

**Development Management Officer Report  
Committee Application**

<b>Summary</b>	
<b>Committee Meeting Date: 16 May 2017</b>	
<b>Application ID:</b> LA04/2016/1184/F	
<b>Proposal</b> Five apartments with associated car parking and landscaping as previously approved under Z/2007/2350/F.	<b>Location</b> 63 Houston Park Belfast BT5 6AT
<b>Referral Route:</b> The application is for more than four residential units.	
<b>Recommendation:</b>	<b>Refusal</b>
<b>Applicant Name and Address:</b> Dornan Barr & Cousins 38 Cyprus Park Belfast BT5 6AT	<b>Agent Name and Address:</b> Studios Rogers Architects Ltd The Egg Store 1 Mountsandel Road Coleraine BT52 1JB
<p><b>Executive Summary:</b> The application seeks an apartment development of five units: three (one) bedroom apartments and two (two) bedroom apartments, with associated car parking and landscaping. Similar to previously approved Z/2007/2350/F.</p> <p>The main issues to be considered in this case are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Landscape Policy Area</li> <li>• Parking</li> <li>• Scale and Mass</li> <li>• Density</li> <li>• Design</li> <li>• Topography</li> <li>• Residential environment: outlook and space standards</li> <li>• Waste Storage</li> <li>• Amenity</li> <li>• Overlooking</li> <li>• Dominance/Overshadowing and Loss of Light</li> <li>• Landscaping and Boundaries</li> </ul> <p>The application site is not located within an ATC or Conservation Area. It is within the Orangefield/Dixon Local Landscape Policy Area – BT 124, and is adjacent to an area of existing open space.</p> <p>The proposal has been assessed against the SPPS, Planning Policy Statement 3, 7, 7 (Addendum), 12, and supplementary planning guidance –Creating Places, Parking Standards, DCAN 8 and DCAN 15.</p>	

This site was granted planning permission (Z/2007/2350/F) in 2008 for the erection of five apartments with associated car parking and landscaping. Since the previous planning approval the Addendum to PPS 7 Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas was introduced in 2010.

There were no representations to this planning application.

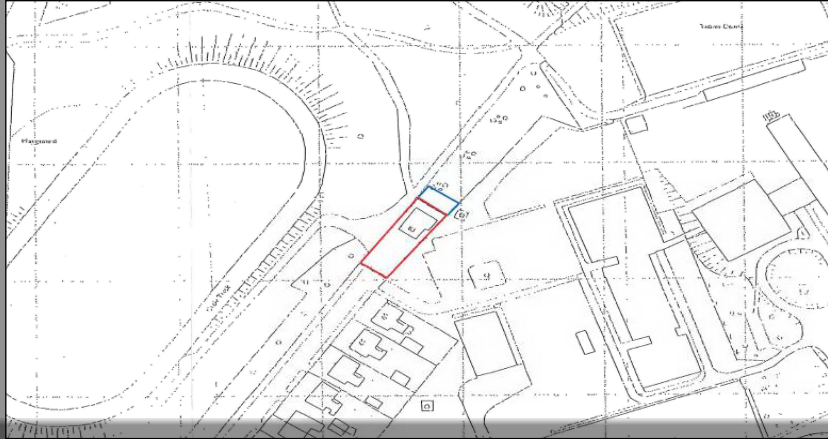
Having regard to the policy context, previous planning history, and other material considerations above, the proposal is deemed to be unacceptable and planning permission is recommended for refusal for the following reasons:

1. The proposal is contrary to Policy QD1 of Planning Policy Statement 7 in that it would, if permitted, result in overdevelopment of the site due to its inappropriate scale, form, massing and design causing unacceptable damage to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would fail to provide a quality and sustainable residential environment.
2. The proposal is contrary to Policy LC1 of Planning Policy Statement 7 (Addendum) Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas in that it would, if permitted, result in a significantly higher density and a development pattern which is not in keeping with this established residential area.
3. The proposal is contrary to Policy LC1 of Planning Policy Statement 7 (Addendum) Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas in that it would, if permitted, result in overdevelopment of the site causing harm to the living conditions of prospective residents by way of inappropriate space standards in Apartments 3, 4 and 5. The proposed development would therefore fail to create a quality residential environment.

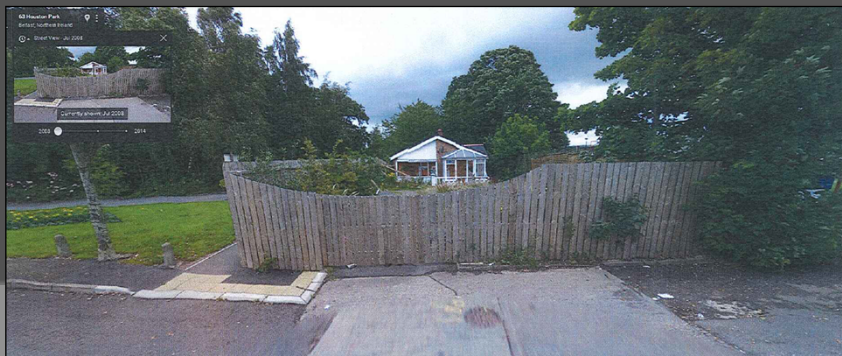
## Case Officer Report

### Plans

Site Location Plan



Previous Dwelling - 2008



Proposed Development



### Consultations:

Consultation Type	Consultee	Response
Statutory	Rivers Agency	Not necessary to comment
Statutory	NI Water	No objection
Non Statutory	Belfast City Council	No objection

	Environmental Health	
Statutory	Transport NI	No objection
Non Statutory	Belfast City Council City and Neighbourhood Department (Waste Storage)	No objection
Non Statutory	Belfast City Council Tree Officer	The development is too big for the site and will result in the loss of a semi-natural buffer between the park and the school. Little scope for new planting to integrate the proposal into the area.
<b>Representations:</b>		
Letters of Support	None Received	
Letters of Objection	None Received	
Number of Petitions of Objection and signatures	No Petitions Received	
Representations from Elected representatives	None Received	
<b>Characteristics of the Site and Area</b>		
<b>1.0</b>	<b>Description of Proposed Development</b> The proposal is for an apartment development of five units: three (one) bedroom apartments and two (two) bedroom apartments, with associated car parking and landscaping. Similar to previously approved Z/2007/2350/F.	
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Description of Site and Area</b> The site at 63 Houston Park was formerly occupied by a single storey dwelling, bounded by close boarded timber fencing. The property and the timber fencing has been demolished since 2008 and there remains only small trees of some limited amenity value. Ground levels rise from Houston Park before falling away sharply to the rear of the site. Located at the end of Houston Park it is surrounded by the site of Orangefield Primary School and Greenville Park. The properties at 53 to 59 Houston Park are single storey in appearance, although in the case of 59 adapted with dormers to create additional floorspace. Bloomfield Football Club and a cycling velodrome are located within the grounds of Greenville Park.	
<b>Planning Assessment of Policy and other Material Considerations</b>		
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Site History</b> This site was granted planning permission (Z/2007/2350/F) in 2008 for the erection of five apartments with associated car parking and landscaping. The proposed development is similar to that which was previously approved.	
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Policy Framework</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015, site is located within the development limits of Belfast (Designation BT 001). The relevant policy is SETT 2, Development within the Metropolitan Development Limit and the Settlement Development Limits</li> <li>• Orangefield/Dixon Local Landscape Policy Area – BT 124</li> <li>• Adjacent to an area of existing open space</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland (SPPS)</li> <li>• Planning Policy Statement 3 – Access, Movement and Parking</li> <li>• Planning Policy Statement 7 – Quality Residential Environments</li> <li>• Planning Policy Statement 7 (Addendum) – Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas</li> <li>• Planning Policy Statement 12 – Housing in Settlements</li> <li>• Development Control Advice Note 8 – Housing in Existing Urban Areas</li> <li>• Development Control Advice Note 15 – Vehicular Access Standards</li> <li>• Supplementary Planning Guidance – Creating Places</li> <li>• Supplementary Planning Guidance – Parking Standards</li> </ul>
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Statutory Consultee Responses</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Rivers Agency</b> – Not necessary to comment</li> <li>• <b>Transport NI</b> – No objection subject to conditions and informatives</li> <li>• <b>NI Water</b> – No objection subject to informatives</li> </ul>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Non Statutory Consultee Responses</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Belfast City Council Environmental Health</b> – No objection subject to conditions and informatives</li> <li>• <b>Belfast City Council City and Neighbourhood Department (Waste Storage)</b> – No objection</li> <li>• <b>Belfast City Council Tree Officer</b> – The development is too big for the site, and will cause the loss of a semi-natural buffer between the park and the school. There is little scope for new planting (because of the small site) to integrate the proposal in to the area.</li> </ul>
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Representations</b>
	The planning application was advertised in the local press and neighbour notified. There were no representations received.
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Other Material Considerations</b>
	<p>Permission was granted on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2008 for a virtually identical proposal – erection of 5 no apartments. The permission expired in August 2013. Since the permission was granted a new policy document has been adopted - Addendum to PPS 7 Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas 2010.</p> <p>A consideration of the current application raises questions regarding the initial assessment of the 2007 application.</p>
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
<b>9.1</b>	The application site is not located within an ATC or Conservation Area. It is within the Orangefield/Dixon Local Landscape Policy Area – BT 124.
<b>9.2</b>	<p>The key issues in assessing this planning application are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Landscape Policy Area</li> <li>• Parking</li> <li>• Scale and Mass</li> </ul>

9.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Density</li> <li>• Design</li> <li>• Residential environment: outlook and space standards</li> <li>• Waste Storage</li> <li>• Amenity</li> <li>• Overlooking</li> <li>• Dominance/Overshadowing and Loss of Light</li> <li>• Landscaping and Boundaries</li> </ul> <p><b>Strategic Planning Policy Statement for Northern Ireland</b></p> <p>Planning authorities are guided by the principle that sustainable development should be permitted, having regard to the local development plan and all other material considerations, unless the proposed development will cause demonstrable harm to interests of acknowledged importance.</p>
9.4	<p><b>Local Landscape Policy Area</b></p> <p>The site is located adjoining Orangefield/Dixon Local Landscape Policy Area and Policy ENV 1 is applicable. It states that planning permission will not be granted for development that would be likely to have a significant adverse effect on those features, or combination of features, that contribute to the environmental quality, integrity or character. The features listed under designation BT 124 area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archaeological sites and monuments and their surroundings – Unnamed 17th century mill;</li> <li>• Area of local amenity importance – A municipal park, playing fields and green space; and</li> <li>• Area of local nature conservation interest - Knock River and mature trees.</li> </ul>
9.5	<p>While it would not be considered that the development would have a significant impact on any of these named features, Policy ENV 1 states that where proposals are within and/or adjoining a designated LLPA, a landscape buffer may be required to protect the environmental quality of the LLPA. The Belfast City Council Tree Officer has stated that the vegetation on site has some limited amenity value, it is generally small and would not meet the criteria for protection by means of a TPO. He also commented that the proposed planting will not screen the new development as there is insufficient buffer within the site for a suitable planting thereby contrary to Qd1 (c).</p>
9.6	<p><b>Parking</b></p> <p>Creating Places stipulates that for communal car parking in apartment developments that five units: three (one bed) and two (two bed) should have provision for 6.75 spaces. The proposal incorporates seven car parking spaces. As such Transport NI consider the parking provision and access arrangements acceptable and in compliance with PPS 3, DCAN 15, Parking Standards and Creating Places.</p> <p>However PPS 7 paragraph 4.36 states that all car parking should be well designed. It should not dominate the residential environment to be created. The proposed car parking is to the front of the development and as such the hard surfacing dominates. The hard surfacing results in a negative impact on the street scene at ground level which is out of character with surrounding area, thereby contrary to Policy QD1 (a).</p>

9.7	<p>In addition, communal bicycle stands have not been provided as part of this development thereby contrary to QD1 (e).</p>
	<p><b>Scale and Mass</b> PPS 7 Policy QD 1 (a) states that new development must respect the surrounding context by way of scale and mass. The proposed development is a three storey apartment block (9.4m in height) with a set back to the top floor (6m in height at the front elevation), replacing a single storey dwelling. It is considered that this scale of development is inconsistent with established properties within the immediate vicinity which are single storey dwellings before progressing to two storey semi-detached dwellings. Each residential property has front and rear amenity space.</p>
9.8	<p><b>Density</b> PPS 7 Policy QD 1 (a) states that the development respects the surrounding context and is appropriate to the character and topography of the site. The immediate vicinity is dominated by traditional residential properties set within plots providing front and rear amenity space. A single storey dwelling occupied this site prior to its demolition. As such the introduction of five apartments in this location would be out</p>
9.9	<p>of keeping with the character of the area. The proposed development fails to comply with Policy LC1 (a and b) of PPS 7 Addendum in that the proposed density of this infill site is significantly higher than the established residential area; and the pattern of development (apartment block) is not in keeping with the established residential area.</p>
	<p><b>Design</b> Policy QD1 of PPS 7 (g) stipulates that the design of the dwellings must draw upon the best traditions of form, materials and detailing. The proposed materials of the apartment development are to be facing brick and painted render. This would not be out of character with the immediate vicinity, however the monolithic block with a flat roof is out of keeping with an area dominated by traditional styled housing.</p>
9.10	<p><b>Residential Layout – Outlook and Space Standards</b> In accordance with PPS 7 Policy QD 1 the proposed apartments provide an acceptable outlook from the living accommodation onto Cherryvale Park. The space standards as detailed in Annex A of PPS 7 Addendum are applicable in this location: two bedroom/four person and one bedroom/two person. As such the proposed layout only meets the recommended space standards in Apartments 1 and 2, the remainder are significantly short of the specified standards.</p>
9.11	<p>Apartment 1 - Provided 65.52sqm – Space Standards require 50/55sqm Apartment 2 – Provided 53.10sqm – Space Standards require 50/55sqm Apartment 3 – Provided 43.08sqm – Space Standards require 50/55sqm Apartment 4 – Provided 68.72sqm – Space Standards require 70/75sqm Apartment 5 – Provided 63.09sqm – Space Standards require 70/75sqm</p> <p>As this area is a low density residential area, it is considered the apartment sizes are well below standard and would be out of character within this residential area.</p>
9.12	<p><b>Waste Storage</b> Belfast City Council City and Neighbourhood Department has stated that the waste</p>

	<p>storage space indicated would be suitable for five apartments. However, the position of the bin store – 3.8m in width and 1.3m in height constructed from facing brick - to the front of the development outside the ground floor apartment is considered unacceptable and contrary to QD1 (a).</p>
9.13	<p><b>Amenity</b> PPS 7 (c) stipulates that there should be a provision for private amenity space in proposed developments. Creating Places stipulates that for apartment developments private communal open space will be acceptable in the region of 10-30sqm per unit. The proposed development has a small grassed area to the rear which equates to approximately 15sqm per unit. Additional balconies/terrace are proposed for the first and second floor apartments. Given the amenity provided and the close proximity to adjacent open space, this is considered acceptable.</p>
9.14	<p><b>Overlooking</b> PPS 7 Policy QD1 (h) states that the proposed development should not create conflict with adjacent land uses. There will be no issues with overlooking due to the separation distance between the proposed apartment block and the closest property at 59 Houston Park. The flat roof section on the third storey is to be accessed for maintenance only.</p>
	<p><b>Dominance/Overshadowing and Loss of Light</b> PPS 7 Policy QD1 (h) states that the proposed development should not create conflict with adjacent land uses. There will be no issues with dominance/overshadowing and loss of light due to the separation distance between the proposed apartment block and the closest property at 59 Houston Park, and the sun path from east to west.</p>
	<p><b>Landscaping and Boundaries</b> PPS 7 Policy QD1 (c) states that planted areas or discrete groups of trees will be required along site boundaries in order to soften the visual impact of the development and assist in its integration with the surrounding area. The Belfast City Council Tree Officer stated that the site is narrow and the proposed apartment block is over development. Although the vegetation presently on the site has some limited amenity value, it is generally small and would not meet the criteria for protection by means of a Tree Preservation Order. Two trees to the rear of the proposed apartments have already been felled. A beech hedge is to be planted along the boundary with the school grounds, however it is unlikely that this could be maintained in the future along a four metre section, because of the proximity of an entrance to the apartments which extends closer to the boundary. As well as this, the establishment of a hedge within this area less than 600mm wide, which has the apartments on one side and a close-boarded fence and palisade fence on the other, is unlikely to be successful. The proposed new planting will not screen the development.</p>
	<p>DCAN 8 states that boundary treatments can have an important influence on local character, and should be retained where possible, in order to protect the surrounding street character. Well-designed walls or railings, and planting, can be used to mitigate the detrimental visual impact of cars and dustbins. It is proposed to have a</p>



	<p>1.2m high rendered wall and a 1.8m high metal railing with boundary planting along the Greenville Park edge. No boundary is proposed fronting Houston Park, whilst the stated existing timber fencing along the rear boundary and that bounding the school grounds does not exist. The boundary existing adjacent to the school grounds is a palisade fence.</p>
<b>10.0</b>	<p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>It is not considered that a full assessment of the planning issues were fully addressed in the assessment of the previous planning application that was granted approval. Since the previous planning approval the Addendum to PPS 7 Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas was introduced in 2010. The proposed car parking is to the front of the development and as such the hard surfacing dominates, and as such results in a negative impact on the street scene at ground level. Communal bicycle stands have not been provided as part of this development. It is considered that this scale of development is inconsistent with established properties within the immediate vicinity which are single storey dwellings before progressing to two storey semi-detached dwellings. Each residential property has front and rear amenity space. The proposed development fails to comply with Policy LC1 (a and b) of PPS 7 Addendum in that the proposed density of this infill site is significantly higher than the established residential area; and the pattern of development (apartment block) is not in keeping with the established residential area. The proposed layout only meets the recommended space standards in Apartments 1 and 2, the remainder are significantly short of the specified standards. Having regard to the policy context, planning history, and other material considerations above, the proposal is deemed to be unacceptable and recommended for refusal.</p>
<b>11.0</b>	<p><b>Summary of Recommendation</b></p> <p>Refusal</p>
<b>12.0</b>	<p><b>Refusal Reasons</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The proposal is contrary to Policy QD1 of Planning Policy Statement 7 in that it would, if permitted, result in overdevelopment of the site due to its inappropriate scale, form, massing and design causing unacceptable damage to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would fail to provide a quality and sustainable residential environment.</li> <li>2. The proposal is contrary to Policy LC1 of Planning Policy Statement 7 (Addendum) Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas in that it would, if permitted, result in a significantly higher density and a development pattern which is not in keeping with this established residential area.</li> <li>3. The proposal is contrary to Policy LC1 of Planning Policy Statement 7 (Addendum) Safeguarding the Character of Established Residential Areas in that it would, if permitted, result in overdevelopment of the site causing harm to the living conditions of prospective residents by way of inappropriate space</li> </ol>

	standards in Apartments 3, 4 and 5. The proposed development would therefore fail to create a quality residential environment.
<b>12.0</b>	<b>Notification to Department (if relevant)</b>  N/A
<b>13.0</b>	<b>Representation from elected member:</b>  N/A

<b>ANNEX</b>	
<b>Date Valid</b>	26 May 2016
<b>Date First Advertised</b>	24 June 2016
<b>Date Last Advertised</b>	9 December 2016
<b>Details of Neighbour Notification (all addresses)</b>	
<p>The Owner/Occupier, 59 Houston Park, Multyhogy, Belfast, Down, BT5 6AT, The Owner/Occupier, Bloomfield Football Club, 8 Houston Park, Belfast BT5 The Owner/Occupier, Orangefield Primary School, Cameronian Drive, Belfast BT56DF</p>	
<b>Date of Last Neighbour Notification</b>	01 December 2016
<b>Date of EIA Determination</b>	N/A
<b>ES Requested</b>	N/A
<b>Notification to Department (if relevant)</b>	
N/A	