

Sunnyside Bungalows supporting information

Building siting

The proposed siting of the application bungalow is on land forward of the existing bungalows known as the Sunnyside Bungalows. The bungalows are set within the plot without designated gardens and the grounds are shared amenity space. The proposed bungalow due to its siting and proximity to the other bungalows shouldn't be considered like a one off new property with private drive and garden but as a collection of buildings which are run and managed by the Trust. Therefore standard separation distances and minimal garden sizes shouldn't be considered in the same way.

Highway improvements

The creation of off road parking from the Church Lane access will provide the equivalent of 1 space per existing property and 2 for the application property. Creating 4 spaces for the existing bungalows allows for removing 4 parked vehicles off Main Street which is a very busy area for parking and has limited visibility for road crossing from the roadside parking. This is far from ideal when the road is regularly used for school drop off. Removing vehicles off Main Street will have a visibly positive response on the conservation area as the architecture will take centre stage over the cars.

The parking area also provides the opportunity for disabled parking bays and space for an ambulance or vital services to pull up easily to serve the needs of the occupants of the bungalows.

Electric car charging points will also help reduce emissions from cars using the site.

Supporting letter and detail from Percy William Ratcliff Cottages Trust

We would like to explain exactly what the proposal is and to reassure you that, throughout the process, we have sought and taken on board advice from The Charity Commission, The Almshouse Association, Solicitors, architects, the local authority and the highways department.

We clarify in the strongest terms that the new build will be on our land. The land will always remain the Trust's property and the property will be, at all times, fully owned by the Trust but funded entirely by the donor. In return, the donor(s) wish(es) to reside in the property for their remaining years. They will pay all outgoings associated with the building, including contents insurance, gardening and maintenance. The Trust will insure the building as it is the Trust which has the vested interest.

The donor(s) is (are) in their 60s and has (have) a direct blood relative living within the village. Upon either the demise of the donor(s) or, if sooner, they vacate the property, we will deal with offering residency of it to qualifying beneficiaries in accordance with our Trust Schedule.

The building will, to start with, be a two bedroomed detached building, with the same footprint as one of our two existing one-bedroom bungalows. It has been designed so that it will be relatively simple and inexpensive to convert the new build into two, one-bed cottages, thus increasing our available accommodation by 50% (when the property becomes empty) and to increase the Trust's assets by at least that percentage. In addition, the donor(s) is (are) funding vehicular access to the properties and parking for (6) vehicles, four of which are for the existing properties. This will alleviate the pressure on parking on the main street in the village and in particular in the bus stop which is immediately outside the Almshouses property.

Construction of the building will be on land which is currently unused and which we have to pay to be maintained, and the plans include the provision of surrounding foliage in order to afford all residents privacy.

If planning permission is granted, no construction will commence until we have the donation, conditions of living etc all confirmed and clarified within a contract drawn up by an appropriate (Almshouse Association recommended) solicitor.

We confirm that, in view of the above, we consider that the donation is extremely generous and will be of enormous benefit to ensure the longevity of the Trust and the provision of residences (the Trust's main purpose) and that our decision to follow this through was in the best interests of the charity and, ultimately, its beneficiaries.

There is disappointingly some opposition within the village, hence people writing to any authority they think can help halt this. The Almshouse Association has also been approached but now offered us their blessings and so now The Charity Commission has been approached.

We believe this opposition is partly due to the donor(s) requesting anonymity and discretion at this stage. All sorts of rumours/untruths and outright slanderous lies have been generated and even though clarification on the position, building plan and parking/emergency services access were all provided at the local parish council planning meeting, untrue speculation continues that:

- we are selling the land;
- a very rich person is doing this so they can have a relative live nearby
- individual trustees are benefitting from this project.

All these rumours are emphatically not true!

In response to the comments made in your email:

1. We fully appreciate that we cannot sell or dispose of land without permission and we hope that we have allayed these fears in what has already been stated.
2. We fully appreciate that the land is designated land and feel that, for the sake of a few years with no income from the new property (but also negligible expense), the property will provide substantial long term benefits for the charity and future beneficiaries. The benefactor(s) has/have very close links to the village.
3. We hope that the issue of property disposal has already been covered sufficiently but, for the avoidance of any doubt, no land is being sold for this project.
4. As to how the Trustees have arrived at the conclusion that it is in the best interests of the charity to allow the benefactor to remain in the property until his/her/their death(s) is simply that, since the charity was established, not one single gift anywhere near the size of this one has been given to the charity. There is no way that the charity could ever afford to build any additional property for themselves and, in accordance with charity guidelines, we are trying to maximise the use of charity property to perpetuate the Trust in the future.

Before we proceed with any part of this project, the Trustees will be seeking further legal advice and this will naturally have to include what is required for the Charity Commission. However, we decided that there was little point in spending considerable sums on legal fees if the chance of achieving planning permission was very low. All your points are entirely relevant and sensible and, so far, we feel we have tried to pre-empt and face these challenges.

In answer to the specific questions asked:

(I) Without a definitive survey, it is hard to say exactly but we would estimate the new Trust property would cover approximately 20% of the total land area owned by the Trust. However, I would stress that the new property would have the same footprint as the existing two semi-detached properties.

(ii) The benefactor(s) will live in the property rent free for the rest of their life/lives. However, they will pay all ongoing running costs, repairs etc and will of course not be able to alter in any way the property without prior consent from the Trustees.

(iii) The benefactor(s) will not be able to leave the property to anyone as it will belong to the Trust.

(iv) At the present time, the Trust has three applicants on our waiting list and one empty property due to the sad passing of one of our beneficiaries just over a week ago. - We have not approached any of those on our waiting list yet out of respect for the family of the bereaved (who live in the village) and also because we have to carry out a full survey of the property to ensure that it is fit for purpose and carry out all necessary repairs and renewals.

(v) At this stage, there is no way we can say what the demand for the additional properties will be in 10 or 20 year's time. However, we would point out that this has always been the case since the Trust was established. What we can say, with some confidence, is that the number of older people in the village is increasing with every year that passes and we are aware that demand for such properties is almost certainly likely to increase.