

SECTION D
DEVELOPMENT TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE COUNTY COUNCIL

Background Documents: the deposited documents; views and representations received as referred to in the reports and included in the development proposals dossier for each case; and other documents as might be additionally indicated.

Item D1

40 extra care apartments at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687

A report by Head of Planning Applications Group to Planning Applications Committee on 3 November 2009.

Application by Kent County Council's Adult Social Services Directorate for outline planning permission for 40 extra care apartments for the elderly including 20 1-bed apartments, 20 2-bed apartments, residents communal areas and staff facilities at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687

Recommendation: Planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

Local Member: Mrs P Cole

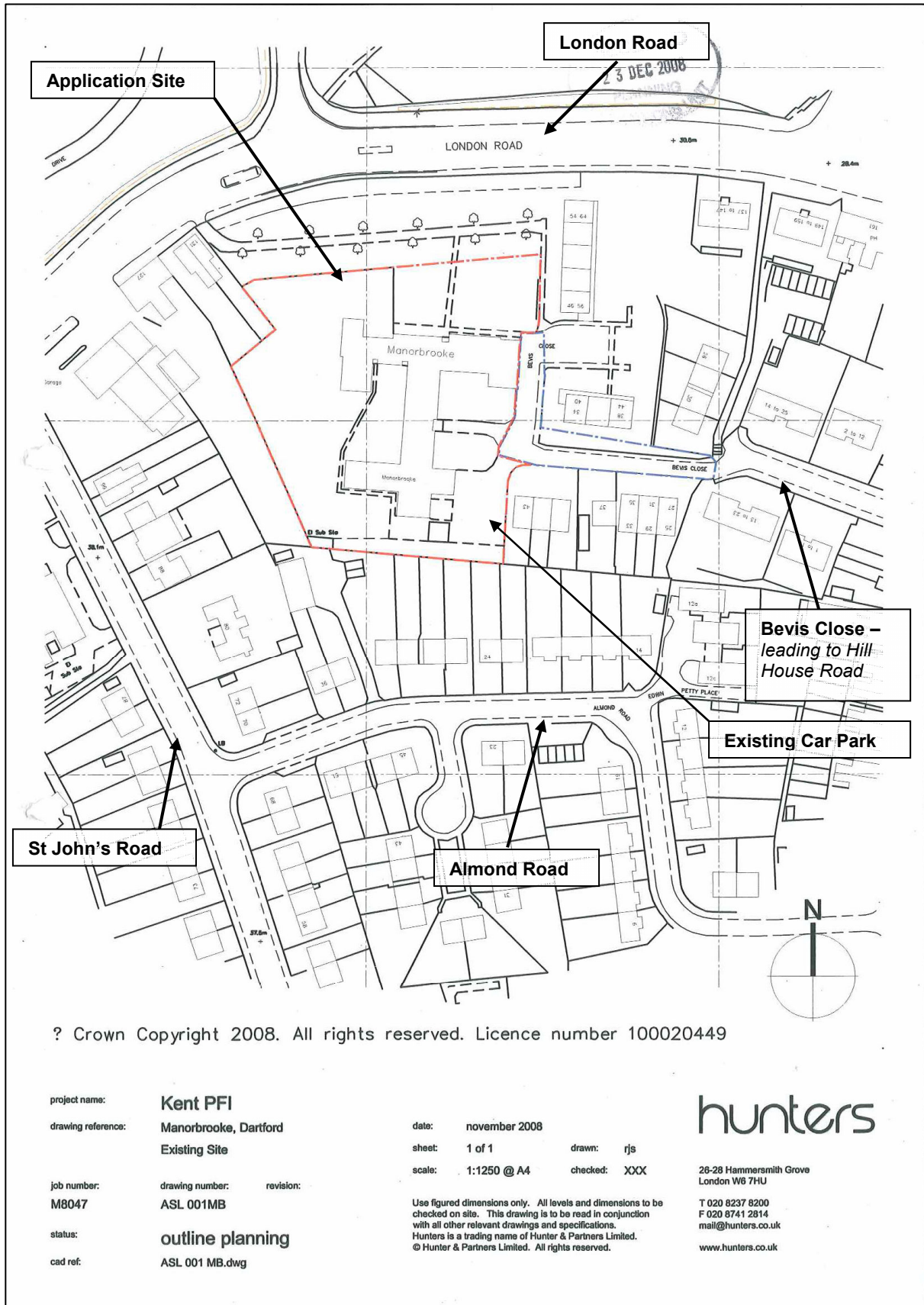
Classification: Unrestricted

Site

1. The application site forms the grounds of the Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, a County Council run care home approximately 2km to the east of Dartford Town Centre, within the Parish of Stone. The Residential Home, a large single / two storey building, was built in the 1960's and provides care facilities for up to 33 elderly people.
2. The balance of the 0.58ha site includes car parking and associated gardens. A tree survey received with the application indicates that approximately 20 trees of varying sizes and species line the western and southern boundaries. An additional 40 trees/shrubs in 4 main groups are spread across the site. The existing ground levels on site fall by approximately 2m in a gentle slope in a roughly west to east direction across the planning unit. Land adjacent to the site falls away to the south and east along Bevis Close and toward the eastern end of Almond Road.
3. Manorbrooke Residential Home is located at the western end of Bevis Close a narrow residential road that rises up toward the site. Access to Bevis Close is gained via Hill House Road, also a narrow residential street off London Road (A226) between Dartford and Stone. Land to the north of the Residential Home between the site and London Road forms a small park maintained by Dartford Borough Council and includes public footpath access directly out onto London Road. The character of the immediate area surrounding the site is predominantly residential comprising a mixture of 2-storey housing and apartment buildings, with land immediately to the east employed in a commercial use. *A site location plan is attached below.*
4. There are no site-specific Development Plan Policies identified in connection with the application site itself, although general policies are set out in paragraph (15).

Item D1

40 extra care apartments at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687



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project name: **Kent PFI**
drawing reference: **Manorbrooke, Dartford**
Existing Site
job number: **M8047**
drawing number: **ASL 001MB**
revision:
status: **outline planning**
cad ref: **ASL 001 MB.dwg**

date: **november 2008**
sheet: **1 of 1**
scale: **1:1250 @ A4**
drawn: **rjs**
checked: **XXX**

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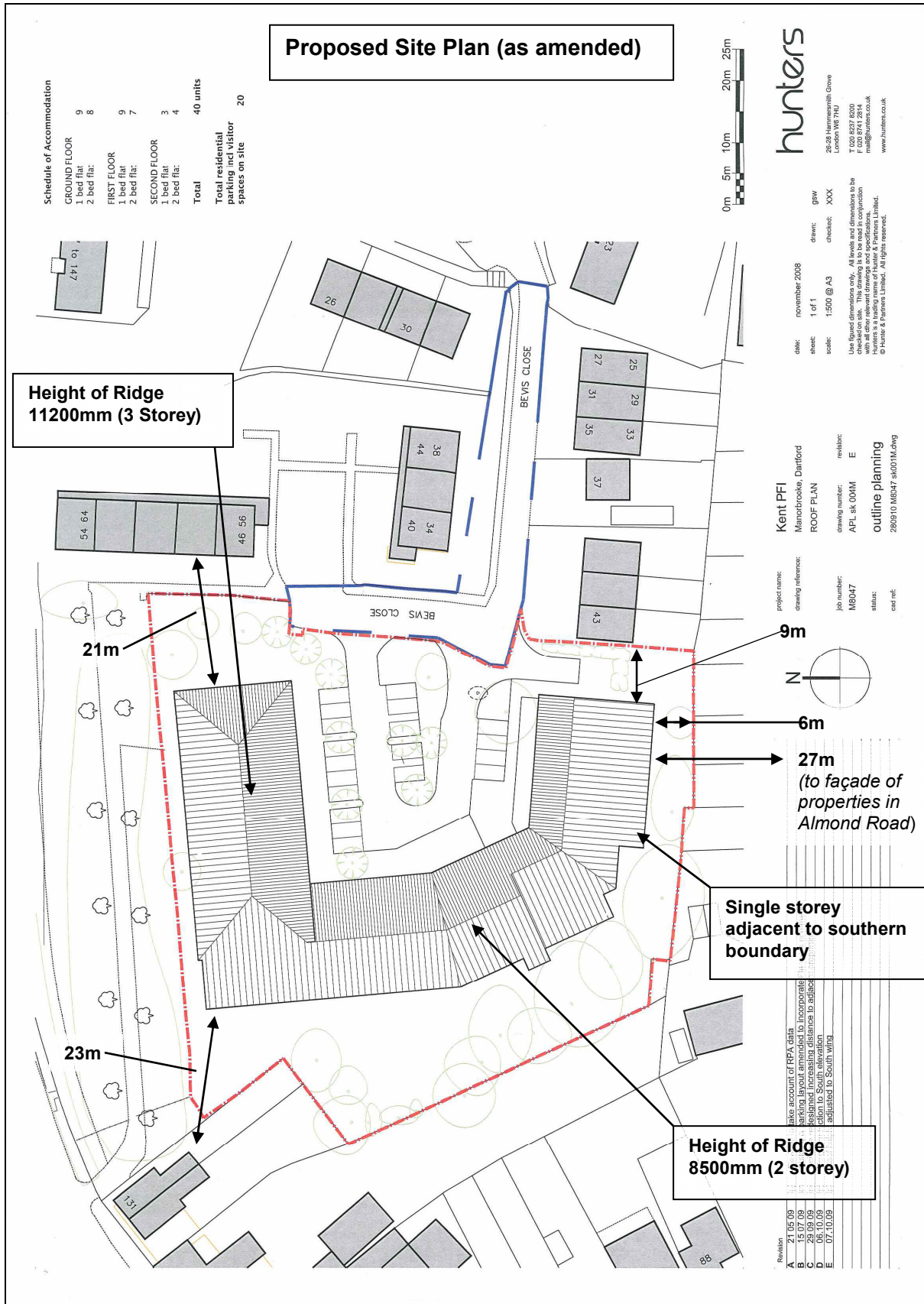
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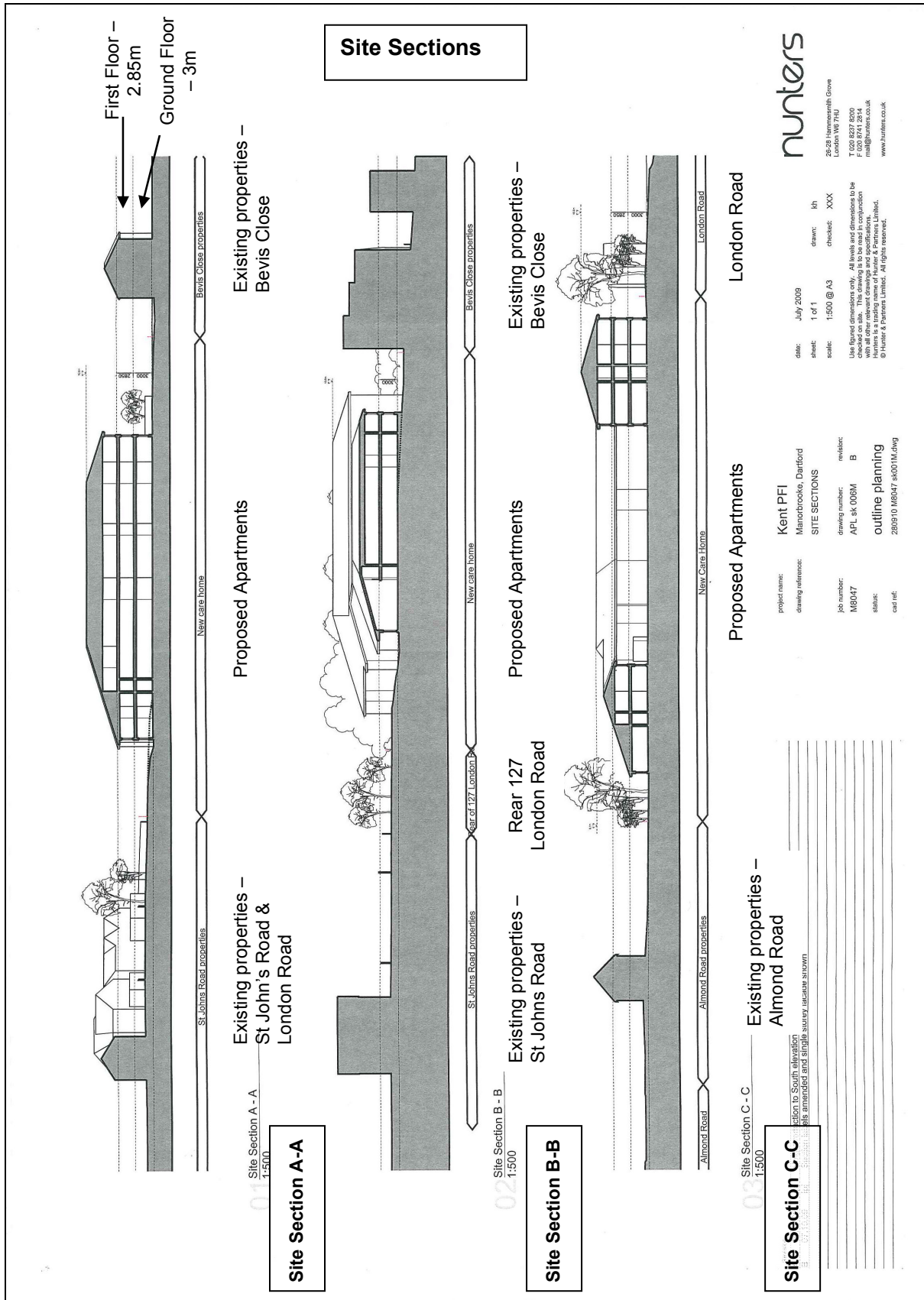
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project name: Kent PFI
drawing reference: Manorbrooke, Dartford
drawing number: SITE SECTIONS
job number: MB047
status: 28/09/10 MB047 sk001M.dwg

date: July 2009
sheet: 1 of 1
scale: 1:500 @ A3
checked: XXX
drawn: kh

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outline planning
28/09/10 MB047 sk001M.dwg

Site Section C - C
1:500
Existing properties – Almond Road
Proposed Apartments
New Care Home
Almond Road properties
London Road
Existing properties – Almond Road
Rear 127 London Road
St Johns Road
London Road

40 extra care apartments at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687

Background

5. This outline planning application is one of a number of proposals being considered by the County Council, submitted on behalf of Kent Adult Social Services (KASS). The application is being made to establish if the site can be considered acceptable in principle for supported housing; if the principle is established, KASS aim to include this proposal within the next wave of the Excellent Homes for All Housing Private Finance Initiative (PFI). This initiative seeks to develop 228 apartments for vulnerable people in Kent including young people and the elderly. Outline planning permission is required on all of the sites across the County as a precondition to accessing central government consent for the PFI scheme to progress.

Proposal

6. This outline planning application has been submitted on behalf of Kent Adult Social Services (KASS) Directorate and falls to be determined by the County Planning Authority due the Social Services aspect of the proposed accommodation. Outline planning permission is being sought to demolish Manorbrooke Residential Home (33 beds) and to redevelop the site as an apartment building providing 40 extra care sheltered apartments for elderly people with associated facilities. The outline application includes details of the layout of the proposed development (including the number of apartments) and the means of access for consideration at this stage; further details relating scale, appearance and landscaping are being reserved for future detailed consideration should outline permission be granted.
7. The layout of the proposed apartment building indicates that it would largely be 2-storey with a pitched roof, with a 3-storey wing to the north. The application includes details of the maximum height of the building at the ridgeline of the roof (11.2m for the 3-storey and 8.5m for the 2-storey elements). The apartment building would include 20 1-bed apartments, 20 2-bed apartments, residents' lounge and dining, gym, main kitchen and laundry, creating a gross floorspace of approximately 4,200m². To be able to deliver the building on site the proposals would require a quantity of cut and fill to level the site adequately to accommodate the footprint of the development. This outline application does not include detailed information on the necessary ground works, however the section drawings included give a general indication of the works required.
8. The application includes a revised access and new car park to the east of the proposed building fronting onto Bevis Close, including a drop off area and cycle store. The car park originally proposed 16 spaces; however this has subsequently been increased to a total of 20 spaces. A service yard for the building is shown to the south-east of the site, adjacent to properties in Bevis Close. The remainder of the land would form residential gardens and amenity space serving the apartments. The application proposes to protect and retain the majority of the trees on site; however the detailed landscaping is being reserved out at this stage.
9. The layout of the development (as amended) is included on the site plan shown on page D1.3. The approximate distances between proposed building and the closest residential properties in Bevis Close, Almond Road, London Road are marked on the plan. Land immediately to the west of the site is in commercial use and to the north forms a public park adjacent to London Road.

40 extra care apartments at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687

10. The Extra Care Housing proposed would be a modern alternative to traditional residential care in which older people have their own self contained apartments. The services also include communal facilities, and 24 hour care to allow tenants to live as independently as possible, knowing that help is at hand should there be a need. The application recognises there is a shortage of extra care housing in Dartford, and that the majority of the ordinary sheltered accommodation units are not fully suitable for disabled access. A recent borough-wide housing needs survey identified a need for up to 273 units of extra care accommodation by 2012, due to an ageing population and a predicted increase in demand on housing and social services for older people.

Additional information provided by the applicant

11. In response to comments raised during the consultation process, including the objections summarised below, the applicant has amended the layout of the scheme twice since its submission. The changes include, setting the building back from the more sensitive boundaries and away from the root protection zones of the trees to be retained on the site, the moving of the building away from the boundary with properties in London Road, the realignment of the block to reduce opportunities for overlooking, changes to the layout and overall height closest to the southern boundary, and the provision of additional car parking spaces. *The revised site layout drawings are included within this report.* The applicant has also agreed to a recommendation made by Kent Highway Services that, if planning permission is granted, funds would be set aside to address on street car parking issues, should the development result in a problem at any point within 5 years of completion of the development. Kent Adult Social Services have confirmed that there would be no demolition on the site without establishing that a replacement facility would be provided – *copies of the letters of reassurance received from KASS are included for information within the attached appendix.*
12. The applicant confirms that there would be no staff accommodation proposed on site, although on site supervision would be 24 hours. The applicant explains that the car parking provision proposed is based on historic and projected use. It is not expected that residents would drive; therefore spaces would be for visitors and staff. The applicant notes that the development would not be typical of a sheltered housing scheme, rather a contemporary interpretation of a residential care home. It is noted that the level of accommodation is increased, however the applicant does not expect the proposed activities would differ significantly from the current use of the site.
13. The application includes details of a number of possible County Council owned sites that were investigated for the proposed development, however these were not considered appropriate for various reasons. The sites considered include the Leigh Technology College, a Greenhithe car park, Swanscombe Infant School, Brent Primary School and Land at Queen Elizabeth Resource Centre. Given the existing use, the applicant considers the Manorbrooke site to be the most appropriate for the proposed extra care apartments.
14. The proposals would require the redevelopment of the existing care home. Kent Adult Social Services indicate that the proposed extra care apartments would not drive any changes to the services provided at the Manorbrooke Home, and that there has been no decision to vary the service to date. This change would be subject to a formal consultation process, conducted over the next year, independent to the formal planning process. Should the Extra Care Housing project ultimately include this location, KASS has indicated that existing residents would be assigned a case manager who would

40 extra care apartments at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687

work with each resident to explore all available options carefully over a 6 month period. These options could include moving to new extra care housing or other residential care homes managed by KCC or within the private sector.

Planning Policy

15. The Development Plan Policies summarised below are relevant to consideration of the application:

(i) The adopted 2009 **South East Plan** the most relevant Regional Planning Policies are:

Policy SP3 Seeks to focus development on urban areas to foster accessibility to employment, retail and other services, and avoid unnecessary travel.

Policy CC1 Seeks to achieve and maintain sustainable development in the region

Policy CC2 Seeks new development to mitigate and adapt to current and forecast effects of climate change.

Policy CC4 Seeks the design and construction of all new development to adopted sustainable construction standards and techniques.

Policy CC6 Seeks sustainable communities and to protect the character of the environment through the creation of a high quality built environment.

Policy H4 Seeks local authorities to identify the full range of housing needs required in their area, including groups with particular housing needs like older and disabled people and others with specialist requirements.

Policy H5 Seeks new housing to deliver a high quality of design to make good use of available land and encourage more sustainable patterns of development and services.

Policy H6 Seeks local authorities to assess the existing housing stock in their areas and implement measures to reduce the number of vacant, unfit and unsatisfactory dwellings.

Policy T4 Seeks a restraint-based maximum level of parking provision reflecting local circumstances and seeks the provision of cycle parking.

Policy BE1 Seeks new development to help improve the built environment with design solutions relevant to local character, distinctiveness and sense of place.

Policy S6 Seeks to support physical and social infrastructure, ensuring community facilities are available to all sections of the community, appropriately designed and located to take account of local needs.

(ii) The adopted 1995 **Dartford Borough Local Plan (saved policies)**:

Policy S2 Encouragement will be given to the provision of community facilities where these accord with the detailed policies of the Plan

40 extra care apartments at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687

- Policy H7** Seeks to support housing development in urban areas provided it accords with other Local Plan Policies.
- Policy H8** Seeks the density and dwelling mix of new housing to have regard to the character of the site and the surrounding area.
- Policy H10** Seeks the layout and design of housing development to be a high standard and be compatible with, or improve on, the surrounding area.
- Policy H12** Proposals which would adversely affect residential amenity will not be permitted.
- Policy H13** Seeks proposals for the development of new flats to pay due regard to the character of the locality.
- Policy H15** Seeks proposals for sheltered housing schemes to be in an appropriate location and not give rise to any unacceptable impact on neighbouring properties.
- Policy B1** The following factors will be taken into account in considering development proposals: proposed use, design, materials, amenity, access, infrastructure and water resources.
- Policy B3** Seeks development to incorporate appropriate landscaping measures, and where possible retain existing trees.
- Policy CF3** Supports the provision of social, community, educational and cultural facilities and infrastructure to meet the current and future needs of the Borough.

Consultations**16. Dartford Borough Council – raises no objection to the proposal.**

The Borough Council initially raised concerns over that the layout originally proposed would result in an overbearing effect to the detriment of the amenities of neighbouring property. However, following receipt of a revised layout the Borough Council formally withdrew this objection to the application. The layout of the development has subsequently been amended a further time in an attempt to improve its impact on the surrounding environment; any additional comments received from the Borough Council on this amendment prior to Committee meeting will be reported verbally.

Stone Parish Council – supports the application in principle and the intention to improve local services for the elderly. However, the Parish Council requests a firm commitment to the proposed redevelopment of the site from the County Council before any demolition or loss of existing local provision is commenced.

Divisional Transportation Manager – raises no objection to the application (as amended) on highways grounds. He recommends a maximum standard of one parking space per residential warden plus one space for every two units, which would equate to a maximum of 21 spaces.

40 extra care apartments at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687

The Transportation Manager notes that the site is well located in terms of bus routes on the London Road (A226) and that there are local shops within reasonable walking distance. Given that he does not believe a highway objection on car parking grounds could be sustained at appeal if the application were to be refused. He also notes that the traffic generated from an active site would be minimal, with little difference to that which currently occurs in connection with the existing residential home. He therefore raises no objection to the car parking provision as proposed.

However, he suggests that consideration be given to requesting that the applicant underwrite the introduction of waiting restrictions in the surrounding area, if on-street parking as a result of the development becomes a problem within 5 years of final occupation. He suggests a budget of £12,000 be set aside for this including survey work, which would be index linked and payable on demand in instalments, so if required KHS could request a fee to carry out a survey to determine whether or not a parking problem had been created by the development. If necessary additional funding can then be requested to carry out the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process, which is subject to its own procedures; if the scheme is approved all costs for the TRO and the necessary infrastructure are paid by the applicant, if the process fails, the abortive costs are paid and the applicant is released from the obligation.

Environment Agency – raises no objection to the proposal, subject to conditions covering the submission of a site investigation and verification plan into risks associated with contamination of the site and that no surface water drainage to be discharged into the ground unless otherwise approved in writing.

Local Members

17. Mrs. P. Cole, the local County Member for Dartford East was notified of the application on the 5th June 2009.

Publicity

18. The application was publicised by press advertisement, the posting of two site notices and the notification of 93 neighbouring properties. Neighbourhood notification to all 93 properties has been carried out in relation to the amendments received any views received between completion of this report and the Committee Meeting will be reported verbally.

Representations

19. 7 letters of representation objecting to the application as originally submitted have been received. The main points raised can be summarised as follows:
 - concerns about loss of privacy/ overlooking as a result of the development, particularly to facing windows within adjacent properties and within private gardens;
 - concerns about the potential for the building to be overbearing and/or to overshadow residential property resulting in loss of natural light;
 - concerns that the proposed 3-storey element of the building would be out of character with the existing buildings within the area due to its scale and massing;

40 extra care apartments at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687

- concerns that the development would have an unacceptable impact on residential amenities and the surrounding built environment, including the existing sense of peace and security;
- considers that there is adequate sheltered housing available in the local area
- concerns regarding highway safety as a result of an increase in the use of the site;
- concerns about the capacity of the local highway network to accommodate an increase in traffic and larger vehicles;
- concerns about the provision of only 16 car parking spaces within the scheme despite a proposed increase in the accommodation provided on site to 40 flats, considers this would result in double parking and congestion [*number of spaces subsequently amended by the applicant to 20*];
- concerns about the potential for increased on-street parking; notes that there are few opportunities to legally park on the highway in Bevis Close;
- concerns about the proximity of the proposed service yard to residential property and the impact its use would have on residential amenities, including through noise generation, the storage of bins for a large block of flats in such close proximity to existing housing potentially giving rise to infestations of vermin and unwelcome odours, the impact on security of neighbouring properties and personal safety;
- concerns about noise in general from traffic;
- concerns about noise and dust that would be generated during any construction period, especially as some local people work nights and rest during the day;
- concerns about noise generated by surrounding land use on the vulnerable people that would live within the flats;
- concerns about potential ecological impacts, in particular foxes that live on the site;
- considers that any development should enhance wildlife benefits;
- concerns about the loss of the existing use and the impact on the vulnerable residents that live at the home;
- raises concerns that views of local residents would not be taken into account when the final decision is made, particularly as the development is being promoted and decided by the County Council; and
- requests the County Council considers buying the closest property (no. 43 Bevis Close) as residents would be unhappy to continue to stay in the house following re-development of the proposed site; considers that the peace, serenity and safety of the property would be unduly affected.

Discussion

20. 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. 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. In considering this proposal, the Development Plan Policies outlined in paragraph (15) above are particularly relevant.
21. The application is seeking outline planning permission for 40 extra care apartments for elderly people. The proposed development would result in the demolition of an existing County Council run Residential Home. The applicant confirms that any decision on the future of the existing service provided within the Manorbrooke Home would be carefully

40 extra care apartments at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687

reviewed over the next year. This decision would be a matter for Kent Adult Social Services and would be independent to the planning process taken under separate legislation. The application is being reported from the Planning Applications Committee as a result of objections received from nearby residents, as summarised in paragraphs (19) above.

22. As this is an outline application, it is the principle of the proposed development that the applicant is seeking to establish. The application includes details of the layout and access for formal consideration at this stage. Should Members be minded to grant planning permission detailed matters of scale, appearance and landscaping would be reserved for consideration at a later stage.
23. In my opinion, the key determining factors for this application relate to the following points:
- location;
 - layout;
 - landscaping;
 - highway consideration;
 - noise, dust and odour;
 - other material considerations; and
 - need.

Location

24. The application site falls within a suburban area of Dartford surrounded by residential properties, consisting for the most part of 2-storey housing and apartment blocks. Consideration should be given as to whether the Manorbrooke site is suitable to accommodate the type of use proposed. There are no site specific policies within the development plan that expressly relate to this site. However South East Plan Policies SP3 and CC1 seek to focus development on urban areas to foster accessibility and achieve sustainable development in the region. Policies CC6 and BE1 seek to protect the character of the local environment through creation of high quality development that respects the local distinctiveness and sense of place. South East Plan Policy H4, H5, H6 and S6 seek to support social infrastructure ensuring community facilities, including appropriate housing, are available to all sections of the community. Dartford Borough Local Plan Policies S2 and H7 seek to support community facilities and housing development in urban areas provided it accords with other Plan Policies. Local Plan Policies H8, H10, H13 and B1 seek that layout and design of new housing development to be of a high standard, compatible with the surrounding area. Policies H12 and H15 seek to ensure development is located appropriately to ensure that there is not an unacceptable impact on residential amenity.
25. The application confirms that the County Council and Dartford Borough Council explored a number of sites around Dartford for the proposed facilities. In order for a site to be included for consideration in the project it needed to meet a number of criteria, including appropriate access to community facilities and public transport, being of an appropriate size and feasible for this type of development, and be in Local Authority ownership. A number of sites were investigated, however these sites were discounted due for various reasons (details of which were included with the application), the investigation established Manorbrooke as the most suitable to accommodate the proposed development.

40 extra care apartments at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687

26. The use of the site for residential care is established with planning permission for the existing home dating back to the 1960s. As an established facility and land use in the local area, I am not aware that the Manorbrooke Residential Home has any unacceptable impacts on local amenities. Whilst not a direct replacement, the proposed extra care apartments would be similar in principle to the existing use of the site and other social housing in the immediate vicinity. The proposed redevelopment would make best use of previously developed land by upgrading the existing arrangements rather than seeking a green-field site. Located within the confines of Dartford, the site has good access to the footpath network, public transport, local services and amenities. On this basis it would be difficult to consider the location as unacceptable for the proposed use. In my opinion, the key considerations in the context of this application are whether the increase in the use and the size of the building proposed would be acceptable in the setting of the existing land uses - *this is considered in more detail below.*
27. Subject to consideration of the layout of the building on site and its potential impact on the existing built environment, highway considerations, landscaping, noise, dust and odour, need and any other material considerations below, I consider that the proposed use of the site accords in principle with the thrust of the most relevant development plan policies. I therefore would not raise a material planning objection to the use of the site for extra care apartments for the elderly.

Layout

28. The outline planning application seeks approval of the layout of the apartment building at this time, whilst seeking to reserve consideration of scale, detailed design and landscaping of the development to a later date. As a statutory requirement the plans indicate that the apartment building would be a mix of 2 and 3 storey accommodation, and includes the maximum length, width and height of the building, along with details of the spaces between neighbouring buildings - *please see attached plans.* The documents received confirm that the application seeks approval for 40 apartments and associated facilities on the site; this number of apartments is necessary to make the proposed facility sustainable. On this basis it is difficult to set aside the general size/scale of the building from consideration of the layout, particularly given the number of apartments the applicant is seeking to deliver, and the proximity of the proposed building to residential properties.
29. When taking into account the layout of the development proposed, consideration needs to be given as to whether the proposals respect the character of the locality in terms of the general size of the building, its location within the planning unit, and the compatibility with neighbouring buildings and open spaces, including whether the proposed apartment building would have the potential to have an unacceptable impact on residential amenities through loss of light, overlooking, or by creating an unacceptable sense of enclosure.
30. The proposed apartment building would be located in a general semi-circular shape, formed around the main access and proposed car parking provision. The western and southern sections of the building are shown over 1 and 2 storeys (rising to a height of 8.5m at the ridgeline); the northern wing would be 3-storey (to a height of 11.2m). The floorspace created by the proposed building would measure approximately 4,200 m². Currently the Manorbrooke Home provides care accommodation for approximately 33 elderly people; the application now proposes 40 apartments. That would generate an increase in the number of people accommodated at the site and potentially the

40 extra care apartments at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687

intensity of the use over that of the existing provisions – *the scale of the use is considered in more detail later within this discussion*. The proposed layout would move the footprint of built development on site closer to residential properties in some instances, changing the existing building line, and the appearance in the street scene to that of the existing residential home.

31. It is noted that the properties immediately surrounding the site are predominantly 2-storey houses and apartments; however there are 3-storey buildings in the vicinity of Bevis Close. The fact that there are buildings of a similar size in the local area helps, in my view, to support an argument that the overall height of the development proposed would be appropriate. This is not the only consideration; factors including the space around the building, its context in the wider townscape, and the character of the townscape all have a bearing on the considerations. In this instance, I am satisfied that the height of the building as proposed would be compatible with the character of the surrounding area.
32. Residential properties in Bevis Close and Almond Road are generally at a lower level than the application site and as such the height of any development close to the respective boundaries would be amplified by these changes in ground level. Concern has been raised by residents that the proposed layout of the site and the position of the building has the potential to affect several amenity issues, including overshadowing, visual intrusion and privacy considerations. The proposal as originally received would have positioned the building close to neighbouring properties, particularly in Bevis Close and London Road. The applicant has subsequently amended the position and layout to seek to overcome the issues raised, by increasing the physical separation of the building and reducing the height of the structure to the more sensitive boundaries. This includes a reduction in the height of the building to single storey adjacent to the southern boundary to reduce the impact on existing properties and, increasing the separation between the apartment building and the closest residential properties at 43 Bevis Close (from 6m to 9m – flank elevations) and 131 London Road (from 16m to 23m). It is noted that the application seeks to retain existing tree and shrub planting around the boundaries to help mitigate for the proximity of the building line to the respective boundaries. The applicant has confirmed that the landscaping could be enhanced as part of any future development.
33. Concerns raised by local residents about privacy issues note that the layout of the development could result in facing windows between the proposed apartments and private properties, including a second storey window within the flank elevation of 43 Bevis Close, windows to front elevation of 46 – 64 Bevis Close, windows to rear elevations of 131 and 129 London Road (at an oblique angle), and windows to the rear of Almond Road. The concerns also draw attention to the possibility of overlooking from second storey windows into the rear gardens of adjacent properties. The detailed design of the building including the positioning of the windows is being reserved for consideration at a later date. Notwithstanding that, the applicant has indicated that the building could be designed to limit opportunities for overlooking to occur by avoiding or carefully placing windows to habitable rooms when within the more sensitive elevations. Accordingly, during the planning process the applicant has amended the layout to relocate two second storey apartments shown to the southern elevation to further reduce the potential impact. With the exception of the proximity of 43 Bevis Close, as a result of the amendments proposed, the distances from nearby property to the proposed building would exceed the guideline 21m window to window at the closest points; this distance being an accepted design guide distance to avoid an unacceptable loss of privacy between facing windows. In considering the impacts on 43 Bevis Close,

40 extra care apartments at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687

the changes to the size of the building in this area of the site would help reduce any opportunities for overlooking. I can see no reason why the applicant should not design the scheme to ensure that no windows are positioned within the closest flank elevation of the building, preventing any loss of privacy between windows here. Taking into consideration the distances involved, the existing landscaping and the opportunity to design out any particularly sensitive overlooking issues, through the orientation of second and third storey flats and the subsequent positioning of windows, I consider that it is unlikely that there would be likely significant invasion of privacy to surrounding houses or the more sensitive areas within private gardens as a result of the development as now amended.

34. The site section drawings included on page D1.7 demonstrates the potential relationship of the proposed building, in terms of its scale and massing, in relation to the surrounding townscape. To the north-west of the site the building is shown over two storeys, with the building cut into the existing ground levels which would help to reduce the potential impact on properties in London Road. The building to the north-west would be the largest element, shown over three storeys with a pitched roof. The construction of a 3-storey building to the west of existing apartments could have the potential to impact on sunlight reaching this building during late afternoons – particularly during winter months when the sun is low in the sky. However, a 21m separation would be acceptable, particularly as the facing elevation details a hipped roof line which should help to reduce the perceived height of the structure from this quarter. The proposed building layout shown to the south / south-east would be over two storeys to the inner courtyard area with a low ridgeline, and single storey facing south. This arrangement helps to reduce the scale in relation to the site boundaries. The site sections demonstrating that even with the limited increase in ground levels on site the apartments building in this location would be deferential in height to the closest residential property at 43 Bevis Close. Under the circumstances, subject to submission of the proposed ground levels for approval at the detailed stage, I consider the scale and massing of the development to be acceptable in relation to surrounding residential property and would not result in any significant detrimental impact to neighbouring properties through loss of light or through the creation of an unacceptable sense of enclosure.
35. I therefore consider that the proposed layout would respect the context of the site, would not result in an unacceptable impact on residential amenities of nearby dwellings, and that the maximum scale of the development would be proportionate to the suburban character. In my opinion the layout of the development is acceptable in the context of the Development Plan Policies in place.

Landscaping

36. Whilst the application seeks to reserve detailed consideration of landscaping until a later stage, it is noted that the site includes a number of trees that are considered to have ample quality and amenity value to the local area to have long term value, warranting protection. The application seeks to retain the majority of the trees on site and is supported by a Tree Survey Report. The majority of the trees appear to be deciduous and as such any mitigation offered in terms of screening and softening of the site is reduced during the winter months when they are not in leaf.
37. During consideration of the proposal the applicant amended the layout of the building, to move the structure away from the root protection zones of trees to along the southern boundary. The layout proposed relies on the retention of existing trees

40 extra care apartments at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687

growing along the boundaries to soften and screen views into and out of the site. The amended scheme reduces the pressures on the more sensitive boundaries by moving the building away from these areas. That in turn offers greater opportunities to enhance the existing landscaping; I particularly note that planting would be important along the southern boundary with properties in Almond Road, to the north east adjacent to Bevis Close and to the north-west to the rear of properties in London Road. The existing boundary treatment with 131 London Road is low level and relatively open in comparison to the rest of the site; I would recommend that should planning permission be afforded to this application that the applicant be encouraged to discuss with the local resident ways of improving this boundary. A well thought-out landscape scheme that takes account of the need to screen and soften the impact of the proposed apartments and seeks to enhance the existing planting would clearly help to mitigate the impact of any re-development of the site.

38. I therefore do not consider that there are grounds to presume against the proposed redevelopment of the site on the basis of the impact on trees, subject to the inclusion of conditions seeking to protect trees to be retained, together with the need for a detailed landscape scheme for planting to maintain and enhance the screening available on site, along with details of any further improvements to the respective boundaries.

Highway considerations

39. This outline application includes details of the proposed access and car parking facilities for approval at this stage of the planning process. The application proposes to revise the existing access arrangements off Bevis Close and includes a new circulation route with an entrance and exit, a service yard, drop off point, vehicle parking for 20 cars and a cycle store. Bevis Close, as noted above, is a narrow cul-de-sac that leads off Hill House Road and serves the existing residential home alongside a number of residential properties.
40. The South East Plan Policy T4 encourages integration with public transport networks and provision of cycle parking, and seeks residential development to apply guidance set out in Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing with regard to vehicle parking provisions. PPS3 encourages efficient use of land coupled with parking standards that reflect local circumstances.
41. A number of objections have been received from nearby residents on highway grounds, these are summarised in paragraph (19) above. The objections include concerns regarding highway safety, the capacity of narrow residential roads to accommodate an increase in traffic and, concerns relating to insufficient car parking on and off site. These comments highlight the increase in accommodation proposed on site from the existing care facilities catering for 33 elderly people to 40 new extra care apartments.
42. The Divisional Transportation Manager's raises no objections to the application on highway grounds. The comments received recommend a maximum standard of 21 car parking spaces for the proposed use, and considers that 20 spaces would be acceptable in this suburban location. He notes that the site is well located in relation to public transport and local amenities, and considers that the traffic generated from the proposal would be minimal, with little difference to the existing use.
43. The applicant has confirmed that given the nature of the residents that would use the extra care apartments it is not expected that they would own a car. On this basis the

40 extra care apartments at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687

proposed car parking would be primarily for staff and visitors in a similar way to the existing provisions on site. Notwithstanding this, given the limited opportunities to park a vehicle on the public highway in neighbouring roads, the Divisional Transportation Manager's recommendations suggest that the applicant underwrites the introduction of waiting restrictions on the public highway. These restrictions would be put in place should on street parking as a result of the development become a problem within 5 years of occupation of the building. He recommends a budget of £12,000 be set aside by the applicant for any necessary survey work, and where appropriate to carry out the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process, which is separate from the planning system. If approved the cost of the TRO and any necessary infrastructure would be paid by the applicant out of the above sum; however should the TRO process fail, or the 5 years lapse without a problem arising, the applicant is released from this obligation. Kent Adult Social Services have confirmed in writing that should planning permission be afforded to the development the tender requirements for the project would oblige the successful bidder to underwrite the introduction of waiting restriction should it prove necessary.

44. Taking all of the above comments into consideration, it is my opinion, that whilst the development would increase the use and number of people accommodated on the site, the change would not materially increase the movements associated with the existing residential home. I note that the type of accommodation would change as a result of the proposed development, with residents encouraged to lead a more independent lifestyle, however the applicant has confirmed that residents are unlikely to drive their own car. Vehicle access arrangements to the site along Bevis Close are constricted due to the width of the road, however the use of the application site as a residential home is long established. I am not aware that private motor vehicles or larger service vehicles travelling to the site currently cause an unacceptable problem on the highway network. It is noted that the Divisional Transportation Manager has not raised objection to this aspect of the application. The proposal would, in my opinion, enhance the existing on-site arrangements by allowing for additional car parking spaces (within the maximum recommended limits), improved access, circulation and drop off facilities, along with cycle parking, all of which should help to ease any additional traffic pressures created as a result of the proposal. The adoption of the Divisional Transportation Manager's suggestion that the applicant underwrite parking restrictions, should this prove necessary, would further safeguard against concerns raised about the potential for additional parking on the public highway.
45. On this basis, I raise no objection to the application on highways or access grounds. This is subject to conditions ensuring the provision of the car parking prior to completion of the development, full details of pedestrian access provision within the site, details of appropriate cycle parking, details of site drainage and an informative seeking the applicant adhere to the commitment to underwrite parking restrictions as necessary.

Noise, dust and odour

46. Representations received from a number of nearby residents raised concern over the possibility that the development, both during construction and on completion, would impact on residential amenities through noise, dust and odour generated by the proposal. Concerns raised highlight that some local residents work nights and therefore the construction period would disrupt their sleeping patterns; concerns are also raised in relation to noise generated by any increase in traffic attending the site. Views received from residents highlight that due to the proximity of residential

40 extra care apartments at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687

properties the proposal would potentially generate unacceptable levels of dust as a result of demolition and construction operations on site. The proximity of the proposed service yard to properties immediately adjacent to the site in Bevis Close in terms of noise, dust, odour and the associated potential for vermin is also raised by residents as a material concern about the proposals.

47. In considering the noise and dust generated by any construction period, it is noted that this would be for a temporary period and would not have a material effect on the long term amenities of the area. Should planning permission be granted, appropriately worded conditions could be placed on any consent that seek to control the timing of construction on site to acceptable hours and also requiring the submission of a code of construction detailing, amongst other matters, mitigation measures to be put in place to minimise concerns surrounding noise and dust associated with the construction operations. A certain level of disruption is necessary during any construction period, I am satisfied that that appropriate conditions could be imposed on any planning permission to minimise this impact of the surrounding properties.
48. The concerns raised about noise generated by any increase in traffic travelling to the site, are in part addressed under the highway section above, in that neither the Divisional Transportation Manager nor I, expect the development to materially increase those movements already associated with the Manorbrooke Residential Home. Whilst, movements may increase and the travel patterns may change as a result of the proposal, this change would not justify raising a material objection to the application on noise grounds.
49. Concern has also been raised by nearby residents that the surrounding land uses could have an unacceptable impact on any future occupants of the proposed building as result of noise generated. The concerns received draw attention to the proximity of the proposed apartments to private gardens considering that daily use of these gardens could disturb the elderly residents. I note that the application has been subsequently amended to increase the distance between buildings and the layout proposed to rearrange the flats to reduce opportunities for overlooking. These changes would help to reduce any concerns local residents may have about disturbing future occupants of the facility. I note that the existing residential care home does not appear to suffer as a result of the surrounding activities and that the noise environment is likely to be dominated by traffic on the nearby London Road. I do not consider this to be a significant problem and would not raise an objection on the above grounds.
50. The proximity of the service yard to residential property is noted and the applicant has amended the design of the scheme to pull this arrangement away from the flank elevation and boundary of the adjacent residential property. This amendment includes an undertaking to provide additional landscape planting along this boundary to create a level of separation between the two uses. The area in question already forms the main car park for the Manorbrooke Home; on this basis it would be difficult to argue that intermittent use of a service yard would generate more activity in this area of the site than the existing arrangements. The number of movements in this area would potentially fall, however intermittent deliveries may have the potential to generate increased noise levels. Provided that the use of the service yard takes place during reasonable hours of the day, I do not consider that the proposals would result in an unacceptable impact on residential property in terms of the noise generated. It is noted that the background noise levels in local area both during the day and night would be dominated by the proximity of the London Road (A226) between Dartford and Gravesend. In addition to the objections over noise and disruption, concerns have also

40 extra care apartments at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687

been received from a neighbouring resident about the service yard accommodating the bin storage facilities serving the apartment block. The comments received from residents raise concerns over the potential odour and health implications of this use in close proximity to residential properties, alongside possible associated problems of vermin. The applicant has sought to create a level of separation between the yard and the residential property. I note that there would be nothing stopping the existing facilities from storing bins in this locality, and that the Manorbrooke Home already accommodates a similar provision on site without causing an unacceptable impact. In my opinion the impact or otherwise of the provision of a bin store in this area would largely be down to a site management issue, rather than one that could be dealt with at the outline planning stage.

51. On the basis of the above considerations, I would not raise an objection to the application as proposed on noise, dust or odour aspects. I consider that the proposed use would not have an unacceptable impact on the sounding area, and that any impact both during construction and final operations could be managed through the use of appropriately worded conditions and good site management.

Other material considerations

52. Concern has been raised by one local resident that the development of the site would impact on the sense of security of the local residential area. In my opinion I cannot see how this would be the case. I accept that during the construction period the site would be empty overnight, however under Health and Safety regulations the contractor would be required to secure the site with appropriate fencing, and depending on the vulnerability potentially employ appropriate security provisions. Once the building is occupied the residents would add to the natural surveillance of Bevis Close and the parkland adjacent to the London Road; in addition the site would be staffed on a 24 hour basis providing more security than a normal apartment building.
53. One letter of objection from a nearby resident raises the potential impact from the proposals on ecological interests, and particularly foxes that occupy the area. The comments received seek any re-development to consider measures to enhance biodiversity on site. I note that the application seeks to redevelop an existing urban site, which would not result in the loss any significant habitat and a minimal number of existing trees. It is noted that this application is only for outline planning permission and seeks to establish the principle of the use; an informative could be added to any planning permission encouraging the applicant to consider incorporating biodiversity enhancements at the detailed design. In relation to the foxes or any other species found on site, any developer would be required to follow best practice in accordance with the relevant wildlife and conservation legislation.
54. The comments received from the Environment Agency regarding ground conditions and drainage are noted and I recommend that any planning permission include appropriately worded conditions that reflect the Agency's recommendations.

Need

55. The documents received from the applicant confirms that the outline planning permission is being sort at this stage to establish if the Manorbrooke site can be considered acceptable in principle for extra care apartments. Should the principle be established, Kent Adult Social Services aim to include this proposal within the next wave of the Excellent Homes for All Housing Private Finance Initiative (PFI) that would

40 extra care apartments at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687

allow the County Council to explore options for the modernisation of the site in the long term.

56. Extra Care Housing seeks to provide a modern alternative to residential care, in which older people have their own self contained apartments. The services include a restaurant, communal facilities, and 24 hour care to allow tenants to live as independently as possible. In justifying the need for the proposal, the application confirms that Dartford, along with the rest of Kent, has an ageing population and it is predicted that in the future there will be increasing demand on housing and social care services for older people. A recent borough-wide housing needs survey identified that up to 273 units of extra care accommodation would be required by 2012. The survey identified that of the existing 598 sheltered accommodation units available in Dartford only 97 apartments are suitable for disabled access; that limits the options available to older people that become frail.
57. The applicant, KASS, who are also the service provider for the existing facilities provided at Manorbrooke Residential Home, has clearly indicated that no decision on the future of the existing facility has been taken at this stage. Under national and local government policies and priorities, KASS is committed to modernising services for elderly people across the county. Should this project achieve the necessary funding through the PFI process, KASS have indicated that a formal consultation on the possible changes would be undertaken, including with existing residents, over the next year. Thereafter, depending on the decisions made, the existing residents would be assigned a case manager who would work with them over the course of six months to carefully explore the options available, including new Extra Care housing, other Residential Care Homes managed by the County Council or within the Private Sector.
58. It is clear from the information received that KASS are seeking to improve the quality of the services provided to elderly people through a modernisation process by providing more choice, and by moving away from the more traditional institutional approach. I am satisfied that acceptable provisions would be put in place to ensure any decision on the future of Manorbrooke Residential Home would safeguard the needs of the people accommodated at the site and the existing community service, providing suitable alternate arrangements where appropriate. I am therefore content that there is an established need for the modernisation of this valuable social service to support the community of Dartford.

Conclusion

59. In conclusion, I consider that the use of the site as for a residential care facility is well established by the existing facilities, and therefore I can see no objection to the principle of its use for extra care apartments. This use would fit in well with the existing social and residential housing in the immediate locality, increasing the range of accommodation available to the local community. The proposal would use an existing brownfield location within an urban area that has good access to public transport and local services. Objections have been raised by nearby residents concerning the potential impacts of the proposed redevelopment on the local environment and residential amenities, mainly as a result of the perceived scale of use and the size of the building proposed. However, following amendments made to the proposed layout by the applicant, I am now satisfied that the proposal would not result in a significant detrimental impact on the character or amenities of the surrounding built environment, and that any impacts could be reasonably be mitigated by way of appropriate conditions placed on any planning permission. However, it will be important to ensure

40 extra care apartments at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687

that these matters are thoroughly addressed when a detailed application is received. I am therefore of the opinion that the development as proposed is in accordance with general principles of the Development Plan Policies, and subject to conditions including those set out below, recommend that outline planning permission be granted.

Recommendation

60. I RECOMMEND that PERMISSION BE GRANTED, SUBJECT TO conditions, including the following:

- standard time conditions for an outline permission;
- the submission of reserved matters relating to scale, design and landscaping;
- the development to be carried out in accordance with the permitted layout and access arrangements;
- the height of the building not to exceed those set out in the information hereby permitted;
- details of proposed site levels to be submitted for approval;
- submission of a site investigation and verification plan into risks associated with contamination of the site;
- measures to be taken if contamination not previously identified on site is found;
- tree protection measures;
- details of all hard landscaping including fencing proposed on site;
- details of foul and surface water drainage;
- no surface water drainage to be discharged into the ground unless otherwise approved in writing;
- details of pedestrian access arrangements on site;
- hours of operation during construction;
- submission of a code of practice covering construction, including measures to mitigate for noise and dust generated by the development;
- measures to ensure no mud is deposited on the public highway;
- no external lighting to be installed without prior approval;
- the provision of vehicle parking spaces prior to first occupation;
- the provision of cycle parking; and
- the use of the building be restricted solely for the use applied for;

I FURTHER RECOMMEND THAT INFORMATIVES be added to the decision notice including:

- seeking the applicant to make provisions to underwrite the introduction of waiting restrictions in the surrounding area, should on street parking as a result of the development becomes a problem within 5 years of final occupation. In accordance with the measures set out in the letter from Kent County Council's Kent Adult Services Directorate dated 15 September 2009;
- encouraging the applicant to consider incorporating biodiversity enhancement measures within the detailed design for the site;
- drawing the applicant's attention to the need for careful consideration of the proposed ground levels for the development in relation to the surrounding private properties; and
- drawing the applicant's attention to the need to ensure that the detailed design minimises the opportunities for overlooking to occur, and the need for the landscape scheme to seek to maintain and enhance the existing provisions on site.

Item D1

40 extra care apartments at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687

Case officer – James Bickle	01622 221068
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Background documents - See section heading
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40 extra care apartments at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687



Mrs J Thomas
Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Stone Parish Council
Recreation Ground
London Road
Stone, Kent DA9 9DQ

Kent Adult Social Services
AMT
17 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent ME19 4UL
Fax: (01732) 525119
Tel: (01732) 525000

Direct Dial: 01732 525219
Ask for: Margaret Howard
Our ref: MH/SB
Date: 15 September 2009

Dear Mrs Thomas,

Re Outline Planning Application for Manorbrooke

Further to your letter of 16th July 2009 to Kent County Council's Planning Applications Group, I am writing to re-assure you that should planning permission be granted for the proposed scheme at Manorbrooke, Kent Adult Social Services would not allow any demolition on the site without establishing that a replacement facility would be provided.

The planning application is only to explore options for the site in the long term and no changes will be occurring to services at Manorbrooke in the immediate future. Any proposals to change the service will be the subject of consultation with residents and their families who will be given choices about the services they will have in the future. Even if changes were approved, no work would start on the site within the next two years and before any work could commence there would need to be a further full planning application in 2010.

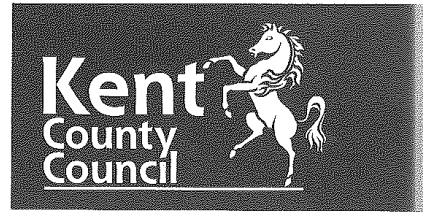
If, following a consultation period, Kent Adult Social Services decides to make changes on the site, there will be no demolition or change of services without first ensuring arrangements for a new replacement facility. The Council has recently received approval for the funding of five new extra care housing developments from central government, and this funding would be used to develop the site at Manorbrooke if any decision is made to go ahead.

I hope that this re-assures you regarding our plans for Manorbrooke. If a further full planning application is developed for the site there will be more detailed discussions regarding the nature of any proposed new facility at that time, and I understand that the Parish Council will be fully consulted in this process.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Howard
Director - Commissioning and Provision, West
Kent Adult Social Services

40 extra care apartments at Manorbrooke Residential Home, Bevis Close, Dartford – DA/09/687



James Bickle
Planning Applications Unit
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ME14 1XX



Kent County Council
Brenclay House
BH3-12 Public Private
Partnerships Team
123-135 Week Street
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 1RF

Ask for David Weiss

Date: 15th September 2009

Dear James

R.e: Manorbrook Site in Dartford

Kent Adult Social Services will make it clear through our tender requirements that the successful bidder who develops the Manorbrooke site will have to agree to underwrite the cost of the introduction of waiting restrictions in the surrounding area.

The stipulation shall be that the bidder should set aside sufficient funds to cover this cost, should on street parking becomes a problem as a result of the development and waiting restrictions need to be imposed within five years of the completion of the site. The bidder will be informed that the funds required to be set aside are £12,000 which is index linked and payable on demand in instalments.

This position can be further re-inforced through the planning process, as it will be the Contractor themselves that applies for Full Planning on the site, and therefore this can be subject to the contractor confirming that the amount will be made available.

I hope that this satisfies the concerns of the Highways Department at this stage.

Yours sincerely

David Weiss

Oliver Mills
Managing Director

KENT ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Please note: Any information provided in this letter about a client may be disclosed to that client unless indicated otherwise

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