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Ms S. Bolsover
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Date: 2nd November 2022
Our Ref: DC/2022/01840

Dear Ms Bolsover

**Garages adjacent 5, Somerville Road, Waterloo,
Demolition of existing garages and erection of 2 no. dwellinghouses. (Semi-detached)**

Thank you for your recent request for pre-application advice. I hope that the following comments set out in the attached report will be helpful.

The comments are an officer opinion, which is given without prejudice to any decision as may be made by the Planning Committee. The information given is the best available at the present time, but it is possible that new issues and information may arise at application stage which may affect the recommendation.

This department also provides a Building Control Service and if your scheme requires Building Regulation approval, I would ask you to contact the Building Control Section on 0345 140 0845 or email building@sefton.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Liz Beard

Senior Planning Officer

Pre-Application Enquiry Report DC/2022/01840

The Site

The site is the garages adjacent to 5 Somerville Road in Waterloo.

Proposal

The proposal is for the demolition of the existing garages and the erection of 2 no dwellinghouses (Semi-detached).

Relevant Planning History

Ref: S/1988/0680. Proposal: Erection of one pair of semi-detached houses. (Outline Application). Decision: Approve with conditions. Decision Date: 19-OCT-88.

Local and National Policy

The application site is situated in an area designated as Primarily Residential in the Council's Adopted Local Plan.

The following policies apply:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, July 2021)
National Design Guide (October 2019)

Sefton Local Plan

SD1 Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development
SD2 Principles of Sustainable Development
HC3 Residential Development and Primarily Residential Areas
EQ2 Design
EQ3 Accessibility
EQ4 Pollution and Hazards
EQ5 Air Quality
EQ8 Flood Risk and Surface Water
EQ9 Provision of Public Open Space, Strategic Paths and Trees
NH2 Nature

The New Housing & Sustainable Travel and Development Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are also of relevance when assessing this proposal.

The Local Plan policies as well as the SPD's and the Neighbourhood Plans are available to view via the following web link:

<https://www.sefton.gov.uk/planning-building-control/planning-policy-including-local-plan-and-neighbourhood-planning.aspx>.

The Council currently have a number of SPDs, which are out for public consultation. This includes one in relation to new housing development. As this document is currently out for consultation it does carry limited weight at this stage, however depending on when the application is submitted, this document may carry more weight when making a decision. The documents can be found via the following link:

<https://www.sefton.gov.uk/planning-building-control/planning-policy-including-local-plan-and-neighbourhood-planning/emerging-supplementary-planning-documents/>

Main Planning Issues

The main planning issues for consideration include the principle of development, highways requirements, drainage requirements, the design of the proposal and the potential impact of the proposal on the surrounding area and neighbouring residents, ecology and the trees and landscaping requirements.

The Proposal

The proposal includes the demolition of the existing garages and the erection of a pair of semi-detached dwellings. There has been a covering letter provided, which includes the following information:

'The application site has an area circa 0.03 ha (0.09 acres) and is located to the west of Somerville Road, near its junction with St John's Road. Broadly level, the site comprises of 11nr garages (totalling a GEA of approximately 149sqm), with hard surfacing to the driveway and central turning area. There is an existing vehicular access from Somerville Road into the site with brick piers through a metal gate. Parking is afforded within the site for several vehicles. A number of residential properties can be found to the north, east and south of the site with a commercial workshop to the west and railway line beyond. Somerville Road borders the site to the east. The site is concealed behind a high level brick wall that fronts Somerville Road. Low level planting site between the wall and the pavement. We assume the site originally housed two or three residential properties prior to the erection of the garages....

The site comprises of 11nr garages within an expanse of tarmac and vehicular access from Somerville Road. The proposed works seek to demolish the existing garage structures and erect two semi-detached dwellings within the site. The vehicular access could be retained with provision for some car parking if felt necessary in this location.

The existing building line would be retained with individual gardens to the front and private amenity space to the rear of each property.

The properties would be constructed of the same style and detail as the adjacent dwellings...

It is the applicant's intention to create a beautiful development that seeks to demolish the unattractive development of garages and return the site to its former residential use. The addition of two new properties would also infill the current 'gap' within the streetscape, and reinstate the traditional character of the local area whilst in turn providing much needed residential accommodation...'

As well as the covering letter there has been a location plan, an existing site plan, a proposed site plan and photographs provided with this pre-application enquiry.

Principle of Development

The area is designated as Primarily Residential in the Local Plan and therefore residential use is acceptable in principle subject to compliance with other Local Plan policies, supplementary planning documents & material considerations.

Highways Requirements

Colleagues in the Highways Development Design Team have been consulted and have provided the following comments:

'The submission is a pre-planning enquiry relating to the proposed demolition of the existing garages on land adjacent 5 Somerville Road, Waterloo and erection of 2no. semi-detached dwellings.

The indicative plans submitted do not show access and parking arrangements, therefore, any full application submission should include these details. Off-street parking provision should be in accordance with the Sefton Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), 'Sustainable Travel and Development' (June 2018).

If the applicant is unable to meet the required off-street parking provision as per the SPD, any full application submission must include an Accessibility Checklist or Minimum Accessibility Standard Assessment (MASA) to demonstrate the extent to which the site is accessible by all modes of transport.'

Appendix C of the Sustainable Travel and Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides the details of the minimum car parking and cycle parking standards. There is a requirement for two car parking spaces to be provided for both two- and three-bedroom dwellings. As stated above, this has not been shown as part of the proposal, therefore a Minimum Accessibility Standards Assessment (MASA) will be required to be submitted as part of any planning application.

The details on how to compile a MASA can be found on pages 7-9 and in appendix B of the same SPD as referenced above.

Drainage Requirements

The Flooding and Drainage Team, also known as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), advise that for a full application that the applicant uses sustainable drainage systems to manage surface water from the additional impermeable surfaces resulting from the proposals. There will need to be details of the surface water drainage to ensure that the proposal complies with Local Plan Policy EQ8 'Flood Risk and Surface Water.'

The LLFA can be contacted via the following email address Flooding@sefton.gov.uk to discuss the scope of any information required.

Residential Amenity and the Design and Potential Impact on the Street Scene

The Council's planning guidance New Housing Supplementary Planning Document (June 2018) provides details of the minimum interface distances that are designed to protect residential amenity and living conditions. These will also prevent overlooking and the loss of privacy/outlook.

The minimum distances between the windows of dwellings are listed as;

- Habitable room* to a blank wall or a non-habitable room window+ is 12 metres
- Habitable room window to another habitable room window is 21 metres

**A habitable room window is a main window to a room that people are in for long periods, such as living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, bedrooms, conservatories, studies and play rooms.*

+A non-habitable room window is a window to a landing, hallway, bathroom, or other room that people do not formally occupy for long periods, or a secondary room which is less used and where obscure glass may be used, or other windows in rooms which have main habitable room windows.

The property at 1 Somerville Road appears to be a dwelling, which has a door and a habitable room window located in the side elevation. There is an additional window on the first floor, but that appears to be an obscurely glazed window.

The other properties 39-43 (odds) St John's Road include shops at the ground floor level, but they appear to have flats above them on the first floor, which also have habitable room windows on the rear elevation.

Therefore, taking the above into account providing that there is a distance of 12 metres between the rear of the existing dwellings and the side elevation of the proposed dwelling then it will meet the requirements as set out above. It is a cramped site, but it is acknowledged that this is the character of the area.

The properties located at 39-43 (odds) St John's Road do include businesses at ground floor level, therefore there would not be any harmful impact. Although one of the extensions to the rear, may be a flat. The windows for the flats at the first-floor level (39 & 41 St John's Road) are located further back than the property at 43 St John's Road and 1 Somerville

Road. Although the outlook, from these windows, will be compromised to some extent, it is the degree of harm that will need to be assessed as part of any planning application. The onus is on the applicant to demonstrate that there is no harm caused.

Future Occupiers

In addition to the amenity of the existing occupiers, the living conditions for the future occupiers also needs to be considered, which includes looking at the interface distances, outlook, privacy and the provision of amenity space.

The New Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) provides the guidance on the minimum requirements for garden sizes. The requirement for a two bedroom property is a 50 m² garden and a 60 m² garden for a three bedroom property. In addition to the above to ensure the privacy of the existing residents and the future residents, as also described above, then it is recommended that the back garden should be a minimum of 10.5m in length, when it backs onto other garden areas.

The advice as set out in the New Housing Supplementary Planning Document is on page 11:

'6.1 Private and useable gardens for houses (i.e excluding front gardens and land forward of any fence on a corner property) should be at least the following size unless:

- a) A lesser space would be consistent with the character of the local area, or*
- b) Particular site constraints mean that it is not possible to achieve the standard....*

Attention should be given to the quality of the useable, garden space thin linear strips (e.g passages providing rear access at the side of the house) will not be counted as part of the garden area.'

The outlook and prospect of the future occupiers also need to be taken into consideration. It will need to be demonstrated that the outlook for the future occupiers is appropriate. The proposal will not meet the interface requirements when looking at the fronts of the proposal in relation to the existing properties on the opposite side of the road, however the building line is adhered to and there is a road in between the properties, which limits how private the frontage of the properties are.

Colleagues in the Environmental Health Team have been consulted and have provided the following comments:

'Should a full application be subsequently submitted, I would recommend the applicant considers the following matters, which if applicable to the development, should be addressed by submission of supporting evidence at the same time as the application. Typically, such evidence will be in the form of a specialist assessment and/or report:

Demolition activities are inherently noisy and should be carried out using best practicable means as recommended in BS5228-1:2009+A1:2014 'Noise and Vibration Control on Construction and Open Sites'. Steps must also be taken to minimise emissions of dust arising from demolition/construction operations. The Code of Practice for Demolition, BS 6187:2011, gives practical guidance where asbestos materials are present. Further guidance and advice can be found in section 11.14.1 (noise), 11.14.2 (vibration) and the more specific guidance found in section 12 (Protecting people and the environment) of BS 6187:2011 'Code of Practice for full and partial demolition'.

Due to the proximity of neighbouring residential properties, a scheme including full information on procedures to be adopted during the commencement of the proposed demolition works should be submitted. Any approved scheme will need to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority and implemented before the demolition work commences.

Should the building development incorporate piled foundations then the following stand-alone condition should be included if a CEMP is not being required as a condition.

A scheme of piling methodology, which provides justification for the method chosen and details noise and vibration suppression methods proposed, should be submitted for prior approval. The agreed scheme should then be implemented throughout the development. There are a variety of piling methods available, some of which cause considerably greater noise and vibration than others. It is common for the prevailing ground conditions to influence the chosen method of piling. Where the prevailing ground conditions would permit more than one piling method, the Council would expect the contractor to choose the method which causes the least amount of noise and vibration, in accordance with the following hierarchy

- *Pressed-in methods, e.g. Hydraulic jacking*
- *Auger / bored piling*
- *Diaphragm Walling*
- *Vibratory piling or vibro-replacement*
- *Driven piling or dynamic consolidation*

Should the contractor propose to use a method which is not the preferred lower impact option, then satisfactory justification will need to be provided in order to demonstrate the piling method that is utilised meets Best Practicable Means (BPM). Please note vibration monitoring will be required for all piling projects. For further advice on what to include in your piling methodology scheme and current standards please contact Sefton's Pollution Control Team.'

The relevant information, as set out above, needs to be provided as part of any planning application. It is recommended that the Environmental Health Team are contacted on 0345 140 0845 to discuss the information that is required to be submitted as part of any planning application. This will enable the proposal to be assessed against Local Plan Policy EQ4 'Pollution and Hazards'.

It is also recommended that the Building Control Team are contacted in relation to the Building Regulations. The Building Control Section can be contacted on 0345 140 0845 or please email building@sefton.gov.uk.

Design

Local Plan Policy EQ2 'Design', is of relevance and indicates that development will only be permitted where the proposal responds positively to the character, local distinctiveness and form of its surroundings. The policy also requires in terms of site design, that the arrangement of buildings, structures and spaces within the site, including the density and layout, and the alignment and orientation of the buildings relate positively to the character and form of the surroundings and achieves a high quality of design.

The Government published the National Design Guide in October 2019. The emphasis being on the creation of high quality buildings and places. The opening page notes how...'*Well-designed places influence the quality of our experience as we spend time in them and move around them.*' The document then provides the components for good design.

There have not been any elevations provided at this stage. It is recommended that the height, design and the materials used on the existing dwellings are taken into account. The terraced properties have bay windows and there are some features provided along the eaves and above the doors of the houses. It is noted that the building line, with the properties from 5 Somerville Road (odds) onwards, is adhered to, which is acceptable in design terms.

There are small boundary walls located on the frontage of all the properties. It is recommended that this is replicated as it is a feature and part of the character of the area.

Ecology

The existing garage buildings, on the site, may provide potential roost features for bats. Therefore, it is advised that a preliminary roost assessment is carried out and submitted as part of any planning application. These can be carried out all year round.

If there are bats found to be present, then emergence surveys will need to be carried out. These surveys can only be carried out May to September.

The Council's Nature Conservation Supplementary Planning Document, provides the background information and can be found via the following weblink:

<https://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/2845/nature-spd-20170814.pdf>

Trees and Landscaping Requirements

Local Plan Policy EQ9 'Provision of Public Open Space, Strategic Paths and Trees' is of relevance. Part 7 of the policy states:

'Trees and Landscaping

7. Development proposals must:

- a) Not result in unacceptable loss of, or damage to, existing trees or woodlands or significant landscaping during or as a result of development;*
- b) Replace any trees lost as a result of the development at a ratio of 1:1 within the site.*
- c) Where appropriate, include an appropriate landscape scheme, showing all hard and soft landscaping and management arrangements.'*

There are no trees within the site, therefore parts a) and b) of this policy are not applicable.

However, to comply with part c) of this policy there will need to be a landscaping scheme provided, which details both the hard and soft landscaping, including the boundary treatment and surfacing to be provided.

Consultation

The Council's most recent Statement of Community Involvement (March 2018) is available to view on the Council's website. Before submitting a planning application, the local planning authority recommends that the applicant consults with the immediate neighbours, who may be affected by the proposal.

Conclusion

The proposed use is acceptable in principle, however as outlined above there will need to be a MASA submitted to demonstrate that the proposal is acceptable in terms of the highway's requirements. It will also need to be demonstrated that the interface distances can be accommodated to ensure that the amenity of the existing occupiers is acceptable and that the garden sizes are acceptable for the future occupiers. The design will need to be of a good quality and fit in with the character of the area. The proposal is unacceptable at present but is capable of complying with the requirements subject to the points above being addressed.

Reports and Information Required

I would refer you to the checklist for submitting planning applications, which you will find at:

<http://www.sefton.gov.uk/planning-building-control/apply-for-planning-permission/how-to-make-a-planning-application.aspx>. In this particular case I would draw your attention to the following specific requirements:

- Planning application forms, including appropriate certificates of ownership.
- Appropriate fee (£462 for each dwelling; the fees for a planning application can be found via the following link: https://ecab.planningportal.co.uk/uploads/english_application_fees.pdf)
- Location plan with the application site outlined in red.

- Site/Layout Plan.
- MASA
- Plans showing the elevations and floorplans.
- Details of the drainage requirements.
- Bat potential assessment.
- Details of the landscaping.

Please show all the dimensions on the plans, or alternatively an appropriate scale.

The validation checklist is available to view via the following weblink:

<https://www.sefton.gov.uk/planning-building-control/apply-for-permission/getting-your-application-right-first-time.aspx>

There may be further information requested by consultees and the case officer as part of the planning application process.

Likely Recommendation

The proposal is unacceptable at present but is capable of complying with requirements subject to the points above being addressed.