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SUPPORTING INFORMATION INCLUDING DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR TWO TOWN HOUSES LAND OFF BACK LANE, LEEK

MR A.L.WALTERS

REVISED APPLICATION

1. Introduction

The application site comprises a vacant plot of land situated on the south side of Back Lane, adjoining existing apartments which continue along this unadopted highway onto Belle Vue Road. The intention is to excavate the site and set into the slope of the land a pair of 3 storey town houses with garages at ground floor level and parking and manoeuvring space within the site curtilage. Vehicular access would be via the lane onto Belle Vue Road.
It is considered that the development would provide traditional family housing comprising three bedroom properties on a site area of less than 0.1 hectares. This is considered to be in accordance with market requirements for this part of Leek.

The scheme has been revised following the refusal of the first scheme for three town houses. The layout with two dwellings now provides more parking space within the site curtilage and sufficient manoeuvring space to allow vehicles to enter and leave the site in forward gear. Additional information is also provided to demonstrate that the site can be developed in a satisfactory manner, with a cross section based on a site level survey, indicating a similar excavation into the slope of the land as the adjoining apartments.

2. Planning Policies

2.1 The site is situated within the development boundary for Leek as identified in the adopted Local Plan and which the emerging core strategy would recognise as being an appropriate location in terms of sustainable development policies. The site would also meet the "potentially suitable" requirements of the Housing Land Availability Assessment in May 2009 in that it is within the settlement boundary with no known significant policy restrictions, physical problems, potential impacts or adverse environmental conditions.

2.2 In addition in respect of advice in P.P.S 3 Housing and sustainable development policies generally it is contended that:-

- The site is a suitable location to offer access to jobs, shops and services by means other than the car, Leek town centre being approximately 10-15 minutes walking distance away.
- There is known to be capacity in the existing infrastructure to absorb this limited development.
- The scheme would support local services and facilities
- Other than excavation of the site (the applicant has an end user for the materials) there are no known physical or environmental constraints on the development of the lands
- It will be argued that the scheme is of a scale and character appropriate (see Design Issues) to the locality, in particular the existing adjoining apartments.

3. Design Issues

3.1 It is the intention to create a form of development which would take account of the physical nature of the site, by cutting into the slope of the land. This would in turn require a three storey design to utilise the ground space in a similar manner to the adjoining apartments, but in the case of this submission accommodation at ground floor level would be limited and mainly for access and garaging. It is intended that the design parameters for the individual properties would be very similar to those on the indicative plan in the range;-

a) Height 9m-10m
b) Width 6m-6.5m
c) Depth 8m-9m

3.2 As the plans indicate, the scale and mass of the houses seeks to mirror that of the adjoining apartments. This idea has been further developed in respect of window openings on the front elevation which seeks to maximise the level of daylight on this side to compensate for the reduction of light which would occur on the rear elevation with the height of the surrounding land, particularly with the ground floor, although this is where habitable rooms are restricted to a study. Garden areas would be in accordance with the Council's normal standards, and as there are only two dwellings with the revised scheme, the gardens overall are now much more generous in area.

Access

3.3 Back Lane is un-adopted and although the highway is not of good construction, the informal view of the Highway Authority in their letter of the 12th February 2010 (Appendix 1) indicate that the scheme is considered satisfactory in terms of parking and turning for the type and size of development. The scheme provides for garage space at ground level and parking/ manoeuvring space on the site frontage which would enable cars to enter and leave the site in forward gear towards Belle Vue. It is considered that the revised scheme addresses the previous concerns of the Highway Authority and that no additional measures are required.

4. Conclusion

The scheme proposed would make optimum use of a vacant plot of land in an essentially residential part of Leek. In terms of latest government advice as set out in PPS3 Housing it would represent an efficient use of land which might not otherwise be developed because of the need to excavate the site. This factor is not considered to represent an issue or constraint which should prevent development as the cost would not fall on the public purse, and in other respects the scheme would not be out of keeping with the adjoining housing development, as demonstrated, which is similarly set into the hillside The site survey and cross section of the site demonstrate that the scheme can be developed satisfactorily with little difference to that of the adjoining apartments. The revised scheme for two dwellings is also considered to address the main concerns of the Highway Authority by providing more parking and manoeuvring space within the site.
As the development of the site has been considered acceptable in principle and as it would also meet sustainable development objectives in that the site is close to all facilities and services of Leek Town centre, reducing dependence on, and use of the car, it is requested that favourable consideration be given to this revised application.

APPENDIX 1

Development Services Directorate

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Our Ref: HoHNM/RCP

12 February 2010

Dear Mr Gower,

Development of 2 Town Houses, Back Lane/Belle Vue, Leek.

I refer to your letter dated26 January 2010 in connection with the above and confirm that am am satisfied that the provisions made for the parking and turning of vehicles are acceptable for the type and size of the development.

I trust this is of assistance and await further developments on the matter.

Yours Sincerely

Ron Parker
Transport Development Control Officer