

(S2) Application No: 05/02151

Ward: Clock House

Address: 181 Beckenham Road, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 4PT

OS Grid Ref: E: 536322 N: 169567

Applicant: Goodview Ltd

Objections: YES

Description of Development:

Demolition of existing building and erection of three storey block on corner of Beckenham Road and Sidney Road comprising an A1/A2 unit at ground floor with 8 two bedroom flats above (Block A); 2 four storey blocks comprising 8 and 16 two bedroom flats (Block B and C respectively) to rear; three storey block comprising 9 two bedroom flats (Block D) to rear; formation of new vehicular access from Sidney Road with parking for 31 cars, refuse and cycle store and associated hard and soft landscaping

Proposal

This site presently comprises a bathroom showroom with a single floor of offices above on the corner of Beckenham Road and Sidney Road with 2 industrial B1/B2/B8 premises behind. One of these is currently used as a joinery workshop and is accessed through an undercroft onto Sidney Road. The other to the east is used as a trolley warehouse and distribution centre and is accessed directly from Beckenham Road which is designated as a District Secondary Road. The site is abutted by the Conservative Club on Sidney Road to the west, by Clock House Station and the railway line to the east, by the commercial parade on Beckenham Road to the north - above which there is an extant permission for two additional floors of residential accommodation – and by No. 1 Sidney Road to the south.

The site is to be entirely cleared and redeveloped as described above. The proposed flats will all be provided for affordable purposes and will be managed by a Housing Association. The anticipated tenure mix of the flats would be confirmed within a S106 legal agreement negotiated as part of any permission granted on this site, and will comprise shared ownership and social rented properties. Vehicle access and exit will be provided solely from Sidney Road.

Consultations

From a highways viewpoint the Council's engineers have raised concern at the level of on-site parking proposed and how unauthorised access will be prevented from the Beckenham Road access – which will remain to serve the rear of Nos. 149-169 Beckenham Road. The position of the gates onto Sidney Road, refuse store and cycle store are also questioned.

In response the agent and their highways consultant have revised the plans to show the gates re-sited 6m back from Sidney Road and a re-sited refuse store. Clarification has

also been provided on accessing the cycle stores which are to be provide cycle parking for 1 space per unit. The exact details can be secured by condition. The plans are also revised to show 2 disabled spaces and the requisite 6m manoeuvring area for all spaces. It is confirmed that the AM peak hour two-way flows on Sidney Road and Beckenham Road are 81 and 1446 vehicles respectively and during the peak PM peak hour they are 100 and 1541. It is therefore submitted that preventing access/egress from this site onto Beckenham Road by a gate to be opened only by emergency vehicles, will greatly reduce the risk of accidents on this road. Further justification of the proposed parking provision is also provided and any response on this matter and on the suitability of the proposed access onto Sidney Road from the Council's Highways Engineers will be reported verbally.

No objections have been raised from an Environmental Health viewpoint in relation to noise impact from the roads and railway that border the site. A standard condition is recommended to ensure that any soil de-contamination is undertaken prior to redevelopment.

Support is expressed for the proposals from a Housing perspective although it is mentioned that it is a requirement of the Council's Affordable Housing Policy that 10% of the units be capable of accommodating a wheelchair user.

The Drainage division have advised that details of surface water drainage should be approved separately under a planning condition. Comments from Thames Water are still awaited on the capacity of local sewers to deal with the discharge from the development.

Network Rail raise no objections but ask that their normal requirements concerning development adjacent to their infrastructure are included as an informative.

The Metropolitan Police comment that there should be an audio and visual door entry system installed at the main entrances. Furthermore the controlled access gates should be a minimum of 1.8m high and should be designed so as not to act as climbing aids.

There have been in excess of 60 letters and e-mails of objection received from local residents and businesses as well as from the adjacent Conservative Club. The main objections are summarised below:-

- The proposed scheme for over 40 flats rising up to four stories will be an overdevelopment of the area and out of character with surrounding developments
- The proposal will overwhelm the nearest properties in Sidney Road by virtue of its height and proximity and due to increased overlooking
- The proposal will not provide adequate on-site parking and as a result will further exacerbate problems of parking in Sidney Road and Kendall Road which are already stretched by the lack of driveway parking and the commuter parking for Clock House Station.
- The junction of Sidney Road and Beckenham Road cannot adequately accommodate the increased traffic levels that will arise
- The density and nature of the accommodation is such that it will lead to a greater likelihood of problem families and youths moving in who will cause noise and disturbance, disorder and crime affecting the wider area

- The development may restrict the Conservative Club from hosting bands and parties given the proximity of these new flats

A letter of support has been received from a resident in Kendall Road arguing that the proposal is a sensible redevelopment of a brown field site which is currently unsightly, providing much needed social housing in a location which is well served by public transport and local amenities.

Any further representations will be reported verbally to the meeting.

Planning Considerations

2 previous applications have been submitted proposing redevelopment of the corner site and joinery workshop behind (but not the trolley warehouse).

Under ref. 02/02933 an application was submitted for a four/five storey block on the corner with 2 three storey blocks behind comprising 32 flats served by 20 parking spaces. However this was withdrawn prior to determination.

Under ref. 03/00388 a more modest proposal for a three storey corner block comprising 20 flats with 20 car parking spaces behind was refused on the grounds of overdevelopment and inadequate parking provision. An appeal was lodged but subsequently withdrawn.

The principal policies against which to assess this application are Policy H.2 'Design of Housing Development', Policy E.1 'Design of New Development', Policies T.3 and T.6 'Road Safety' and Policy T.15 'Parking' of the adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP). From the second deposit draft UDP the corresponding Policies H6, BE1, T3 and T22 are relevant, as is Policy H2 dealing with Affordable Housing. From the London Plan the following policies are relevant to these proposals: 3A.8 (concerning Affordable Housing), 4B.1, 4B.3 and 4B.7 (concerning housing design principles, maximising the potential of sites and respecting local context, respectively) and 3C.16 (concerning traffic generation). Members should also have regard to Planning Policy Guidance note 3 (PPG3) which encourages the efficient use of existing and previously developed sites in order to deliver more housing, although the guidance is clear that this aim does not set aside other established planning considerations.

The main issues to be considered in this case are the impact of the scheme upon the character of the area and upon adjoining properties, the level of amenity that will be provided for the future residents of the scheme; the level of affordable housing provided and the consequent parking ratio; and the suitability of the access.

Although this development will result in the loss of employment uses, it is important to note that this issue did not form a ground of refusal in the case of 03/00388 above. Moreover, as the employment uses on this site are long established they are likely to be unfettered by conditions and could therefore cause harm to the amenities of local residents. Accordingly the principle of redevelopment for a predominantly residential scheme is considered to be acceptable in this instance.

In terms of the impact of the scheme upon the character of the area, it should be taken into account that Sidney Road and Kendall Road adjacent are now designated as an Area of Special Residential Character (ASRC) in the emerging UDP. The character of these roads is remarkably uniform consisting of two storey late Victorian red brick houses and flats arranged in tight formation along either side of the road. Against this context the proposed scheme with its three and four storey blocks could be considered to be rather incongruous and obtrusive. However, it is important to recognise that the site is actually largely screened from Sidney Road by the Conservative Club and its only road frontage is onto the corner of Sidney Road and Beckenham Road where the three storey block now proposed is considered to appropriately mark a prominent road junction.

The impact of the scheme on adjacent properties does need to be carefully considered however. Objections have been received from the owner of No. 1 Sidney Road at the rear that the nearest block (Block D), which is three storeys high, will be overbearing and give rise to undue overlooking. This owner has suggested that if the balconies on the rear of the block were omitted this would go some way to overcome his objections. Although some overlooking will undoubtedly arise from the rear of this block towards the garden of No. 1 with or without balconies, this garden is fairly well screened by deciduous trees while the trees are in leaf. Furthermore, at present the bottom half of the garden at No. 1 is not used and is overgrown, although this area could be brought back into use at any time. At the other end of the site the rear of Block B will be within approximately 10-12m of the rear of the parade at Nos. 149-169 Beckenham Road. Although this parade is only two storey (when viewed from the rear) at present, as mentioned above there is an extant permission for 2 floors of residential above with windows that will look directly towards Block B. Care has been taken to keep openings in the rear of Block B to a minimum to reduce mutual overlooking, although the degree to which the proximity between the two blocks may be overbearing also needs to be assessed.

Another key issue is the amenity that will be afforded to future residents within the scheme itself. The site is bordered by a busy road to the north and by a railway line to the east. Environmental Health have confirmed that they have no objections on noise and disturbance issues although this is likely to reflect the noise attenuation measures that can be incorporated into the design of the blocks themselves to cut down the noise experienced once inside. Members also need to consider the noise levels that are likely to be endured outside the blocks particularly in the communal gardens. The largest communal garden is provided behind block C directly adjacent to the railway line, though this is screened by a brick wall, and a judgement will need to be made on whether these areas will offer sufficient relief for residents given that most of the remainder of the site is given over to hardstanding for car parking.

The concerns raised by some local residents at the concentration of affordable housing on this site should be noted. However, given that the majority of the residential property in this area is privately owned it is not considered that the proposed scheme should result in saturation of the area. Furthermore, it should be recognised that the scheme will contribute much needed affordable housing in a sustainable location close to public transport where higher densities can normally be sustained. The management of the flats would be the responsibility of a Housing Association.

In terms of parking, the apparent imbalance between demand and capacity in Sidney Road and Kendall Road should be taken into account. However, as mentioned above,

this is a sustainable location well served by public transport and local amenities and the scheme proposes a proportion of social rented properties which are subject to lower parking standards in the Council's emerging UDP. The further comments of the Council's engineers on this issue and the suitability of the access onto Sidney Road will be reported verbally to the meeting.

Conclusions

The principle of a residential redevelopment of this site was accepted on earlier schemes. The grounds of refusal raised against 03/00388 are not considered to be directly applicable in this case as the site is now larger taking in the trolley warehouse also.

Members may concur that the visual impact of this entirely flatted scheme on the surrounding character of the area should be quite limited given its screening from most frontages. However, careful consideration should be given to the impact of the scheme upon the neighbouring properties at either end of the site for the reasons described.

Careful consideration should also be given to the level of amenity that will be afforded residents within the scheme itself and the general level of intensity of the development, whilst at the same time recognising that this is a sustainable location that would normally enabled higher densities to be achieved.

Should Members be minded to grant permission a S106 legal agreement would be required to govern the delivery and tenure mix of the affordable housing, the allocation of available parking spaces on site and the production of a Travel Plan.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on file refs. 02/02933, 03/00388 and 05/02151 excluding exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION:

MEMBERS' VIEWS

Should Members be minded to grant PERMISSION to the application as amended by doc's rec. 1st August 2005 AND SUBJECT TO THE PRIOR COMPLETION OF A LEGAL AGREEMENT the following conditions are recommended

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| 1 | DCA01 | Commencement of Development |
| | DCA01R | A01 reason |
| 2 | DCA04 | Landscaping scheme – full application but no details submitted |
| | DCA04R | A04 reason |
| 3 | DCC01 | Satisfactory materials |
| | DCC01R | C01 reason |
| 4 | DCC03 | Details of windows |
| | DCC03R | C03 reason |
| 5 | DCD02 | Surface water drainage – no details submitted |
| | DCD02R | D02 reason |

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| 6 | DCH03 | Satisfactory parking – full application |
| | DCH03R | H03 reason |
| 7 | DCH04 | Parking bays |
| | DCH04R | H04 reason |
| 8 | DCH10 | Provision of sight line4.5m x 90m.....the access onto Sidney Road.....1m..... |
| | DCH10R | H10 reason |
| 9 | DCH11 | Visibility splays (3 inserts) access onto Sidney Road 3.3m x 2.4m x 3.3m 1m |
| | DCH11R | H11 reason |
| 10 | DCH18 | Refuse storage – no details submitted |
| | DCH18R | H18 reason |
| 11 | DCH22 | Bicycle parking |
| | DCH22R | H22 reason |
| 12 | DCH23 | Lighting scheme for access/parking |
| | DCH23R | H23 reason |
| 13 | DCI12 | Obscure glazingin the upper floor rear elevation (north facing) of Block B..... |
| | DCI12R | I12 reasonH.2 and E.1.....H6 and BE1.... |
| 14 | DCI17 | No additional windowsupper floor rear.....block B..... |
| | DCI17R | I17 reasonH.2 and E.1.....H6 and BE1..... |
| 15 | DCK05 | Slab levels – no details submitted |
| | DCK05R | K05 reason |
| 16 | DCK09 | Soil survey – contaminated land |
| | DCK09R | K09 reason |
| 17 | Details of the gates to be placed at the accesses to the site from Sidney Road, and the emergency gates into the site from Beckenham Road, shall be submitted to and approved by or on behalf of the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of works; and the gates shall be installed in accordance with the approved details before the first occupation and maintained as such thereafter. | |

In order to comply with Policies H.2, E.1. and T.3 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan and Policies H6, BE1 and T22 of the second deposit draft Unitary Development Plan (Sept 2002) and in the interests of visual amenities and highway safety.

AJ02 Justification UNIQUE reason OTHER apps
Policies (AUDP)
H.2 Design of Housing Development
E.1 Design of New Development
T.3 and T.6 Road Safety
T.15 Parking

Policies (2DDUDP)
H2 Affordable Housing
H6 Housing Design
BE1 Design of New Development
T3 Parking
T22 Road Safety

Should Members be minded to REFUSE permission to the application as amended by doc's rec. 1st August 2005 the following grounds are recommended:-

The proposed scheme due to the intensity of development proposed and the amount of ground coverage by buildings and other hard surfaces will result in the overdevelopment of the site with inadequate amenity areas, harmful to the amenities of future residents and thereby contrary to Policies H.2 and E.1 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan and Policies H6 and BE1 of the second deposit draft Unitary Development Plan (Sept 2002)

The proposed scheme due to the height and massing of Blocks B and D and their proximity to adjacent properties will be harmful to the amenities which these neighbouring occupants should reasonably expect to be able to continue to enjoy by reason of loss of light, prospect and privacy, thereby contrary to Policies H.2 and E.1 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan and Policies H6 and BE1 of the second deposit draft Unitary Development Plan (Sept 2002)