

Harry,

I refer to the above pre-application proposal. I have the following comments to make:-

1. The site is located within the urban settlement of Woodville and in principle some residential development would be acceptable.
2. Although you indicate that the site does not appear to have much of a use, presumably it looks like it provides parking for the existing property fronting High Street at number 10, and therefore could involve the loss of available parking space for this property which is unlikely to be replaced. I think it would be good to keep the distance from number 5 by leaving the vehicular access to the rear of number 10. Presumably, these commercial uses fronting High Street do still need servicing.
3. I note you desire to set the development back on the site to limit the detrimental effects on the occupants of number 5 Moira Road, but I do not think setting the building back on the site is good in terms of both the impact on the character and appearance of the street, or on the effects on residential amenity on the occupants of properties 6 to 10 High Street. The proposed block is three storeys high and would be right at the back of the site. This would result in the significant loss of sunlight to parts of the gardens, or private amenity areas for those dwellings, and also at that bulk would have an overbearing impact. I would look to provide at least 1 car park space for each new dwelling off this side access if possible.
4. Does the living room at number 5 have another window, or is the only one facing north towards the site? If it is a secondary window it will be less of an issue. It looks like from Google Maps that all the side windows are small and secondary windows, so I think this is less of an issue in terms of setback to a side gable.
5. My preference would therefore to set the development further forward on the site. There is a strong character to the form of development on the street and this should be used in any re-development. perhaps there maybe scope for two x two bedroom two storey semi-detached houses on the site. In terms of the proposed design and appearance of the development I have no real issues with what it looks like, but at the same time, I don't think you have to compete with number 5. You could simplify the design and look at something like the dwellings at 11 and 13 which is simple two storey traditional Victorian dwellings.
6. Another issue I think you will have a problem with are the proposed bedroom windows on the north side. I appreciate you have done this to avoid overlooking to the gardens in High Street, but these are so close to the boundary there are likely to be Building Regulations problems with windows over a certain size. You may also have no control over whether another building gets built right up to the boundary of the site and then occupants could end up looking at a brick wall from the bedrooms. You would effectively be borrowing light and amenity from the adjacent development which is not good design. There is no guarantee that the car park for the pub will remain. You cannot have windows that open out over the

car park. With comings and goings from this car park, potentially late at night, it would be better to keep this end elevation blank.

7. The site maybe subject to contaminated land issues, and potential of effect from historic below ground coal mining activity so a Coal Mining Risk Assessment report will be required.

So in conclusion, there maybe scope for a smaller development than you have shown, with a simpler design and provision of two semi-detached dwellings set back similar to the line of houses along Moira Road, using numbers 11 and 13 as an example. This provides better separation to the buildings to the rear and would avoid the problem with the pub and the boundary. A gable at the side would be less of an issue in terms of effect on number 5. It would be useful to know how many of the commercial properties have first floor flats in use in terms of any overlooking from the first floor of the development into the rear areas of 6 to 10. It may be less of an issue if they are not occupied. There may always be a way around designing first floor windows with high level openings or rooflights which provide natural light to first floor rear rooms. Given the slightly angled situations of the buildings, and the bringing forward of the development on the plot it may be less of a problem than anticipated.

These views are my own professional opinions and given without prejudice to the determination of a planning application by the local planning authority.

I trust that this information is satisfactory.

Kind regards

Neil Thompson

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