

PLANNING SERVICES COMMITTEE - 25 November 2004 Item R5 Referred Item

TITLE : **04/00305/FUL
INSTALL PERFORATED (BROWN) EXTERNAL SECURITY
SHUTTERS TO SHOWROOM WINDOWS
ERNEST DOE AND SONS LTD WEIR POND ROAD
ROCHFORD**

APPLICANT: **ALAN RINGER**

ZONING: **RESIDENTIAL**

PARISH: **ROCHFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

WARD: **ROCHFORD**

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

This application was included in Weekly List no. 752 requiring notification of referrals to the Head of Planning Services by 1.00 pm on Tuesday, 16 November 2004, with any applications being referred to this meeting of the Committee. The item was referred by Cllr Mrs M S Vince.

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

- 5.1 **Rochford Parish Council** - Appreciate the need for security and would be happy to approve a shutter style that was in keeping with the conservation area.

NOTES

- 5.2 The application site is situated within Rochford town centre and the conservation area. The current building dates from when the site was re-developed, providing offices, showroom, stores, depot and workshop accommodation for Doe's, which has been on the site since 1946. The building comprises a number of elements with red brickwork predominant, black timber boarded elements and a pantile roof. The stores entrance has a roller shutter door.
- 5.3 The application was originally for perforated, but has been revised to punched lathe metal (colour coated) external security shutters fitted to the four showroom windows (some 13.5m wide) facing onto Weir Pond Road.

- 5.4 In line with the Authority's Supplementary Planning Guidance "Shop Fronts - Security and Design" and its track record of resisting unsympathetic external roller shutters, both within and outside conservation areas (as supported on Appeal, eg, 4 Golden Cross Parade, 428 Ashingdon Road and 30 Main Road, Hockley), officers have advised the applicant that this proposal is visually unacceptable. Discussions have rehearsed appropriate visual solutions ranging from glass type internal measures and shutters, to re-designing the shop front. Also, rather uniquely, the shop fronts do not back onto the pavement, but are set nearly 8m back within their own private forecourt. Officers have also suggested that a more severe and permanent enclosure of the forecourt may assist them.
- 5.5 As a compromise, officers suggested that the applicant consider open roller grille type external shutters. These, if the proportions are correct, are not so visually damaging and allow the eye to read the shop front behind rather than the shutter installed to the front. The applicant explored this, but has discounted it on cost grounds (twice the cost).
- 5.6 The applicant explains they have been experiencing 2 types of problems: burglary and anti-social behaviour. The external shutters are an attempt to address both issues. There have been at least 2 serious burglaries at the premises, resulting in both loss of stock and smashed shop windows with the attendant cost and mess of shattered glass strewn around. The vandalism manifests itself in the glass and premises entrance being abused with food, drink and the like.
- 5.7 Whilst the shutters have been under discussion, the applicant has upgraded security at the premises, both electronically and with internal grills to the office windows and entrance and horizontal bars to the shop fronts. The applicant explains construction of the shop front does not lend itself to a convenient solution of an internal shutter, nor is this their preference.
- 5.8 **County Survey (Highways)** - has no objections.
- 5.9 **Essex County Council Conservation Officer** - comments the addition of shutters to this modern industrial building will not significantly affect the character or appearance of the conservation area.
- 5.10 **Economic Development Officer** - supports the application, as it may help to retain the business in the area.
- 5.11 The occupiers of 18 and 23 Weir Pond Road - support the application as, due to the rapid increase in break-ins to the property, it has led to an increase in the feeling of vulnerability to the occupiers of the surrounding properties.

REFUSE

- 1 The proposed roller shutters, even in their amended forms, when in use would be alien to the appearance and character of this prominent town centre site and conservation area location. If permitted, it would create an extensive shuttered frontage, with a heavy and overbearing appearance detrimental to the amenities enjoyed by surrounding residents and others in the locality.
- 2 If permitted, these shutters would set a significant precedent that would be difficult to resist. If shutters were erected in the vicinity, they would have an increasingly harmful effect on the visual amenity of the street scene and the character of the area generally. The cumulative effect would create a grossly unacceptable appearance and character to the area.

Relevant Development Plan Policies and Proposals:

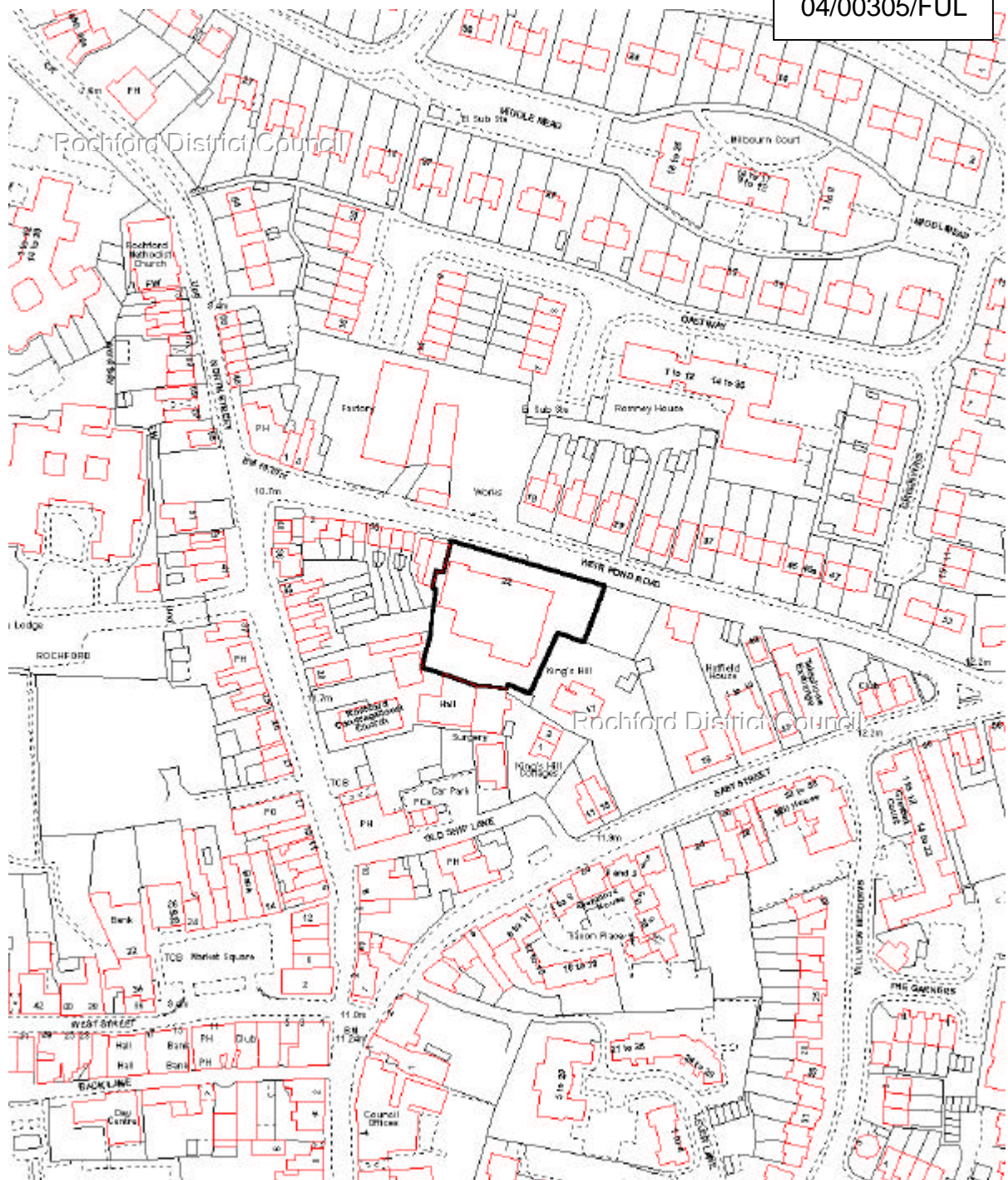
SAT6, UC1, of the Rochford District Council Local Plan First Review



Shaun Scrutton
Head of Planning Services

The local Ward Member(s) for the above application are Cllr Mrs S A Harper
Cllr K J Gordon Cllr Mrs M S Vince

For further information please contact Leigh Palmer on (01702) 546366.



Rochford District Council

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