

**East Malling &
Larkfield**
East Malling

569923 157169

**18 October
2006**

TM/06/03385/CR3

Proposal: Erection of a two storey detached building comprising 7 supported apartments for people with learning difficulties with communal space together with access, car parking and landscaping

Location: Land At The Former Mill Stream School Mill Street East Malling West Malling Kent

Applicant: Kent County Council Adult Services And Housing 21

1. Description:

- 1.1 This proposal is for the erection of seven supported apartments for people with learning difficulties within a single two storey building. The proposal will be sited over the car park area and the northeast corner of the former Mill Stream School. Vehicular access the site is to be via the existing access onto Mill Street.
- 1.2 The proposed building appears to be brick built building with first cladding on the front and rear elevations. The building has a mix of gable and mono pitched roofs, which results in shallow roof pitches. The proposed building will be 7.3m high, 19.5m wide and 20.1m deep with a number of recessed elements.
- 1.3 The applicant has submitted a Habitat Survey Report, a Design and Access Statement, which also incorporates the applicant's planning statement. These documents are available for the Members inspection prior to the Committee meeting.

2. The Site:

- 2.1 The application site lies outside the rural settlement confines of East Malling and within an Area of Local Landscape Importance and the Green Wedge. The site lies on the northern side of Mill Street and occupies the eastern part of the former Mill Stream School site. To the east of the site lies recreation ground and the north lies Malling School and a protected tree. The former has been demolished and this part of the site is used as the access and parking for the construction works for the replacement school buildings at Malling School site.

3. Planning History (most relevant):

TM/06/01645/LDCE Certifies

15 September 2006

Lawful Development Certificate Existing: School.

4. Consultees:

- 4.1 DHH: Housing: The scheme forms part of the Kent wide PFI initiative bid under which this Council seeks to benefit from seven units of self contained accommodation for people with a learning disability. The proposals are consistent with our involvement to date in the bid and have my support.
- 4.1.1 Contaminated Land: Available historic map data suggests no historic contaminative use of the site. PPS23 advises a precautionary approach and given the proposed residential use and therefore a desk top survey and walk over contamination report is required.
- 4.1.2 Pollution Control: No objection.
- 4.1.3 Waste Management Services: There is insufficient detail submitted about the site, building locations, bin stores, access road and bin collection points.

Responses received following KCC consultations

- 4.2 EA: No objection. Groundwater supplies need to be protected during construction and subsequent operation. A desk top study covering contamination needs to be carried out.

5. Determining Issues:

- 5.1 The main issues to be considered are whether the proposal is appropriate development in this location and whether the proposal will detract from the visual amenity of the locality.
- 5.2 The site lies outside the rural settlement confines of East Malling, where development would not normally be permitted. However, the site lies within the grounds of the former Mill Stream School and in particular covers the car park, access road and rear corner of the former school. This part of the school site is considered to be previous developed land.
- 5.3 In addition, given the nature of the proposal the supported accommodation for people with learning difficulties, it can be classified as a form of affordable housing. Indeed, the DHH supports this housing scheme and the Council is committed to the principle of such development, although not necessarily in this location, through its involvement in the PFI. Therefore, I consider that this type of development can be classed as exception rural housing. Therefore, given the status if the land and affordable housing provision, I consider this an appropriate form of development in this location.

- 5.4 The proposed two storey building is a large structure with a combination of gabled and mono pitched roofs. The building is sited on the former car park and at the back of the former school site. The scale and massing of the building is smaller than the former school buildings.
- 5.5 In terms of the design, the proposal does not appear to have been designed to specifically respect the setting of the nearby Conservation Area, the Kent Design and the East Malling Village Design Statement. The design is not in keeping with the local area and will set a poor precedent for future development in the area especially on adjoining Millstream School site which is currently being marketed by KCC for redevelopment. In particular, the side elevations are not aesthetically well designed, as they feature large two storey relatively blank elevations. The use of mono pitch roof forms also results in the side elevations proposed having parapet walls at two storey height for nearly half of their length of the building. The eastern side elevation of the building will be very visible from the adjacent recreation ground. Whilst I can fully support the scheme in principle, I consider it appropriate to request that KCC seek amendments to the design of the building to better reflect the quality and local character of the area. Such an approach has been taken at officer level – as we have not previously been consulted on the detailed design, but to date we have had no response from KCC.
- 5.6 The proposal will not result in the loss of any trees and will not harm the nearby TPO tree just outside the application site area.
- 5.7 The proposal will not result in the loss of privacy, sunlight or background daylight to any nearby properties.
- 5.8 In highway terms, the proposal will utilise the existing vehicular access from Mill Street. The proposed level of traffic movements from this development will be very limited and will not result in adverse highway conditions. The proposal will be served by 7 parking spaces, which is more than meets the requirements of the KVPS. The proposal appears to be acceptable in highway terms.
- 5.9 The DHH has raised concerns that the application does not provide sufficient details to determine whether there is adequate provision for refuse storage and collection. These matters will also be raised with KCC and part of discussions relating to the design of the building.
- 5.10 The applicant has submitted a habitat survey in support of the application, which indicates that the bat activity survey is required if any of the trees along the eastern boundary of the site are to be removed. These trees lie outside the applicant's control, as they stand within the East Malling Recreation ground. These trees are not proposed to be removed as part of this application.

5.11 In light of the above considerations, whilst I am fully supportive of the need for the development in this location, the proposed design will be visually detrimental to the locality, therefore, I would recommend that the KCC seek amendments to the design of the proposed building.

6. Recommendation:

6.1 The KCC be advised that TMBC raises **no objection** to subject to the design of the proposed building being amended as detailed by letter dated the 29 September 2006, Habitat Survey Report, Design and Access Statement dated September 2006 and by plans 10001A, 10002, 10003, 10004 and 1005.

Contact: Aaron Hill