

Application No: 04/04776

Ward: Clock House

S1

Address: 25 Beckenham Road, Beckenham, Kent, BR3 4PR

OS Grid Ref: E: 536705 N: 169465

Conservation Area: No

Applicant: United Language Schools Ltd

Objections: Yes

Description of Development:

2 three/four storey blocks comprising 3 one bedroom and 12 two bedroom flats, with 15 car parking spaces, at 25 and 27 Beckenham Road OUTLINE

Proposal

The application site comprises two large former Victorian houses which face Beckenham Road. They are presently occupied by the Kings School of English and function as a college for language students. The site has a combined hard paved frontage for car parking and a combined garden area at the rear. There are a row of 4 sycamores at the back positioned along the line of the former boundary between the two gardens which are subject to TPO 1538. The site is flanked by a two storey block of maisonettes to the east 'Carlton Court' which appears to date from the 1950s/early 1960s. To the west is No. 29 Beckenham Road which is another Victorian house of similar size and now used as a surgery. On the opposite side of Beckenham Road is an old people's day centre which is housed in a modern building with older Victorian properties either side. At the back of the site are the gardens for Nos. 22 Hayne Road and 1 Elm Road.

This proposal seeks to demolish the two existing buildings and to redevelop the site with 2 blocks of flats comprising 3 one bedroom and 12 two bedroom flats in total with 15 car parking spaces. The proposal is submitted in outline with only siting and means of access to be approved at this stage. The plans indicate the footprints of the 2 proposed blocks which will be constructed in approximately the same positions as the existing buildings. The plans also indicate 11 surface level parking spaces at the rear behind the western block. 4 parking spaces will be provided at ground floor level within the eastern block. A central access point, in a similar position to that existing, will be used and a driveway between the blocks created. Secure cycle storage and refuse storage will be situated alongside this driveway although will be subject to detailed approval. Illustrative plans have been submitted which indicate

three and four storey blocks of comparable height to the existing buildings. The eastern block is likely to have blanked off windows, or no windows at all at ground floor level given the parking area within this block.

Consultations

From a highways perspective it is commented that sightlines of 4.5m x 90m need to be achieved in both directions taking into account the intensity of use of the access and the status of Beckenham Road as a District Secondary Road. A parking ratio of 1 space per unit is considered to be acceptable in this location which is rated by Transport for London as highly accessible to/by public transport.

In relation to drainage issues it is commented that the site is within an area in which the Environment Agency – Thames Region require restrictions on the rate of discharge of surface water from new developments into the River Ravensbourne or its tributaries. Accordingly surface water drainage details should be conditioned for subsequent approval.

23 letters and e-mails of objection have been received from local residents in the area and the West Beckenham Residents' Association. The primary issues of concern are as follows:

- The existing buildings are good examples of Victorian architecture and fall within an area proposed as a Conservation Area
- The replacement buildings will not have the same architectural merit
- The proposal will be an overdevelopment which will give rise to increased overlooking to the rear
- The proposed rear parking area will cause undue impact through noise and disturbance upon the nearest gardens at the rear and will threaten the protected trees on the site
- The proposal will not have adequate parking to support a scheme of this size and will exacerbate the acute parking situation already encountered in neighbouring roads
- The proposal will result in an increase in vehicle manoeuvres onto this busy part of Beckenham Road which will be injurious to conditions of highway safety

One letter of support has been received from a local resident.

Any further representations will be reported verbally at the meeting.

Planning Considerations

Under ref. 04/00830 outline permission was refused for the demolition of the existing buildings and the erection of a total of 20 two bedroom and 2 one bedroom flats with 22 car parking spaces at the rear on the grounds of overdevelopment and the likelihood that an excessive area of rear

hardstanding would be required to provide car parking which would give rise to undue noise and disturbance to neighbouring gardens and result in harm to the protected sycamores. An appeal has been lodged and the decision of the Inspector is imminent.

The principal policies against which to assess this application are Policy H.2 'Design of Housing Development', Policy E.1 'Design of New Development', Policy E.7 'Conservation Areas' and Policy T.15 and Appendix 5 detailing parking standards from the adopted Unitary Development Plan (UDP). From the second deposit draft UDP the corresponding Policies H6, BE1, BE9, T3 and Appendix 2 are relevant. Government advice in Planning Policy Guidance note 3 (PPG3) concerning housing and the recently adopted London Plan should also be taken into account.

The key issues to be assessed are the principle of redeveloping the site in the manner proposed taking into account the loss of the existing Victorian buildings. In making this assessment Members should also have regard to the density of the proposed replacement scheme, the siting of the proposed blocks and the probable massing; the layout and extent of the parking area and any potential impact on surrounding residents and upon protected trees arising from these factors. The parking ratio proposed, suitability of the access point and intensity of use of the access should also be considered.

In relation to the demolition of the existing buildings, these are now proposed to be included within a new Conservation Area including Elm Road, other buildings on the southern side of Beckenham Road along as far as Queens Road and The Studio on the northern side of Beckenham Road. This proposed designation was first reported to the Development Control Committee on the 26th October 2004, after the determination of 04/00840 and after the submission of the current application. Nevertheless, consultation on this proposed designation has been occurring in the interim and the matter will be reported back to the Development Control Committee on the 19th April 2005 and then on to the Council Executive for final confirmation. With regard to this application, support has been expressed from a Conservation viewpoint that the existing buildings do positively contribute to the character and appearance of the area. Members will be aware that within Conservation Areas demolition of buildings which are deemed to make a positive contribution to the area is normally resisted unless the replacement scheme is of an exceptional quality which is likely to enhance the area. The assessment of the architectural merit of the proposed scheme is hindered by the fact that it is submitted in outline with design a reserved matter. However, Members should also appreciate that an outline format was considered to be acceptable for this application as the Conservation Area proposal had not been formally commenced at the time of submission, as mentioned above, and remains to be finally confirmed.

The area of the site is quoted in the agent's supporting statement as being approximately 0.2ha and therefore the proposed scheme would result in a density of approximately 75 dwellings per hectare. Taking into account the

proximity of this site to Beckenham town centre and the TfL rating of this area as highly accessible, this density is not considered to be excessive.

The siting of the blocks shown on the plans shows that the eastern block will stand in advance of Carlton Court to the east but to a lesser extent than does the existing building in this position. The rear of the block will approximately align with this neighbouring block and therefore there should not be a material impact upon the visual amenities presently enjoyed by the nearest residents within Carlton Court. The front of the western block will broadly align with the front of No. 29 to the west. The rear of the block will project past the main rear wall of this neighbouring property and the flank of the block will be considerably closer to the party boundary. However there is only one notable window within the flank of No. 29 which faces the site, and the separation that will be retained will be sufficient to prevent any undue loss of light and prospect from either side or rear facing windows.

In terms of their massing, the illustrative plans indicate blocks of comparable height to the existing buildings and therefore the impact on the street scene should be acceptable. The illustrative plans show the two blocks as having up to four storeys of accommodation with the upper most storey being provided largely within the roof space. Although design and external appearance can be assessed at the detailed stage it is likely that the blocks will appear rather more bulky and will have a greater number of windows at upper levels than do the existing buildings which, despite their overall height are predominantly two storey with rooms above in the roofspace. However, due to the degree of existing boundary planting, which is to remain, undue overlooking or overbearing impact from the upper storeys of the proposed blocks upon the neighbouring properties at the rear should not occur.

The extent and position of the parking area is shown on the siting plan with 11 spaces to the rear and 4 within the eastern block. The rear parking area will be positioned behind the western block such that virtually all of the existing lawn on this side of the garden will be lost to either hardstanding or soft screening. The lawn behind the eastern block will remain however and should in itself provide adequate amenity area for the occupants of the proposed flats. The outlook for the occupants at the rear of the western block, and for those in No. 1 Elm Road at the back will be softened by constructing a pergola structure around the spaces over which climbing plants can be grown. The parking area has been pulled away from the rear boundary, compared with the scheme refused permission, to allow additional screen planting inbetween in order to attenuate noise and disturbance impact upon the garden of No. 1 Elm Road. The hardstand is also kept away from both the row of protected sycamores and the large tree adjacent to the western boundary and through the use of careful construction methods, which can be ensured by conditions, harm to these trees should be avoided.

Many residents have argued in their submissions that the area already suffers from acute parking problems on adjacent roads, mainly due to the paucity of off street parking for the Victorian houses in the area, exacerbated by local facilities such as the doctors' surgery and the library. Nevertheless, given the

high accessible rating of the immediate area, and with the potential for secure cycle parking on the site, the 1 space per flat parking ratio proposed is in line with the Council's emerging policy and is therefore considered to be acceptable. The new access will be more intensively used than the existing accesses although the requisite sightlines are achievable given the position of the site on the outside of a gentle bend on Beckenham Road. The close proximity of the bus stop and the propensity for small groups of people to congregate here should be taken into account although it should also be noted that there is no permanent bus shelter here to impede vision. It should also be recognised that the existing use of the site is unfettered by conditions and therefore a more intensive use within Class D1, such as a school with younger students and a consequent increase in dropping off and picking up, could take place here without the need for a new planning permission.

Finally, in relation to affordable housing provision, this scheme was submitted prior to the date on which the Council's policy – and its lower threshold of 15 units and above – significantly gained in weight (28th September 2004). Given this situation it is not considered reasonable to require affordable housing as part of this scheme.

Conclusions

For the reasons given above the proposed density, siting and probable massing of the proposed blocks are considered to be acceptable both in terms of their impact on the street scene and any impact on neighbours. The parking areas are now arranged on the site in such a way as to ameliorate the impact on trees. Members will have to take a view on the principle of providing parking at the rear and the impact that will arise from noise and disturbance, although they will appreciate that rear parking has been accepted elsewhere in the vicinity and with less separation or screening to adjoining boundaries, such as Ashley Court and No. 28 in Hayne Road. The proposed access is in a similar position to the existing central access, and will afford the requisite sightlines for vehicles that will be exiting the site in a forward gear.

Accordingly the current proposed development is considered to have successfully overcome the previous grounds of refusal on 04/00840. Nevertheless, Members will be aware of the issue of the proposed Conservation Area that has emerged in the interim and will have to decide how much weight can be given to this aspect prior to its final confirmation.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on file refs. 04/00830 and 04/04776, excluding exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: MEMBERS' VIEWS

Should Members be minded to **grant outline permission** than the following conditions are recommended:

1	DCA02	Details required	design, external appearance, landscaping	
	DCA02R	A02 reason		
2	DCA03	Compliance with landscaping details (1 insert)		1
	DCA03R	A03 reason		
3	DCA07	Boundary enclosures – no details submitted		
	DCA07R	A07 reason		
4	DCB01	Trees to be retained during building operations		
	DCB01R	B01 reason		
5	DCB02	Trees – protective fencing		
	DCB02R	B02 reason		
6	DCB03	Trees – no bonfires		
	DCB03R	B03 reason		
7	DCB04	Trees – no trenches, pipelines or drains		
	DCB04R	B04 reason		
8	DCB15	Trees – details of access/parking		
	DCB15R	B15 reason		
9	DCC01	Satisfactory materials		
	DCC01R	C01 reason		
10	DCC03	Details of windows		
	DCC03R	C03 reason		
11	DCD02	Surface water drainage – no details submitted		
	DCR02R	D02 reason		
12	DCD04	Foul water drainage – no details submitted		
	DCD04R	D04 reason		
13	DCH03	Satisfactory parking – full application		
	DCH03R	H03 reason		
14	DCH04	Parking bays/garages		
	DCH04R	H04 reason		
15	DCH10	Provision of sight line(3 inserts)..... 90m x 4.5m ..the point of access onto Beckenham Road.....0.6m...		
	DCH10R	H10 reason		
16	DCH16	Hardstanding for wash-down facilities		
	DCH16R	H16 reason		
17	DCH17	Materials for estate road		
	DCH17R	H17 reason		
18	DCH18	Refuse storage – no details submitted		
	DCH18R	H18 reason		
19	DCH22	Bicycle parking		
	DCH22R	H22 reason		
20	DCK05	Slab levels – no details submitted		
	DCK05R	K05 reason		

AJ02 Justification UNIQUE reason OTHER apps

Policies (AUDP)

H.2 Design of Housing Development

E.1 Design of New Development

E.7 Conservation Areas

T.15 Parking

Policies (2DDUDP)

H6 Housing Design

BE1 Design of New Development

BE9 Conservation Areas

T3 Parking

Should Members be minded to **refuse outline permission** the following grounds are recommended:

The existing buildings at 25 and 27 Beckenham Road are considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area and in view of their inclusion within a proposed Conservation Area their demolition would cause unacceptable harm to visual amenities and undermine the integrity of the proposed designation, thereby contrary to Policy E.7 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan and Policy BE9 of the second deposit draft Unitary Development Plan (Sept 2002)