

TAUNTON HERITAGE TRUST (PROPERTIES MANAGER)

Demolition of Corfield Hall and erection of 11 No. Almshouse flats with community room and ground floor offices for Taunton Heritage Trust with external alterations at Corfield Hall, Magdalene Street, Taunton

Location: CORFIELD HALL, MAGDALENE STREET, TAUNTON, TA1 1SG

Grid Reference: 322942.124636

Full Planning Permission

Recommendation

Recommended decision: Subject to a S106 agreement to secure affordable housing, conditional approval.

Recommended Conditions (if applicable)

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun within three years of the date of this permission.

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51(1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

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

DwgNo 1252/00A - Location Plan
DwgNo 1252/01 - Existing Site Plan
DwgNo 1252/06B - Proposed Site Plan
DwgNo 1252/07A - Proposed Ground Floor
DwgNo 1252/08A - Proposed First Floor
DwgNo 1252/09A - Proposed Second Floor
DwgNo 1252/10B - Proposed Elevations
DwgNo 1252/11A - Proposed Sections and Street Elevation
DwgNo 1252/12B - Landscape Plan
DwgNo 1252/13A - Proposed Railings and Bin Store

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

3. A cluster of five Schwegler 1a swift bricks or similar built into the wall at least 60cm apart, at least 5m above ground level and away from windows

on one of the east facing gable ends. Photographs of the installed features will be submitted to Local Planning Authority prior to the completion of construction works.

Reason: In accordance with Government policy for the enhancement of biodiversity within development as set out in paragraph 170(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework

4. Before the commencement of the development hereby permitted the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, shall have secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work (POW) in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which has been submitted and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The WSI shall include details of the archaeological excavation, the recording of the heritage asset, the analysis of evidence recovered from the site and publication of the results. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: To enable the remains of archaeological interest which may exist within the site to be appropriately recorded.

Reason for pre-commencement: Any works on site have the potential to disturb archaeological interests.

5. No building shall be occupied until the site archaeological investigation has been completed and post-excavation analysis has been initiated in accordance with Written Scheme of Investigation approved under the programme of archaeological work (POW) condition and the financial provision made for analysis, dissemination of results and archive deposition has been secured.

Reason: To enable the remains of archaeological interest which may exist within the site to be appropriately recorded.

6. Provision shall be made within the site for the disposal of surface water so as to prevent its discharge onto the highway, details of which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such provision shall be installed before the occupation of the building and thereafter maintained at all times.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety

7. The area allocated for parking and turning on the submitted plans shall be kept clear of obstruction and shall not be used other than for parking and turning of vehicles in connection with the development hereby permitted.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety.

8. Prior to first occupation of the development hereby permitted, access to covered cycle and electric vehicle charging points will need to be available. They shall be in accordance with a detailed scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety

10. The bin storage facilities shown on the submitted plan shall be constructed and fully provided prior to occupation of the dwellings hereby permitted, and shall thereafter be retained for those purposes.

Reason: To ensure that adequate facilities exist for the future residents of the site and that the proposed development does not harm the character and appearance of the area.

11. (i) A landscaping scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local Planning Authority prior to such a scheme being implemented. The scheme shall include details of the species, siting and numbers to be planted.

(ii) The scheme shall be completely carried out within the first available planting season from the date of commencement of the development.

(iii) For a period of five years after the completion of each landscaping scheme, the trees and shrubs shall be protected and maintained in a healthy weed free condition and any trees or shrubs that cease to grow shall be replaced by trees or shrubs of similar size and species.

Reason: To ensure that the proposed development does not harm the character and appearance of the area.

12. Prior to the construction of the building, samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development, including surfaces for parking areas and railings details shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and thereafter maintained as such.

Reason: To safeguard the character and appearance of the area.

13. Prior to the commencement of the development, a construction management plan shall be submitted to and agreed in writing with the Local Planning

Authority. All subsequent works shall accord with the agreed details.

Reason: To protect the amenity of nearby residential properties.

14. No demolition shall commence until a contract for the development of the site is in place and details of the contract submitted to and approved in writing with the Council.

Reason: To protect the visual amenity of the conservation area.

15. No development shall be commenced until details of the surface water drainage scheme, based on sustainable drainage principles, together with details of a programme of implementation and maintenance for the lifetime of the development, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This scheme should aim to enhance biodiversity, amenity value, water quality and provide flood risk benefit (i.e. four pillars of SuDS) to meet wider sustainability aims, as specified by The National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018) and the Flood and Water Management Act (2010). The drainage scheme shall ensure that surface water runoff post development is attenuated on site and discharged at a rate no greater than 2 l/s and agreed with Wessex Water. Such works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

These details shall include: -

- Details for provision of any temporary drainage during construction. This should include details to demonstrate that during the construction phase measures will be in place to prevent unrestricted discharge, and pollution to the receiving system.
- Information about the design storm period and intensity, discharge rates and volumes (both pre and post development), temporary storage facilities, means of access for maintenance (6 metres minimum), the sustainable methods employed to delay and control surface water discharged from the site, and the measures taken to prevent flooding and pollution of the receiving groundwater and/or surface waters.
- Any works required on and off site to ensure adequate discharge of surface water without causing flooding or pollution (which should include refurbishment of existing culverts and headwalls or removal of unused culverts where relevant).
- Flood water exceedance routes both on and off site, note, no part of the site must be allowed to flood during any storm up to and including the 1 in 30 event, flooding during storm events in excess of this including the 1 in 100yr (plus 40% allowance for climate change) must be controlled within the designed exceedance routes demonstrated to prevent flooding or damage to properties.
- A management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include the arrangements for adoption by an appropriate public body or statutory undertaker, management company

or maintenance by a Residents' Management Company and / or any other arrangements to secure the operation and maintenance to an approved standard and working condition throughout the lifetime of the development

Reason: To ensure that the development is served by a satisfactory, sustainable system of surface water drainage and that the approved system is retained, managed and maintained throughout the lifetime of the development, in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (July 2018) and the Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework.

Notes to Applicant

1. In accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework the Council has worked in a positive and pro-active way with the applicant and has negotiated amendments to the application to enable the grant of planning permission.
2. The applicant will be required to enter into a suitable legal agreement with the Highway Authority to secure the construction of any highway works necessary as part of this development. The developer should contact the Highway Authority to progress this agreement well in advance of commencement of development.
3. The developers and their contractors are reminded of the legal protection afforded to bats and bat roosts under legislation including the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In the unlikely event that bats are encountered during implementation of this permission it is recommended that works stop and advice is sought from a suitably qualified, licensed and experienced ecologist at the earliest possible opportunity.
4. Your attention is drawn to the agreement made under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, relating to this site.

Proposal

The application proposes the demolition of the existing Corfield Hall and the erection of a three storey building to accommodate 11 no. one bedroomed flats (Class C3). The ground floor would contain one flat, an ancillary community space and offices to be used by the managers of the units and also include an area for mobility scooter storage and charging and a laundry. Outdoor amenity space is proposed to the north-west and south-west. The first and second floor would contain the remainder of the flats.

Three off-street car parking spaces are proposed to the front courtyard area, with access from Magdalene Street.

Railings measuring approximately 1.25 m high will be erected on top of the existing boundary wall along the south-western boundary of the site. A new pedestrian entrance is proposed in the south-western boundary wall from the churchyard. Railings are also proposed along the lower boundary walls facing the car park.

The accommodation is proposed to be for independent living for people over the age of 60. The dwellings are managed by Taunton Heritage Trust, an Almshouse charity. All the flats are to provide affordable housing.

The application is supported with the following information:

- Ecology survey
- Daylight and sunlight assessment
- Archaeological assessment
- Tree survey
- Design and Access Statement

Prior to submission of the application, the proposal was considered by the South West Design Review Panel.

Site Description

The site lies in a central location within the town and within the St Mary and St James Conservation area. St Mary Church to the south-west is a Grade I listed building. A number of other listed buildings are located in close proximity to the site, including the Almshouses on the south-eastern side of Magdalene Street.

Magdalene Court , a three storey development of flats lies to the north-east. Cannon Street car park is located to the north.

The site lies within an area of high archaeological interest, located over the original town ditch.

Relevant Planning History

38/19/0427/LB - Listed building associated with this application

38/10/0438 - Change of use to mixed use A1/A3/D2 - Approved 15 March 2011

38/07/0542 – Retention of part of ground floor to be used as a café, Corfield Hall. Granted conditional approval on 21st Dec 2007.

38/06/0029 – Change of use to A3 restaurant use at Corfield Hall. Refused on 27th March 2006.

38/06/0009 – Change of use of retail shop to restaurant (class A3) at Corfield Hall. Refused 3rd March 2006.

Consultation Responses

*SCC - TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT GROUP -
Parking.*

The proposal would see the creation of eleven one bedroom dwellings on site, as well as dedicated office space. It is also intended that the communal area could be

used as external meeting space.

The properties proposed here are almshouse accommodation for the over 60's on a means tested arrangement. This would strongly suggest that the level of parking required, particularly in an area such as this would be minimal. There are several public car parks on the area that could be used by visitors, as well as a proposed area for three visitor spaces to the front of the property.

With regards to vehicle parking provision the Highway Authority would normally require that the parking provision reflects that of the Somerset County Council – Parking Strategy (amended September 2013) (SPS).

Additionally, as part of the Somerset County Council Parking Strategy, new residential development is required to provide cycle storage facilities and electric charging points for each property. To comply with the SPS standards there is a requirement for appropriate, accessible and secure storage for 1 bicycle per bedroom, the cycle parking should be secure, appropriate and accessible.

The submitted proposed site plan shows the provision of three parking spaces for visitors to the dwellings, electric charging points should be provided for the visitor spaces in line with the SPS.

The office use would replace existing nearby office use, at the existing location there is car parking for the members of staff, this parking provision is to be retained and used for staff at the new location.

Due to the nature of the proposed use the Highway Authority does not wish to raise an objection on parking level grounds.

Vehicle Movements

The average dwelling generates 6-8 vehicle movements per day. However, it is noted that in this case due to the nature of the proposed dwellings there is unlikely to be many vehicle movements associated with the residential elements of the proposal. The office use is to replace existing office use nearby and as such there would be minimal direct increase in the associated vehicle movements, however, the existing office space is likely to have a future use and as such this would lead to an increase in vehicle movements. The low number of associated staff is unlikely to lead to a large increase in vehicle movements and due to the town centre location it is unlikely to be a noticeable increase in traffic.

Visibility

Due to the location of the site and the high level of pedestrian activity to and from the town centre it is important that pedestrian visibility to and from the visitor parking spaces is maintained.

Other matters

The submitted proposed site plan, drawing No 1252.PL.06, shows an area of landscaping to the front of the site between the visitor parking spaces and the existing footway. This landscaping is on highway dedicated land and would therefore need to be removed from the proposal or the area stopped up by the appropriate mechanism.

Conclusions

Taking the above comments into account the Highways Authority does not object to the proposal in this application, subject to the imposition of conditions.

Further comments received from SCC -

Highways indicates that the land to the front of the site is not highway land.

COUNTY ECOLOGIST -

An Ecology Survey and Preliminary Roost Assessment of the application site was carried out by Quantock Ecology in November 2019. This found negligible opportunity for roosting bats in the building to be demolished. An informative has been included.

The National Planning Policy Framework (170d) requires biodiversity enhancement to be provided within development. A condition is included.

SOUTH-WEST HERITAGE TRUST

The site lies on the line of the medieval town's defensive ditch and bank which investigations have shown was re-used in the Civil War both as a defensive structure and to bury casualties if the siege. Therefore this proposal has the potential to impact on relatively significant archaeology.

For this reason I recommend that the developer be required to archaeologically excavate the heritage asset and provide a report on any discoveries made as indicated in the National Planning Policy Framework (Paragraph 199). This should be secured by the use of the following conditions attached to any permission granted.

Further comments received 28 May 2020

The applicant has submitted documentation to address the issues raised by Historic England (HE) in response to an email from this office. The documents include, an assessment of approaches to foundation design including a piling design and a Written Scheme of Archaeological Investigation (mitigation plan).

It is clear that development on this site will have an impact on remains relating to the medieval town ditch and possibly the re-use of the ditch as a fortification in the Civil War. The piling design document details the likely impacts based on current knowledge of the archaeological deposits and describes the methodology adopted to assess the impacts.

Based on these submissions it is advised that the sufficient information has been submitted to enable the significance of the asset, and the impacts on the asset to be understood as required by the NPPF paragraph 189.

In light of the information it is advised that two conditions be placed on permission to ensure the archaeology is dealt with as described in the WSI.

HERITAGE -

The proposal is for redevelopment of the Corfield Hall demolishing the existing 2 storey flat roofed hall and replacing with a residential block of 2 storeys with an additional storey part within the roof space with dormers. The accommodation would provide 11 units with community space and office. The building will be almshouses run by the Taunton Heritage Trust.

The site is located adjacent to the Church of St Mary Magdalene and within the

conservation area of St Mary and St James. Proposals will affect the setting more specifically of St Mary Magdalene, war memorial, Richard Huish homes, St Mary's vicarage and cottage adjoining; it will also affect the medieval town defences.

The current building is a flat roofed two storey building that currently is harmful to the designated assets due to its poor design and a pitched roofed building is preferable in this location as it will be more sympathetic to the design of buildings around it and fenestration and the overall design will respond better to local vernacular. Raising the roof of the two storey section will inevitably increase the mass of the building and it will be more conspicuous against the church however the higher levels of pitched roof would be preferable to the rather harsh flat roof; to incorporate the third storey is where there is greater impact.

The height overall however will blend in well with adjoining properties in Magdalene Street and the conservation area and it will have a softer appearance due to having a pitched rather than flat roof. Overall there is some harm from the greater height as identified by Historic England and this should be balanced against the public benefit of providing alms houses and community facilities. As Historic England have discussed the quantity of flats should be justified and I acknowledge there is a level of public benefit in providing community facilities and alms house flats. The following comments are more detailed comments on the design.

- The wider dormers seem heavy but unavoidable for this number of flats as they are the kitchens - particularly flat 10.
- The bin provision looks minimal for this number of flats and viewable from Magdalene Street. The detail design of these should be provided.
- Surface treatment of paving and visitors parking area should be agreed
- I question a dwarf wall, north facing onto the car park as views of the air source heat pumps and scooter store will be seen and that archway leading to the graveyard is attractive. It may need raising on the right hand side though it will make the seating area darker. The view through from the east side to scooter etc needs a bit of thought. It is questionable to have a scooter park where the elderly will be reversing opposite wall mounted air source heat pumps. What will be the material of the coping that the railings will be set into? A large scale detail/materials including railings (diam and heads) would be useful.
- The choice of brickwork and colour of pointing is crucial and should be conditioned.

I concur with Historic England recommendations on the scheduled monument.

DEVELOPMENT ENABLING SPECIALIST -

A S106 agreement would be required to secure the future tenure of the building as affordable housing.

PLACEMAKING SPECIALIST-

This has been well considered and I am largely happy with the scheme apart from the roofscape.

The oversized central dormer in the north and south elevations would appear very bulky and clumsy. This would be better treated as a stepped gable as shown below in the Design & Access Statement. This change would also visually help to

tie the design of the other elevations together, particularly the view facing the church tower.

There is little in the Design & Access Statement regarding sustainability and I do wonder whether solar slates could be incorporated.

No bike parking is shown for visitors and given this sustainable location this should be encouraged.

I would also encourage that more thought be given to the enclosure of Magdalen Street. Whilst this is shown as 'green' on the landscape plan, there may be an opportunity to have railings to the frontage.

LEAD LOCAL FLOOD AUTHORITY -

All SuDS requires maintenance, and due to the nature of the development, and we are disappointed that permeable paving could not be included within the design.

However, we are satisfied that in this instance the applicant has include further sustainable features within the design including rainwater reuse, rainwater planters and a green roof which we encourage for multi functional benefits. Therefore, we are satisfied to advise the LPA of a suitable condition to be applied to the application.

HISTORIC ENGLAND -

Following receipt of the latest amendments, we would refer you the council to our previous response provided on the 9th March 2020. The advice contained within that letter is still relevant in light of these latest revised drawings.

Recommendation

Historic England has concerns regarding the applications on heritage grounds.

Please see our previous letter for details of our recommendations dated the 9th March 2020 and attached to this letter for ease of reference.

In determining these applications you should bear in mind the statutory duty of sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments,

Representations Received

Thirteen representations received, including one on behalf of Magdalene Court Management Committee, raising concerns regarding the following:

- increase in shade and loss of sunlight to living room, bedroom and garden area
- noise and disturbance from the occupiers of the proposed building
- location and access to the community facilities located close to residents
- height of building would be unacceptable and result in overlooking
- noise and dust during construction

- inappropriate location of bins, plant room and laundry room

Six representations in support:

- accommodation needed for aging population
- design is in keeping with the surrounding area
- would provide surveillance of adjoining churchyard

Planning for Nature - Recommend conditions as recommended by the County Council Ecologist.

Following re consultation on amended plans a representation was received on behalf of Magdalene Court Management Committee:

Having considered the revised plans, we are pleased to see that the double doors at the rear of the community room have now been removed. This amendment is welcomed.

Notwithstanding this amendment, it is disappointing to see that no other changes are proposed to directly address the concerns of our clients. For that reason, we can confirm that the objections made on behalf of Magdalene Court Ltd (CAMP Planning Objection February 2020) in respect of the following matters are maintained:-

- The visual dominance of the three storey elements of the proposed building;
- The impacts of extraction and associated noise and smells from the plant and laundry room; now exacerbated by the addition of a door on the Magdalene Court facing elevation;
- The proposed location of the bin store;
- The need to mitigate the impacts of construction through the planning process.

In respect of the daylight and sunlight assessment, we would urge the Council to seek independent verification of the content of this report to ensure that it is an accurate representation of the likely outcome of the proposed development. Those living in the apartments of Magdalene Court facing the proposed development site are vulnerable residents who spend a significant proportion of their day in their homes. Any actual or perceived adverse impacts in respect of loss of light and/or overbearing will have a significant impact on their living conditions. For the Colliers report to state that impacts would not be material and would be de minimis is considered to be an understatement, particularly when the vulnerability of the residents and the importance of protecting their living conditions is given the appropriate weight.

We are of the opinion that the only way in which the actual and perceived impacts of the proposed development can be properly experienced is for the decision makers (planning officer and committee members) to undertake a site visit and view the application site from within the apartments of the facing elevation of Magdalene Court and from the intervening garden area. However we quite appreciate that the current circumstances mean that there is no possibility of this happening for the time-being. For that reason, we would strongly urge the Council to delay the determination of this planning application until such time that this essential site visit can be carried out.

Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that applications are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The development plan for Taunton Deane comprises the Taunton Deane Core Strategy (2012), the Taunton Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (2016), the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan (2008), Somerset Minerals Local Plan (2015), and Somerset Waste Core Strategy (2013).

Relevant policies of the development plan are listed below.

ENV4 - Archaeology,
A1 - Parking Requirements,
D10 - Dwelling Sizes,
D7 - Design quality,
D12 - Amenity space,
SP1 - Sustainable development locations,
SB1 - Settlement Boundaries,
CP8 - Environment,
DM1 - General requirements,
D8 - Safety,
A5 - Accessibility of development,
NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework,

Local finance considerations

Community Infrastructure Levy

Creation of dwellings is CIL liable.
Proposed development measures approx. 635sqm.

The application is for residential development in Taunton where the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is £70 per square metre. Based on current rates, the CIL receipt for this development is approximately £44,500.00. With index linking this increases to approximately £63,250.00.

Determining issues and considerations

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act requires that special regard is paid to the desirability of preserving the listed building, its setting and any features of historic or architectural interest when deciding whether to grant planning permission.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act requires that special regard is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character

and appearance of the conservation area when deciding whether to grant planning permission.

Principle of development

The site lies within a central location in the town centre. The principle of residential is considered acceptable.

The existing building is unoccupied and has fallen into disrepair. Its demolition would not be considered to be a loss to the character of the area.

The last approved use of the building was for A1/A3/D2, but is not located in a primary or secondary shopping frontage. The loss of the potential retail uses would be outweighed by the benefits of providing affordable housing on this town centre site.

Residential amenity

A number of issues have been raised by the occupiers of nearby residential properties.

- Loss of daylight and sunlight

The applicants have submitted a Daylight and Sunlight study in support of the application, which concludes:

The results indicate a significantly high level of compliance overall and Colliers do not view Daylight and Sunlight as a constraint to the buildability of the proposals at Corfield Hall.

The results of the technical assessment indicate that there will be a single breach of the BRE Guidelines in respect of a Living Room on the ground floor within Magdalene Court which is identified as 'Room 6' on the technical results that can be located within Appendix C.

Although there will be a minor breach in respect of the VSC (Vertical Sky Component) and APSH (Sunlight) methodology, the overall room exceeds the target criteria when reviewing the NSL (No Sky Line) results and for this reason, along with the fact that the APSH results surpass the guidelines annually, we do not consider this to result in a material breach. Furthermore, the loss of light to the window within 'Room 6' is highly unlikely to be noticeable to the human eye.

The overshadowing assessment for the external amenity area at Magdalene Court indicates that the space will surpass the recommended target values.

In any event, it is important to consider that the BRE Guidance is designed to be applied flexibly and should be used as a guide in understanding impacts and should not be rigidly applied.

- Overlooking

The number of windows on the north-east elevation above ground floor level (facing Magdalene Court) is limited to those serving the staircase and therefore the privacy of adjoining residents would not be significantly impacted upon.

- Reuse of site for residential purposes

The reuse of the site for residential purposes would result in activity and occupation for 24 hours a day, which would result in additional surveillance of the area.

- The location of the plant room and laundry room

The applicants agent has stated that the laundry room contain three washing machines and three dryers, less than if each flat had their own. Similarly, the plant room will provide heating and hot water for all flats rather than each flat having their own. The overall impact of noise and emissions would therefore be lower.

A condition requiring the submission of a construction management plan has been included, to provide clear expectations in terms of all aspects during the construction phase.

The use of the community space will be accessed via the cloisters to the south-west. The space will be managed by the Trust and will be for the benefit of the residents. The Trust will ensure that the residents are not disturbed by users of the community space and therefore occupiers of Magdalene Court should also not be disturbed.

Design

The design has been considered in the context of its location adjacent to listed buildings, within a conservation area and in close proximity to other residential dwellings.

The proposal was considered by the South West Design Review Panel. Their observations informed changes to the design prior to the submission of the application.

Raising the roof of the two storey section will increase the mass of the building and it will be more conspicuous against the church however the higher levels of pitched roof would be preferable to the rather harsh flat roof; to incorporate the third storey is where there is greater impact.

The height overall however will blend in well with adjoining properties in Magdalene Street and the conservation area and it will have a softer appearance due to having a pitched rather than flat roof.

Whilst the increase in height will have a visual impact on the adjoining residents in Magdalene Court, the impact would be limited to loss of views and some additional overshadowing of outside amenity areas.

A number of points raised by the Conservation Officer, Placemaking Specialist and local residents regarding the design have been taken on board and incorporated into amended plans.

The design has been amended to remove the doors to the rear (north-eastern elevation) to address the concerns of the residents of Magdalene Court. Cycle parking has been provided within the Cloisters area. The bin store, located to the front of the building, is overlooked by the offices in the proposed building and in close proximity to the pickup point on the street.

Parking and access

Car parking for three vehicles is proposed to the front of the building using the existing vehicular access. These are to be used for visitors to the site. Cycle parking will be provided below the entrance cloister. Mobility scooter and charging will be accommodated on site. Car parking for the proposed offices will be retained at the Almshouse site.

The proposal complies with policy A1.

Archaeology

The issues raised by Historic England regarding the protection of archaeology have been resolved. South West Heritage Trust are satisfied that sufficient information has been submitted to enable the significance of the asset, and the impacts on the asset to be understood as required by the NPPF paragraph 189. In light of the information it is advised that two conditions be placed on permission to ensure the archaeology is dealt with as described in the Written Scheme of Archaeological Investigation (WSI).

Conditions have been included accordingly.

Affordable Housing

The applicant and future manager of the site is a Registered Affordable Housing Provider and 100% of the accommodation is proposed for that purpose. A S106 agreement is required to secure affordable housing provision on the site should the ownership change hands in the future.

Conclusion

The proposal provides much needed affordable housing in a central location in the town, giving easy access for residents to services and facilities.

Whilst in a sensitive location, it is considered that the design and scale of the development would blend well with the existing streetscape and the conservation area.

Subject to the applicant entering into a S106 agreement to secure the future provision of affordable housing, approval is recommended.

In preparing this report the planning officer has considered fully the implications and requirements of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Contact Officer: Denise Grandfield