

TITLE : APPLICATION 2006/190
PROPOSAL : Erection of 1-storey extensions to the S & W sides
and extension/alteration of car park
LOCATION : Balladen House, Union Road, Rawtenstall

TO/ON : DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE - 30 MAY 2006

BY: TEAM MANAGER DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

APPLICANT : Lancashire Care NHS Trust

DETERMINATION EXPIRY DATE : 7/6/06

Human Rights

The relevant provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 and the European Convention on Human Rights have been taken into account in the preparation of this report, particularly the implications arising from the following rights: -

Article 8

The right to respect for private and family life, home and correspondence.

Article 1 of Protocol 1

The right of peaceful enjoyment of possessions and protection of property.

The Site

Balladen House is situated on the west side of Union Road, approximately 100m from its junction with Haslingden Road (A681). It forms part of Rossendale General Hospital.

It is a substantial 4-storey Victorian building, in extensive grounds, bounded by mature shrubs and trees. It is presently used as a non-residential training centre for health service staff and as a learning disability centre, its staff and visitors having use of a car park capable of accommodating approximately 25 vehicles.

Proposal

As part of the NHS Trust's on-going programme to rationalise and improve mental health service provision across Lancashire it wants to bring together on one site staff serving Rossendale who are presently split between three sites.

Whilst the upper two storeys of Balladen House will be used solely as office accommodation, the two lower floors will also contain consulting/interview rooms where Clients will be seen, by appointment. To facilitate this use of the building permission is sought for two 1-storey extensions that will increase its floorspace by

100 sq m (from 1,484 sq m to 1,584 sq m) and for additional facilities for the parking of cars/motorbikes/cycles. In amplification :

- That extension proposed on the south side will measure 2m x 22m and will in-fill an indentation in the front elevation, where there is presently a raised terrace. The extension is essentially a corridor, with new front door. An external platform-lift is also to be provided here to assist disabled people in entering the building via the front door.
- That extension proposed on the west side will measure 7m x 9m and is intended to form part of the intended day-care facility.
- The parking area on the south side of the building is to be extended to increase its capacity to 68 (7 of the spaces to be for use by disabled people), with a covered facility for motorbikes/cycles.

The Applicants Case

In support of the proposal the applicant states :

1. This use of Balladen House will overcome deficiencies in the current premises occupied by mental health staff and will provide greater opportunity for integrated working between the various teams of Community Support Workers, Consultant Psychiatrists and Psychology/ Therapy staff.
2. The proposed extensions are relatively small (adding to the buildings floorspace by just 7%), will not adversely affect openness, and are to be of a design/facing materials in-keeping with the existing building.
3. Although approximately 100 staff will be based at Balladen House it is anticipated that only 60 are likely to be there at any one time (many staff do home-visits, some will work outside the hours of 9am-5pm, etc). This being the case, the level of parking provision proposed ought to be adequate to meet the needs of both Balladen House staff and visitors, and complies with LCC's Parking Standards. It is happy for the Planning Permission to be subject to a condition requiring it to prepare a Green Travel Plan, to minimise the number of cars for which parking needs to be provided. Indeed, it hopes that this proposal will reduce the frequency with which cars presently park on Union Road due to a lack of off-street parking at Balladen House and the Out Patients Department (which is situated between it and Haslingden Road). The extension of parking proposed will not be evident from beyond the boundaries of the site.

Consultation Responses

LCC (Planning) considers that the proposed development is in conformity with the policies of the Joint Lancashire Structure Plan. In amplification, it states that :

- The development is located within Green Belt and, thus, subject to the provisions of PPG2 and Policy 6 of the Structure Plan. It has concluded that the proposed development will not have a materially greater impact/prejudice the openness of the Green Belt.
- Whilst the application proposes a level of parking provision that does not exceed its adopted Parking Standards, the site has poor accessibility by means other than the private car. Accordingly, it considers that the applicant should contribute £34,000 (ie £500 per car parking space), to be expended on the operation of the County Rider Service and its booking-service.

Notification Responses

One letter of objection has been received from a resident of Stacksteads indicating that decision upon this application should be held in abeyance pending decisions on the whole issue of healthcare in Rossendale.

A petition of objection bearing 67 signatures, letter of objection from a planning consultant employed by residents of Union Road and 13 letters of objection from local residents. The following grounds for objection to the application have been advanced :

Union Road is an inappropriate environment for a mental health resource centre - its siting here will endanger children living nearby/attending nearby schools and will diminish the security/value of nearby properties.

The very special circumstances have not been advanced to warrant permission being granted for development which is inappropriate in the Green Belt and would be injurious to it visual terms, nor would the criteria of Policy DC1 of the Rossendale District Local Plan be satisfied.

The proposed extensions add to the buildings footprint and extend into the open part of the site.

The proposal will result in increased traffic on Union Road (some of it outside normal working hours) and will be detrimental to highway safety, impede ambulances and cause inconvenience/ disturbance to nearby residents.

The Union Road/Haslingden Road junction is an accident blackspot and close to a zebra-crossing/school/bus stops.

For some too much parking is proposed and the resulting car park and cycle shed will form an unattractive and intrusive feature within the grounds of an imposing and attractive building, whilst for others inadequate off-street parking is proposed and the access to it so narrow/difficult to use that existing problems with on-street parking will be exacerbated.

Provision of the extended car park/cycle shed is likely to result in the loss of a mature tree and they will be visible from Union Road and the residential properties opposite.

The proposal will add to littering in the grounds of Balladen House/on Union Road by smokers employed in the building.

The covered motorcycle store could attract drunks/drug-abusers out of office hours/result in anti-social behaviour.

Rabbits, owls and other birds, bats, badgers, foxes, squirrels and other wildlife inhabit the mature grassed area now to be hard-surfaced as car park and the surrounding woodland.

Development Plan Policies

Rossendale District Local Plan (Adopted 1995)

- DS1 - Urban Boundary
- DS3 - Green Belt
- E4 - Tree Preservation
- DC2 - Landscaping
- DC4 - Materials

Joint Lancashire Structure Plan (Adopted 2005)

- Policy 1 - General Policy
- Policy 5 - Development Outside of Principal Urban Areas, Etc
- Policy 6 - Green Belt
- Policy 7 - Parking
- Policy 20 - Lancashire's Landscapes

Other Material Planning Considerations

LCC Parking Standards

Planning Issues

The primary use of Balladen House is presently for health service purposes and this will remain so. Furthermore, the existing use of the building falls within Class D1 (Non-Residential Institutions) of the T&CP (Use Classes) Order 1987, as too will the proposed use. Accordingly, the application entails no change in use for which planning permission first needs to be applied for and obtained.

Permission is required for the intended works, namely the extensions to the building and the extension/alteration of the parking facilities. This being the case, the main issues to consider are :

- 1) Green Belt; 2) Landscape/Wildlife Impact; 3) Neighbour Amenity; & 4) Traffic/Parking.

Green Belt

Whilst the residential properties on the east side of Union Road lie within the Urban Boundary of Rawtenstall, Balladen House and the rest of the land forming part of Rossendale General Hospital lie within the Green Belt.

PPG2 and Policy DS3 of the Rossendale District Local Plan indicate that within the Green Belt planning permission will not be given, except in very special circumstances, for development other than that for the purposes of agriculture and forestry, essential facilities for outdoor sport/recreation, and for other uses of land which preserve the openness of the Green Belt.

Clearly, the proposed extensions do not accord with Green Belt policy. As Government guidance states “the most important attribute of Green Belts is their openness” it is, therefore, appropriate to consider to what extent the proposed extensions will impinge upon openness and whether there are any other material planning considerations of sufficient weight to tip the balance in favour of a permission.

Balladen House is a substantial building which, though not a Listed Building, is a fine vernacular Victorian building, constructed of stone and with a slate roof. It is presently under-used. I consider it desirable that it is brought back into full-use. I have no reason to doubt the Health Trust when it says that none of the three buildings in which Rossendale’s mental health service staff are presently split is capable of accommodating all of them, and there are significant benefits for operational efficiency and the delivery of services to Clients from bringing the various Teams together on this site.

The 4-storey building now to be seen is very much ‘as built’ and the proposed extensions will add to its volume by less than 10%; the proposal entails a miniscule increase in the volume of buildings forming the premises of Rossendale General Hospital. The extensions are both single-storey. One will not project beyond the front face of the building. Whilst the other will project 6.5m to the west side it will not be visible from beyond the boundaries of the site, sitting significantly below the level of the roadway running on its north side and screened from it by the mature shrubs/trees on this bank.

Accordingly, I concur with the view of the County Council that the proposed extensions will not materially affect the openness of the Green Belt. I am also satisfied that there are good reasons for allowing them in terms securing the long-term use of the building for health service purposes. Similarly, I do not think that extensions of the scale/form proposed will add so significantly to the traffic visiting the site/activity at the site as to warrant refusal of the application on Green Belt

grounds. Nor will the proposed extension of hardstanding within the grounds, and the covered motorbike/cycle store, be visible to any significant extent from beyond the boundaries of the site.

Landscape/Wildlife Impact

The proposed extensions are to be constructed with stone walls/slate roofs and, in my view, are of a design in-keeping with the existing building. Details of the covered motorbike/cycle store have not been submitted. Accordingly, a condition is recommended to ensure it is of appropriate appearance. I am satisfied that it, and the extended car park, will not detract unacceptably from the openness or appearance of the area.

The car park extension will eat into the grassed area to the front of the building significantly, but will not result in the loss of any trees of particular visual/wildlife value. The applicant has indicated that they will be seeking to retain the large eucalyptus tree presently to be seen in the lawned area. The loss of three flowering cherry trees on the edge of the lawn is not unduly detrimental, the very much larger trees screening the sites boundaries remaining intact.

Neighbour Amenity

Whilst objectors have expressed concern about the intended use of Balladen House as a Mental Health Resource Centre, this does not require submission and approval of an application for planning permission. However, it is appropriate to consider how the extensions to the building, and extension/alteration of parking facilities will impact on neighbours by reason of their siting/size/appearance and the activity/traffic associated with them.

I am satisfied that the proposed extensions and the proposed parking facilities will not cause any neighbours significant detriment by reason of their siting/size/appearance, being largely screened from view from beyond the boundaries of the site by mature shrubs/trees. Conditions are recommended to protect this screen-planting and secure additional planting.

The principal impact of the application for neighbours will be in terms of the additional movements of people and vehicles to and from the site resulting from its use as a Mental Health Resource Centre and not, to any significant extent, from the extensions for which permission is being sought. Although the capacity of the car park is to be significantly increased (from 25 to 68 spaces). This does not reflect the change in traffic movements likely to occur as a result of the intended use of the building, still less the activity/traffic associated with the extensions. The existing car parks at Balladen House and the nearby Out Patients Department are all too frequently full. As a consequence the service road within the grounds of Balladen House and the grassed area now to be surfaced are used for parking, as too is Union Road. This on-street parking is a frequent source of complaint from local residents and the application proposal is designed to address it (without exceeding the level of parking spaces which the LCC Parking Standards allow). The number of traffic movements in the late evening/at night is not expected to be significant.

Traffic/Parking

For the reasons set out in the preceding paragraph I do not consider the development for which permission is sought will add significantly to the traffic on Haslingden Road or Union Road. Nor do I consider it appropriate to ask for the financial contribution towards public transport sought by the County Council. I would not wish the applicant to delete the proposed car park extension from the proposal to

avoid it and, as a consequence, leave unresolved the existing problems for neighbours/highway safety associated with the on-street parking that now occurs. To further reduce the likelihood of on-street parking I consider it appropriate to require by condition the production of a Green Travel Plan (to minimise private car use) and the improvement of the site access-point (to make it easier for vehicles to more easily enter/leave the site).

Recommendation

That permission be granted subject to the following conditions :

- 1) The development permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.
Reason :The condition is required by virtue of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
- 2) Notwithstanding what is shown on the submitted drawings, the development hereby permitted shall not commence until samples of the local natural stone to be used to construct the external walls to the proposed building (or an alternative closely matching it) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The external facing materials to be used shall in all other respects accord with those shown on the submitted drawings, unless a variation is first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To ensure that the materials used are visually appropriate to the locality, in accordance with Policy DC4 of the adopted Rossendale District Local Plan.
- 3) The development hereby permitted shall not commence until details of the motorbike/cycle store to be provided have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to first use of either of the extensions hereby permitted unless a variation is first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To ensure that the materials used are visually appropriate to the locality, in accordance with Policy DC4 of the adopted Rossendale District Local Plan.
- 4) Neither of the extensions hereby permitted shall be used prior to provision of the additional parking shown on the submitted Site Layout and the improvement of the site access in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, unless a variation is first agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason : In the interests of highway and pedestrian safety and to accord with the criteria of with Policy DC1 of the adopted Rossendale District Local Plan.
- 5) Prior to the commencement of development a Green Travel Plan shall be submit to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, setting out the measures to be taken to minimise private car use in relation to Balladen House upon first use of the extensions hereby permitted and subsequently.
Reason : In the interests of highway and pedestrian safety and to accord with PPG13 and the criteria of with Policy DC1 of the adopted Rossendale District Local Plan.
- 6) No development shall take place until a scheme of hard and soft landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, notwithstanding any such detail which may have previously been submitted. The scheme shall indicate all existing trees and hedgerows on the land; detail any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of development; indicate the types and numbers of trees and shrubs to be planted, their distribution on site, those areas to be seeded,

paved or hard landscaped; and detail any changes of ground level or landform.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the area, in accordance with the criteria of Policy DC1 of the adopted Rossendale District Local Plan.

- 7) All hard-surfaced areas/walls/fences forming part of the approved scheme of landscaping/boundary treatment shall be completed prior to first use of either of the extensions hereby permitted, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. All new planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following substantial completion of the building to which they relate/are nearest. Any trees or plants in the approved scheme of landscaping which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority gives written consent to any variation.

Reason: In the interests of the amenity of the area, in accordance with the criteria of Policy DC1 of the adopted Rossendale District Local Plan.

IMPORTANT
 © This drawing is copyright and remains the property of this practice
 Do not scale this drawing
 All dimensions to be checked on site
 Positions of existing services to be confirmed prior to proceeding

REVISION STATUS
 S Information issued for feasibility or scheme design.
 T Information issued for tender purposes only.
 C Information issued for Construction.
 NB: Only those drawings containing a C revision to be used for construction.

NOTES

REVISION	DATE	DESCRIPTION
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CLIENT
 Lancashire Care NHS Trust

PROJECT
 Proposed Conversion Of Balladen House

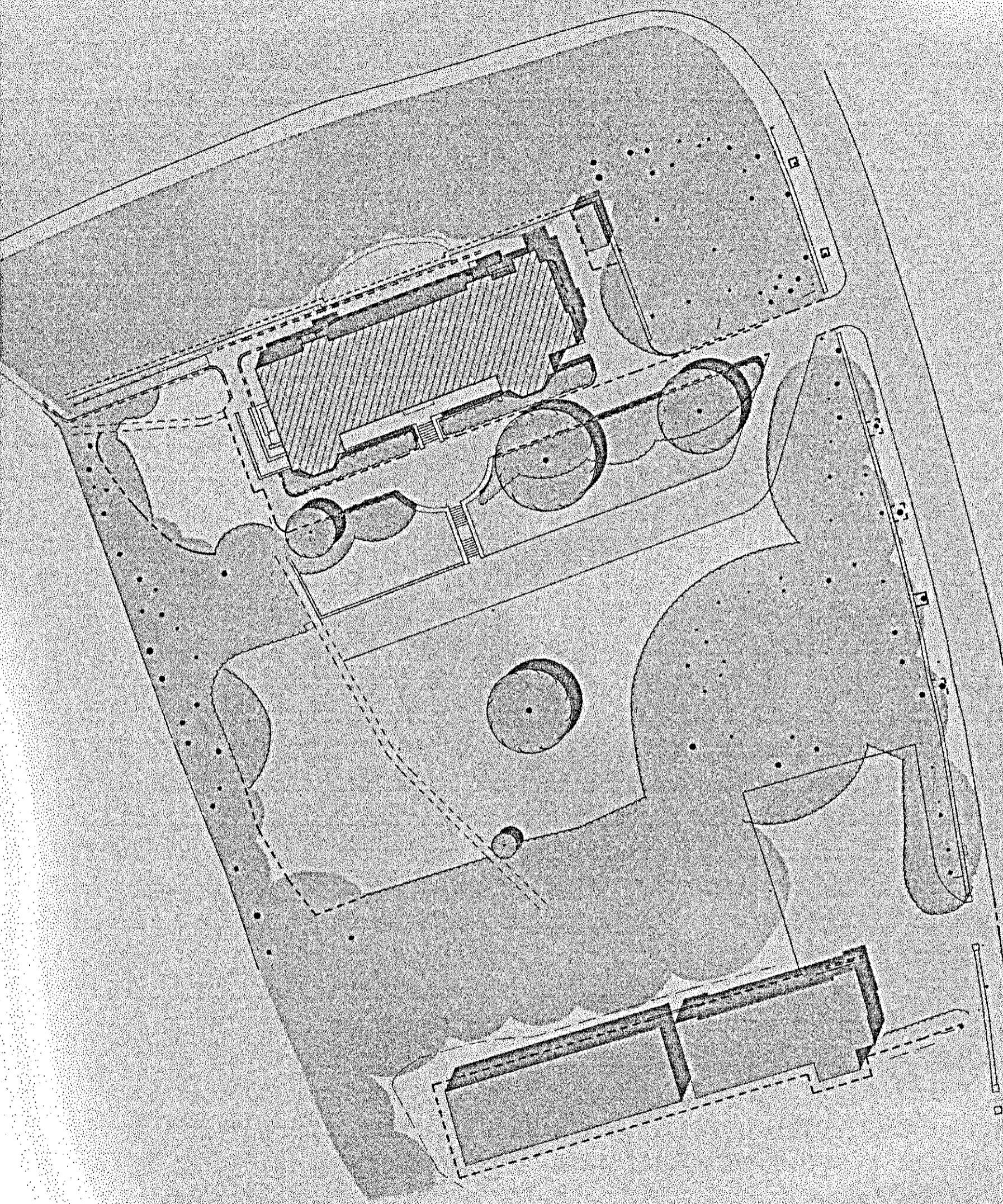
DRAWING TITLE
 Existing & Proposed Site Layout

SCALE	DATE	DRAWN	CHECKED
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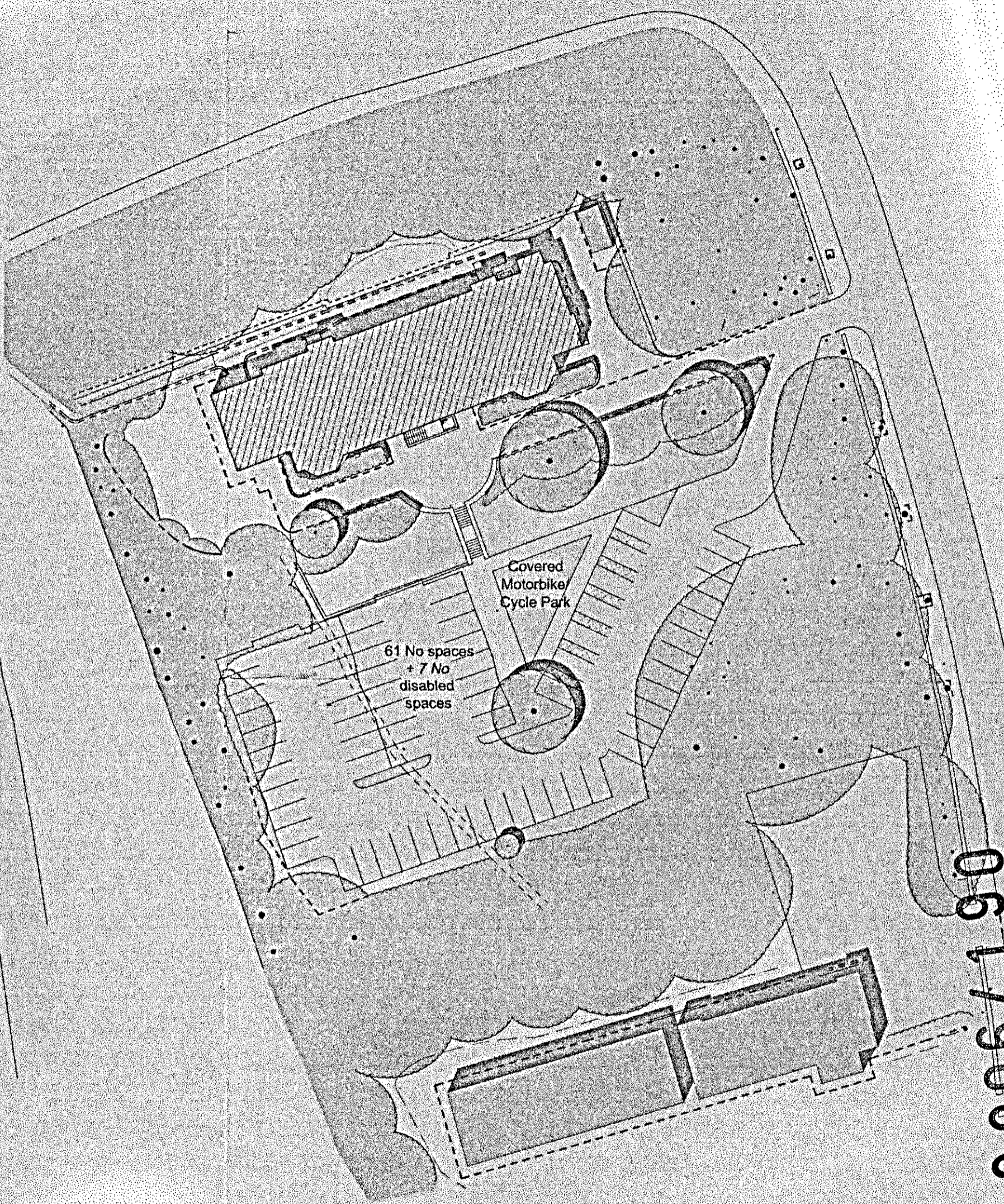
DRG NO.	REVISION
3509-107	

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Existing Site Layout 1:500



Proposed Site Layout 1:500