

Proposals for the redevelopment of the

former Chas Lowe & Sons site, Knebworth



Artist's impression of the development

Welcome

We are pleased to announce that we have now submitted a planning application to North Hertfordshire District Council for the redevelopment of land at the former Chas Lowe & Sons site, London Road, Knebworth with Assisted Living (Extra Care) accommodation.

The regeneration of this site offers the opportunity to provide a sensitive redevelopment that will complement the character of this part of Knebworth and help fulfil a local need for this type of accommodation for older people.

Design

Before we begin designing any proposal, our team of architects carefully researches the architecture and character of the local area.

The site is located within a residential area, with traditional architecture and independent retail units along the road. Because of this, we have retained the retail frontage in our proposals to ensure our development complements the existing buildings.

We have carefully considered our design to integrate the site with the surrounding area and we believe these proposals present the best opportunity for the future of this site. Furthermore, it is important that communities address the current and future needs of their residents.

Parking and traffic impact

The move to retirement housing is 'needs based' and will often go hand-in-hand with people choosing to give up their cars and the need for more specialised housing.

Parking surveys at our sites over a number of years have been undertaken to understand our homeowners' needs and inform future developments, and have guided our parking provision here.

We propose 26 parking spaces for homeowners and visitors, as well as 3 for staff. McCarthy & Stone's independent research on parking provision at its schemes across the country show that Assisted Living developments require 0.415 spaces per apartment, including staff and visitors. This would equate to 20 spaces at this development.

However, we are mindful of the sensitivity of off-street parking provision in the immediate area and believe this additional capacity will ensure that this issue is not exacerbated. We have therefore undertaken a survey of local parking capacity, the results of which are included in the Transport Report submitted as part of the application. This study finds that there is existing parking capacity on local roads, which will further increase following the closure of the Builders' Merchants.

The scheme at a glance

The proposals include 48 one and two-bedroom Assisted Living (Extra Care) apartments for private sale, together with:

- A design which reflects the residential character of Knebworth
- 2625 sq ft of flexible space to be used for retail, office or community uses to service both homeowners on site and the local community
- Communal facilities, including dining room, function room, and homeowners' lounge, and a guest suite available for visitors
- High-quality landscaping and boundary treatments, including retention of some of the existing trees at the south of the site
- Space for internal mobility scooter storage with charging points
- 26 car parking spaces for homeowners and guests, plus 3 for staff
- Support for the local economy
- Release of family-sized housing in the area back onto local market

Addressing the Council's identified housing need

The Office of National Statistics predicts that, by 2033, there will be an additional 3.5 million older households in England alone. This reflects a 60% increase on today, yet only 2% of current housing in the UK is specifically designed to meet the needs of older people.

As part of our planning application we have submitted a Needs Report, carried out by Contact Consulting, which concludes that there is a significant need for older people's housing in Knebworth, and North Herts more widely. It finds that the proportion of the older population in North Hertfordshire is projected to increase most significantly within those aged 85 and above, which will lead to an impact upon the demand for specialised accommodation and care services.

With the local over 60s population expected to rise from 29,000 to 44,000 by 2031, this development would assist in providing much-needed accommodation for older people.

It is important the needs of older people are not overlooked. Purpose-built accommodation better meets the needs of older people, delaying the need for residential care.

We strongly believe the development will be an asset to the town and represents the ideal opportunity to assist the Council in meeting an acknowledged and growing local housing need.

Benefits of this proposal:

- Much-needed specialist Extra Care accommodation provided for local people
- Flexible retail, office or community use space on London Road
- Ideal location, close to public transport links, shops and services
- An attractive building for this vacant brownfield site
- A sensitive neighbour for those living near to the site
- Increased landscaping on the site
- Low levels of traffic generation and car ownership
- Support for the local economy, with homeowners typically choosing to use local shops and services on a regular basis
- Typically most homeowners moving to a McCarthy & Stone development move within a 5 mile radius from the development, releasing family housing back into the market
- Financial contributions through the Government's New Homes Bonus Scheme

By its very nature, specialist retirement accommodation is regarded as a 'passive' form of residential development and considered to be an entirely 'sympathetic neighbour' with extremely low levels of car ownership and traffic generation.

Our Assisted Living (Extra Care) apartments

Our Assisted Living (Extra Care) developments enable our homeowners to live independent and healthy lives, in their own home with flexible care and support available on-site 24 hours a day. Apartments can be occupied by people aged 70 or over, although the average age of homeowners upon purchase is 83.

Designed to make life a little easier

Along with the benefits of independent living within their own apartments, homeowners are able to enjoy activities in the shared spaces within the development.

These include a restaurant offering freshly prepared meals 365 days a year, cooked by a professional chef using local produce. There is also a function room, homeowners' lounge, laundry room, mobility scooter charging room, and a guest suite for when friends and family come to stay. Some developments include health and wellbeing suites, hairdressing salons and hobby rooms. Our developments also include landscaped outside spaces which enhance both the building and the local neighbourhood.

Estate management, care and support is provided by YourLife Management Services, our care and management company, created in 2010 as a joint venture with the highly regarded and long-established care provider – Somerset Care. YourLife is regulated by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in England and its equivalent bodies in Scotland and Wales.

Questions?

The plans have now been submitted to North Hertfordshire District Council and will be determined by the authority in the coming months. If you would like to find out more about the submitted plans you can visit the project's dedicated website at www.mccarthyandstoneconsultation.co.uk/knebworth, contact our freephone information line on **0800 298 7040** or email us at feedback@mccarthyandstone-consultation.co.uk.

The full application is available to view on the Council's website (www.north-herts.gov.uk) using the reference number: **17/01863/1**.

If you have any comments, please let us know by filling in the enclosed feedback form. We look forward to hearing from you and hope you find this newsletter useful.