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**REFERRED ITEM R7**

**TITLE: 09/00024/COU  
CHANGE OF USE FROM INVOLVING INTERNAL  
ALTERATIONS AND ALTERATION TO FIRST FLOOR REAR  
ELEVATION FENESTRATION PATTERN TO PROVIDE 9 NO.  
ONE BEDROOMED FLATS AND 3 NO. TWO BEDROOMED  
FLATS  
33A EASTWOOD ROAD RAYLEIGH**

**APPLICANT: B.G.W. P.F**

**ZONING: PRIMARY SHOPPING FRONTAGE**

**PARISH: RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL**

**WARD: WHEATLEY**

In accordance with the agreed procedure this item is reported to this meeting for consideration.

This application was included in Weekly List no. 978 requiring notification of referrals to the Head of Planning and Transportation by 1.00 pm on Tuesday, 21 April 2009, with any applications being referred to this meeting of the Committee. The item was referred by Cllr Mrs M J Webster.

The item that was referred is appended as it appeared in the Weekly List, together with a plan.

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- 7.1 **Rayleigh Town Council:** No objection, provided adequate parking and amenity space is made available, which does not appear to be shown in the submitted plan.

NOTES

- 7.2 Planning permission is sought for a change of use from offices to 9 No. one-bedroom and 3 No. two-bedroom flats at Ulfa Court, 21-33 Eastwood Road, Rayleigh.
- 7.3 The existing property is a three storey block that was built under T/Ray/285/63 with ground floor shops, first floor storage and 8 flats at second floor level. A change of use from offices to training rooms of the majority of the first floor level was granted in 1993 under 93/00178/COU.

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- 7.4 The proposal will result in minimal alteration to the external appearance of the building. It involves works only within the first floor rear elevation including replacement of three doors with windows in the same openings, the removal of an existing window and the replacement of a window with a single entrance door. In addition to the rear external staircases, existing first floor access from entrance doors within Eastwood Road will be retained.
- 7.5 The proposal accords with the design of the existing building and would not significantly alter its external appearance. The County Historic Buildings Adviser does not object to the scheme and notes that the proposed changes would not have any significant impact on the character or appearance of the adjacent conservation area.
- 7.6 There is a car park to the rear of the building which contains 20 spaces and currently serves both the ground floor shops and the existing second floor flats. Each of the existing 8 second floor flats has a single reserved parking space. The application does not propose any additional parking for the new first floor flats, however the applicant has stated that there is currently no parking provision for the occupiers of the first floor. In addition to the existing commercial parking provision a turning area to the rear of Nos. 27-29 will be retained.
- 7.7 The application site is located within Rayleigh Town Centre and is also located within the Primary Shopping Frontage zone. Within this zone Local Plan policies seek to ensure that there should not be an over concentration of non-retail uses and that if non-retail uses are supported they should reinforce the retail function of the centre. Given that the application proposes retention of the ground floor retail function it is not felt that this policy is of particular relevance in this case.
- 7.8 Residential re-development of the upper floors of the site not only creates additional housing, it would also attract a mix of residents back to the commercial heart of the town, creating critical mass vital to economic and social regeneration. In this respect it is considered that the proposal would support the health, vitality and vibrancy of the town centre, by adding to the range of uses within the centre and also assisting in ensuring that the commercial centre does not become a 'dead' centre after the commercial uses have ceased trading.
- 7.9 Given the location of the development and the character of the area the proposed density is considered to be in line with policy requirements.

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- 7.10 The site is located within the commercial centre of Rayleigh and as such the Local Plan car parking standard allows for residential development with zero parking to be supported, given the availability of other means of transport, notwithstanding County Highways comments. The proposal is situated at the very heart of a town centre that provides significant retail shopping facilities in addition to other professional and ancillary services. A number of major bus routes are within a few metres of the site and the main line railway to London is some 10 minutes walk away. Moreover the style of living proposed by the application is one in which people are often willing to forgo car ownership in return for the convenience of town centre living. In addition immediately adjacent to the site is a public car park of substantial size.
- 7.11 The proposal does not include the provision of any amenity space, although those flats fronting Eastwood Road are served by 'juliette' balconies. Given the town centre location of the proposal and the nearby public open space at King George V recreation ground it is not considered that lack of on-site amenity space provision could justify a refusal. The proposal does not give rise to any undue overlooking and would not result in a material loss of residential amenity to the occupiers of any surrounding dwellings.
- 7.12 **Highways:** Objection. The proposal does not provide any parking for the residential part of the proposal. The lack of parking within the site may well lead to vehicles being parked within the public car parks. This may well lead to displaced parking onto the highway network, causing obstruction to other road users to the detriment of general highway safety. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy 1.1 (Safety) and Policy 7 (Parking Standards), Appendix G: Development Control Policies and Processes, Essex Local Transport Plan 2006/2011. It is accepted that there is a large car park close to the development; however, the lack of residential parking may well lead to residents' vehicles being parked within the public car parks, reducing the available space for shoppers visiting Rayleigh Town Centre.
- 7.13 **Essex County Council Historic Buildings Adviser:** No objections on conservation grounds.
- 7.14 **Head of Environmental Services:** No adverse comments.
- 7.15 Neighbours: one letter received from residents of Ulfa Court. Main points of objection include:-
- Existing parking issues for residents and conflict with users of retail units.
  - Additional flats would mean 12 cars or more.
  - Safety concern regarding access for emergency vehicles.

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APPROVE

- 1 SC4B Time Limits Full - Standard
- 2 SC15 Materials to Match (Externally)
- 3 Prior to occupation sound installation works shall be carried out in respect of the dwellings to be provided in accordance with a scheme previously submitted and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

**REASON FOR DECISION**

The proposal is considered not to cause significant demonstrable harm to any development plan interests, other material considerations, to the character and appearance of the Rayleigh Conservation Area, the street scene or residential amenity such as to justify refusing the application; nor to surrounding occupiers in Eastwood Road or Websters Way.

**Relevant Development Plan Policies and Proposals**

HP1, HP3, HP6, HP11, HP17, of the Rochford District Council Adopted Replacement Local Plan



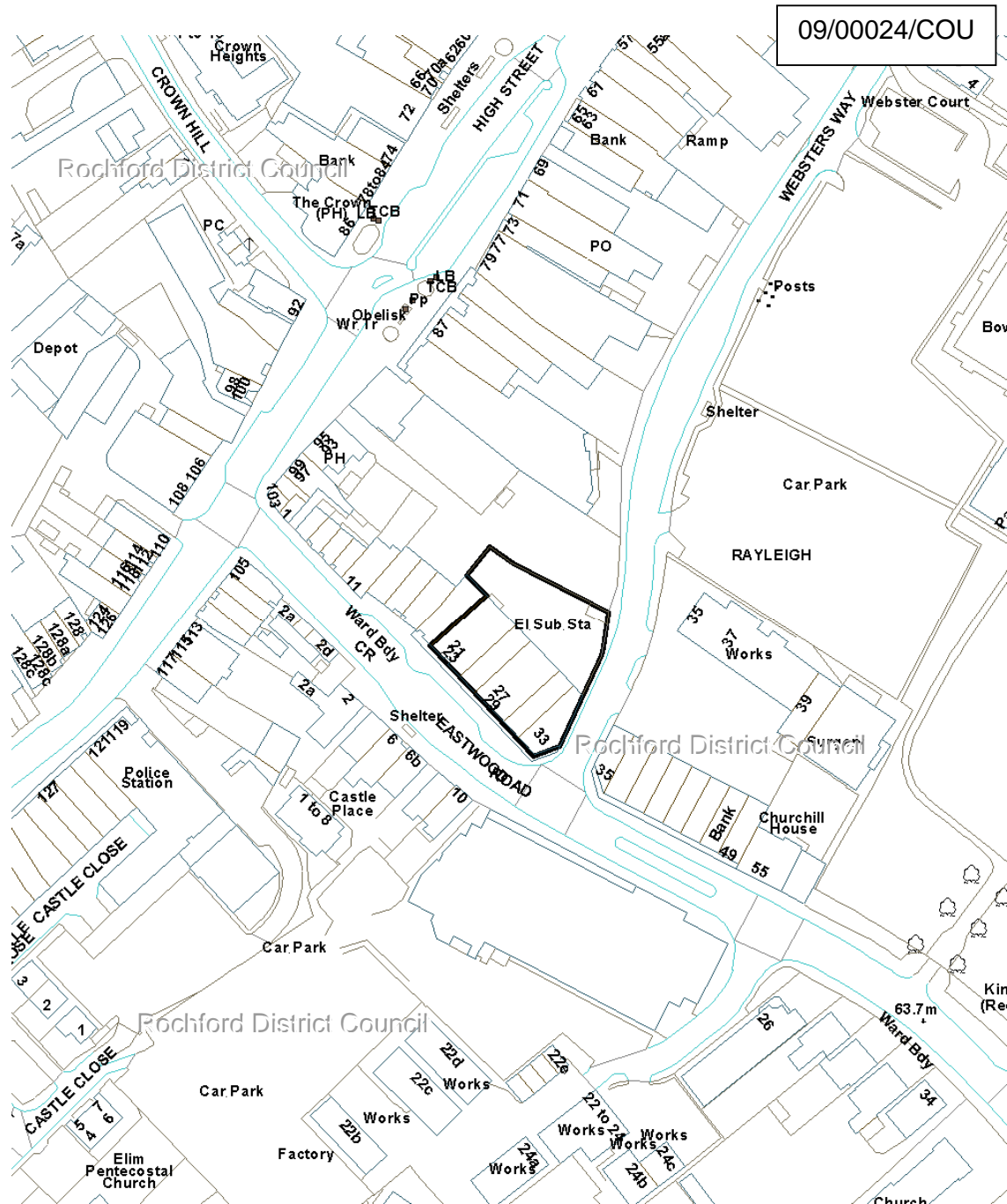
Shaun Scrutton  
Head of Planning and Transportation

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For further information please contact Judith Adams on (01702) 318091.

The local Ward Members for the above application are Cllrs J M Pullen and Mrs M J Webster.

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