

REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE

16 November 2017

REPORT

Subject Heading:

P1047.17

Beehive Court, Gubbins Lane

Conversion of 14 no. bedsits into 8 no. one bedroom, wheelchair accessible flats, the construction of a new lift shaft and associated refurbishment works. Works also include construction of new access ramps and additional car parking spaces within the existing car park.

(Application received 22-08-2017)

SLT Lead:

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Ward:

Harold Wood

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

Places making Havering	[X]
Opportunities making Havering	[X]
Connections making Havering	[X]

SUMMARY

This application is put before Members as the site is Council owned. This application should be considered on its own merits and on the material planning considerations which are independent to the Council's interest as landowner of the site. This application seeks consent for the conversion of 14 no. bedsits into 8 no. one bedroom, wheelchair accessible flats, the construction of a new lift shaft and associated refurbishment works. Works also include construction of new access ramps and additional car parking spaces within the existing car park. In all respects, the proposal is considered to accord with the relevant policies contained in the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document and The London Plan. It is recommended that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended 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 the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

3. Materials

The proposed development hereby approved shall be constructed in accordance with the materials detailed under Section 9 of the application form unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To 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. Hours of construction

All building operations in connection with the construction of external walls, roof, and foundations; site excavation or other external site works; works involving the use of plant or machinery; the erection of scaffolding; the delivery of materials; the removal of materials and spoil from the site, and the playing of amplified music shall only take place between the hours of 8.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday, and between 8.00am and 1.00pm on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays/Public Holidays.

Reason: To protect residential amenity, and in order that the development accords with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

5. Access

The dwellings hereby approved shall be constructed to comply with Part M4(2) of the Building Regulations - Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings.

Reason: In order to comply with Policy DC7 of the Local Development Framework and Policy 3.8 of the London Plan.

6. Water Efficiency

All dwellings hereby approved shall comply with Regulation 36 (2)(b) and Part G2 of the Building Regulations - Water Efficiency.

Reason: In order to comply with Policy 5.15 of the London Plan.

INFORMATIVES

1. Approval - No negotiation required

Statement Required by Article 31 (cc) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management) Order 2010: 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. Street Naming and Numbering

Before occupation of the residential/ commercial unit(s) hereby approved, it is a requirement to have the property/properties officially Street Named and Numbered by our Street Naming and Numbering Team. Official Street Naming and Numbering will ensure that that Council has record of the property/properties so that future occupants can access our services. Registration will also ensure that emergency services, Land Registry and the Royal Mail have accurate address details. Proof of having officially gone through the Street Naming and Numbering process may also be required for the connection of utilities. For further details on how to apply for registration see:

<https://www.havering.gov.uk/Pages/Services/Street-names-and-numbering.aspx>

3. Fee

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 site entitled 'Beehive Court' is located on the junction of Gubbins Lane and Arundel Road, Romford. The scheme consists of 5 no. two storey blocks set within a 1.5 acre plot with communal gardens to the perimeter of the site and a central courtyard. The site is a sheltered housing scheme owned and managed by the London Borough of Havering. There are 48 units in total, which consist of 34 no. flats and 14 no. bedsits.

2. Description of Proposal

2.1 This application seeks consent for the conversion of 14 no. bedsits into 8 no. one bedroom, wheelchair accessible flats, the construction of a new lift shaft and associated refurbishment works. Works also include construction of 8 new access ramps and additional 8 car parking spaces within the existing car park.

2.2 The proposed works are confined to the 'southern block', which would be extensively re-configured and refurbished on both the ground and first floors to provide wheelchair accessible flats, as well as retaining the various communal facilities that are still required such as the warden's office, guest sleepover room, etc. In addition, the proposal would provide new additional communal facilities for the residents, such as a salon, wheelchair accessible communal W.C and a mobility scooter store. A limited amount of external

changes are proposed, which include a new external wall (incorporating a window and door) within the existing recessed entrance/covered porch, some window/door openings to be infilled and partially infilling some existing window openings. The proposal incorporates the construction of a lift shaft within the central courtyard of the site. The garden areas are to be retained and largely unaffected, the only necessary adaptations will include the construction of new pathways and ramps, so all occupants can access the communal gardens.

- 2.3 The supporting statement states that following a review of the Council's existing stock, Beehive Court has been identified as ideal premises to convert some of the accommodation into wheelchair accessible, self-contained one bedroom flats, which are currently in very limited availability and high demand locally. A recent assessment has also concluded that the need for the facility to be retained in its original form is not critical, as other more suitable facilities are available elsewhere within the local area.

3. Relevant History

- 3.1 P0911.15 - Internal alterations to convert 14 bedsits and 3 flats into 10 one-bedroom flats and 1 two-bedroom flats. Alterations include infilling, partially external lobby entrance area and replacing door - Approved with conditions.

4. Consultation/Representations

- 4.1 The occupiers of 72 neighbouring properties were notified of this proposal. Four letters of representation were received with detailed comments that have been summarised as follows:
- Queried if all the work will be internal or if there will be any added structure to the current building.
 - Concerns regarding access during construction works.
 - Any enlargement to the building would appear too large and unsightly in the streetscene.
 - Reference was made to the fact that planning permission was refused to a neighbouring property.
 - Difficulty viewing the plans.
 - A tenant will lose their home to accommodate the refurbishment.
 - Tenants being decanted to facilitate the Housing Regeneration and lack of consultation by Housing Services.
 - Lifts should be provided to accommodate all first floor flats, not just the internal block including a lack of consultation regarding this.
- 4.2 In response to the above, the proposal involves a limited amount of external changes which include a new external wall (incorporating a window and door) within the existing recessed entrance/covered porch, some window/door openings to be infilled and partially infilling some existing window openings and the construction of a lift shaft within the central courtyard of the site. Comments regarding access during construction works and a planning application concerning a neighbouring property are not material planning considerations. Each planning application is determined

on its individual planning merits. The plans were emailed to the person concerned.

- 4.3 Comments regarding a tenant losing their home to accommodate the refurbishment and tenants being decanted to facilitate the Housing Regeneration are not material planning considerations, although the Council's Housing Department has provided the following information: The primary function of the block is to provide self-contained accommodation to elderly residents enabling them to live independently. The existing accommodation offer is not fit for purpose and the current proposal not only address the issue of unsustainable bedsit units but facilitates a long term strategy of the Community Sheltered Hub dealing with social isolation in the wider community. The two bedroom unit was previously accommodation for an onsite warden which is now not part of our service model. Consequently the proposed scheme looks to maximise the use of the space to support service provisions. Group Consultations with residents at Beehive Court Sheltered Scheme have taken place during 2017 regarding the conversion of empty bedsit properties into new one bedroom sheltered flats. While the original plans included a two bedroom flat, on discussion with the occupant concerned our proposal was considered unsuitable. The occupant of the two bedroom flat will be moving off site to a general needs property, will also benefit from a direct offer, assistance to move and financial support to cover Home Loss and Disturbance.
- 4.4 Environmental Health - No objections or comments with regards to contaminated land or air quality. A condition is required regarding a road noise assessment with regards to the road noise emanating from Gubbins Lane upon the development, but Staff consider that it is not reasonable to impose this condition given that the building is currently used for bedsits and this condition was not imposed for a previous planning application – reference P0911.15.
- 4.5 Highway Authority - No objection.
- 4.6 Essex & Suffolk Water - We do not have any apparatus located in the proposed development. We have no objection to this development subject to compliance with our requirements; consent is given to the development on the condition that a water connection is made onto our Company Network for the new dwelling for revenue purposes.
- 4.7 Fire Brigade - There should be access for a pump appliance to within 45m of all points in each dwelling measured along a line suitable for the laying of hose. If this cannot be achieved, a fire main should be installed and access provided to within 18m of the inlet to the main, which should be visible from the appliance. No additional fire hydrants are required.

5. Relevant Policy

- 5.1 Policies CP17 (Design), DC2 (Housing Mix and Density), DC3 (Housing Design and Layout), DC29 (Educational premises), DC33 (Car Parking),

DC40 (Waste recycling), DC55 (Noise), DC61 (Urban Design) and DC72 (Planning Obligations) of the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document are also considered to be relevant together with the Design for Living Supplementary Planning Document and the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document.

5.2 Policies 3.18 (Educational facilities), 3.3 (increasing housing supply), 3.4 (optimising housing potential), 3.5 (quality and design of housing developments), 6.13 (parking), 7.1 (building London's neighbourhoods and communities), 7.4 (local character), 8.2 (Planning obligations) and 8.3 (Community infrastructure levy) of the London Plan are relevant. The DCLG Technical Housing Standards document and the Housing SPG 2016 are relevant.

5.3 Policies 6 (Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes) and 7 (Requiring good design) of the National Planning Policy Framework are relevant.

6. Mayoral CIL implications

6.1 The proposed development has a gross floor area of less than 100 square metres and as such, is exempt from the Mayoral CIL.

7. Staff Comments

7.1 The main issues in this case are the principle of development, the impact on the streetscene and neighbouring amenity and highway and parking issues.

8. Principle of Development

8.1 The proposal would only result in the rearrangement of the existing residential use. The use would therefore remain as residential and is acceptable in principle.

9. Density/Layout

9.1 Policy DC2 of the LDF provides guidance in relation to the dwelling mix within residential developments. The proposal would not have a significant impact on density as it will result in the reduction of 6 units.

9.2 Policy 3.5 of the London Plan advises that housing developments should be of the highest quality internally, externally and in relation to their context and to the wider environment. To this end, Policy 3.5 requires that new residential development conforms to minimum internal space standards.

9.3 The proposals have been assessed against the Technical Housing Standards - nationally described space standards. For one bedroom flats for one person, the space requirement is set at 39m² and 50m² for two people. The proposal would provide residential units with varying floor space sizes all of which meet or exceed the respective minimum standards as per the proposed number of rooms and number of occupants they are intended to serve.

9.4 The proposal would not increase the amount of units on site and therefore, there is not a requirement for additional amenity space provision. The garden areas are to be retained and largely unaffected, the only necessary adaptations will include the construction of new pathways and ramps, so all occupants can access the communal gardens.

10. Design/Impact on Street/Garden Scene

10.1 The proposal involves a limited amount of external changes which include a new external wall (incorporating a window and door) within the existing recessed entrance/covered porch, some window/door openings to be infilled and partially infilling some existing window openings. The changes are considered to be acceptable and would integrate satisfactorily with the streetscene. The lift shaft would project approximately 0.3m above the roof ridge of the building, although given its siting to the centre and rear of the building and its relatively narrow width of 2.5m, it is considered that it would not appear unduly prominent or adversely affect the character and appearance of the streetscene. In addition, the lift shaft would be partly screened by the higher roof ridge of the western part of the 'southern block' and ground levels slope downhill within the site adjacent to the western and southern elevations of the 'southern block', which would help to mitigate its impact.

10.2 Three ramps would be located to the front of the southern block and it is considered that these would not adversely affect the streetscene, as ground levels slope downhill from south to north to the front of the building in Arundel Road, which would help to mitigate their impact. The remaining five ramps would be located to the rear (north) of the site and as such, would not be directly visible in the streetscene.

10.3 Staff consider that the 8 new car parking spaces would not adversely affect the streetscene, as four spaces would be set back a minimum of approximately 19 metres from Arundel Road, which would mitigate their impact. It is considered that replacing an area of grass with tarmac to provide the remaining four car parking spaces would not have a detrimental impact on the streetscene, as the size of this area is relatively modest.

11. Impact on Amenity

11.1 It is considered the conversion of 14 no. bedsits into 8 no. one bedroom, wheelchair accessible flats, the construction of a new lift shaft and associated refurbishment works would not result in material harm to residential amenity, as the site is well separated from neighbouring properties. The proposed lift shaft would be located to the centre and rear of the building and its overall proportions are relatively modest. The lift shaft would be largely screened by the front elevation and flank walls of the existing building, which would help to mitigate its impact. It is considered that the proposal would not create any additional overlooking or loss of privacy over and above existing conditions. Staff consider that the ramps

would improve the accessibility within the site for occupants. It is considered that the creation of eight car parking spaces would not be harmful to residential amenity, as they would be located adjacent to the existing car park within the site.

12. Highway/Parking

- 12.1 The site has a PTAL rating of 3. The proposal would result in a reduction in units and involves the creation of eight car parking spaces that would be located adjacent to the existing car park within the site, which is deemed to be acceptable. The Highway Authority has no objection to the proposal.

13. Planning Obligations

- 13.1 Staff do not consider a contribution towards education provision to be justified in this case, as the proposed development would replace 14no. bedsits with 8 no. one bedroom units.

14. Conclusion

- 14.1 Staff are of the view that the conversion of 14 no. bedsits into 8 no. one bedroom, wheelchair accessible flats, the construction of a new lift shaft, associated refurbishment works, new access ramps and additional car parking spaces within the existing car park are acceptable in principle, would not adversely impact on the streetscene or result in a significant loss of amenity to neighbouring occupiers. The conversion would provide a suitably high quality living environment for the enjoyment of future occupiers. Staff consider that the scheme would not create any highway or parking issues. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in all other respects and it is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

None.

Legal implications and risks:

This application is considered on the material planning considerations which are independent to the Council's interest as landowner of the site. No legal implications arise as a result of the proposal.

Human Resources implications and risks:

None

Equalities implications and risks:

The Council's planning policies are implemented with regard to equality and diversity. The development is for sheltered accommodation, thus contributing to the provision of mixed and balanced communities. The proposal would also improve access within the building and the site.