

Date: 22 November 2019
Our Ref: 2019/00063/PREAPP
Please ask for: Mike Halsall

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Pre-Application Advice

Dear Alban

Proposal: The submission proposes the change of use of the existing Sue Ryder Neurological Care Centre to alternative use, with potential for hotel, care facility, residential accommodation, or another alternative use subject to the advice received through this pre-application submission

Location: Sue Ryder Care Centre Cuerden Hall Shady Lane Cuerden Bamber Bridge Preston PR5 6AZ

Reference: 2019/00063/PREAPP

Thank you for your enquiry requesting pre-application advice in respect of the above referenced proposal.

This response is based upon the information submitted with the pre-application advice request received on 13th September 2019, site visit of 30th October 2019 and subsequent email of 20th November 2019. The proposal is non-specific in terms of the type of development and is aimed at providing a high-level discussion of the general acceptability in planning terms of potential alternative uses of Cuerden Hall, a Grade II* listed building and additional new development within its grounds.

All content and advice are as at the date of this letter, and you are asked to note that matters may be subject to change.

Please note that a full assessment of the proposal can only be made as part of a planning application. Comments made in this letter are for general guidance only and are made without prejudice to the determination of any future planning application.

Overview

The Council's main priorities for this site are to safeguard the future of Cuerden Hall, a grade II* listed building with additional grade II listed structures, and to safeguard the Green Belt, in which the site is located, from inappropriate development.

As identified within the supporting statement that accompanies the pre-application advice request, the building has been granted planning permission for various changes of use since the 1970's, first as offices and most recently to its current use as a residential care home.

The current users are vacating the premises in March 2020 to relocate to a new premises in Preston. It is therefore important to find an appropriate new use for the building to ensure its longevity.



The supporting statement submitted in support of the pre-application advice request provides a comprehensive review of national and local planning policy relevant to the site and the possible forms of alternative uses for the site. It is therefore considered unnecessary to repeat all the policy wording within this letter. Any proposal will have to demonstrably accord with such policies.

Cuerden Hall

Any planning application for the change of use of Cuerden Hall will need to provide details of the setting of the building and the history of the surrounding parkland within a supporting statement or heritage statement to accompany the planning and listed building consent applications.

It is recommended that any thoughts for the reconfiguration of window openings in the existing development should adopt an honest and contemporary approach and your attention is drawn to information published by English Heritage (now Historic England), '*Practical Building Conservation*' (March 2013).

Vehicle parking as part of any change of use of Cuerden Hall or new build development would need to accord with Policy ST4 of the Chorley Council Plan 2012-2026 whilst its location would require careful consideration. The first impression of any proposed approach to the hall site should not be met by a veritable sea of parked cars. This would give rise to serious concerns about the impact of this upon the setting of the buildings and the openness of Green Belt. Whilst there is already an area of parking to the northern side of the hall and the stable block, this should not be drastically increased.

Parking areas to the north of the hall and the stable block could be softened to some extent by landscaping to make a proportionate increase in parking in these areas acceptable in terms of its impact on the setting of the listed buildings. Removal of parking from the area to the north of the principal entrance to the hall would be welcomed as a formal planting area is unlikely to be appropriate for this location. It would be better to retain the circulation area for pick up and drop off but break it up perhaps with a central landscape feature.

It is considered that a sensitively designed change of use of the hall could be found to be acceptable and be supported by the Council.

Proposed New Build

It is assumed that new build would either relate to extensions to the existing building, new ancillary buildings for a hotel or care facility, or new dwellings.

In relation to any proposed new build, it will be both necessary and beneficial to your case to demonstrate how the chosen design ethos has been arrived at. This will be beneficial to not only the elected members of the planning committee, but also members of the public when the proposal is scrutinised and to that end I would suggest that 3-dimensional visualisations will be most useful in this respect.

In a similar vein an explanation of the design ethos for any proposed alterations and extensions to Cuerden Hall will be both required and beneficial to making the case for development.

It is recommended that any new work within the courtyard area including the warehouse and any proposed new build beyond should adopt an honest, contemporary but at the same time sympathetic approach. It is recommended that any attempt to replicate details from the original building or the use of pastiche is to be avoided.

The applicant may wish to present a case for any new build being 'enabling development'. In such circumstances, as set-out within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the Council will need to assess whether the benefits of the proposal, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of Cuerden Hall, would outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies. Robust financial information in the form of a viability appraisal would need to be submitted in support of any such proposal. A phasing plan would be required to link the new build development with the hall so funding would be released when sections of the hall are complete. A legal agreement would also need to be formulated to ensure that the works to the hall take priority.

Green Belt

Development will only be permitted within the Green Belt, in accordance with the Framework, if it is considered appropriate development or where very special circumstances can be demonstrated. The Framework confirms that 'very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Paragraph 145 of the Framework states that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt but lists a number of exceptions to this rule, these include; the re-use of buildings provided that the buildings are of permanent and substantial construction and the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

With regards to the change of use of the hall, this would likely be considered appropriate as the existing building is of permanent and substantial construction and would not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Extensions to the hall could also be found to be appropriate development in terms of Green Belt policy, providing they are not disproportionate additions. This would have to be demonstrated by the applicant within any formal planning submission.

New buildings for hotel, care or residential purposes would be classed as inappropriate development in the Green Belt and so very special circumstances would need to be demonstrated to outweigh harm to the openness of the Green belt any other harm. Openness is not defined in the Framework but is generally seen to mean freedom from development. It is largely therefore seen as a spatial designation and whilst it is not a landscape designation in terms of landscape impact, there is a visual component to it. Visual as well as spatial impacts therefore need to be considered distinctly from one another.

Providing very special circumstances can be demonstrated to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt from inappropriateness and any other harm to e.g. amenity, ecology, archaeology etc. new build could be found to be acceptable on this site.

Financial contributions

There may be a requirement for a S106 agreement for financial contributions as part of the development in relation to open space and/or affordable housing. I would direct you to policies HS4 and HS8 of the Local Plan for further information. Such requirements depend upon the type and scale of development.

CIL

Please also note that the Chorley CIL Infrastructure Charging Schedule provides a specific amount for development. The CIL Charging Schedule was adopted on 16 July 2013 and charging commenced on 1 September 2013. The proposed development will potentially be a chargeable development and the charge is subject to indexation in accordance with the

Council's Charging Schedule.

Requirements as part of Planning Submission (refer to Validation Checklist)

The Council now has an adopted Validation Checklist which sets out the requirements for documents to be submitted with planning applications. This document can be found at www.chorley.gov.uk/planning however I can advise that the following documents will be required to accompany an application at this site:

- Standard application forms and plan
- Planning fee
- Energy Efficiency / Resource Conservation Statement
- Archaeological Assessment
- Heritage/Planning Statement
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Determination Form
- Financial Viability Assessment- if specific financial considerations are applicable
- Transport Statement and Travel Plan
- Flood Risk Assessment (if any new development is over 1 hectare in area)
- Tree Survey
- Ecological assessment (if new build is to take place), including habitats and tree surveys and any potential licence implications
- Options appraisals in terms of alternatives considered and rejected

Conclusion

As noted earlier, the Council's main priorities for this site are to safeguard the future of Cuerden Hall, a grade II* listed building with additional grade II listed structures, and to safeguard the Green Belt, in which the site is located, from inappropriate development.

It is considered that a sensitively designed change of use of Cuerden Hall could be found to be acceptable and be supported by the Council to secure the longevity of this important heritage asset. This could be for a range of uses, including a hotel, care facility or residential accommodation.

The erection of new buildings in the Green Belt which are not listed within the exceptions of the Framework fall to be considered inappropriate development which is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt. Any planning application would need to; demonstrate very special circumstances; not result in significant additional impact on the surrounding countryside; and demonstrate that the development would safeguard the future and protect the heritage asset.

I hope the above sets out the main planning considerations in respect of this site. If you do not submit a planning application straight away please be advised that planning policies/ legislation may have changed and I would advise contacting the Planning Section who can advise on the current planning policy situation.

Chief Planning Officer
Chorley Council