

Demolition of existing building and erection of 7 supported apartments. Former Tram Shed + garden of Westbrook House, 150 Canterbury Road, Margate – TH/06/1300

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 13 February 2007.

TH/06/1300 – Application by Housing 21 and Kent County Council Adult Services for the demolition of existing building and erection of a two storey building comprising 7 supported apartments for people with mental health issues, with communal space together with access and car parking. Former Tram Shed and part of rear garden of Westbrook House, 150 Canterbury Road, Margate.

Recommendation: Permission be granted.

Local Members: Mr R. Burgess

Classification: Unrestricted

Site

1. The application site is located at 150 Canterbury Road (A28), Margate, approximately 1.7 km to the south-west of Margate town centre. The site currently consists of a former tram shed and part of the rear gardens of Westbrook House, a two storey residential home providing care for the elderly. The proposed site extends to approximately 0.28 hectares and is bounded by a high brick wall and railway line to the north, Westbrook House to the west, Canterbury Road to the south, and residential development immediately to the east (please see attached site plan).

Background

2. The application is one of a number of applications, which have been submitted on behalf of Kent County Council Adult Services and Housing 21. The proposals form part of a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) to redevelop a number of sites in Kent with extra care accommodation for the elderly and supported apartments for people with learning difficulties.
3. Outline planning permission was granted by the County Planning Authority on 21 February 2006 (ref: TH/05/1263) for a similar development on the same site location. The outline planning permission approved the principle of the demolition of the tram shed and the development of a 2-storey building, comprising 7 supported apartments for people with mental health issues. Within the outline application details of the external appearance, landscaping and design were reserved for consideration at a later point in time.
4. The former tram shed in question once comprised the western terminus of a tramway built and operated by the Isle of Thanet Electric Tramways & Lighting Company, which closed 1937. The building comprises a double height brick built shed with a corrugated metal/asbestos roof. The tram shed is open to the south with a cobbled access onto Canterbury Road with the original tram tracks retained in-situ.
5. The former tram shed adjoins the Westbrook House site, which has recently been partially redeveloped. This development work involved the demolition of the old Westbrook Day Hospital and the construction of a new two storey residential home providing care for elderly people.

Item D3

Demolition of existing building and erection of 7 supported apartments. Former Tram Shed, 150 Canterbury Road, Margate – TH/06/1300.

Item D3

Demolition of existing building and erection of 7 supported apartments. Former Tram Shed, 150 Canterbury Road, Margate – TH/06/1300.

Item D3

Demolition of existing building and erection of 7 supported apartments. Former Tram Shed, 150 Canterbury Road, Margate – TH/06/1300.

Proposal

6. Full planning permission (ie. not pursuant to the outline consent) is being sought for the demolition of the former tram shed and the construction of a new detached building housing 7 supported apartments for people with mental health issues, including communal space, and the creation of new vehicle and pedestrian access arrangements and car parking.
7. The proposed development consists of a 2-storey brick built apartment building under a pitched roofline. The building would create 558m² of floorspace, and would measure approximately 20m by 19m, rising to a height of 5.5m at the eaves and a maximum height of 7.5m at the ridgeline. The application details a contemporary palette of materials, drawing from the architecture of the adjoining Westbrook House, to include buff brickwork, off white (ivory) render, natural cedar cladding and blue/ grey aluminium window and door frames under a red tiled roof. The design of the building indicates windows to the principal habitable rooms (lounges and bedrooms) to the north and south elevations, with a restricted number of windows to the kitchens, bathrooms and windows to the communal halls shown on the east and west elevations.
8. The application sets out the proposed development and access arrangements along a north south orientation between the Westbrook House nursing home and the site boundary, locating the access road over part of the footprint of the former tram shed with the building and associated car parking on land currently forming part of the gardens of Westbrook House to the rear of residential property at 146, 144 and 142 Canterbury Road.
9. The access arrangements proposed for the site would link the development into the existing internal road layout at the Westbrook House site, using the established entrance and exit arrangements on to Canterbury Road. As part of the development the existing access point from the tram shed onto Canterbury Road would be permanently closed and the public footpath reinstated. The new access road layout proposes a separate entry and exit points onto the internal Westbrook House road layout, with 7 car parking spaces, and turning space to allow vehicles to drop off/ collect adjacent to the proposed building.
10. The application documentation includes a Ground Contamination Report into potential land contamination on site. The report recommends further ground investigation to enable detailed consideration of geotechnical and contamination issues prior to the development of the site.
11. The documentation confirms that the proposal was designed to comply with the principles of Secured by Design, creating good natural surveillance over the car park and private amenity space. The final scheme would include low level lighting to the parking area and pedestrian access, details of which have not been provided at this stage.

Item D3

Demolition of existing building and erection of 7 supported apartments. Former Tram Shed, 150 Canterbury Road, Margate – TH/06/1300.

12. The proposed development includes the felling of a number of recently planted trees within the grounds of Westbrook House and a number of closely spaced self sown Sycamores within the tram shed site.

Additional Information provided by the Applicant

13. During the processing of this application, the proposed access arrangements to the site, boundary treatment and the orientation of the building have been amended in response to concerns being raised. The revised access arrangements, shown in the attached drawing, sets out traffic flows to allow safe use of the existing entry and egress onto Canterbury Road. The orientation of the building has been amended to reflect the positioning of Westbrook House, and off-set the proposed building to the adjoining residential property.
14. The application includes an Arboricultural Survey, that concludes that the smaller recently planted trees on the site have no visual impact on the wider landscape and the self sown Sycamores are considered to be short term specimens due to their close spacing and are not considered significant to local amenity.
15. The applicant has also provided the following statement in response to the concerns being raised by nearby residents to the future residents of the proposed apartments:

'The proposed development forms part of the National Health Service (NHS) East Kent Inpatient redesign process, which would see the development of an additional 33 units of supported accommodation across the East Kent area. These 7 units would be for local mental health service users, all of which are already on the Local Authority Housing register and would have a local connection with the Thanet area.

Individuals living in these units would have their own dedicated support. This would be from professional workers such as Community Psychiatric Nurses, Occupational Health Therapists as well as support workers who would offer daily input to meet individual need. This support is a new service and would not place any burden on existing resources locally.

All the 7 service users would have been thoroughly assessed to ensure that they do not pose a risk to themselves or others and are capable of living in this type of environment, and are able to participate in local vocational resources. It is anticipated that these service users will be able to fully participate in the local community.

It is unlikely that these service users would have their own cars and would be using public transport. The only traffic onto the site would be from the staff that would be based on site. The same staff would provide support to all 7-service users and so traffic would be kept to a minimum.

There have been plenty of examples where initial concerns have been raised at the beginning of these types of projects but once people have moved in they have been fully accepted as neighbours and the local community.

Item D3

Demolition of existing building and erection of 7 supported apartments. Former Tram Shed, 150 Canterbury Road, Margate – TH/06/1300.

The Thanet District Local Authority Housing Strategy and Homelessness strategy both identify the need for additional supported accommodation units for people with mental health problems.'

Development Plan Policies

16. Kent and Medway Structure Plan (2006) – the most relevant Structure Plan Policies include:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Policy SP1 | Seeks to protect and enhance the environment and achieve a sustainable pattern and form of development. |
| Policy SS6 | Seeks to improve the built and natural environment, functioning and appearance of the suburbs of the major urban areas, including the provision of services and facilities that serve local needs. |
| Policy EN9 | Seeks to maintain tree cover and provision of new habitat as part of development proposals. |
| Policy QL1 | Seeks all development be well designed and of high quality that respond positively to the local character. Development, which would be detrimental to the built environment, amenity, function and character of settlements or the countryside, will not be permitted. |
| Policy QL7 | Seeks to protect potentially important archaeological remains. |
| Policy QL8 | Seeks to protect buildings of architectural or historic importance. |
| Policy QL11 | Provision will be made for the development and improvement of local services in existing residential areas and in town and district centres, particularly where services are deficient. |
| Policy HP6 | Seeks to secure a mix of dwelling sizes and types which will contribute towards meeting the identified needs of all sections of the community, including sheltered housing. |
| Policy TP3 | Local Planning Authorities should ensure that development sites are well served by public transport, walking and cycling. |
| Policy TP19 | Seeks development proposals to comply with the respective vehicle parking policies and maximum standards adopted by Kent County Council and Medway Council. |

17. Thanet Local Plan (2006) – the most relevant Local Plan Policies include:

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| Policy H1 | Permission for new residential development will be granted only on sites allocated or on other sites where there is no conflict with |
|-----------|--|

Item D3

Demolition of existing building and erection of 7 supported apartments. Former Tram Shed, 150 Canterbury Road, Margate – TH/06/1300.

- Development Plan Policies. Seeks all proposals to demonstrate adequate infrastructure and access to serve each unit.
- Policy H4 Requires all windfall sites to be assessed against set criteria, including location and accessibility, capacity of existing and potential infrastructure, and the physical and environmental constraints.
- Policy TR11 Seeks new development to provide safe convenient access and movement for all pedestrians.
- Policy TR12 Seeks provision for secure parking and storage of cycles.
- Policy TR16 Requires proposals to make satisfactory provision for the parking of vehicles.
- Policy D1 All new development is required to provide high quality and inclusive design, sustainability, layout and materials. Requires new development that, respects or enhances the character of the surrounding area; is compatible neighbouring buildings and spaces and does not lead to unacceptable loss of amenity; incorporates disabled access; retains features that contribute to biodiversity and the quality of the local environment; and promotes public safety and security.
- Policy D2 Requires landscaping proposals for all new development that enhance the development in its setting and incorporates the retention of as much of the existing vegetation on site as possible.
- Policy HE11 Seeks appropriate assessment of archaeological or historic importance of the site and the likely impact of development.
- Policy HE12 Seeks to preserve and protect archaeological sites.
- Policy CF1 Supports applications for new community facilities provided the proposals are not contrary to other local plan policies and the community use and location are demonstrated as appropriate.

Consultations

18. **Thanet District Council** – no formal comments have been received at the time of writing this report; any views received prior to the Committee meeting will be reported verbally.
19. **The Divisional Transport Manager** – no objection to the revised submitted drawing (7003 Rev.J), subject to conditions covering wheel washing facilities to be provided on site during construction to prevent the deposit of mud on the highway, and any works carried out within the existing highway to be carried out to KHS specification and satisfaction.
20. **Environment Agency** – no objection, subject to conditions covering:

Item D3

Demolition of existing building and erection of 7 supported apartments. Former Tram Shed, 150 Canterbury Road, Margate – TH/06/1300.

- further investigations at the site into ground contamination to determine any required appropriate remediation works;
- procedures to be put in place if contamination not previously identified is found;
- completion of relevant remediation works and submission of a closure report for approval prior to construction commencing on site;
- groundwater protection measures.

21. **The Airport Director, Kent International Airport** – no objection to the proposed development; should the maximum overall height of the development exceed 7.5 m above ground level, it will be necessary for the Airport to reconsider its opinion.

22. **The County Archaeologist** – no objection to the proposed development, subject to conditions securing building recording work on the tram shed before demolition, and a programme of archaeological work to evaluate the site's archaeological potential and mitigate for potential impacts from the development.

Comments that the tram shed formed the western terminus of a tramway built and operated by the Isle of Thanet Electric Tramways & Lighting Company. It ran for 11 miles between Garlinge and Ramsgate through Westgate, Margate and Broadstairs. The line opened April 1904 and closed in 1937 when its services were replaced with buses. The shed may retain elements of early Twentieth Century architectural and industrial archaeological significance.

Representations

23. The application has been publicised by a site notice and the notification of 41 neighbouring properties.

24. 6 letters of representation have been received. The comments/ objections raised relate to the following points:

- the proposal potentially represents over development of the site and would detract from the character of the surrounding residential area,
- the building would be too close to the site boundary and represents an unnecessarily imposing structure,
- the two storey building would result in overlooking to the adjoining gardens,
- the car parking is too close to the boundary and would generate excessive noise,
- objects to loss of the tram shed, due to its local historic importance as part of Margate's heritage which should be preserved for future generations
- the demolition of the tram shed would open up overlooking issues from Westbrook House to property on 144 and 146 Canterbury Road,
- the loss of trees within the grounds,
- concerns about highway safety in terms of any increase in traffic using a dangerous and very busy section of road, particularly with the junction between King George V Avenue and Canterbury Road close by and the bus stop yards from the junction and access arrangements which obscures vision of oncoming traffic,
- concerns about the safety of future vulnerable residents being housed near a busy road,
- concerns about the use of the existing tram shed access for construction traffic,

Item D3

Demolition of existing building and erection of 7 supported apartments. Former Tram Shed, 150 Canterbury Road, Margate – TH/06/1300.

- the proposed development would overburden the local infrastructure and support services,
- a unit for those with identified mental health issues is likely to lead to more people with such chronic illness and/ or those requiring significant support being placed into the area; thereby exacerbating the issues already faced by the services in Thanet,
- concerns about the future tenants that would be housed within the development,
- prior to the redevelopment of the old Westbrook Day Hospital in February 2002 a public meeting was held with local residents, at which assurances were given that there would be no facilities for those with mental health problems at the site; and
- perceived security and well being of the local community and nearby residents.

Local Member

25. The Local County Member for Margate West Mr. R. Burgess was notified of the application on 2 November 2006.

Discussion

26. In considering this proposal regard must be had to the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph (16 – 17) above. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) states that applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Therefore, this proposal needs to be considered in the context of the Development Plan Policies, Government Guidance and other material planning considerations arising from consultation and publicity.

Siting

27. The proposed development would be located on an area of land currently occupied by a former tram shed and part of the rear gardens of Westbrook House residential care home. The application site is located off Canterbury Road, and is bounded by residential property, Westbrook House and a railway line. The surrounding properties vary in height with predominantly two storey residential housing located to the south and east along Canterbury Road, with the two storey Westbrook House located to the south west. The apartment block proposed would effectively be constructed to the rear of the gardens of residential property at 142, 144 and 146 Canterbury Road within the grounds of Westbrook House. Access to this site would be provided through the demolition of a former tram shed that adjoins 146 Canterbury Road.

28. There are no existing land designations in association with the site proposed. I would advise Members that the layout and use of the development is largely unchanged from that proposed in the outline application permitted by the County Planning Authority in February 2006 (under reference TH/05/1263). That decision effectively establishes the premise of a building on the proposed site subject to the details of the external appearance, landscaping and design being approved. Whilst the current application is for full planning permission, not approval of reserved matters under the earlier permission, the changes from the outline layout permitted are principally minor alterations to the access and car parking arrangements proposed, albeit that the current proposal includes details of design and external appearance which need to be considered carefully to ensure they are acceptable.

Demolition of existing building and erection of 7 supported apartments. Former Tram Shed, 150 Canterbury Road, Margate – TH/06/1300.

Impact on residential amenity

29. The submitted drawings show the proposed building, at the closest point, would be approximately 3.5 metres from the site boundary with the rear gardens of adjoining residential property, and over 40 metres distance from the façade of the nearest houses. Westbrook House would be approximately 16 metres to the south west of the proposed building with a railway cutting 13 metres to the north. A new pedestrian and vehicular access that would link the proposed apartments to the existing internal road layout within the Westbrook House site. At the closest point, the access road would be situated adjacent to the site boundary with residential property at 146 Canterbury Road.
30. As detailed above, the proposed development would be situated in close proximity to surrounding property. A number of objects regarding the location of the proposed development have been received from nearby residents, and these are summarised in paragraph (24) above.

Overlooking

31. Given the location proposed there would be potential for the development to impact on the residential amenities of adjoining properties, particularly the rear gardens. As such careful consideration needs to be given as to whether the development would result in an unacceptable impact on residential amenity through overlooking, loss of light or creation of an unacceptable sense of enclosure.
32. The application proposes a building that has been designed to reduce the opportunities for overlooking to occur, avoiding direct views towards residential property. The elevations of the building proposed show all windows that serve the principal habitable rooms (lounges or bedrooms) within the various apartments in the north-east and south-west elevations. A reduced number of windows are shown to the south-east and north-west elevations, serving bathrooms, kitchens or communal hallways. This approach would reduce opportunities for overlooking to occur from the south-east elevation over the rear of the adjacent gardens. In addition to the above, during the processing of the application the applicant has amended the proposal, re-orientating the building to further increase the angle at which overlooking could potentially occur from the south-west elevation; offsetting the proposed building to the adjacent boundary line. The application also includes an undertaking to provide further landscape work and a boundary wall to the east of the site to a height of 1.8 metres, with a 0.3 metre trellis on top of the section of the wall bounding the adjoining rear gardens. Consequently, further reducing opportunities for overlooking from ground floor windows and offering opportunities for a planting scheme to soften and break up views of the development.
33. The standard advice on distances between windows of habitable rooms in order to prevent loss of privacy is 21 metres. The distances between window and wall, or wall to wall can be much closer. The Kent Design Guide advises that normally the area directly outside the rear doorway of residential property should be treated as private outdoor space. This should not be directly overlooked from adjacent property or public areas.
34. The distances from the proposed apartment building to residential property at 144 and 142 Canterbury Road would be in excess of 40 metres, with the main facade of property at 146 Canterbury Road in excess of 50 metres. Given the above, the issue of views

Demolition of existing building and erection of 7 supported apartments. Former Tram Shed, 150 Canterbury Road, Margate – TH/06/1300.

into residential buildings from the proposed apartments is considered to be within the acceptable guidance.

35. Concern has also been raised by nearby residents that the demolition of the tram shed would potentially open up overlooking from the existing Westbrook House nursing home into residential property. The distances between the closest elevation of Westbrook House and property at 146 Canterbury Road are less than those quoted above (approximately 15 metres). In my opinion, the provision of a boundary wall at least 1.8 metres in height along with an suitable landscaping scheme, to include appropriate planting to either side of the access road between the two buildings, would reduce the likelihood of an unacceptable loss of privacy occurring at this location.
36. Given the location of the development proposed the first floor windows would have the potential to overlook the rear gardens of residential property. The Kent Design Guide advises that the area directly adjacent to residential property should be afforded the most protection, with views over the far end of residential gardens less likely to impact on amenity. As detailed above the distances from the proposal to the area of garden directly adjacent to residential property would be in excess of 40 metres. Taking account of the distances involved, in my opinion, the design of the building coupled with a carefully thought out scheme of hard and soft landscaping should limit the potential for unacceptable levels of overlooking to occur.

Proximity

37. Objections have been raised by nearby residents about the proximity of the building to the boundary and potential for overshadowing of residential gardens. The comments received also raise concern that the application as proposed represents over development of the Westbrook House site. Consideration should be given to whether the layout and scale of the development as proposed is acceptable in relation to the existing neighbouring uses and open spaces, bearing in mind the outline planning permission that was granted last year.
38. The proposed layout shows the building within 4 metres of the boundary line, rising up to a height of 5.5 metres at the eaves. Whilst the positioning of the building would be close the adjacent gardens, the built structure would be located to the north and west of residential property and as such would not have an unacceptable impact on the sunlight or daylight reaching the gardens or cause an unacceptable level of overshadowing. I would also note that the area of land directly adjoining the site to the east represents the far end of the residential gardens.
39. Further to the above, I would point out that the development as proposed would involve the demolition of the tram shed building which has a far greater overshadowing/overbearing impact on the residential property at 146 Canterbury Road.
40. The proximity of the proposed access road to the side and rear quarter of property at 146 Canterbury Road has the potential to impact on residential amenity in terms of noise and disturbance generated by any traffic using the site. The access road as proposed is positioned directly along the boundary line with 146 Canterbury Road, passing within approximately 2 metres of this property. I would acknowledge that the site plans provided in association with this application do not detail an extension to 146 Canterbury

Item D3

Demolition of existing building and erection of 7 supported apartments. Former Tram Shed, 150 Canterbury Road, Margate – TH/06/1300.

Road, which moves the façade of the building closer to the boundary with the tram shed site.

41. Noise and disturbance from vehicle movements is difficult to assess due to its intermittent nature. However, due to the nature of the potential future residents of the supported apartments proposed, the applicant has advised that they are unlikely to drive. As such any traffic movements generated by the scheme are likely to be as a result of staff and/ or visitors attending the site. Given the number of apartments proposed these movements are likely to be intermittent and unlikely to result in an unacceptable level of disturbance. The provision of a brick built boundary wall would provide some acoustic screening to the access road. Taking all of the above into account alongside the outline planning permission, I would not consider the impact of disturbance from vehicle movements would be sufficient to justify a recommendation for refusal of this application.
42. Therefore, subject to the consideration of design, visual impact, access and highway safety, security and well being, heritage, landscaping, and ground contamination below, in my opinion the proposal would accord with Kent and Medway Structure Plan Policies SP1 and QL1 and Thanet Local Plan Policies H1, H4 and D1.

Design and visual impact

43. The proposed development consists of a 2-storey apartment building that could potentially have an impact on the visual amenity of the surrounding environment. The design of the building and the way that it would potentially integrate with the character of the surrounding built environment should be considered against the appropriate Development Plan Policies.
44. The application details the proposed building as brick built, under a red tiled roof, finished in contemporary materials including buff brickwork, ivory render, natural cedar cladding with blue/ grey aluminium window and door frames. The configuration of the windows and the materials proposed would reflect the built style adopted within Westbrook House, with the render and roofing material drawing on residential property in Canterbury Road.
45. The height and mass of the proposed apartment is sympathetic to the adjoining buildings, being not considerably larger in mass than the residential property on Canterbury Road and less significant than Westbrook House. The pitched roofline proposed would be similar in height to the existing buildings and would create an interesting and not inappropriate visual impact. In my opinion, the overall effect of the design is not out of character with the area given the adjoining nursing home. The siting of the building to the rear of residential property and Westbrook House mean that views of the development from the street scene would be limited. The use of contemporary materials coupled with the provision of landscaping within the site would serve to break up views of the structure and reduce any impact the development may have on the surrounding area. Therefore, subject to the consideration of access and highway safety, security and well being, heritage, landscaping, and ground contamination below, and the imposition of a conditions covering, amongst other matters, the submission of a landscape scheme, the proposal would accord with Kent and Medway Structure Plan Policies SP1, SS6 and QL1 and Thanet Local Plan Policies H1, H4 and D1.

Demolition of existing building and erection of 7 supported apartments. Former Tram Shed, 150 Canterbury Road, Margate – TH/06/1300.

Access and highway safety

46. Concern has been raised by nearby residents about the highway safety implications of siting a new development within the Westbrook House site. The objections relate to the potential for additional vehicle movements associated with the development adding to the existing traffic levels in the area and the potential safety implications of any increased use of the existing Westbrook House entry and exit arrangements onto Canterbury Road.
47. I would advise that the outline planning permission (TH/05/1263) establishes the use of the Westbrook House access arrangements in association with an apartment building at the site. The Divisional Transportation Manager commented on the outline planning application that the construction of 7 new apartments would not generate sufficient traffic over that already using the site to cause a problem, or to justify the need for further investigation of the traffic issues in the surrounding area.
48. In response to the current application, the Division Transportation Manager has advised on amendments to the internal road layout to take account of highway safety considerations and is raising no objections on highway grounds, subject to conditions. Please see paragraph (19) above.
49. The application includes 7 car-parking spaces, which would accord with the provisions set out with the current Kent Vehicle Parking Standards. Further to this, the applicant has advised that given the nature of the potential residents they are unlikely to own a car and any vehicle parking arrangements would mostly be used by staff/ visitors attending the site. Provision for cycle parking has been included within the proposed scheme, and should planning permission be granted further details could be required by way of a condition on any decision notice. The pedestrian access arrangements shown would require further clarification, as it is not clear how visitors entering the site on foot would reach the building without entering the internal access road and conflicting with vehicle movements. However, this detail could be covered by way of condition should Member be minded to permit the application.
50. Concern has also been raised within correspondence received from local residents about the housing of vulnerable people close to a busy road. I would advise that the Westbrook House nursing home already accommodates vulnerable people at the site. The location enjoys large grounds, easy access to the local footpath network and to public transport. Whilst the location of a busy road in close proximity to the development may not be ideal, this would be a concern in any urban location. Adult Services would have taken account of this when considering possible sites. In my opinion, the easy access to the footpath and public transport network, coupled with the existing nursing home, establishes the acceptability of the site in terms of access and highway safety. The applicant has advised that the type of people who would be housed with the proposed development would be fully capable of using these arrangements.
51. Integrated Care Solutions who currently operate the Westbrook House project for the County Council have raised concern over the use of the existing tram shed access during construction. As this could potentially impact on the safety of staff, clients and visitors when exiting the Westbrook House. They have asked that detailed consideration be given to the management of the site traffic during construction, particularly lorries and parking arrangements for delivery vehicles, site staff and visitors.

Demolition of existing building and erection of 7 supported apartments. Former Tram Shed, 150 Canterbury Road, Margate – TH/06/1300.

The Divisional Transportation Manager has considered the use of the existing access arrangements to the tram shed during construction and has advised that this would be appropriate provided the arrangements are carefully managed and the access closed prior to first occupation of the building. I would advise that, were Members minded to recommend approval of the application, these issues could be covered by way a condition.

52. Taking the above into account, and subject to the imposition covering details of the pedestrian access arrangements, details of cycle parking, the closure of the existing tram shed access and reinstatement of footpath, provision of car parking prior to occupation, details of site compound and access arrangements, and a management plan for construction traffic, I would consider the proposal acceptable in highway terms. Therefore, subject to consideration of security and well being, heritage, landscaping, and ground contamination below, the proposals accord with Kent and Medway Structure Plan Policies QL1, TP3 and TP19 and Thanet Local Plan Policies D1, TR11, TR12 and TR16.

Security and well being

53. Local residents have raised concerns about the security of the site and whether the location is acceptable for the housing of vulnerable people. I would acknowledge that the site is bounded to the north by a railway line and to the south by the A28. However, Westbrook House already comfortably accommodates elderly residents providing 24-hour care and medical facilities in close proximity. I would suggest that in accompaniment to the staffing to be provided to support any future residents, the acceptability of the site to accommodate vulnerable individuals has been established. The railway line is screened by a high boundary wall and whilst Canterbury Road is a busy primary route, the footpath arrangements in the locality are acceptable and the road allows immediate access to public transport. I would advise that the low boundary treatment to the north east should be improved as part of the scheme, and the applicant has confirmed that this would be increased to a minimum height of 1.8 metres with an additional 0.3m trellis on top.
54. In addition to the above concerns have been raised, by local residents, about the potential future residents of the apartments proposed and their potential impact on perceived safety within the community. In response to these concerns, the applicant has provided further comment on the potential residents and the care they could expect to receive; these comments can be found in paragraph (15) above.
55. Reference has been made to a public meeting undertaken as part of the consultations for the redevelopment of Westbrook House back in 2002. I am unable to comment on the content or outcomes of this meeting, and can only assess the acceptability of application that has been brought forward on this occasion based on the provisions set out in the Development Plan and appropriate Government Guidance.

Heritage

56. The application involves the demolition of a tram shed currently occupying part of the site. The tram shed consists of a double height brick built building with corrugated metal/ asbestos roof, open at the southern end with cobbled access and tram tracks.

Demolition of existing building and erection of 7 supported apartments. Former Tram Shed, 150 Canterbury Road, Margate – TH/06/1300.

The County Archaeologist has confirmed that the shed formed the western terminus of the tramway built to service the Thanet area.

57. Concerns have been raised by local residents about the demolition of the tram shed building and loss of heritage from the local area. This issue was carefully considered during the processing of the previous outline planning application (ref: TH/05/1263). The considerations included an application made to English Heritage by Thanet District Council to have the tram shed formally Listed. That application for Listing was turned down on the grounds that whilst the tram shed has some local interest as a survivor of an old tram system, the depot building lacks sufficient architectural or historic interest, in a national context, to merit Listing.
58. The outline planning permission effectively establishes the principle of the demolition of the tram shed. This planning permission requires by way of condition that the tram tracks and cobbled access be retained in place as part of the development of the site. The applicant has advised that retention of the tracks and cobbled access in place is not practicable as part of the current application, and propose to reuse the materials as part of the wider landscaping for the development. Members should take account of this within their considerations. In my opinion, whilst the loss of the tram tracks and cobbled access is not ideal, as it would have provided a link to the past uses of the site, this would not be an overriding issue in the considerations given to the application, and I would not raise objections on these grounds, subject to a condition covering details of a landscape scheme for the site.

Landscaping

59. The application proposes the felling of a number of trees within the grounds of the tram shed and Westbrook House. Most of the trees proposed for removal are small specimens, planted in recent years after the completion of construction work on Westbrook House. A small number of semi-mature Sycamore trees are located within the tram shed site and would be removed as part of the current scheme. These trees appear to be self-seeded, growing in close proximity to each other and are not considered to be of any long-term merit to the immediate locality.
60. I would consider that the provision of a well thought-out landscape scheme that takes account of the need to screen and soften the impact of the proposed apartments, as well as providing replacement planting, would mitigate for the loss of existing trees on site. Therefore, I would not raise an objection to the removal of trees on site.

Contamination

61. A Ground Condition Report has been prepared in association with this application and recommends further investigations at the site to determine any ground contamination and appropriate remediation work. Conditions covering the submission of a further detailed report, the completion of any appropriate mitigation, and the submission of a closure report, as advised by the Environment Agency, would be an appropriate means of addressing this issue.

Need

Item D3

Demolition of existing building and erection of 7 supported apartments. Former Tram Shed, 150 Canterbury Road, Margate – TH/06/1300.

62. Due to the material planning objections that have been raised, need becomes a balancing factor. The applicant has provided further comment on the need for the development, please see paragraph (15) above. The development is required to improve the County Council's provision of appropriate accommodation for vulnerable people in the local area. Planning permission is being sought in order to facilitate the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) process to obtain the funding required to realise extra care and supported accommodation required in Thanet and around the County.

Conclusion

63. This application proposes the provision of 7 supported apartments for vulnerable people within the local community. The layout of the proposals would site the apartment building to the rear of residential property on Canterbury Road, siting the access road in close proximity to the boundary of the site. In February 2006 the County Planning Authority permitted outline planning permission for a similar proposal, including the demolition of the tram shed, that establishes the principle of the use of the site. However, the current application has given rise to a number of concerns (as discussed above), particularly those relating to the impact of the building through overlooking and proximity to adjacent property, highway safety, perceived security and well being, and loss of heritage through the demolition of the existing tram shed.

64. Overall, taking account of the outline planning permission, I consider that the development as proposed would not have an unacceptable impact on residential amenities and is in accordance with the relevant Development Plan policies. Therefore, I consider that the benefits of the provision of such a facility to the wider community outweigh any detrimental impacts the proposal may have. I recommend that subject to conditions, proposed to mitigate for any harm resulting from the development, planning permission be granted.

Recommendation

65. SUBJECT to any views received from Thanet District Council prior to Committee Meeting, I RECOMMEND that PERMISSION BE GRANTED SUBJECT TO the imposition of conditions including:

- the standard time restrictions,
- the development being carried out in accordance with the approved plans,
- a programme of building recording,
- a programme of archaeological work,
- the submission of a landscape scheme for approval,
- the re-use of the cobbled entrance and tram tracks within the general landscaping,
- a boundary wall to be provided to 1.8m in height,
- the submission of a further ground contamination report(s) and completion of remedial work,
- hours of operation during construction and demolition,
- a programme for the control of construction traffic and access,
- details of the contractors compound,
- incorporation of dust suppression measures,
- measures to ensure no mud is deposited on the public highway,
- details of all works within the public highway, including the permanent closure of the existing vehicle access to the tram shed site from Canterbury Road,

Item D3

Demolition of existing building and erection of 7 supported apartments. Former Tram Shed, 150 Canterbury Road, Margate – TH/06/1300.

- details of the pedestrian access arrangements proposed,
- the submission of an external lighting scheme,
- the provision of car parking spaces prior to the first occupation, and
- details of cycle parking and bin store.

66. I FURTHER RECOMMEND that the applicant be advised by informative of the concerns raised about loss of amenity and privacy, and the need to provide strong boundary screening to the eastern boundary through hard and soft landscaping.

Case officer – James Bickle	01622 221068
-----------------------------	--------------

Background documents - See section heading
--