

TITLE : **01/00353/OUT**
OUTLINE APPLICATION TO ERECT 2 STOREY BLOCK OF
14 ONE AND TWO BEDROOM FLATS. LAYOUT, PARKING
AND AMENITY AREAS (DEMOLISH EXISTING PETROL
FILLING STATION, WORKSHOP ETC.)
111 ASHINGDON ROAD, ROCHFORD

APPLICANT : **MRS E VAUGHAN**

ZONING : **EXISTING INDUSTRY**

PARISH: **HAWKWELL**

WARD: **HAKWELL EAST**

DEFERRED REPORT

- 4.1 This application was reported to the 27 September 2001 meeting of the Committee and deferred for a site visit, which took place on 20 October 2001. The report below is reproduced as it appeared at the 27 September meeting. However, there are a number of amendments to the scheme which have come forward as a result of the discussion at the site visit. These are:
- the proposals are amended such that the proposed building is two storey only in height, without any rooms in the roofspace;
 - the commercial element which was proposed at ground floor has been removed and the development will be for residential use only. This has resulted in an increase in the number of flats from 13 to 14; and,
 - the width of the building has been increased such that more of the frontage of the site is taken up by development.
- 4.2 Members are therefore requested to take these into account in the consideration of the remainder of this report. The application is in outline form only at this stage and so consideration is restricted to the principle of the development, with only the matters of siting and access to be considered in detail.
- 4.3 Given the outline nature of the scheme, and that the proposed amendments go toward meeting the concerns that residents and Members raised, it would seem appropriate to endorse the proposals on the basis of the inclusion of the amendments, if all else is acceptable. As the commercial element is to be removed however, the application will need to be advertised as a departure to the Local Plan and the requisite period permitted to elapse (14 days) prior to the issuing of any permission. To that end, it is recommended that authority be delegated to the Head of Planning Services to issue the decision at the expiry of that period.

PLANNING APPLICATION DETAILS

- 4.4 The applicant seeks outline planning permission for the erection of a part three-storey and part two-storey block of 13 one and two bedroom flats, with B1 Use (light industrial, offices, R&D etc) at ground floor level. The existing petrol filling station, workshop etc. would be demolished.
- 4.5 The site is situated on Ashingdon Road at its junction with Leecon Way and is presently designated as employment land. An industrial area sits back from the junction. The building would occupy the corner of the site at the junction of Ashingdon Road and Leecon Way. To the rear would be a car parking/servicing area and this would be accessed off Leecon Way underneath the first floor of the proposed development and to the side would be an amenity area. The plans show this area is to be planted with trees and this would continue the line of trees on this side of the road which would add to the street scene.
- 4.6 The proposal seeks to abandon all access from Ashingdon Road, replacing this with access from Leecon Way.
- 4.7 Being an outline application the only items for consideration are the siting and means of access of the proposal. Matters such as design and external appearance will be dealt with at a later stage should this application be successful. Nevertheless, the applicant has provided a number of indicative detailed drawings of the proposal to assist the consideration of this application.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.8 **104/51** Approved. Erection of printing factory
- 4.9 **ROC/283/54** approved. Remove barn and erect garage, workshop and filling station.
- 4.10 **ROC/562/60** Approved. Erection of petrol/ filling station and showroom.
- 4.11 **ROC/579/65** Approved. Erection of car showroom, office and toilet.
- 4.12 **ROC/14/68** Approved. Erection of an illuminated pole sign - permission for five years.
- 4.13 **ROC/195/72** Approved. OA extend and divide existing industrial building to form two units.
- 4.14 **ROC/1023/73** Approved. Provide a covered way for clearing timber.
- 4.15 **ROC/333/81** Approved. Café for sale of hot drinks and snacks.
- 4.16 **ROC/364/83** Approved. New canopy and forecourt additions.
- 4.17 **ROC/30/2/88AD** Withdrawn. Internally illuminated sign.

- 4.18 **ROC/470/88** Approved. Two underground storage tanks
- 4.19 **ROC/80/89** Refused on the grounds of overdevelopment and lack of car parking. Outline application to erect two flats with amenity area over existing workshop and showroom
- 4.20 **ROC/620/97** Approved. Display illuminated and non-illuminated forecourt adverts.

CONSULTATIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS

- 4.21 **Hawkwell Parish Council** - Objection. A three-storey building is out of keeping with the streetscene, the site is adjacent to a listed building. The proposal would set a precedent for other sites in the vicinity.
- 4.22 **County Surveyor (Highways)** - Raises no objection subject to attaching planning conditions. However, they also wish to enter into a legal agreement with the developer and this would relate to the developer contributing £15,000 for off site works relating to the proposed cycle route on Ashingdon Road.
- 4.23 **County Planner (Environmental Services)** - The general layout appears satisfactory providing suitable enclosing boundary treatment to Ashingdon Road can be achieved to make the amenity space as private as possible. A three-storey building, in this location, would not relate to the suburban form of Ashingdon Road. The Two-storey element would benefit from additional fenestration at first floor and ground levels.
- 4.24 **Buildings and technical Support (Engineering)** - no observations
- 4.25 **Housing, Health and Community Care** - There is potential for residents of this proposed development to be adversely affected by noise and disturbance arising from the commercial use of the ground floor. Conditions recommended to be attached to any permission.
- 4.26 **Local Plans** - In terms of sustainability, this site is well located to serve the local work force and is also reasonably well located on the road network. The District appears to have 2 ha. of employment land 'in hand' but its loss should still be contemplated with considerable caution.
- 4.27 **Anglian Water** - no objection in principle subject to attachment of conditions.
- 4.28 **Rochford Hundred Amenities Society** - Considerable over-development resulting in an unacceptable number of vehicles, which must emerge onto the already overcrowded Ashingdon Road. It is felt that the present garage and shop serve a vital purpose in the local area.
- 4.29 **Neighbour Notification letters** - There has been two letters from neighbours concerned about: type of residential accommodation, scale, excessive number of flats, B1 use would increase the traffic on an already busy road, shops already under used, impact on listed building.

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.30 Policy H16 (Purpose Built Flats) is the most relevant Local Plan policy along with appendix 1 and 2 and Policy EB2 which, seeks to safeguard areas for B1, B2 and B8 uses. In addition, PPG3 on Housing which seeks to provide a range of housing types appropriate to local needs in an efficient and sustainable way, is also relevant.

Principle

- 4.31 As this application is in outline, it is just the principle of whether or not the proposal is acceptable or not, i.e. whether a three storey block of 13 flats with a ground floor B1 use meets the requirements of national and local policy. Although details of the buildings external appearance and design have been submitted, these are just for illustrative purposes giving an indication of what form such a development could take and have been submitted to aid the consideration of this application. Such details as the external appearance etc., will be the subject of a future application should the current application be approved.

Street Scene.

- 4.32 This part of Ashingdon Road does not have any three-storey buildings within it. However, to the west within the matchbox estate are number of three-storey flats and to the north, on Ashingdon Road, there are three-storey buildings at Golden Cross Parade. Bearing in mind the fact that Ashingdon Road is major road and that at this point there is quite a large distance between the buildings on either side of the road, it is considered that a three-storey building can be accommodated in this location in principle.
- 4.33 Nevertheless, bearing in mind this an outline application, the scale of the building could be reduced with the second floor accommodation in the form of dormers which would reduce the mass of roof space. This would help to break down the roof pitches, encouraging and focusing attention in to the detailed finished result, required to produce a welcome 'feature' in to the street scene. This aspect would be dealt with fully at the reserved matters stage.

Areas of concern.

- 4.34 Although in outline the indicative plans submitted did illustrate a number of potential shortcomings which needed to be addressed at this stage. These were:
- The original submitted plans showed there to a shortfall in the proposed amenity space and parking provision. This suggested that the applicant was cramming the site, with a shortfall of approximately 32 square metres in amenity area and of seven parking spaces when compared with the current parking standards. It is recognised that the site is situated on a main transport route and fairly close to the town centre and station, but attention is still required so that the proposal does not over-develop the site.
 - The proposed building very close to the highway, projecting beyond the building line, which means that it would be seen for quite a distance along Ashingdon Road. This would look rather incongruous bearing in mind the design and the three-storey

element shown in the drawings accompanying the application.

- Concern was also expressed about the means by which the business use on the ground floor will be serviced. The only means of servicing the ground floor unit was via a lay-by on Leecon Way. This is not ideal.
- To the south of the site the road is lined by trees, the extension of tree cover northwards as detailed on the plans would improve the street scene and would provide a useful break between the proposed building and the nearby listed building to the south of the site. With a high wall to enclose it, the proposed amenity space would be both useful and attractive for residents and passer-bys alike. However, it is not well related to the access of the flats and as such may not prove so useful to the residents of the proposed flats.

- 4.35 Although, the plans submitted are just indicative, it was considered that in order to prove the principle of the development, the above concerns needed to be addressed. To this end discussions have taken place with the applicants agent and revised indicative plans have now been received. These show a similar sort of building but the only flat on the ground floor has been removed, reducing the total number of flats to 13 and the servicing and parking areas have been revised to take on board the concerns raised by officers. Additionally, the building has been moved back from the Ashingdon Road frontage so that it is not so far forward of the existing buildings along this frontage and this would make it less prominent. However, it would still help to mask the rather unattractive industrial buildings to the rear of the site.
- 4.36 The proposal will now provide a total of 21 car parking spaces plus a proposed layby in Leecon Way. Adequate servicing of the ground floor unit is provided at the rear of the buildings, together with the parking for the flats. This parking provision is in line with both national (PPG3) and Essex County Council standards but falls short of this Authorities current standards. However, bearing in mind the above and the location of the development, the car parking is considered acceptable. In addition to the car parking provision, secure cycle parking facilities are shown on the plans and again this reflects national and regional standards.
- 4.37 The amenity space is still shown to be well away from the entrance of the flats and this is still not considered ideal. However, the plans do prove that sufficient space can be provided within the site and in a good location in terms the quality of the space and its contribution to the street scene. The applicant's agent considers that re-locating the entrance nearer to the amenity space would require a complete redesign of the building and as the drawings are for indicative purposes only, this could be dealt with at the reserved matters stage.

The Use

- 4.38 The use of the site for housing is not strictly in accordance with the provisions of the development plan as it should be solely for Class B1, B2 or B8 uses. However, bearing in mind that the proposal will provide 200 sq. m of B1 use on the ground floor and that a large proportion of the site is currently used as A1/petrol filling station, it is not considered significant in respect of the consideration of this application. However, the relationship with the existing industrial uses is of concern and to this extent the

building has been sited on the western boundary away from these uses as is the proposed amenity area. The area closest to the adjacent industrial unit is to be used as the parking area and this will act as a buffer between the two uses. Nevertheless, it is proposed that a condition be attached to the outline permission requiring a suitable means of enclosure be provided along this boundary to safeguard the amenities of the occupiers of the proposed flats.

- 4.39 The proposed B1 use on the ground is considered appropriate bearing in mind the site's existing use and being a B1 use it should not have any adverse affects on the occupiers of the flats above. In fact it is hoped that some of the occupiers of the flats above would work in the unit below, thus achieving a very sustainable form of development.

CONCLUSION

- 4.40 The principle of a three-storey building on this site is considered acceptable. The advantages of redeveloping this site can be seen from the potential to enhance the street scene and help mask the industrial estate to the rear of the site. The indicative plans as submitted by the applicant indicate that in principle a three- storey building is acceptable in this location subject to certain conditions.
- 4.41 The mixture of B1 use on the ground floor with flats above is considered acceptable (the definition of a B1 use is that it can take place within a residential area without detriment to the amenity of the area). And with its cycle parking provision, its proximity to the railway station, and the potential for some of the occupiers of the flats to actually work within the B1 unit, gives the proposal the potential for being a very sustainable form of development which ought to be encouraged.
- 4.42 With respect to the requirements by Essex County Council Highways for a contribution of £15,000, this is not considered by the Agent to be directly related to the development and he considers that it cannot be justified.

RECOMMENDATION

- 4.43 It is proposed that this Committee **RESOLVES** to delegate authority to the Head of Planning Services to APPROVE the outline application subject to the following conditions at the expiry of the departure advertisement.
- 1 SC2 Reserved Matters (including design, external appearance, landscaping and revised details of access)
 - 2 SC3 Time Limits Outline
 - 3 SC8 Use and Building Removed
 - 4 SC51 Enclosure/Screening Details.
 - 5 The existing accesses onto Ashingdon Road shall be closed off before the development is first used in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.
 - 6 SC87 Contaminated Land

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- 7 SC41 Hours of Deliveries
 - 8 SC38 Hours open to customers

Relevant Development Plan Policies and Proposals:

H16 EB2 of the Rochford District Local Plan First Review

Shaun Scrutton
Head of Planning Services

The local Ward Members for the above application are Mrs H L A Glynn. Cllr V H Leach. Cllr M G B Starke.

For further information please contact Mark Q Mann on (01702) 546366.