Land at Sheldon Heath Road and Platt Brook Way, Sheldon, Birmingham, B26 2DS

Erection of 100 no. two, three, four and five bedroom dwellings for affordable rent and market sale, with associated external works (Revised application to that approved under reference 2012/08228/PA)

Applicant: Birmingham City Council
BMHT - Regeneration and Development Team, Planning & Regeneration, 1 Lancaster Circus Queensway, Birmingham, B4 7DJ

Agent: Walker Troup Architects Limited
52 Lyndon Road, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, B73 6BS

Recommendation

Approve Subject To Conditions

1. Proposal

1.1 At the Planning Committee meeting on 7 March 2013 permission was granted under ref 2012/08228/PA, for the erection of 100 dwellings on this current application site. The development is to be undertaken on behalf of BMHT and comprises of a mix of affordable and private sale dwellings. Construction work has commenced but following additional site investigations further sewer and attenuation tanks have been uncovered in the western corner of the site which cannot be relocated. In addition it has not proved possible to divert a further foul sewer which extends along the entire northern boundary of the site parallel with Platt Brook. As a result, amendments to the previously agreed layout for the site are required in order to retain the sewers, hence the submission of this new application.

1.2 It is still proposed to provide a development of 100-dwellings on the site, with 50% of units being for affordable rent and remainder being for sale. The revised layout would be very similar to that previously agreed with dwellings predominantly fronting Platt Brook Way which still to be extended back into the site to form a loop and continue the connection back to Sheldon Heath Road. The same house types would be used but one new 2 bed house type has been added. The types are predominantly two storeys high and narrow fronted but with the addition of some wide and corner house types to provide variety to the street scene. The larger four and five bed units also have higher pitched roofs with accommodation in the roof space lit by roof lights. The mix has slightly changed and would now comprise the following:-

2 bed house - 61
3 bed houses – 10
4 bed houses - 27
5 bed houses – 2
1.3 The main changes proposed would affect the dwellings to be provided on the northern boundary of the site between the existing road frontage and boundary with Platt Brook. The retained foul sewer extends along the full length of this boundary from the Sheldon Heath Road frontage to the west corner of the site. Severn Trent Water requires the sewer to be kept in its existing location with a 10 metre wide easement and access to existing manholes. Most of the route of the sewer would be within the rear gardens of the proposed dwellings which would still to be arranged as pairs of semi detached properties with small gaps between. However in order to meet Severn Trent Waters requirements it is proposed that a wider gap 3-4 metres wide is provided between some of the pairs of dwellings to allow vehicle access to the sewer to be provided. This is now shown between plots 66-67, 74-75, 86 – 87 and 94 - 95. Access to the sewers and underground tanks would also be available adjacent to plots 1 and 43.

1.4 In addition, it was originally proposed to erect a pair of semi detached dwellings on the Sheldon Heath Road frontage (plots 99-100). One of the plots would now be within the sewer easement line and therefore now needs to be omitted leaving the retained dwelling as a detached property. In order to compensate for the loss of this plot it is also proposed to amend the layout in the southern corner of the site (plots 9 and 10) to accommodate a third 2 bed dwelling. Originally there were two wide fronted dwellings in this location but it is now proposed to provide three plots by using a narrower house types. Plots 49 to 52 would also be adjusted to maintain the mix of house types and Plots 1 and 2 would be changed from 3 bed house types to 2 beds to ensure that the easements and access to the sewers are maintained. Part of this reconfiguration would also include the realignment of the proposed fence to Platt Brook to allow a larger seeded bank as part of the Brook improvement works.

1.5 The development would continue to meet the Council’s guidance in terms of back to back distances and main bedroom sizes. However there are 7 plots where the rear garden sizes for the 2 bed house types would now be between 51-48 square metres in size and therefore slightly below the 52 square metres normally sought to meet the guidance set out in Places for Living.

1.6 The parking provision for the development would remain at 142% provision as originally approved which would be provided as in curtilage car parking spaces with larger properties are provided with 200% car parking and smaller properties provided with 100% car parking.

1.7 The site area is 2.3ha giving the development a density of 43.4 dwellings per hectare.

Site Layout

Typical Street Scene

2 Site & Surroundings

2.1 The application site is a long linear parcel of land most of which was originally part of a larger plot previously used as playing fields. The playing fields had a narrow access onto Sheldon Heath Road and then extended in a westerly direction between the rear of existing residential development at Downsfield Road and Waterfield Way to the north and Brays Road and Rodborough Road to the south and west. The playing fields were declared surplus to requirements in 1997 and since then two specialist elderly people’s accommodation buildings with a day centre have been developed.
served by a new access road from Sheldon Heath Road known as Platt Brook Way. This new road is in the form of a cul de sac which extends about half way into the application site. Following the grant of planning permission in March 2013 for residential development on the site it has been cleared and construction works are underway.

2.2 The surrounding area comprises predominantly of two storey family housing and three storey high specialist sheltered housing accommodation and a day centre. There is also a small development of bungalows at Waterfield Close to the north. The existing dwellings to the north are separated from the site by Platt Brook, a narrow water course in an open concrete culvert. On the east boundary of the site is a vacant plot of land covering 0.5 ha on which planning permission was granted in 2007 for a two storey primary care health centre but has not been developed.

2.3 In the wider area there is a large area of public open space known as The Radleys on the opposite side of Sheldon Heath Road and a local centre with a range of retail units at the junction of Sheldon Heath Road and Brays Road.

3. Planning History

3.1 7/3/13 - 2012/08228/PA – Full planning permission granted for erection of 100 two, three, four and five bedroom dwellings for affordable rent and market sale with associated external works, parking and landscaping.

3.2 1/10/2007 – 2007/01213/PA – Full planning permission granted for erection of a primary care centre with associated access and parking.

3.3 1/2/2007 – 2006/01752/PA – Full planning permission granted for erection of a 64 bed residential special care centre and day facility with associated works. (Now known as Ann-Marie Howes centre)

3.4 15/10/1999 – 1999/02287/PA – Full planning permission grated for demolition of existing buildings and erection of a 3 story 40 bed extra care facility with associated access and parking. (Now known as Radley Court).

4. Consultation/PP Responses

4.1 Transportation – Comments awaited. Previously raised no objections subject to appropriate highway conditions being imposed.

4.2 Local Services – Advise that their previous comments still apply. These were that the proposal is part of the redevelopment of former Education playing fields and a compensatory contribution of £320,450 is required to provide replacement facilities at a cost £15 per square metre. The number of dwellings proposed also generates an off-site sum for public open space and children's play facilities which they calculate as being £234,600 which would be used for the provision, improvement and maintenance of public open space and children's play facilities in the Sheldon Ward. They cannot support the application without the requested financial contributions.
4.3 Regulatory Services – No objection subject to a condition being applied requiring a verification report demonstrating completion of the works set out in the submitted remediation strategy.

4.4 Education Skills Infrastructure Team - Request a contribution under Section 106 from any potential development as development would impact on the provision of places at local schools.

4.5 Environment Agency – No objection subject to conditions being imposed covering site drainage and the enhancement and management of Platt Brook.

4.6 Severn Trent Water – No objection subject to drainage condition being imposed. Also point out that there is a public sewer located within the application site that may not be built close to, directly over or be diverted without their consent.

4.7 Centro – No objection and comment that the site is near to bus services that operate along Sheldon Heath Road and Brays Lane. As the number of proposed residential units exceeds 80 the developer request that the developer should be required to develop a Residential Travel Plan and promote sustainable travel to and from the development.

4.8 National Grid – No objections but advise that they have apparatus in the vicinity of the site which might be affected by the development.

4.9 West Midlands Police – No objection and comment that this development is the subject of an ongoing Secured by Design application the development continues to be designed with the security appropriate principles.

4.10 West Midland Fire Service – No objection subject to suitable water supplies for fire fighting being provided.

4.11 MP, Local Councillors and local residents/businesses notified of the application, press and site notices displayed. The applicants also held a public exhibition of the previous plans which local residents were invited to attend on 17 October 2012. One letter received which supports the development particularly the inclusion of the larger 4 and 5 bed dwellings and hopes that will be available to local people currently living in overcrowded accommodation.

5. Policy Context


6. Planning Considerations

6.1.1 The application site currently has the benefit of planning permission for the erection of 100 dwellings as granted under application 2012/08228/PA in March 2013. Although the site was previously playing fields, this use ceased in 1990 and in 1986 the Cabinet Member for Regeneration gave approval for the allocation of part of the playing fields for a health centre with the remainder allocated for development of a special care centre and for housing. Planning permission for the use of the site for
housing was therefore granted but subject to £100,000 compensation being paid for the loss of open space which is controlled through the imposition of planning conditions. A viability appraisal was provided demonstrating that this was the maximum contribution the development could afford to offer.

6.1.2 As a development of 100 dwellings on the site has recently been agreed and construction work on the site has commenced it is considered that there is no objection in principle to this revised application which is for the same number of dwellings. The main issues are considered to be whether the revised layout is acceptable and appropriate for the site and whether there would be any adverse impact on surrounding residential properties.

6.3 Layout/Design

6.4 The majority of the layout would be unchanged from the current approved scheme. The number of dwellings would remain at 100 but there would be three more 2 bed dwellings at the expense of two less 3 bed properties and one less 4 bed. This is still considered to result in an acceptable mix of dwelling type and sizes.

6.5 The most noticeable changes would be the removal of the pair of semi detached dwellings from the Sheldon Heath Road frontage, the increase in the size of the space between some of the pairs of semi detached dwellings, the change of house type on plots 1-2, 51-52 and 63-64 and the alterations to the layout to accommodate an additional dwelling on plots 9 and 10.

6.6 None of these alterations are considered to adversely affect the development. Although a pair of dwellings were to be provided on the Sheldon Heath Road frontage the position of the sewer means that only one detached dwelling can now be provided in this location which would result in a 10 metre gap to the site boundary with Platt Brook. This would give a more open aspect to Sheldon Heath Road than originally proposed but as this part of the site is currently undeveloped and it lies opposite The Radleys public open space this would not appear out of keeping.

6.7 The proposed increase in the space between some of the pairs of semi detached dwellings is also considered to be acceptable as generally the wider gap would be used to accommodate parking for the adjacent dwelling as well as allowing Severn Trent Water access to the drainage runs and manholes within rear garden areas. The development would still provide an appropriate frontage to Platt Brook Way and result in a very similar appearance to that previously agreed. The need to provide access to Severn Trent Water would however mean that some of the plots widths have been slightly reduced and therefore on some plots the 3 bed semi detached dwellings that were previously approved have been replaced with two bed properties. The two bed house types to be used have previously been agreed for other plots and are considered to be acceptable.

6.8 In addition there would be 7 plots where the rear garden sizes for the 2 bed house types would now be slightly below the 52 square metres normally sought to meet the guidance set out in Places for Living. The smallest rear garden size would be 48 square metres which is only marginally below the 52 square metres recommended. The affected plots back onto the landscaped buffer to be provided adjacent to Platt Brook and therefore they would have an open aspect to the rear which would help to compensate for the smaller garden areas.

6.8 The other main alteration proposed is the replacement of the two wide fronted 2 bed dwellings approved on plots 9 and 10 with a row of three dwellings. As originally
approved the 2 bed dwellings have large rear gardens of 121 and 131 square metres in area so there has been space to readjust the layout and provide a further dwelling to compensate for the dwelling to be removed from the Sheldon Heath Road frontage. The 2 bed dwellings now proposed would be of a new house type but it has been designed to reflect the style and appearance of the other types approved for the site. The rear garden sizes for all three plots would also exceed the garden sizes recommended in Places for Living and these amendments are therefore considered to be acceptable.

6.9 Impact on Neighbours/Residential amenity

6.10 Although the layout has been amended most of the changes have not altered the separation distances with nearby residential properties which are in excess of the guidance recommended in Places for Living. The only area where there would be a slight change is at plots 9 and 10 where the revised proposals would add a third plot and reduce the separation distance between the new dwellings and existing properties in Rodborough Road to the west by approximately 1 metre. The new house type proposed also includes additional windows at first floor level in the rear elevation. However the back–to-back distances would still be over 29 metres, well in excess of the 21 metres recommended by Places for Living. It is therefore considered that the amendments to the layout would not have an adverse impact on neighbouring dwellings.

6.11 Other Issues/Community Infrastructure

6.12 The comments made by Local Services regarding the compensation required for the loss of the playing fields and to address the lack of public open space being provided as part of the development were addressed as part of the previous approval. The position is still the same in that the financial appraisal provided shows that the site would generate a negative return and that the debt would not be repaid until year 35. However a contribution of £100,000 was offered to help provide or improve public open space in the area which has been secured by planning conditions as part of the current approval. This condition is recommended again together with a further condition as before to ensure the 50 affordable units are provided.

6.13 The Education and Skills Infrastructure Team have also requesting a contribution be paid towards the provision of additional school places in the area however the £100,000 offered towards public open space provision is the maximum payment the applicants are prepared to offer bearing in mind that the scheme already generates a negative return. The current approval does not require any further contributions to be made.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 The application site already has the benefit of planning permission for 100 dwellings and this new application is for a slightly revised layout to allow existing public sewers to be retained within the site. The amendments are not considered to adversely affect the development or to have any detrimental impact on the site, its surroundings or neighbouring residential properties.

8.0 Recommendation

8.1 Approve subject to the following conditions:-
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<th>Requires the prior submission of Palaeoenvironmental/Dendrochronological Archaeological Work</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Requires the prior submission of a contaminated land verification report</td>
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<td>Requires the prior submission of a sustainable drainage scheme</td>
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<td>Requires the prior submission of a scheme to improve the existing surface water disposal system.</td>
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<td>Requires the implementation of the scheme for improving Platt Brook</td>
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<td>Requires the prior submission of a scheme for a buffer zone adjacent to Platt Brook.</td>
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<td>Requires the prior submission of a scheme for ecological enhancement measures</td>
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<td>Requires the prior submission of hard and/or soft landscape details</td>
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<td>Requires the prior submission of hard surfacing materials</td>
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<td>Requires the prior submission of a construction method statement/management plan</td>
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<td>Requires the approved materials to be used for the development.</td>
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<td>Requires the prior submission of level details</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Requires the prior submission details obscure glazing for specific areas of the approved building</td>
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<td>Removes PD rights for extensions</td>
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<td>Requires the scheme to be in accordance with the listed approved plans</td>
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<td>Requires the prior installation of means of access</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Requires the prior submission of a residential travel plan</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>Requires the prior submission and completion of works for the S278/TRO Agreement</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>Requires the parking area to be laid out prior to use</td>
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<td>Protects retained trees from removal</td>
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<td>Requires the implementation of tree protection</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>Requires the provision of affordable dwellings</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>Grants a personal permission to Birmingham City Council</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Requires the provision of financial contributions towards off site public open space in Sheldon Ward.</td>
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26 Requires the affordable dwellings to be built to the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4

27 Requires tree replacement within 4 years post development

28 Limits the approval to 3 years (Full)

Reason for Approval

1 Birmingham City Council grants Planning Permission subject to the condition(s) listed below (if appropriate). The reason for granting permission is because the development is in accordance with:
   Policies 5.7 - 5.40 of the Birmingham Unitary Development Plan 2005; Places for Living (2001), which has been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance; and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Case Officer: Lesley Sheldrake
Photo(s)

Figure 1 - View looking towards the Sheldon Heath Road frontage

Figure 2 - View towards the rear of dwellings in Rodborough Road