Mere Green Close, Off Mere Green Road, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham, B75 5BZ

Demolition of existing garages and office unit and the erection of 1 no. two storey building containing two apartments

Applicant: Carbury Investment Ltd
211 Bromsgrove Road, Hunnington, Halesowen, West Midlands, B62 0JS

Agent: David G Barton Ltd
Moorgreen Cottage, Radford Road, Weatheroak Hill, Alvechurch, Worcestershire, B48 7DZ

Recommendation
Approve Subject To Conditions

1. Proposal

1.1. The proposal includes the demolition of a small single storey office unit and 7 garages and the redevelopment of the site with a 2 storey building to provide 2 apartments.

1.2. The proposed building would be of modern design constructed of facing brickwork with decorative tile hanging on the front elevation and a hipped, tiled roof. A covered porch with a tiled roof would be included on the front elevation together with a decorative gable. A Juliet balcony would be included at first floor level on the rear elevation and a free standing cycle store with a pitched roof would be constructed in the rear garden.

1.3. There would be one apartment at ground floor level and one at first floor. Each apartment would contain a living room/kitchen, a double bedroom, a single bedroom and a bathroom. Bedroom sizes would exceed minimum guidelines.

1.4. A private amenity space would be provided at the rear for the apartments totalling 160 sq.m with additional planting along the rear boundary.

1.4. 4 car parking spaces are proposed for the apartments and parking in Mere Green Close would be reorganised to compensate for the loss of the garages. 16 spaces (including 4 retained garages) would be available as at present for the 12 existing residential properties and the office unit in Mere Green Close (the office unit would be demolished as part of the proposed development). The applicant has submitted a Transport Statement in support of the proposal which concludes that the site is located in a sustainable location close to Mere Green District Centre and bus routes, has satisfactory visibility at the junction with Mere Green Road and the proposed
level of parking is appropriate.

Site Layout Plan

Elevations and Plans

2. Site & Surroundings

2.1. Mere Green Close is privately owned cul-de-sac development located off Mere Green Road containing semi-detached dwellings fronting Mere Green Road, flats/maisonettes, a small office unit and garages dating from the 1950’s.

2.2. The cul-de-sac is adjoined by residential gardens to the west, north and east and Mere Green Road to the south.

Site Location

Street View

3. Planning History

3.1. None relevant.

4. Consultation/PP Responses

4.1. Transportation Development – no objections subject to conditions.

4.2. Regulatory Services – no objections.

4.3. West Midlands Fire Service – no objections.

4.4. Severn Trent Water – no objections subject to condition requiring drainage details.

4.5. Councillors, Residents Associations and nearby occupiers notified. 7 letters have been received objecting to the proposal on the following grounds;

- There is already a parking problem in Mere Green Close caused by a cleaning business and residents having 2 cars.
- Lack of turning space for refuse vehicles and fire appliances.
- Loss of privacy to residents at the rear in Harvey Drive.
- Restricted access off Mere Green Road and lack of space for vehicles within the site, congestion on Mere Green Road.
- Affect value of adjoining properties.
- Loss of privacy to garden and light to conservatory of dwelling to the rear in Harvey Drive.

5. Policy Context

6. Planning Considerations

6.1. Policy - The adopted UDP 2005 policies 3.8 and 3.10 seek to preserve the positive characteristics of an area and to improve what is less good in the City's environment. With specific consideration to residential development the adopted UDP 2005 policies 5.20 and 5.40, along with guidance outlined in Places for Living SPG and Mature Suburbs: Guidelines to Control Residential Intensification SPD seek to provide good quality housing that does not detract from the character of the surrounding area.

6.2. The adopted UDP 2005 (policy 5.25A) advises that new housing developments should be located on previously developed sites, which take account of the following: the suitability of the location for housing; the need to maintain a diversity of uses within the built-up area; whether there are any serious physical constraints, any intrinsic historic, cultural or natural assets; the accessibility of the site to jobs, shops and services by modes other than the car; and the capacity of existing and potential infrastructure to absorb further development.

6.3. National Planning Policy Framework (2012) advises that all housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including replacing poor design with better design; creating a high quality built environment; and providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations.

6.4. Mature Suburbs SPD seeks to protect and enhance the suburban environment and indicates appropriate design criteria for housing developments in mature suburbs. The key components of the design criteria are: plot size; building form and massing; siting; landscaping and boundary treatment; plot access; parking provision; design styles; and public realm.

6.5. Places for Living SPG provides guidelines for bedroom sizes, garden sizes and separation distances in new residential development and the 45 Degree Code protects the amenities of existing residential properties.

6.6. Character and design – I have no objection to the principle of the development on a previously developed site in a residential area. The immediate area contains a mix of dwelling types including dwelling houses, flats, maisonettes and bungalows. The proposed development of modern design would fit in with the character of the area and also result in the removal of an office unit within Mere Green Close. The proposal would be in accordance with guidance in Mature Suburbs SPD.

6.7. Residential guidelines and amenity - the proposed apartments would comply with guidelines for new residential development in terms of bedroom sizes and private amenity space. The rear elevation of the proposed apartments would be 10 metres at its closest point to the rear boundary with no. 32 Harvey Drive which would comply with the guidelines in Places for Living which require a separation distance of 5 metres per storey between elevations in new development containing windows to habitable rooms and private amenity areas at adjoining dwellings. I note the conservatory to the rear of no. 32 Harvey Drive referred to in the objections is a further 3.5 metres from the site boundary. The applicant is also proposing new tree planting along the rear boundary to provide additional screening. I do not consider the proposal would lead to any loss of residential amenity to adjoining occupiers.
6.8. Highways – I note the objections received from local occupiers regarding the existing parking situation in Mere Green Close. Although the proposal would result in the loss of 7 garages, the same amount of replacement parking spaces would be provided for existing residents and an extra 4 spaces for the proposed apartments. The proposal would also result in the removal of the proposed office unit which would be likely to generate more trips and parking demand than a residential use.

6.9. Transportation Development requested further information including details of whether Mere Green Close is adopted and a tracking plan to show how refuse vehicles and fire appliances could turn taking into account the proposed new parking. This information has been provided and Transportation Development raise no objections subject to conditions. West Midlands Fire Service have raised no objections with respect to access for fire appliances.

6.10. I do not consider the introduction of 2 new apartments, given the loss of the office unit, would likely cause additional car parking or highway safety problems. The applicants are proposing replacement and additional car parking and I have attached a condition requiring the provision of the replacement parking prior to the occupation of the proposed apartments and also a parking management condition.

7. Conclusion

7.1. I consider the proposal is in accordance with local and national planning policy and acceptable subject to conditions.

8. Recommendation

8.1. Approve Subject To Conditions.

1 Requires the prior submission of a contamination remediation scheme
2 Requires the prior submission of a contaminated land verification report
3 Requires the prior submission of hard and/or soft landscape details
4 Requires the prior submission of hard surfacing materials
5 Requires the prior submission of boundary treatment details
6 Requires the prior submission of sample materials
7 Requires the prior submission of drainage details
8 Requires replacement parking to be provided prior to occupation
9 Requires the prior submission of a car park management plan
10 Requires any highway works to be carried out to be agreed with the Highway Authority
11 Requires parking and vehicle circulation areas are not used for any other purpose
Requires works to the existing footpath prior to occupation

Requires the scheme to be in accordance with the listed approved plans

Limits the approval to 3 years (Full)

Case Officer: John Davies
Figure 1 - Garages proposed for demolition
Figure 2 - Office and garages proposed for demolition
Location Plan

This map is reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Birmingham City Council. Licence No.100021326, 2010