

Committee Date	Wednesday, 4 November 2020
Application Reference	20/00788/FUL
Site Address	Land adjacent 1 Park Terrace, Watford, WD25 9PL
Proposal	Erection of 3 x 4 bedroom terraced houses with associated car parking within the curtilage of the site
Applicant	Westfield Homes
Agent	Warner Planning
Type of Application	Full Planning Permission
Reason for Committee Item	Number of received objections
Target Decision Date	Friday 6 th November 2020 (extended by agreement)
Statutory Publicity	Neighbour letters
Case officer	Helen Harris; helen.harris@watford.gov.uk
Ward	Meriden

1. Recommendation

- 1.1 That planning permission be granted, subject to conditions and informatives (as set out in Section 8 of this Committee Report).

2. Site and Surroundings

- 2.1 The application site is approximately 710sqm in area and comprises of a vacant piece of land adjacent to No. 1 Park Terrace, a two-storey end-of-terrace dwelling. The site is situated within Character Area 21C in the Watford Character of Area Study. This Character Area is located in the northern part of the Borough.
- 2.2 To the north and east of the application site lies additional contemporary residential development within the neighbouring Borough. There is consistent architectural topology across the development, with buildings exhibiting similar materials and of a fairly consistent scale. This outer urban area operates as a cul-de-sac and has low levels of pedestrian/vehicular activity.
- 2.3 The application site is not located within a Conservation Area and there are no statutory or locally listed buildings either on the site or within close proximity.

3. Summary of the Proposal

3.1 Proposal

3.2 Full planning permission is sought for the construction of three, three-storey terraced dwellinghouses, each with four bedrooms, together with associated refuse/recycling stores and cycle parking and a total of six car parking spaces to the rear.

3.3 The proposed layout of each dwelling is such that the ground floor would comprise of an open plan living/dining/kitchen room and WC, the first floor would comprise of two double-sized bedrooms, one single bedroom and family bathroom, and the second floor would comprise a further double-sized bedroom and en-suite bathroom.

3.4 A total of 6no. car parking spaces are shown to the rear of the proposed dwellings, accessed via Kytes Drive. Additional landscaping is also proposed to the front of each dwelling in the form of small front garden areas, with each dwelling shown to have a cycle store to the front for two cycles each, as well as provision for refuse/recycling.

3.5 Each dwelling is shown to have a private rear garden, ranging between 67sqm to 128sqm in total area. Boundary treatment to the rear includes 2.1m high close-boarded timber fencing and gates, with individual gated rear access provided to each dwelling from the rear car parking area through into rear gardens.

3.6 Conclusion

3.7 The proposed three dwellinghouses sit comfortably within the street scene, without giving rise to any significant or unacceptable loss of amenity to the surrounding properties in accordance with the Development Plan. The dwellings would provide high-quality, good-sized accommodation and amenity areas. On-site parking using the existing vehicle accesses is acceptable to the Highway Authority.

4. Relevant Policies

4.1 Members should refer to the background papers attached to the agenda. These highlight the policy framework under which this application is determined. Specific policy considerations with regard to this particular application are detailed in Section 6, below.

5. Relevant Site History / Background Information

- 5.1 The application site has no relevant planning history.
- 5.2 The agent has sought pre-application advice from Watford Borough Council. A written response was provided to the agent on 14 April 2020.

6. Main Considerations

- 6.1 The main issues to be considered in the determination of these applications are:
- (a) Principle of Development;
 - (b) Scale and Design;
 - (c) Proposed Layout and Quality of Living Accommodation (including Amenity Space);
 - (d) Impact upon Neighbouring Residential Amenity;
 - (e) Highways, Refuse & Recycling Provision; and
 - (f) Ecology, Trees and Landscaping;
- 6.2 (a) Principle of Development
- 6.3 Section 11 of the NPPF establishes the requirement to make effective use of land. Paragraph 117 establishes that “Planning policies and decisions should promote effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions”. Paragraph 118 states that “Planning policies and decisions should promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively”.
- 6.4 The application proposals would provide for three, four-bedroom dwellings on a plot of underutilised land. Policy HS2 gives guidance on the mix of housing units sought across the borough in order to provide for the needs of the whole community. Policy SS1 acknowledges that in suburban areas a significant provision should be made for family sized units. Given the location of the site within an established suburban area, the majority of the units should be 2 bed or larger. The proposal would provide family-sized dwellings which are considered to comply with Policy HS2 of Watford Core Strategy which encourages family-sized accommodation.

- 6.5 Sustainable development underpins planning policy from a local to national level, which includes the creation of residential accommodation and it is considered that the proposed development would align with, and support, these policy objectives.
- 6.6 (b) Scale and Design
- 6.7 The area surrounding the application site consists predominantly of residential uses, with a varied mix in terms of building types and sizes. Detached dwellings feature along Kytes Drive to the north of the site, with flatted development further to the west on the other side of the North Orbital. In the immediate context of the site along Coates Way, however, the predominant form of housing is two-storey terraced dwellings with pitched roofs. Many of the houses have been extended in the roof and feature rear dormers. The general materiality is uniform, comprising of dark stock brickwork, u-PVC and painted timber windows and doors and clay tiled roofs.
- 6.8 The design of the proposed dwellings is traditional, with limited detailing. The building form proposed is considered to complement the local street scene in terms of its character and appearance. The scale of the proposed 3no. 4-bedroom terrace dwellings would also be in keeping with the general scale and appearance of neighbouring dwellings within the residential area. In terms of materiality, brick is proposed as the principal facing material which would be compatible with the local context. Clay plain tiles are proposed to the pitched roofs. Detailing around the window reveals would take the form of alternate courses of projecting brick at ground floor level and contrasting brickwork at first floor level. The positioning, scale and design reflect the wider character of the street and would sit comfortably within the street scene. Appropriate materials and design details will be secured by way of condition.
- 6.9 The proposed scheme would provide a functional layout and the design and appearance of the proposed terrace dwellings are considered to be acceptable in the context of the site's residential setting. The proposed terraced dwellings would have front access from Park Terrace, with rear access to private gardens and parking area via an access road off Kytes Drive.
- 6.10 Overall, the proposed dwellinghouses will reflect the scale, design and appearance of the surrounding houses and will enhance the streetscenes in Park Terrace.

- 6.11 (c) Proposed Layout & Quality of Living Accommodation (including Amenity Space)
- 6.12 The Nationally Described Space Standards (March 2015) prescribe the minimum space standards for new residential development which provide as follows:
- Bedrooms of 11.5sqm and over are considered to be double (2 person) rooms, whereas bedrooms under 11.5sqm are considered to be single (1 person) rooms; and
 - Dwellings should provide flexibility by providing at least one bedroom capable of being used and furnished as either a double or a twin room.
- 6.13 The Nationally Described Space Standards, March 2015 (DCLG) further prescribes minimum unit sizes. The minimum space standard set for 4-bedroom, 7-person dwellinghouses arranged over 3 storeys is 121sqm, with an additional 3sqm requirement given over to built-in storage.
- 6.14 Each of the houses will have an internal floor area of 126sqm. This slightly exceeds the minimum floor area set out in the nationally described space standards. Floor to floor heights are 2.7m, achieving 2.5m floor to ceiling height at ground and first floor. Storage space is provided under the stairs at ground level and first floor. At ground floor level, the open plan arrangement allows for the living/dining rooms to be dual aspect, with kitchens facing to the rear garden. At first floor level the bedrooms face to the front and rear. As such, it is considered that all of the main habitable room windows will be afforded with good levels of outlook, natural light ingress and ventilation.
- 6.15 In respect of privacy, the rear facing windows of the houses are 25.5m apart, which exceeds the minimum guideline of 22m for distances between proposed dwellings and will ensure acceptable levels of privacy. Each house will have a private rear garden area of between 67-128sqm. The Residential Design Guide prescribes a minimum area of 80sqm of amenity space for new four bedroom dwellinghouses. Two of the three dwellinghouses would have gardens smaller than this, with a deficit of between 10sqm and 14sqm. One of the dwellings would benefit from wraparound side and rear garden extending to 128sqm, significantly in excess of the standards. It is not considered that the smaller garden areas to two of the dwellings are unduly harmful to the quality of accommodation provided by the dwellings. It is also acknowledged that the application site is within close proximity to Garston Park which would serve as a supplementary recreational and wellbeing space for future residents.
- 6.16 Overall, it is considered that the proposed dwellinghouses will provide good quality accommodation for future occupiers.

6.17 (d) Impact upon Neighbouring Residential Amenity

6.18 Development is expected to be cognizant of the impacts that it may generate so as to avoid reducing the level of amenity available to either the application site itself or its surroundings.

6.19 The nearest properties to the application site are 1-3 Park Terrace fronting onto Coates Way which lie immediately adjacent to the application site. The siting of the proposed dwellings is such that they would be in a linear arrangement, following the established building line created by the existing row of terraced dwellings along Coates Way.

6.20 The building footprint of the proposed dwellings would follow that of the existing dwellings adjacent and not project further forward and out to the rear than the neighbouring dwellings. There are no side-facing windows proposed at any level to the proposed dwellings. As such, there would be no resultant direct overlooking, loss of privacy/amenity or loss of light to the living accommodation or external amenity spaces of those neighbouring properties adjacent to the east.

6.21 (e) Highways, Refuse & Recycling Provision

6.22 Pedestrian access to the proposed development would be via the front (Park Terrace) while vehicular access would be through the rear access service road (Kytes Drive) which would be extended for vehicles and car parking to the site.

6.23 The proposal would incorporate 6no. on-site car parking spaces (that is, two spaces to serve each dwelling). Car parking spaces are arranged so that four are perpendicular and two are longitudinal. The Watford District Plan states maximum parking standards within Appendix 2. This site is located within Zone 4 and for the development of 3 x 4-bedroom units, the maximum parking provision for the development should not exceed 9no. spaces (i.e. 3 x 3 spaces per dwelling max). The quantum of car parking spaces would fall within the maximum parking standards and is considered to be a reasonable level of provision.

6.24 The site is bounded by a service/access road to the rear of Park Terrace and the North Orbital Road (A405) to the west. A footway linking into the pedestrian underpass ramp underneath the A405 is set within a green area to the south. An existing 3m cycleway footway is present on the eastern side of the A405, bordering the site. The service/access road off Kytes Drive is maintainable by the highway authority with footpaths on both sides, providing vehicular access to the rear of a number of properties. This access road is accessible at its eastern

end via Kytes Drives, approximately 35m to the north of the junction with Coates Way.

- 6.25 Hertfordshire County Council have been consulted and have raised no objection to the scheme. Whilst acknowledging that the proposed development is an intensification of the use of the existing site, Highways officers consider that the scheme will generate low vehicular trips and the level of traffic to be generated by the proposed development would not result in a significant impact upon the local road network. Highways officers find the submitted swept-path analysis to be acceptable demonstrating adequate turning / manoeuvrability space for vehicles.
- 6.26 The proposal also includes space for bin and bike storage to the front garden area of each dwelling.
- 6.27 Plans depict Sheffield cycle stands for each property, positioned adjacent to each front door to allow up to two cycles to be securely stored. The Council would expect these stands to be covered/enclosed and a condition is hereby attached to ensure details of enclosure are submitted to the Council prior to occupation of the development.
- 6.28 Refuse/recycling is shown to be positioned in the front garden area for a 240litre and 140litre bin per dwelling. The bins would be brought to the front highway on collection day. Refuse collection will be made off Coates Way, in a similar arrangement to neighbouring properties. Details of these refuse stores will be secured by way of condition.
- 6.29 (f) Ecology, Trees and Landscaping
- 6.30 The application site involves the development of an area which was previously part of a site of deciduous woodland of ecological importance, however, this has now been cleared and the site has been used as a residential garden for No. 1 Park Terrace for the last several years. The site is, however, sited immediately adjacent to a site which remains deciduous woodland of significant ecological importance.
- 6.31 The planning application includes a supporting ecological assessment which finds that the site affords negligible opportunities for protected species. The boundary of the site is largely retained with close-boarded fencing with few access points for common garden mammals, such as hedgehogs. The woodland edge habitat along the northern site boundary is recognised as providing for potential foraging and navigational opportunities for bats.

- 6.32 The proposed development incorporates a number of ecological enhancement measures, including native plant species and species of known wildlife value in landscaping scheme; provision of tree, shrub or hedgerow planting along the northern site boundary to buffer the adjacent woodland habitat; provision of new bat roosting and bird nesting opportunities (i.e. 1no. bat box and 1no. bird box to be incorporated in the fabric of the dwellings) and cut-outs inserted to fencing at ground level to ensure hedgehog and other wildlife are able to move freely between gardens.
- 6.33 The Council's arboricultural officer has assessed the proposals, finding that the proposals would not impact directly on the health and longevity of the on-site trees. The proposed vehicular access extends to the extent of the boundary to the north which could have the potential to impact on the health of the offsite trees in the adjoining woodland. The Council's arboricultural officer recommends that a tree survey be undertaken on the offsite trees on the adjacent land, together with an Arboricultural Impact Assessment to ensure no damage is had to these trees through construction works. These recommendations have been dealt with via pre-commencement conditions attached to the recommendation for approval.

7. Consultation Responses Received

7.1 Statutory Consultees and Other Organisations

7.2 Internal Consultees

Name	Officer's Comment
Hertfordshire County Council Highways Team	No objections to the scheme, subject to the imposition of a number of informatives.
Waste and Recycling Team	No objections to the scheme. Refuse requirements noted.
Arboricultural Officer	No objection to the proposals, subject to the attachment of pre-commencement conditions.

7.3 Interested Parties

Letters were sent to 15no. properties in the surrounding area. Responses have been received from 10no. properties. The main comments are summarised below (the full comments/letters are available to view online):

Comments	Officer's Response
Exacerbation of car parking pressures and highways concerns to the rear access road in terms of safety (between intended users and other residents) and capacity to serve the proposed development	<p>The Highway Authority have not raised concerns or objections in relation to traffic generation or road safety.</p> <p>Maximum parking standards seek to prevent increased traffic generation. The provision of two parking spaces per dwelling is in accordance with policy. Please refer to Section (e), above, relating to access, servicing and parking provision.</p>
Loss of sunlight/daylight and loss of privacy	The proposal has been designed to not give rise to any significant or unacceptable loss of amenity to the surrounding properties. See Section (d), above, relating to impacts on surrounding properties.
Noise and disturbance resulting from construction activity	<p>The Environmental Protection Act, the Control of Pollution Act and the Highway Act control the matters of disruption raised and an informative is attached to this effect.</p> <p>Any disruption during construction works would be temporary and a construction management plan would be secured by way of condition.</p>
Validity of supporting technical studies/reports (i.e. concerns that Noise Assessment is not accurate due to date of survey / errors found in accompanying Planning Statement)	Errors in Planning Statement duly noted by planning officer. Specifically, page 27 (under Sustainable Development sub-heading) where reference is made to a different address/scheme. However, these errors do not make a difference to the validity of the assessment.

8. Recommendation

That planning permission be granted, subject to the below listed conditions and informatives.

Conditions

1. The development to which this permission relates shall be begun within a period of three years commencing on the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings:

2036 (P) 00-P9 – Proposed Ground Floor Plan
2036 (P) 01-P6 – Proposed First Floor Plan
2036 (P) 02-P6 – Proposed Second Floor Plan
2036 (P) 40-P5 – Proposed Elevations
2036 (P) 100-P2 – Existing Site Plan with Location Plan

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. Prior to the commencement of the site works the applicant shall submit a construction management plan setting out details of any demolition works, removal of materials from site, parking for all contractors, subcontractors, visitors and delivery vehicles, storage of materials to be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Highway Authority and that the service road accessed via Kytes Drive shall be maintained available for use at all times during the period of site works.

Reason: To minimise danger, obstruction and inconvenience to users of the highway, and for the free and safe movement of vehicles. This is a pre-commencement condition to ensure that the proposed measures during construction are satisfactory and are agreed with the Local Planning Authority before construction commences.

4. No construction works shall commence until details of the materials to be used for all the external finishes of the building, including walls, roof, doors and windows, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out only in accordance with the approved materials.

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31. This is a pre-commencement condition as the materials need to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority before construction commences.

5. No development on site shall commence until a Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment and a Method Statement in respect of tree protection measures (including ground protection) relating to trees located within and adjacent to the site (i.e. to include those offsite protected trees to the north of the site) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The tree protection measures approved under this condition shall be implemented prior to the commencement of any works and shall be maintained as such at all times whilst the construction works take place.

Reason: To ensure the existing trees which make a positive contribution to the visual amenity of the area are retained and not harmed by the development in accordance with saved Policy SE37 of the Watford District Plan 2000.

6. No work shall commence until a detailed tree and landscaping scheme for the site, including details of trees to be retained, trees to be removed and replacement planting, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved landscaping scheme shall be carried out not later than the first available planting and seeding season after completion of development. Any trees or plants whether new or existing which within a period of five years die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, or in accordance with details approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the site and the wider area, in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

7. No dwelling shall be occupied until full details of a soft landscaping scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved landscaping scheme shall be carried out not later than the first available planting and seeding season after completion of the development. Any trees or plants whether new or existing which within a period of five years die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, or in accordance with details approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the visual appearance of the site, in accordance with Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

8. No dwelling shall be occupied until details of the cycle stores and refuse stores have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and have been constructed in accordance with the approved drawings. The stores shall be retained as approved at all times thereafter.

Reason: To ensure adequate facilities are provided for the future occupiers, in accordance with saved Policies SE7 and T10 of the Watford District Plan 2000 and Policy UD1 of the Watford Local Plan Core Strategy 2006-31.

9. Notwithstanding the provisions of Article 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (or any modification or reenactment thereof), no development permitted under Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes A, B, C or D of the Order shall be carried out to the new houses without the prior written permission of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To enable the Local Planning Authority to ensure that any such developments are carried out in a manner which will not be harmful to neighbouring amenity or the character and appearance of the area.

Informatives

1. IN907 - Positive and proactive statement - GRANT
2. IN910 - Building Regulations
3. IN912 - Hours of Construction
4. IN909 - Street Name and Numbering
5. IN913 - Community Infrastructure Level Liability
6. IN808 – Vehicular Crossover
7. HIGH – Storage of Materials – Highway
8. OBSHIG – Obstruction of the Highway
9. MUD – Mud on highway
10. Roads to Remain Private

The applicant is advised that all access roads and parking area associated with the development will be unadopted and the developer should put in place a permanent arrangement for long-term maintenance.