

Warwick District Council Development Control Forum Meeting, Wednesday 23rd March 2011, commencing at 6.00 pm.

The continuing progress in respect of a full Planning Application for a Use Class C2 development (Residential Care) at Quarry Farm, Old Milverton Lane, Old Milverton, Leamington Spa CV32 6RW

In September 2010, Opus Land and Care UK Ltd submitted a Planning Application on 0.45 hectares of land at Quarry Farm for the erection of a 80 bed residential care home (Use Class C2) after demolition of the existing buildings on this frontage land.

The Application did not include the full extent of the site. The land area to the rear (the subject of a recently granted Certificate of Lawfulness for commercial storage on a site of c. 0.5 hectares) was not included within the Application.

The submitted Planning Application (Ref: W/10/1236) represented a contemporary approach to Dementia Care and was based on arguments relating to environmental enhancement, the substantial provision of employment jobs, the clear cut need and demand for residential care (particularly specialist Dementia Care) within the area and the legitimacy of the landscaping and site enhancement measures.

The Planning Application received an Officer recommendation for refusal on the basis of Green Belt, landscape impact, the proximity of the rear commercial land and the loss of employment from the site.

At the Planning Committee meeting on 2nd February 2011, Committee Members' views were divided and approval for the scheme was lost on a vote of 5 against and 4 for.

In the light of the closeness of the Planning Committee decision, Opus Land and Care UK have taken the view that they should revisit the Application and take the opportunity to amend and enhance its provisions rather than resort to the Planning Appeal process

The joint Applicants believe that substantial refinement can be brought forward in a further Planning Application which can seriously enhance this development proposal.

One major provision to be introduced is the incorporation of the rear land area as part of the red line Planning Application proposal.

This land area, which would have remained as commercial storage as a result of the first scheme, was the subject of serious criticism by the Committee Members who found the adjacent Use of this land area as unacceptable to a neighbouring Residential Care Use.

Opportunity has now been taken to:

- Incorporate the full extent of the rear land into the scheme with a commitment that, on implementation (occupation), this land will be cleared of the commercial storage uses.

- Set the overall built form further back into the site from the road frontage;
- Increase the amount of car parking provision;
- Enhance the vegetation and landscaping screens;
- Reduce the height of the property in relation to the height of surrounding development;
- Demonstrate, in greater detail, the substantial employment advantages emerging from the scheme: and
- Identify, further, the clear cut logic of this particular site in the context of the provision of specialist residential care (Dementia Care) that is proposed.

Opus Land and Care UK have undertaken further work on all of the above aspects of the scheme and now wish to use the Forum as an opportunity to update Members and respond to issues that were raised during the Planning Committee consideration of the initial Planning Application.

The presentation to be made to the Development Forum will cover the following:

- An update on progress towards a new Planning Application
- Dementia Care: Need and Demand
- The legitimacy of this site for Dementia Care
- The Loss of Industrial Land
- The changed form of the Application
 - i) The use of the rear land
 - ii) The re-positioning of the development proposal
 - iii) The reduction in development height
 - iv) Landscaping and car parking
 - v) The Philosophy behind contemporary design
- The Employment advantages of the overall proposal.
- The justification for “very special circumstances” in Green Belt terms.
- Next steps and overall timetable.