

2014 / 034

Section 106 Obligations.

03 MAR 2014

Affordable Housing

The proposed development of the old Waterfoot Primary school is currently subject to section 106 requirements for affordable housing because the number of proposed units exceeds 15. Rossendale BC requirement in this instance is that a maximum 20% of the proposed units have to be classed as affordable units.

Waterfoot Investments propose to provide 3 units as affordable/shared ownership or rented properties to meet this criteria. To increase this number will cause the development to become financially unviable.

Open Space and Play Equipment

Rossendale BC SPD states "that full contribution is exempt if the contribution would make the development unviable"

AND

"The development would bring significant regeneration to the area"

The development site including, land purchase costs, final build costs and potential sales costs make contribution to open space and play equipment unviable for the reason below.

Our preferred option was to demolish the existing building and develop new housing. Having discussed this matter with the LA planners we were advised that the preferred option to develop this site would be the retention of the existing building structure. As a result of this guidance, our final planning submission proposes to retain the existing school building because of the historic value to the community and town. The potential commercial development opportunity is therefore substantially reduced as a result of this restriction.

The proposed development site is in the heart of Waterfoot town centre. Rossendale BC's Core Strategy DPD (adopted Nov 2011) chapter 4 states that:

- Development of the area will act to support the local economy and help to provide people with a choice of employment and residential opportunities.
- Redevelopment of derelict and under used sites is to be encouraged.
- Appropriate sites for new housing in Waterfoot should encourage families and young people to stay in the borough
- One of the issues listed states that local heritage buildings are poorly maintained.

This development will allow Rossendale BC to fulfil a number of its strategic goals that have been set down to regenerate the area.

Our proposals intend to:

1. Develop a building which is currently derelict
2. Develop a building that has local heritage value
3. The development proposes a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom apartments, with some new 3 bed houses-this will encourage a mix of young professionals and families to stay within the borough.

Taking these items into consideration we feel that the criteria for exemption is satisfied and as such should be exempt from the S106 contribution to open space and play equipment.

6.1 Public Consultation

Public consultations were held at the proposed site on 21 September 2013. Local residents were invited, to view the proposed designs and make comments.

As part of the open day an opportunity was provided to:

- View proposed designs
- View a scaled 3D model
- Tour of the site
- Ask any questions of the development architect who were present on the day.
- Provide feedback
- Email any follow-on questions

As well as the consultation, we advised local residents that we could email information to those who could not attend. For those unable to attend the original open day, a further consultation was also held.
paragraph line

There were 30 local residents in total who attended the initial consultation meeting and made enquiries online. The broad consensus was positive and in support of the key aspects of the proposed development. The general feedback from the majority who attended in person was they were pleased the building was being retained and being converted to residential use and this is a much needed development for the site and the area. There was also an overall positive response with regards to the architectural aesthetics of the new housing designs which were sympathetic to the architectural qualities of the existing building.

In addition to the broad positive view, we received nine specific concerns on feedback.

Concerns	Response
<i>The height of the two proposed houses on the west of the site, the proximity of these to their property, reduction in privacy and the restriction to their view.</i>	The height of the proposed houses is equal to the height of the properties directly opposite the proposed build which also matches the height of the school at the west of the site. Further down Thomfield Avenue to the west, the building heights increases by at least 5 metres from the peak of the proposed houses. The height is appropriate for the location, is and is the same as the height of surrounding buildings and does not break the street height line on Thornfield Avenue.
<i>The proximity of the proposed houses on the west side was mentioned as an issue in their feedback.</i>	The houses are stepped back from the edge of the footpath as much as possible, in-line with planning guidance and the constraints of the site. The distance from the elevation of the proposed houses to the houses opposite meet the minimum requirements to ensure current residents can maintain their privacy. Furthermore, we have since this changed the design that was shown on the day to ensure that there are no windows opening to the north elevation, thus ensuring privacy.
<i>The loss of view from an existing dwelling on Thornfield Ave.</i>	The proposals aim to be aesthetically pleasing, and yes they will affect the view from this dwelling, it will enhance the street view from what is currently a pre-fabricated building. The project becomes financially uneconomic without the inclusion of the new build properties. As a result of retaining the existing school building the scope for siting any new houses is significantly reduced.

<p><i>Four residents raised concerns regarding the impact on their views of Whitewell brook and the tree line behind to the south side of the site.</i></p>	<p>Two of the four residents do not face this elevation and as such will not be affected.</p> <p>To alleviate this concern, it was agreed to retain the tree that is situated between the new houses and Holt Street.</p> <p>The height of the four houses has taken into consideration their proximity to the properties on Holt Street and the height of the school roof. A step up appearance has been designed to show a link between surrounding properties.</p> <p>The tree line is over 35 metres from these residents, and therefore we believe minimal impact on their views.</p>
<p><i>A resident expressed concerns regarding the need for new housing as they see a number of vacant properties in the town.</i></p>	<p>Our research shows an increase in demand for housing in the area, population is expected to increase by 6.8% over the coming years.</p>
<p><i>Concerns were expressed at the loss of natural light</i></p>	<p>The proposed development is over 20 metres at the closest point from the houses across Whitewell Brook. The new houses will not exceed a height of 11 meters which means there will be no overshadowing to houses.</p>
<p><i>Car Parking-concerns with regards to any new development</i></p>	<p>The parking requirements for the development are entirely met by the spaces that will be provided on-site. There should be no need for on-street parking.</p>
<p><i>Increased congestion on Thornfield Avenue</i></p>	<p>There may be an element of increased traffic along Thornfield Avenue. However in the context of the previous site usage, and the potential reestablishment for educational use, we believe this proposal will significantly reduce congestion.</p>
<p><i>One resident said they were protective of the trees along Thornfield Avenue</i></p>	<p>There was evidence of trees being removed from the street in the past. Our proposals retain the majority of trees and only remove those that are necessary to provide an access road to the site.</p>