



REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE

8 December 2016

REPORT

Subject Heading:

P1609.16: Mountbatten House, Elvet Avenue, Gidea Park.

Internal modifications and rear extension to ground floor of tower block to provide Tenants Management Organization office and associated facilities (Application received 6 October 2016)

Ward

Squirrels Heath

Lead Officer

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Policy context:

Local Development Framework
The London Plan
National Planning Policy Framework

Financial summary:

None

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Havering will be clean and its environment will be cared for	[x]
People will be safe, in their homes and in the community	[x]
Residents will be proud to live in Havering	[x]

SUMMARY

This application has been submitted on behalf of the London Borough of Havering. This has no material bearing on the planning considerations for this development. It concerns proposals to carry out internal modification works and construct a single storey extension to the rear of an existing block of flats to provide offices for the Tenants Management Organisation (TMO). The proposal will enable the removal of existing portacabin accommodation from the site. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in all material respects and it is recommended that planning permission is granted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. Time Limit

The development to which this permission relates must be commenced not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason:-

To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2. Accordance with Plans

The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved plans (as set out on page one of this decision notice).

Reason:-

The Local Planning Authority consider it essential that the whole of the development is carried out and that no departure whatsoever is made from

the details approved, since the development would not necessarily be acceptable if partly carried out or carried out differently in any degree from the details submitted. Also, in order that the development accords with Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

3. External Materials

No works shall take place in relation to any of the development hereby approved until samples of all materials to be used in the external construction of the building(s) are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter the development shall be constructed with the approved materials.

Reason:-

Insufficient information has been supplied with the application to judge the appropriateness of the materials to be used. Submission of samples prior to commencement will ensure that the appearance of the proposed development will harmonise with the character of the surrounding area and comply with Policy DC61 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

4. Landscaping

No works shall take place in relation to any of the development hereby approved until there has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of hard and soft landscaping, which shall include indications of all existing trees and shrubs on the site, and details of any to be retained, together with measures for the protection in the course of development. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised within the scheme shall be carried out in the first planting season following completion of the development and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local Planning Authority.

Reason:-

Insufficient information has been supplied with the application to judge the appropriateness of the hard and soft landscaping proposed. Submission of a scheme prior to commencement will ensure that the development accords with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61. It will also ensure accordance with Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

5. Use of Building

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) the use hereby permitted shall be

solely as an office for use by the Delta Tenant Management Organisation only and shall be used for no other purpose(s) whatsoever.

Reason:-

To restrict the use of the premises to one compatible with the surrounding area and to enable the Local Planning Authority to exercise control over any future use not forming part of this application, and that the development accords with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61

6. Removal of Portable Buildings

Within 1 month of the first bringing into use of the office hereby approved, the existing portacabin and storage container used by the Delta Tenant Management Organisation and the palisade fenced compound, as shown on drawing no. 253/02 Revision P1, shall be removed from the site and the land reinstated to a grassed area.

Reason:-

The structures are not acceptable on a permanent basis as they result in visual harm. The requirement to remove these and the fencing will bring about an improvement in the visual appearance of the locality and accord with Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61

INFORMATIVES:

1. Statement Required by Article 35 (2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015: No significant problems were identified during the consideration of the application, and therefore it has been determined in accordance with paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
2. A fee is required when submitting details pursuant to the discharge of conditions. In order to comply with the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications, Deemed Applications, Requests and Site Visits) (England) Regulations 2012, which came into force from 22.11.2012, a fee of £97 per request or £28 where the related permission was for extending or altering a dwellinghouse, is needed.

REPORT DETAIL

1. Site Description

- 1.1 The application relates to an existing residential block, Mountbatten House, which is situated on the eastern side of Elvet Avenue. The block forms part of the wider Delta Estate, which comprises a number of residential properties within Elvet Avenue and Durham Avenue. There is a Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) responsible for the estate which, for some time, has been accommodated in temporary accommodation located on open space to the southern side of Mountbatten House. This is within a compound enclosed by metal palisade fencing. There is also a steel storage container located here.
- 1.2 The estate is characterised primarily by residential accommodation provided in flatted blocks or maisonettes. The blocks generally are set within landscaped areas, with parking provided in garage blocks or small surface parking courtyards. Dreywood Court, an assisted living residential development, lies to the eastern boundary of the application site.

2. Description of Proposal

- 2.1 The application proposes the removal of the temporary accommodation that is currently used by the TMO and its replacement with purpose built accommodation. This would be achieved by internal alterations to remove a number of dis-used ground floor stores and an extension to the rear of Mountbatten House. This would remove around 17 stores with 19 still retained.
- 2.2 The extension would project 1.8m out from the rear elevation of the block and have a length of 13.6m. The office would provide office space and reception rooms for the TMO. The extension would be 3m high to a flat roof, with a rendered external finish and colour coated, aluminium framed windows. The building will have retractable security shutters, concealed beneath the lintels, with an opaque finish. The proposal would enable the removal of the existing portacabin and storage container.

3. History

- 3.1 P0445.05 Portable office building - granted (temporary planning permission until May 2006)

P0988.13 Reconfiguration and refurbishment and creation of a new office, change of use from C3 to B1 - approved

4. Consultation/Representations

4.1 Neighbour notification letters were sent to 126 local addresses and one letter of representation has been received, objecting to the proposal on the following grounds:

- Residential property should not be used as business premises, especially when there are people in need of homes
- Revenue wasted on restoring former office to residential and cost of portacabins
- Delta TMO do not benefit the estate
- Council should tackle parking issues on the estate

In response to the issues raised above, it should be noted that issues relating to the previous proposal to use a flat within Mountbatten House as a TMO office and to the cost of portacabins are not material planning considerations. Neither is the issue of how beneficial the TMO is to the estate as a whole.

4.2 Highways raise no objections to the proposals.

5. Relevant Policy

5.1 The National Planning Policy Framework, specifically Section 7 (Requiring good design) is relevant to these proposals.

5.2 Policies 6.13 (parking), 7.3 (designing out crime), 7.4 (local character) and 7.6 (architecture) of the London Plan, are material considerations.

5.3 Policies CP17 (Design), DC26 (Location of Community Facilities), DC32 (The Road Network), DC33 (Car Parking), DC61 (Urban Design) and DC63 (Delivering Safer Places) of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document are considered to be relevant.

6. Staff Comments

6.1.1 The issues arising from this application are the principle of the development, including the need for the proposal, the design and visual impact, impact on neighbouring amenity and parking and highway considerations.

6.1.2 The application is brought before Committee as it has been submitted on behalf of the Council and an objection has been received.

6.2 Principle of Development

6.2.1 The accommodation is required for the purpose of providing office accommodation for the Delta Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) and for the residents of the estate that use their service. The TMO was

established in 2006 and provides services assisting residents with matters such as day to day repairs and maintenance, so is integral to the way in which the estate is managed.

6.2.2 The TMO has for some time been based within temporary accommodation, that is not fully suitable for purpose and is reliant on the need for renewed planning permissions, given that the portacabin and storage container used are not considered visually to be acceptable on a permanent basis and have only ever benefitted from temporary consents. The existing temporary consents have, in fact, long since lapsed. This proposal therefore seeks to provide purpose-built, permanent accommodation that would meet the needs of residents and the TMO.

6.2.3 Staff consider that the development would be acceptable in principle as it meets the needs of residents of the estate. It is a purpose built structure that would be acceptable on a permanent basis. The proposal does involve the loss of some existing ground floor storage areas but these are currently un-let and storage would remain available to meet demand. The proposal would also have the benefit of prompting the removal of the existing, unsightly portacabin and storage container and the removal of palisade fencing.

6.2.4 Members may also note that planning permission was given in 2013 for the conversion of a flat into an office for the TMO. Staff have been advised that this has now been returned into residential accommodation (never having been used by the TMO as offices) and Staff consider that the proposal, which would prevent any need for loss of residential accommodation and enable the removal of the portacabin and storage container, would be an appropriate solution to the accommodation needs of the TMO. No objection is therefore raised to the development in principle.

6.3 Design and Visual Impact

6.3.1 The proposed extension is considered appropriate in terms of scale and design to the existing block. The materials are judged to be acceptable and in keeping with surroundings. The extension will have very limited visual impact owing to its location to the rear of the building.

6.4 Impact on Amenity

6.4.1 The proposed extension is a flat roofed building, maximum 3m high. It will occupy a position that is below the rear facing windows of the flats on the first floor of the block and so would not obstruct outlook from the windows. It is accepted it would change the outlook, as this is currently a grassed area, but the extension is not extensive and would occupy a limited section of this area, such that the impact is not judged materially harmful. The grassed area does not provide a high degree of amenity and it is noted that the proposal does include provision for additional landscaping here, which is judged would improve on the visual quality of the area.

6.4.2 The extension would be set over 5m from the boundary with Dreywood Court, which has a parking area adjacent to the site boundary. The extension is not therefore judged to be harmful to residents of Dreywood Court.

6.4.3 The extension will only be used for office purposes and not as a wider community facility so no issues relating to noise and disturbance are envisaged.

6.5 Parking and Highway Issues

6.5.1 The proposal does not give rise to any material parking issues. It is an estate office intended to be used by and on behalf of existing residents and is not expected to generate any material parking demand. There is no dedicated parking for the existing facility and the situation for the new facility will be no different. Issues raised in representations regarding parking are not judged to be directly arising from this application, but more to wider issues of parking on the estate as a whole, including potential commuter parking issues.

6.6 Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy

6.6.1 The application is not CIL liable as the new floorspace to be created is less than 100 square metres.

7. Conclusion

7.1 The application is considered to be acceptable in principle. It is a purpose built facility that meets the needs of the Delta TMO and also enables the removal of existing temporary accommodation from the site. The proposal is acceptable in terms of design, impact on amenity and highway considerations. It is therefore recommended that planning permission is granted subject to conditions.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial Implications and risks:

None.

Legal Implications and risks:

This application has been assessed independently of the Council's interest as applicant and land owner, which has no material bearing on the planning considerations of this development.

Human Resource Implications:

None.

Equalities and Social Inclusion Implications:

The application provides purpose built facilities for the TMO, which serves the needs of all residents of the estate and is designed to be accessible to all.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Application P1609.16 received 6 October 2016