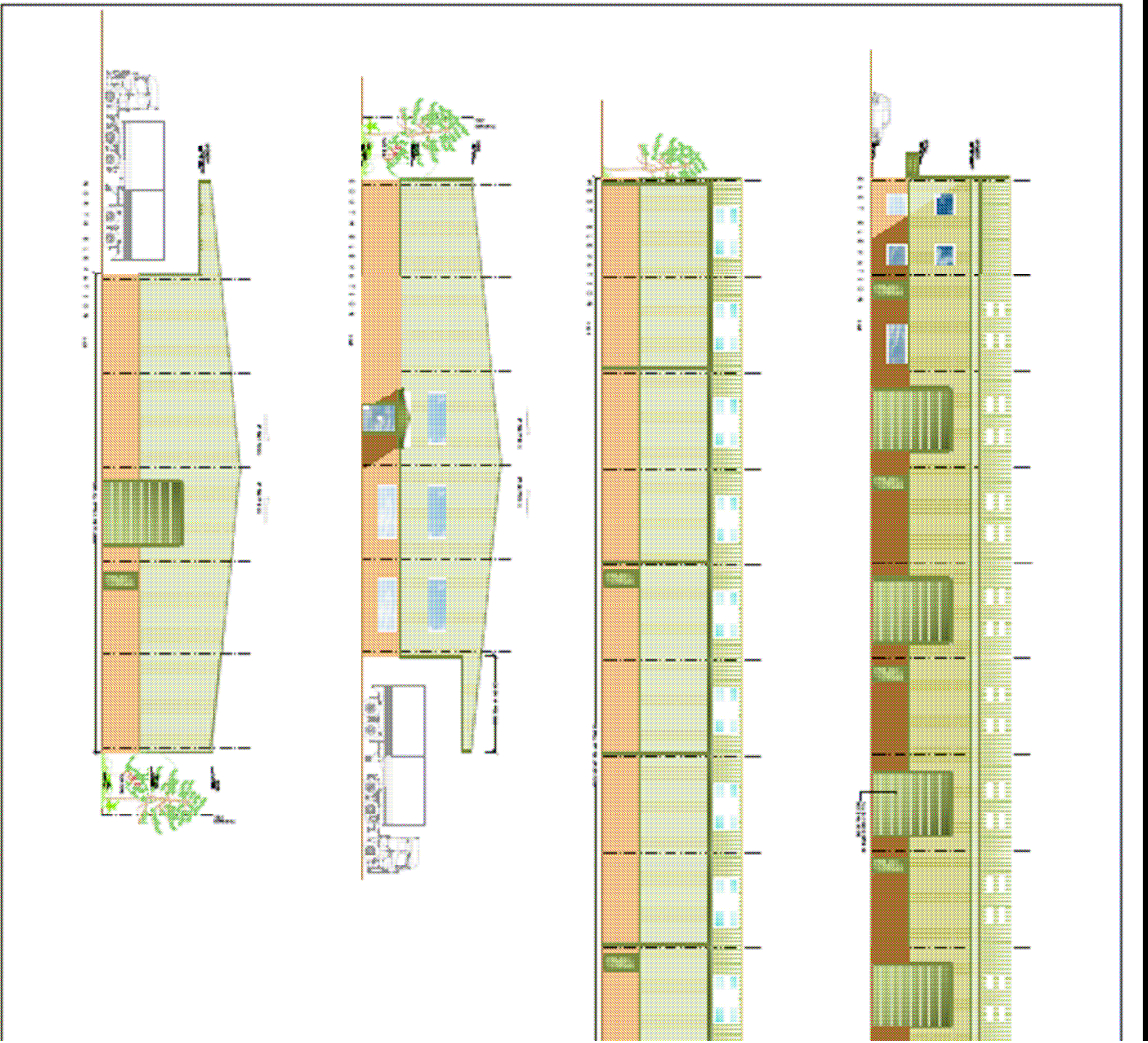
Case Officer: Stephen Reed

Contact Details: 0191 387 2212

stephenreed@chester-le-street.gov.uk

Summary of Reason for Recommendation: This proposal would have an acceptable impact on the character of the area and the amenity of neighboring occupiers. In particular it would not give rise to unacceptable noise problems. It therefore complies with the aims of relevant development plan policies.





Item 2 THE PLANNING SERVICES 2006 CUSTOMER SURVEY – UPDATE FOR MEMBERS

Purpose of Report

Members will recall that at their meeting in February a request was made for full details of the results of the Planning Services Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) 111 customer survey to be made known to Members.

Comments

This report provides the details requested, including a breakdown and analysis of the responses received to each question, and a sample of the responses received to the 'open questions' which customers were invited to answer at the end of the survey.

For Members information Officers intend to consider the nature of the negative comments, and thereafter look to potentially alter procedures to address the concerns raised

Recommendation

That Members note the contents of this report.

CHESTER-LE-STREET DISTRICT COUNCIL
BEST VALUE & AUDIT COMMISSION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
SURVEY OF PLANNING APPLICANTS
(April 2006 to September 2006)

FINAL REPORT

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APPENDICES

1. Copy of questionnaire/ covering letter
2. Copy of results as shown on Excel Template uploaded to Audit Commission
3. Frequency Counts (analysis excluding 'missing responses')
4. Respondents' comments

CHESTER-LE-STREET DISTRICT COUNCIL
BEST VALUE & AUDIT COMMISSION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
SURVEY OF PLANNING APPLICANTS
(April 2006 to September 2006)

1.0 BACKGROUND AND SURVEY OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 The purpose of the survey was to obtain feedback from planning applicants in order to gather information relating to Best Value Performance Indicator No. 111 (BVPI 111): 'satisfaction with the planning service by those making a planning application'.
- 1.2 The target population was 'all planning applicants or agents of applicants who had received a decision letter on their application between April 1st and September 30th, 2006'.

2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 All survey methodology was in line with the 'Guidance for undertaking the Best Value Surveys' as provided by the Department of the Deputy Prime Minister (subsequently changed to Department of Communities and Local Government) on the Best Value Website – www.survey.bvpi.gov.uk
- 2.2 Chester-le-Street District Council Planning Department provided NWA with lists of all applicants/ agents who had received a decision letter on their application between 1st April and 30th September 2006. These lists contained names and addresses of individuals informed, telephone numbers, date of submission, date of decision, whether a single or joint application, and unique identifier. The lists contained a total of **277 applications**.
- 2.3 Duplications were removed from the database by NWA (when multiple notifications had been made to individuals/ companies, the 'first notification' was included in the sample frame and all had received a decision letter from the authority during the six-month period totalled **212**).
- 2.4 Survey Guidelines state that 'if the number of applicants/agents is fewer than 800 within the sampling window, the surveyed population must be a census of all applicants/ agents within that period. The Audit Commission was therefore

informed in October 2006 that Chester-le-Street District Council would be undertaking a 'census' of applicants/ agents for the 2006 BVPI Planning survey.

- 2.5 Self-completion questionnaires, with letters requesting assistance with the research and a reply-paid return envelope, were sent to all 212 applicants/ individuals. The questionnaire and letter were in the format provided on BVPI Website www.survey.bvpi.gov.uk. A copy of the questionnaire is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report.
- 2.6 The initial letter and questionnaire were posted on 10th October 2006. Respondents were asked to return the questionnaire to NWA as soon as possible, in the freepost-addressed envelope provided.
- 2.7 Two postal reminder letters, including further copies of the questionnaire, were sent to non-responding applicants - on 25th October 2006, and then again on 13th November 2006. (subsequent ones removed). When all duplicates had been removed, the **number of applicants** who
- 2.8 In total, 106 completed questionnaires were returned to NWA prior to analysis: the overall response rate was therefore 50%.
- 2.9 Data was entered onto the Excel Template downloaded from the BVPI website.
- 2.10 NWA standard quality control procedures were applied to the entered data:
 - A minimum of 10% of each operator's data was checked
 - If an error was discovered, all of the operator's data for that particular question was checked
 - If two or more further errors were discovered, all of the operator's data (i.e., for all questions) was checked.
- 2.11 Steps were then taken to validate the data for consistency and completeness:
 - The 'data validation routine' included on the Excel template provided on the BVPI Website was applied, and any 'invalid' data highlighted was checked against questionnaires and corrected if necessary.

- Checks were made to ensure that respondents had followed correct routing, and 'invalid' responses were coded '0', i.e., only those who stated 'that they had applied for planning consent previous to their most recent application' at Q3, were given 'valid' codes for Q4 and Q8.
- The data was transferred to SPSS and frequency counts run.

2.12 After the data on the Excel Template had been validated, it was uploaded to the Audit Commission by NWA, via the BVPI Website, on 19th December 2006. The 'survey results' as shown on the uploaded Excel Template are attached as **Appendix 2** to this report. These results show details of 'missing responses' (which in the case of Q4 and Q8 also include 'invalid' responses), and 'don't know/ not applicable' responses.

2.13 Results were also analysed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Tables showing counts and count percentages were produced, and are attached as **Appendix 3** to this report. These tables are based on the 'valid' sample, i.e., 'missing data' has been removed from the percentage calculations. Reported results are therefore based on this 'valid' sample.

2.14 All sampling is liable to sampling error: this is based on the size of the sample, the level of response to individual questions, and the proportion of the population who are interviewed. The table below shows the '95% Confidence Intervals' for a variety of sample sizes, where the sample constitutes around 50% of the population (106 completed questionnaires: 212 applicants). This can be used as a guide to give an indication of the confidence interval relating to the overall sample and sample subgroups:

Sample Size	30	50	70	106
(Assumed Population)	(60)	(100)	(140)	(212)
	± %	± %	± %	± %
Response 50% / 50%	12.7	9.8	8.3	6.7
Response 30% or 70%	11.6	9	7.6	6.2
Response 10% or 90%	7.6	5.9	5	4

SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 Acting capacity when making most recent application

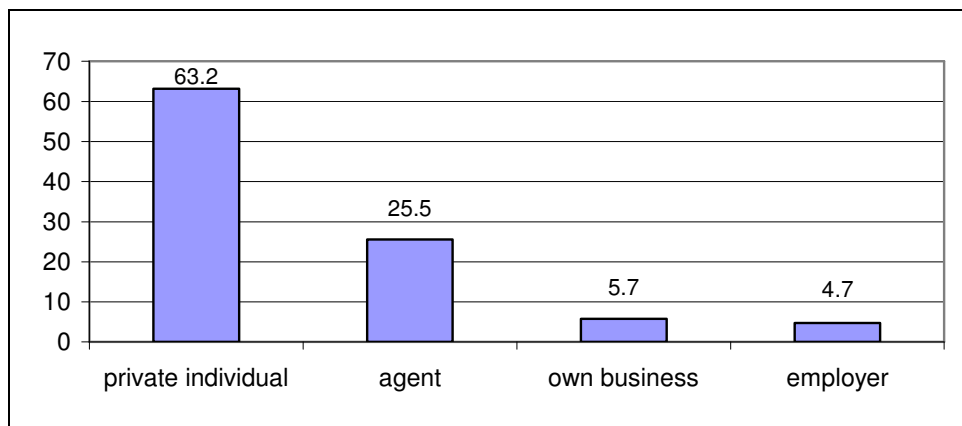
Q1: 'When you made your most recent application, in what capacity were you acting?'

(Appendix 3 - page 1 refers)

3.1.1 Nearly two-thirds of respondents (63.2%) were applying as 'private individuals', when they made their most recent application, whilst a quarter (25.5%) were acting as 'agents on behalf of another party', 5.7% were applying 'as part of their own business', and 4.7% were acting on behalf of 'an employer'.

Q1: In what capacity were you acting?

(Q1 : % response – all respondents)



3.2 Type of Application

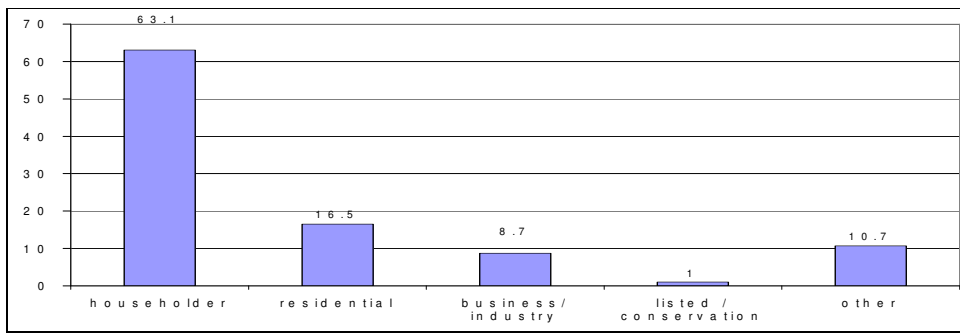
Q2: 'What type of application were you submitting?'

(Appendix 3 - page 1 refers)

3.2.1 Overall 63.1% of applicants had submitted a 'householder' application, whilst 16.5% had made a 'residential development' application, 8.7% had made 'a business or industry development' application, and 1% had submitted applications for 'listed building/conservation area consent'. 10.7% of respondents indicated that they had made some 'other' kind of application: these included applications relating to 'advertisement consent', and 'stables'.

Q2: What type of application were you submitting?

(Q2: % response – all respondents)



3.3 Previous applications

Q3: 'Have you applied to Chester-le-Street District Council planning department for planning consent previous to your most recent application?'
 (Appendix 3 – page 2 refers)

3.3.1 Just over half of all respondents (50.5%) stated that they had previously applied to the Chester-le-Street District Council planning department for planning consent. 49.5% of respondents said that they had not applied for planning consent previous to their most recent application, and 1% could not recall if a previous application had been made.

3.4 Number of previous applications

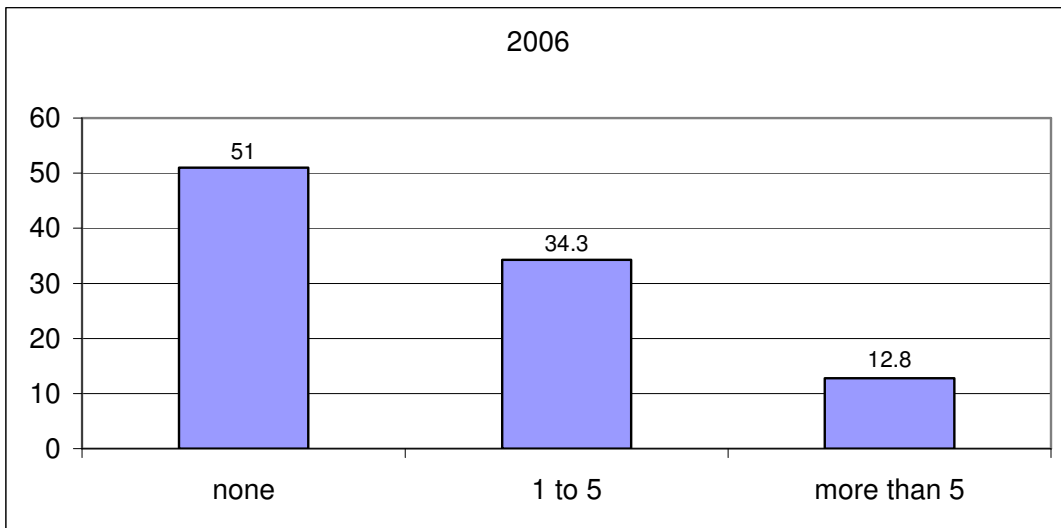
Q4: (If answered 'yes' to Q3) Please indicate how many times you have applied to Chester-le-Street District Council planning department for planning consent ... in last six months/ in last year/ in last two years/ in last three years?'
 (Appendix 3 - pages 3 to 5 refer)

3.4.1 Respondents who indicated at Q3 that they had 'previously applied for planning consent to the Chester-le-Street District Council planning department', were asked to indicate 'how many times they had applied to the Planning Department for planning consent' - 'in the last six months', 'in the last year', 'in the last two years' and 'in the last three years'. However, many respondents did not give a response to all of these questions – this may have been because there was no provision for a

'not at all' response on the questionnaire, and the respondent believed the question related to the number of previous applications, not including the current application. However, we cannot be certain of this, so responses shown in the Appendix 3 tables are as received.

Nevertheless, recalculating these percentages over the total sample, and using the 'highest' response given at Q4 (i.e., '1-5', '6-10', '11-20', '21-50' or '51+'), suggests that 34.3% of respondents had previously applied for planning consent between '1 and 5 times' over the past three years, whilst 12.8% had applied 'more than 5 times', (5.9% '6-10 times', 2% '11-20 times', 2.9% '21-50 times' and 2% '51+ times').

No. of previous applications over last three years
(Q3/4: % of all respondents)



3.5 **Attitude statements**

Q5: 'Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your experience of the Council's handling of your planning applications in the last year
(Appendix 3 - pages 6 to 15 refer)

3.5.1 **Advice and help**

79.3% of respondents agreed with the statement 'I was given the advice and help I needed to submit my application correctly' (18.9% 'strongly agree' + 60.4% 'agree'), whilst 4.7% disagreed (1.9% 'strongly disagree' + 2.8% 'disagree'). 13.2% stated

that they 'neither agreed nor disagreed' with the statement, and 2.8% gave 'it does not apply/ don't know' responses.

3.5.2 Information about Progress of Application

75.3% of respondents agreed with the statement 'the Council kept me informed about the progress of my application' (10.5% 'strongly agree' + 64.8% 'agree'), whilst 9.6% disagreed (2.9% 'strongly disagree' + 6.7% 'disagree'). 14.3% stated that they 'neither agreed nor disagreed' with the statement, and 1% gave 'it does not apply/ don't know' responses.

3.5.3 Dealing with queries promptly

72.7% of respondents agreed with the statement 'the Council dealt promptly with my queries' (14.2% 'strongly agree' + 58.5% 'agree'), whilst 10.3% disagreed (2.8% 'strongly disagree' + 7.5% 'disagree'). 13.2% stated that they 'neither agreed nor disagreed' with the statement, and 3.8% gave 'it does not apply/ don't know' responses.

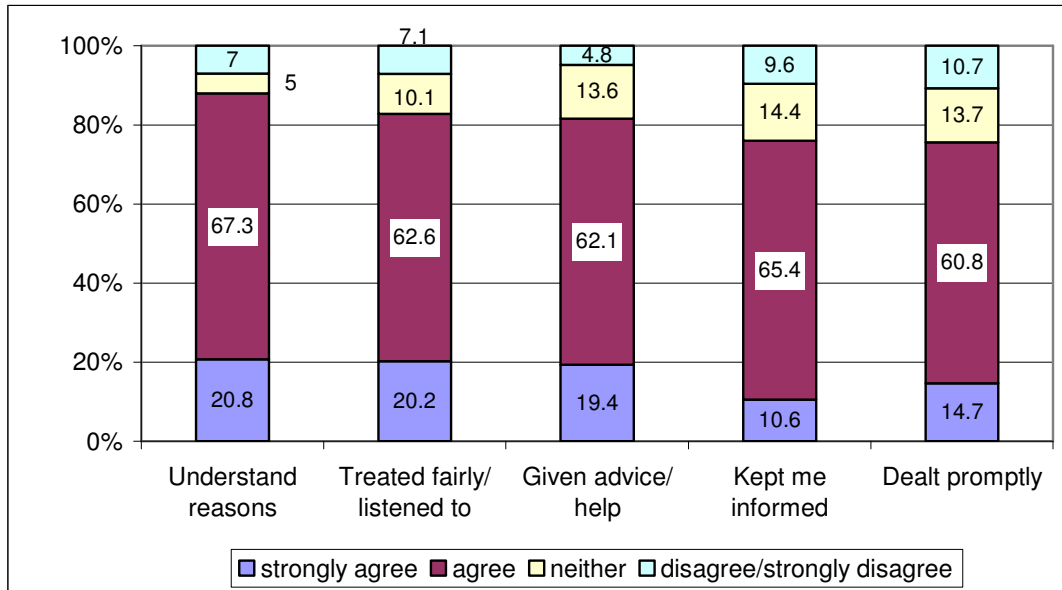
3.5.4 Understanding decision made

84.8% of respondents agreed with the statement 'I understand the reasons for the decision made on my application(s)' (20% 'strongly agree' + 64.8% 'agree'), whilst 6.7% disagreed (4.8% 'strongly disagree' + 1.9% 'disagree'). 4.8% stated that they 'neither agreed nor disagreed' with the statement, and 3.8% gave 'it does not apply/ don't know' responses.

3.5.5 Fair treatment

77.4% of respondents agreed with the statement 'I felt that I was treated fairly and that my viewpoint was listened to' (18.9% 'strongly agree' + 58.5% 'agree'), whilst 6.6% disagreed (5.7% 'strongly disagree' + 0.9% 'disagree'). 9.4% stated that they 'neither agreed nor disagreed' with the statement, and 6.6% gave 'it does not apply/ don't know' responses.

Q5: Agree/ disagree statements regarding Council's handling
of planning applications in the last year
(%s excluding 'it does not apply/ don't know' responses)



3.5.6 Analysis of responses from those who expressed an agreement, (i.e., excluding ‘it does not apply/ don’t know’ responses), reveals that agreement was highest (88.1%) for the statement ‘I understand the reasons for the decision made on my application’ (20.8% ‘strongly agree’ + 67.3% ‘agree’).

Agreement was lowest (75.5%) for the statement ‘the Council dealt promptly with my queries’ (14.7% ‘strongly agree’ + 60.8% ‘agree’).

Disagreement was highest for the statements ‘the Council dealt promptly with my queries’, (10.7% either disagreed or strongly disagreed) and ‘the council kept me informed about the progress of my application’ (9.6% either disagreed or strongly disagreed); disagreement was lowest for the statement ‘I was given the advice and help I needed to submit my application correctly’, (just 4.8% either disagreed or strongly disagreed).

3.6 Satisfaction with service provided

Q6: ‘Setting aside whether any individual application was successful or not, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by the Council in processing your application?’
 (Appendix 2 - page 16 refers)

3.6.1 84.9% of all respondents expressed satisfaction 'with the service provided by the Council in processing their application' (41.5% 'very satisfied' + 43.4% 'fairly satisfied'), whilst 9.4% reported that they were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied' and 5.6% expressed dissatisfaction (2.8% 'very dissatisfied' + 2.8% 'fairly dissatisfied').

BVPI 111 OVERALL SATISFACTION					
Group	Satisfied	95% Confidence Interval	Base No. (100%)	Neither satisfied /dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
<u>2006: all respondents:</u>	84.9%	± 6.8%	106	(9.4%)	(5.6%)

Note: The 95% Confidence Intervals shown in the above table, are as calculated by the Audit Commission, and are based on an 'infinite' population. Recalculating the Confidence Interval to take account of the fact that 106 out of a total of 212 applicants gave a response, gives a 95% Confidence Interval of ± 4.8%.

3.7 Outcome of application

Q7: 'Was your most recent application - granted/refused (permission/consent)?'
(Appendix 3, page 16 refers)

3.7.1 91.3 % of respondents reported that they had been granted permission/consent for their most recent application, and only 8.7% (nine respondents) had been refused permission or consent.

3.7.2 Only three of the nine respondents whose application had been 'refused permission/consent' were 'very' or 'fairly dissatisfied' with the 'service provided by the Council' (Q6).

3.8 Service improvement

(Only respondents who had made more than one application in the last three years)
Q8: 'For each of the following elements of the planning service provided by Chester-le-Street District Council, please indicate whether you think the service has got better or worse over the last three years, or has it stayed the same?'
(Appendix 3, pages 17 to 20 refer)

3.8.1 Advice and help

A large majority (85%) of those who expressed an opinion, were of the view that 'the advice and help provided to applicants' had 'stayed the same' over the last three years. However, 12.5% thought that it had 'got better', whereas only 2.5% thought it had got 'worse'.

3.8.2 Information provided about progress

Over three quarters (77.5%) of those who expressed an opinion, were of the view that 'the information provided about the progress of applications' had 'stayed the same' over the last three years. However, 17.5% thought that it had 'got better', compared to only 5% who thought it had got 'worse'.

3.8.3 Dealing with queries promptly

Over three quarters (79.5%) of those who expressed an opinion, were of the view that 'the promptness with which queries about applications were dealt' had 'stayed the same' over the last three years, whilst 12.8% thought it had 'got better', and 7.7% thought that it had got 'worse'.

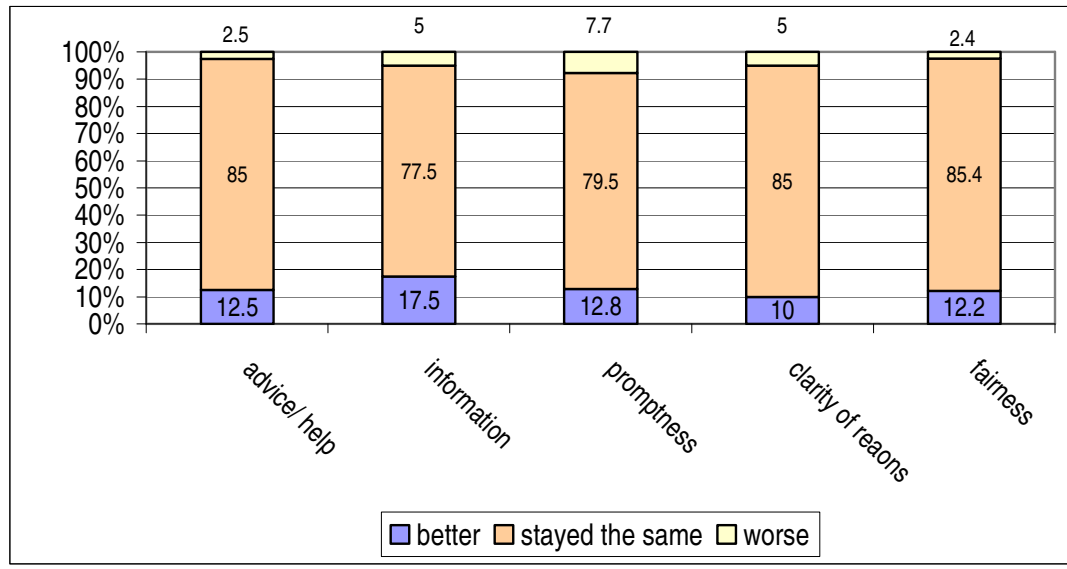
3.8.4 Clarity of reasons given for decision

The great majority (85%) of those who expressed an opinion, were of the view that 'the clarity of the reasons for the decisions given' had 'stayed the same' over the last three years. whilst 10% thought it had 'got better', and 5% thought that it had got 'worse'.

3.8.5 Fairness with which application was dealt

The great majority (85.4%) of those who expressed an opinion, were of the view that the 'fairness with which the application was dealt' had 'stayed the same' over the last three years. However, 12.2% thought that it had 'got better', whereas only 2.4% thought it had got 'worse'.

Perceived change in service over past three years
(Q8 : % response – those who expressed an opinion)
(analysis excluding 'don't know; responses)



3.9 Additional comments

3.9.1 Respondents were asked if they had any other comments that they wished to make, and 20.8% of respondents did so. Comments were diverse and are listed in full in **Appendix 4**, sorted by whether they made ‘positive’, ‘partly positive’ or ‘negative’ comments with regard to the Council’s planning department. In total 22 respondents made comments: 5 made ‘wholly positive’ comments, 3 made ‘partly positive’ comments and 10 made ‘negative’ comments. 4 respondents made ‘other’ comments.

4.0 PROFILE OF THE ACHIEVED SAMPLE

(Appendix 3, pages 21 and 22 refer)

4.1 Three quarters of respondents were male (75.5%); 24.5% of respondents were female.

4.2 Over half (55.3%) of respondents were ‘employees’ (full time 48.6%, part time 6.7%), whilst 29.5% were ‘self-employed’, and 11.4% were ‘wholly retired from work’.

4.3 16% of all respondents said that they had a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity, (16 respondents). Of these respondents, thirteen went on to say that their illness or disability limits their activity.

4.4 All respondents gave their ethnic group as 'White – British', excepting one person who stated their ethnic group as 'White – Other', and four people who did not respond to the question.

CHESTER LE STREET: BVPI PLANNING SURVEY
 COPY OF RESULTS AS SHOWN ON EXCEL TEMPLATE TO BE UPLOADED TO AUDIT COMMISSION
 (106 COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRES)

BVPI	Sample	BVPI Score	Confidence Interval
BVP111	106	85	6.82

Q1. Acting capacity of most recent application							
Private individual	67 (63.21%)						
Part of own business	6 (5.66%)						
On behalf of employer	5 (4.72%)						
Agent acting on behalf of another party	27 (25.47%)						
Other	1 (0.94%)						
Not answered	0 (0.00%)						
Q2. Type of application							
Householder	65 (61.32%)						
Listed building/conservation	1 (0.94%)						
Residential development	17 (16.04%)						
Business/Industry development	9 (8.49%)						
Other	11 (10.38%)						
Not answered	3 (2.83%)						
Q3. Whether has applied for planning consent previous to most recent application							
Yes	53 (50.00%)						
No	51 (48.11%)						
Do not recall	1 (0.94%)						
Not answered	1 (0.94%)						

PLANNING COMMITTEE 10 April 2007

Q4. Number of times applied for planning consent within each period of time							
	1 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 50	51 or more	Doesn't apply / don't know	Not answered
In the last 6 months	23 (21.70%)	4 (3.77%)	0 (0.00%)	1 (0.94%)	0 (0.00%)	5 (4.72%)	30 (28.30%)
In the last year	17 (16.04%)	3 (2.83%)	2 (1.89%)	2 (1.89%)	0 (0.00%)	7 (6.60%)	32 (30.19%)
In the last 2 years	10 (9.43%)	4 (3.77%)	2 (1.89%)	2 (1.89%)	2 (1.89%)	10 (9.43%)	33 (31.13%)
In the last 3 years	18 (16.98%)	5 (4.72%)	1 (0.94%)	2 (1.89%)	2 (1.89%)	12 (11.32%)	23 (21.70%)
Q5. Agreement with each of the following statements							
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Doesn't apply / don't know	Not answered
I was given the advice and help I needed to submit my application correctly	20 (18.87%)	64 (60.38%)	14 (13.21%)	3 (2.83%)	2 (1.89%)	3 (2.83%)	0 (0.00%)
The council kept me informed about the progress of my application	11 (10.38%)	68 (64.15%)	15 (14.15%)	7 (6.60%)	3 (2.83%)	1 (0.94%)	1 (0.94%)
The council dealt promptly with my queries	15 (14.15%)	62 (58.49%)	14 (13.21%)	8 (7.55%)	3 (2.83%)	4 (3.77%)	0 (0.00%)
I understand the reasons for the decision made on my application(s)	21 (19.81%)	68 (64.15%)	5 (4.72%)	2 (1.89%)	5 (4.72%)	4 (3.77%)	1 (0.94%)
I felt I was treated fairly and that my viewpoint was listened to	20 (18.87%)	62 (58.49%)	10 (9.43%)	1 (0.94%)	6 (5.66%)	7 (6.60%)	0 (0.00%)
Q6. Overall satisfaction with service provided by council in processing application							
Very satisfied	44 (41.51%)						
Fairly satisfied	46 (43.40%)						
Neither	10 (9.43%)						
Fairly dissatisfied	3 (2.83%)						
Very dissatisfied	3 (2.83%)						
Not answered	0 (0.00%)						
Q7. Outcome of most recent application							
Granted permission	95 (89.62%)						
Refused permission	9 (8.49%)						

Not answered	2 (1.89%)						
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Appendix 4
Chester-le-Street District Council

Response to Open Questions

Question 2: What type of application were you submitting?

- Ad consent
- Change of garden shed for above ass. New for old
- Cross country farm ride
- Education
- Engineering operation blowing grant of pp
- Express consent for advertising
- Floodlights for horse arena
- Stable on Deneside allotment
- Stables
- To develop sports pitches at Riverside
- Tree management

Question 14: To which of these groups do you consider you belong? Other

- German

Question 15: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Wholly Positive

- Chester le Street DC acted impeccably with our application. They were courteous, efficient helpful and prompt at each stage
- I believe planning dept has shown worthwhile improvements since last applied for planning permission 15 years ago
- The service received was more than acceptable and greatly appreciated
- *** was very helpful; gave good advice and stuck by it which is not a common theme at many PPAs
- This is our 1st application for planning permission on anything and I was very impressed with the speed and informative way that our application was carried out

Partly Positive

- Application took long time for approval considering other more complex applications granted much sooner, otherwise great service
- Little aggrieved at having to have planning consent for a structure which needed pulling down and building another the same size. Pulling down my stone porch - rebuilding with brick. Apart from this was dealt with professionally and efficiently. Thank you
- Service efficient enough. Application fees seem very expensive indeed. Don't know how this compares with other Councils

Negative

- Feel that process could be speeded up considerably although we had a split decision (on trees) if we could have met with someone we could come to an agreement, but we now have to drag it out further and go to appeal
- For the type of work that I undertake in Gainford and Wynyard areas I don't think I should be held up for 6 weeks whilst waiting for planning permission - building regs. As I am only converting small porch/utility flat roofs to pitch tiled roofs
- I applied for planning permission in Jan and took 6 months to complete. Had to pay for set of plans £200 which did not need as had submitted my own plans which were no good they said but were same as £200 ones. I had to pay for all of this
- I felt process was very expensive to carry out repairs which were essential to maintain property especially for pensioners on restricted income
- My dissatisfaction is due to the time taken for planning/process decision. I felt there was no flexibility to consider my application - which was extremely straightforward
- Our latest application went away. You acknowledged the application but had the building detail checked by another company who wrote to us at the totally wrong address, so nothing further happened and our application ran out of time. It has not been sorted
- Planning committee/councillors very dissatisfactory
- The building regulations dept were not helpful or understanding in fact quite opposite
- The yew tree which was refused planning permission to fell is dying still and is dangerous, I believe a poor assessment was made by the Council
- We didn't feel that reasons for refusal were specific enough. They did not address/answer our reasons for application

Other

- Only concern is no one answers telephone in office via direct line. If go via reception they pick up

- No complaints RE: Council. But a complaint against allotment ass allowed to give planning permission to others but reporting me to the Council and therefore having to pay the Council
- The planning dept must inform 1st time applicants about building control dept to stop any confusion
- You need to have person/s able to answer technical questions over telephone. When the building inspectors are out on site others and myself have found that your staff in planning and building control are unable to give specific answers to technical questions

3 Planning General

3.1 NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING APPEAL DECISIONS

3.1.1 APPEAL AGAINST REFUSAL TO GRANT PLANNING APPROVAL TO CHANGE THE USE OF A FORMER CRICKET PAVILLION TO FARM SHOP INCLUDING EXTENSION AND ALTERATION OF THE EXISTING BUILDING, IMPROVED ACCESS AND CAR PARK AT HARBOUR HOUSE FARM, WHEATLEY WELL LANE, PLAWSWORTH

Notification has been received from the Planning Inspectorate of the decision reached in an appeal lodged by Harbour House Farms against the Council's decision to refuse consent to Change the Use of the former cricket pavilion to a farm shop, an extension and alteration of the existing building and the formation of an improved access at the above site.

The Council's decision to refuse permission was upheld with the appeal being dismissed.

In considering the merits of the appeal the Inspector considered that the main issues raised by this application were whether the proposal would be inappropriate development within the Greenbelt; the effect of the proposal on sustainability and the character and appearance of the countryside and whether there were any material considerations sufficient to clearly outweigh any harm to Green Belt and any other harm thereby justifying the proposal on the grounds of very special circumstances.

The Inspector acknowledged that the site was in an isolated location in the open countryside, outside the settlement limits of the village of Plawsworth and that this was located in the Green Belt and an Area of High Landscape Value some distance from the nearest public transport connection. The Inspector, like this Council, was of the opinion that the proposal would have a materially greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the former use both by virtue of the extension / alteration of the existing building and because of the formation of the vehicular access and car parking area.

The Inspector also agreed with the Council's view that the proposal would be likely to attract visitors throughout the year rather than occasionally as was the case with the previous use. This use would, therefore, be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt and detrimentally affect the character of the Area of High Landscape Value.

The Inspector also agreed with this Council's view that the proposal does not accord with Government advice on promoting more sustainable patterns of development as it is located some distance from the nearest settlement and because the site is poorly served by public transport. As such access to the site would be very dependant upon the use of the private car.

A copy of the Inspector's decision letter is appended to this report.

Case Officer : David Walker

3.1.2 APPEAL AGAINST REFUSAL TO GRANT PLANNING APPROVAL TO CONSTRUCT A TWO STOREY EXTENSION AND TO RE-BUILD AN EXISTING CONSERVATORY AT No. 4 OUSTON FARM COTTAGES, OUSTON, CHESTER LE STREET.

Notification has been received from the Planning Inspectorate of the decision reached in an appeal lodged by Mr A. Carr against the Council's decision to refuse consent to construct a two storey extension at the gable of the property and the re-building of an existing conservatory on the side of the proposed extension.

The Council's decision to refuse permission was upheld with the appeal being dismissed.

In considering the merits of the appeal the Inspector considered that the main issue raised by this application was whether the proposed extension would be inappropriate development within the Greenbelt.

The application site is one of four terraced houses, which are located in open countryside beyond the settlement boundary of Ouston. The proposed extension would enlarge the existing property by approximately two thirds and the Inspector agreed with this Council, that this could not be regarded as a 'limited' extension.

The Inspector found that the proposed extension would be out of character with the existing housing and that this would intrude into the openness of the Green Belt, thereby, undermining the main purpose of Green Belt policy which is to preserve the 'openness' of area.

The Inspector also concluded that the repetition of similar schemes would be very damaging.

A copy of the Inspector's decision letter is appended to this report.

Case Officer : David Walker

3.1.3 APPEAL AGAINST REFUSAL TO GRANT PLANNING APPROVAL TO CONSTRUCT A 10 BAY STABLE BLOCK AND BARN AT LAND NORTH EAST OF HUMBLEBURN LANE, BLACKHOUSE.

Notification has been received from the Planning Inspectorate of the decision reached in an appeal lodged by Mr C. Dixon against the Council's decision to refuse consent to construct a 10 bay stable and barn.

The Council's decision to refuse permission was upheld with the appeal being dismissed.

In considering the merits of the appeal the Inspector considered that the main issues raised by this application was whether the proposal would be a disproportionately large construction in the open countryside and therefore would detract from the appearance of the landscape and that whether commercial operations should be sited in sustainable locations close to existing accommodation.

The proposal involved constructing an 'L' shaped building being 3.8m high with a footprint of approximately 19m x 18m. The proposed barn would be approximately 5 m high and have a footprint approximately 18m x 9m. The Inspector agreed with this Council that the proposed buildings would be incongruously isolated in the landscape and so detract from the rural character. It was felt that this impact would be further accentuated by the need to construct a proper access and roadway to the stable and barn.

The Inspector found that the proposal was of such a scale that this went beyond the scale commensurate with a 'private' stable'. He agreed with this Council's Policy stance that commercial equestrian uses should be sited in 'sustainable' locations and close to existing accommodation.

The Inspector also agreed with the Council that a proposal of this scale would necessitate numerous trips to stables to clean, exercise, feed and tend to the animals that the isolated location of the stable block would render such activity unsustainable.

A copy of the Inspector's decision letter is appended to this report.

Case Officer : David Walker