



Press Release

1 April 2014

Churchill Retirement Living WINS planning permission on appeal, for new development at Havant Road in Drayton, Portsmouth.

Retirement lifestyle specialist Churchill Retirement Living is pleased to announce that on 31 March planning permission was granted on appeal by a Planning Inspector against a decision of Portsmouth City Council Planning Committee, for a 52, one and two bedroom retirement housing development, including communal features and Lodge Manager's apartment in Havant Road, Drayton, Portsmouth. The site, which comprises approximately 0.5 hectares, is currently occupied by a redundant nursery school which has ceased trading and has been vacant since 2013.

Andrew Burgess, Director of Churchill Retirement Living comments:

"The Planning Inspector recognised the many benefits of this retirement living development as well as the established need for Private Sheltered Housing within the Portsmouth area and that the effects upon the character of the area would be acceptable. It is regrettable that we have had to appeal and that Portsmouth City Councillors have delayed this much needed development coming forward sooner. Councillors should reflect on this decision and the invidious position they put their planning officer, Ian Parkinson; in, having to defend a decision he did not support in his committee report."

Comments of particular note in the Inspectors Appeal decision letter are;

A great redevelopment opportunity

The appeal site is by some margin one of the largest parcels of land in the immediate vicinity. As such it represents a significant redevelopment opportunity and given the finite amount of such space available within what is essentially an urban authority, it is important that its potential in providing new residential accommodation is maximised, within the context of the area in which it is located.

Plenty of Parking

In this case there is good car parking availability on the roads immediately adjoining or close to the site, most of which is unrestricted. I visited the appeal site at busy times and noted that particularly around school delivery and collection periods, like many other locations, local roads are busy. However, even at such times there appeared to be decent opportunity to park safely and quite close to the appeal site without interrupting traffic flow and without damage to local amenity. As such I am content that any 'overflow' car parking which might be occasionally generated can be accommodated in this manner.

The critical need to provide more retirement living developments in line with Government Planning Guidance

Policy PCS19 of The Portsmouth Plan states that the Council will encourage the provision of sheltered accommodation. This is consistent with the Framework and the recently issued Planning Practice Guidance, which identify the need for such accommodation, given the country's ageing population, as critical. I place appropriate weight on this fact.

Family Housing versus Older Peoples Housing

Some objectors felt that family housing would be preferable at this location. Whilst such provision might be acceptable in principle, a proposal of that kind is not before me and there is no substantive suggestion backed by policy that this site should be safeguarded or reserved exclusively for that purpose. The Appellant pointed out that sheltered schemes release under occupied family housing onto the market and contribute towards achieving balanced communities.

No unacceptable concentration of retirement housing

Others were critical of the potential clustering effect of retirement accommodation in this part of Drayton, hinting at undesirable social consequences. No convincing manifestations of this perceived threat were articulated and it is clear that if the scheme was implemented the proportion of retirement units within the overall housing stock would still be at a modest level within the ward.

The site is located on a main road into Portsmouth, close to the shops and amenities of Drayton and is well served by public transport and provides sufficient parking.

"I am delighted that we have convincingly achieved planning permission at appeal."

continues Andrew Burgess,

"This is our second development in Portsmouth as well as our fourteenth planning approval in England since June. The construction will get underway in May with first occupations anticipated in summer 2015. This positive outcome is a testament to true collaboration and professionalism by our planning consultants, affordable housing advisers, architects and officers from Portsmouth City Council. It is very disappointing that we had to appeal to correct the fundamentally flawed decision of Councillors."

The new development will follow the same highly successful pattern of all Churchill Lodges, providing high quality, self-contained homes in landscaped grounds. Owners have the benefits of a Lodge Manager, 24 hour Careline, Owners' Lounge, guest suite and laundry room. It is a lifestyle that is becoming increasingly sought after by people of retirement age, who enjoy freedom from household and gardening maintenance, and have the benefit of built-in sociability whilst still retaining their independence and privacy.

For more information on Churchill Retirement Living, please call 0800 458 1856 or visit www.churchillretirement.co.uk

-Ends-

Note for editors:

Appeal decision dated 31 March 2014 enclosed.

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Image of the proposed retirement living development.

