

Planning Department
Stoke-on-Trent City Council
Place, Growth and Prosperity
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Ground Floor, Block 9
Staffordshire Police HQ
Weston Road
Stafford
ST18 0YY

Application Reference: 63110/FUL

Date: 18th October 2018

Location: Land off Chamberlain Avenue, Penkhull/Stoke
Proposal: Demolition of existing garages and residential development of ten 1-bed apartments over two storeys and associated parking

The following comments should be considered in the light of the following:

- The National Planning Policy Framework states "Planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments ... create places that are safe ... and where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine the quality of life or community cohesion and resilience";
- National Planning Practice Guidance which states that "Designing out crime and designing in community safety should be central to the planning and delivery of new development";
- The statutory obligation placed on local authorities to do all they can to prevent crime and disorder in accordance with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- The Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Urban Design Guidance SPD which recognises that "Promoting good design and layout in new development is one of the most important ways in which the Council can address crime issues";
- The 2006 CABE document entitled 'Design and Access Statements: How to Write, Read and Use Them', which states "Statements should demonstrate how development can create accessible and safe environments, including addressing crime and disorder and fear of crime."

Assuming there is sufficient justification for dispensing with the existing garages without adversely impacting upon congestion in Chamberlain Avenue, Staffordshire Police would have no objection to the broad proposals contained within this application. The block of apartments appears well positioned with the amenity space to the rear, the bin store, linking steps and electricity substation, and most (but not all) of the parking overlooked. However, there are a couple of aspects of the proposals which Staffordshire Police believe would merit from reconsideration to reduce the opportunity for anti-social behaviour and provide a safer environment.

Firstly, the Design and Access Statement states "It is our intention that the development will be enclosed by 1.8m close boarded fencing to all boundaries". The area just outside the western site boundary comprises an elevated footpath link to Penkhull and the high rear boundaries of the "buff brick linked houses". Currently this does not feel too enclosed owing to the grassed strip dropping down to the rear of the garages with the visually permeable palisade railings above. The photograph opposite captures this. It is worth adding that youths have at some point used the steps and substation area as somewhere to hang out as evidenced by the graffiti on the side of the garage abutting the steps and on the brick substation building. The proposals would see wooden 1.8m fencing added along the path edge (superimposed red in the photograph). The concern with this is that it



will create an enclosed corridor and hidden area, which could encourage gathering out of sight, graffiti, nuisance behaviour to residents and reduce the safety of users of the path.

A solid fence would also create something of a hidden corridor behind parking bays 6-10 and the existing rear boundary of No. 16 Colindene Grove (superimposed in blue dashed line on drawing opposite). This could again be seen as an out of the way place for youths to frequent to the detriment of the residents.

That a fence is required to demarcate the boundary is not an issue. However, a solid wooden fence could be problematic for the reasons stated. Consideration should be given to replacing proposed solid fencing with a 1.8 m high visually permeable weldmesh fence between the points arrowed.



By being visually permeable it would prevent youths for being hidden from view and therefore less likely to gather, and certainly make footpath users feel safer. I would not think that footpath users being able to see into the application site would be deemed particularly intrusive.

The second aspect for reconsideration is linked to the first. The apartment block gable end facing west towards the elevated footpath and 'private parking' spaces is blank. While this is undesirable in its own right as it might provide opportunity for graffiti or nuisance behaviour such as footballing against the wall, this does not enable any natural surveillance (or perception of the same) from the block towards the path and unoverlooked parking spaces. Consideration should be given to the provision of at least one ground floor and first floor side window to further discourage unwanted activity along the footpath or to the side of the apartment block.

As a concluding point, I would direct the applicant to the Secured by Design Homes 2016 Design Guide available online. It would be highly desirable for the properties to meet the minimum physical security requirements contained within this guidance document. This would primarily constitute front doorsets and ground floor windows which have been tested and importantly, have third party certification to recognised minimum manual attack-resistant standards. This would undoubtedly be for the long-term benefit of the future residents of the development and incidentally, installing appropriately certified products would satisfy Building Regulation Approved Document Q (Security). Furthermore, the applicant will find other useful guidance within this document as it relates to crime prevention/security.

Crime Prevention advice is given freely without the intention of creating a contract, and all comments and recommendations are site specific. Staffordshire Police and the Home Office do not accept any legal responsibility for the advice given.

David Elkington
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Staffordshire Police