

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

27th March 2014

Item No:

UPRN	APPLICATION NO.	DATE VALID
	13/P2192	10/07/2013
Address/Site:	The Nelson Hospital (Assisted Living Phase) 220 Kingston road, Wimbledon chase, SW20 8DB	
(Ward)	Merton Park	
Proposals	Discharge of Condition 4 (Materials), attached to planning permission ref 12/P0418 for those parts of the re-development of the former Nelson Hospital comprising a 51 flat assisted living-extra care building with associated communal facilities (Site 2)	
Drawing No's	Site location plan and drawings; 10/1823/111.1 (Prop Elevations A&B obscure glazing), 10/1823/111.2(Prop Elevations C&D obscure glazing), 10/1823/102-1 Rev D (Proposed elevations A&B)and 10/1823/102.2 Rev B (Proposed elevations C&D) and drawing marked 'Cedar panelling detail' CGI Image received March 5 th 2014'.	
Contact Officer	Leigh Harrington (020 8545 3836)	

RECOMMENDATION

Approve discharge of Condition 4 (External materials) in respect of Site 2 of the redevelopment of The Nelson Hospital.

CHECKLIST INFORMATION

- Head of agreement: No.
- Is a screening opinion required: No
- Is an Environmental Statement required: No
- Has an Environmental Impact Assessment been submitted: No
- Design Review Panel consulted – No
- Number of neighbours consulted – NIL
- Press notice – No
- Site notices – Yes
- External consultations: John Innes Society
- Density - N/A
- Number of jobs created - N/A
- Flood risk assessment – N/A

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At the meeting of PAC on 13/02/14 members deferred taking a decision on an application to consider facing materials so as to allow consultations with the applicant regarding the possible provision of a “living wall” on the Manor Gardens frontage.
- 1.2 A copy of the earlier report is appended to this report.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The Nelson Hospital site, covering a total area of 1.3 hectares and fronting Kingston Road, comprises two adjoining areas of land, separated by Blakesley Walk. To the east of the footpath are the former hospital buildings, dating from 1911 which are currently being redeveloped with some façade retention and the construction of the new medical facilities on the majority of the site. This part of the application site is located within the Merton Hall Conservation Area and is bordered to south and east by the John Innes Merton Park Conservation Area.
- 2.2 The part of the site where the assisted living-extra care building is proposed is located to the west of Blakesley Walk. The land is outside the conservation areas and is currently an undeveloped area awaiting the construction of the assisted living facilities. No buildings on either part of the site are statutorily or locally listed.
- 2.3 The surrounding area is predominantly residential, with small scale commercial frontages on the opposite side of Kingston Road and in the adjacent Merton Park Parade that fronts The Rush. The two terraces of two storey houses that comprise Cleveland Avenue from which the building will be seen from the west include textured/pebbledash painted white/cream elevations, with soft red bricks at ground floor level between neighbouring bays, with tile hanging to parts of the projecting front bays and storm porches, timber beam details to gable ended roofs over the two storey front bays and tiled roofs. The two-storey semi detached houses in Manor Gardens, and which are within the Conservation Area, are similarly detailed albeit with greater areas of brick on the ground floor front elevation arising from being wider.

3. CURRENT PROPOSAL AND CONSIDERATIONS OF GREEN WALL

- 3.1 The proposal seeks approval to discharge condition 4 (Facing materials) in respect of the assisted living-extra care building, imposed under planning permission 12/P0418 and relating to the detailed appearance of

the development. Facing materials have already been approved for the local care centre.

- 3.2 Condition 4 required: “For the relevant phase: Notwithstanding any materials specified in the application form and/or the approved drawings, particulars and samples of the materials to be used on all external faces of the relevant phase of the development hereby permitted, including window frames and doors, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before any works are commenced. The relevant phase of the development shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details”.
- 3.3 Members requested the applicant investigate the possible provision of a living wall on the Manor Gardens frontage. At the meeting officer officers advised members that when the application had been originally considered by the Committee, the application had included illustrative drawings showing proposed external materials but these had not included the use of a living wall.
- 3.4 Officers have been in dialogue with the applicant who has considered the green wall option but has decided that this is not a viable for the following reasons;
- A green wall is not in line with the original concept of the scheme and throughout the negotiations the intention was to use a mixture of wood render and exposed brick work.
 - Construction drawings have already been completed and it is considered too late in the process to undertake a complete re-design that would be required for a green wall.
 - Green walls are difficult to detail and notorious for their ongoing maintenance - a cost that would have to be passed on to the residents via their service charge.
 - The green wall would add 100mm to the thickness of the wall and would therefore make it look bulkier.
- 3.5 Having decided not to investigate the incorporation of a green wall further the applicant seeks approval for the originally submitted materials namely;
- Facing brick to all elevations - Thakenham Red Multi-Stock’
 - Mortar - Natural,
 - Glazing - incorporates a mixture of clear glazing panels and black glass with black backing glazing panels set within grey coloured fixed and openable double glazing framing
 - Upper level cladding - vertically hung cedar panels, patterned so as to recess narrower strips of cedar behind the wider panels and all secured with stainless steel nails
 - Wall render_The proposal is for the use of “Chalk’ coloured texture rendering for the white render panelling sections of the building

- 3.4 Samples of the materials have also been submitted and the applicant will present the materials in context at the meeting with a sample board and has provided an additional colour CGI of the proposed finish using the proposed materials.

4. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The principal planning considerations and officer comments on the appearance and suitability of the proposed materials are found in section 7 of the appended report.
- 4.2 With regards to the applicant's reasons not to proceed with a green wall on the Manor Gardens frontage officers concur that a green wall was never part of the original design concept which was based on the use of three basic material types, wood, brick and render and it was these basic materials that were presented to members when permission was originally granted.
- 4.3 As demonstrated in the CGI image of the view from Manor Gardens, the actual amount of render visible from this elevation represents less than 25% of the total elevation. The render is not the main material on view and it is considered to serve to break up and 'lighten' the massing of the elevation as a whole.
- 4.4 In terms of the practicality of engineering a green wall on this elevation, the rendered sections also include at least 12 glazing sections. The green wall would have to be in a strip but given the lack of symmetry between the two rendered sections the placement of a strip of green wall is considered likely to appear rather incongruous.
Timber may not be a suitable material to affix a green wall to and its height above ground would make maintenance difficult whilst much of the brick based sections are actually given over to glazing panels.
- 4.5 In terms of the impact on the construction drawing process, whilst the completion of the construction drawings would not be a planning matter it is considered that there is validity in the assertion that providing a green wall would involve a redesign of the elevation.
- 4.6 The landscaping proposals include the planting of trees between the boundary with Blakesley Walk and the building and subject to these being advanced nursery specimens the trees should be able to rapidly create some screening of the site which would give an attractive 'green break' to views of the elevation.

4.7 Whilst the proposed materials will require maintenance and cleaning from a green wall will require regular maintenance in terms of watering and plant management in order that it serves its purpose of providing an attractive design and appearance. If this is not carried out or there is an issue with the planting then any benefits from the greenery could be counteracted by an unattractive appearance.

4.8 The addition of a green wall would add to the thickness and thereby bulk of this section of the wall although it is a matter of opinion for members as to whether this is acceptable or not.

5. CONCLUSION.

5.1 In accordance with members' request, the issue of the provision of a green wall on part of the proposed building has been the subject of discussion with the applicant.

5.2 Officers concur with the applicant's assertion that the subject of a green wall on the Manor Gardens elevation was never a matter for consideration during the extensive discussions between officers and the developers during the initial planning application determination, when the application was brought before members or during discussions between officers and the applicant relating to the discharge of the materials condition.

5.3 The applicants have considered and investigated the possibility of providing a green wall on the Manor Gardens frontage but do not wish to pursue this as an amendment to the design of the building. A green wall would require a redesign of this elevation and have adduced reason for not doing so. Officers note that planting will provide a green break between the building and Manor Gardens thereby softening in the longer term the visual impact of the building.

5.4 While a green wall as part of an integrated design solution for the building may have added visual interest, the key test is whether harm would arise on the basis of the facing materials now under consideration and whether permission should be refused. Given the level of detail describing the generality of materials when the Committee endorsed the application is considered that it would be unreasonable to withhold approval on the basis of the failure to now integrate a "Green wall into the design.

- 5.5 Article 30 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010 provides that the local planning authority shall give notice to the applicant of its decision on the application for discharge of planning condition within a period of eight weeks from the date when the authority received the application, or any longer period agreed in writing by the applicant and the authority. Failure to discharge the condition exposes the Council to the possibility of an appeal. The lodging an appeal would in turn expose the Council to an application for an award of costs in the event that an applicant considers the local planning authority to have acted unreasonably and the unreasonable behaviour has directly caused another party to incur unnecessary or wasted expense in the appeal process.
- 5.6 Members are respectfully requested to have due regard to the basis on which the planning application for the development was determined, not to delay determination further, and to determine the submission on the basis of the submitted materials palette.

RECOMMENDATION

Approve discharge of Condition 4 (External materials) in respect of Site 2 of the redevelopment of The Nelson Hospital.

Appendix 1 – Copy of report to PAC February 2014.