

<b>APPLICATION NO:</b>	<b>P0518.13</b>	
<b>WARD :</b>	Brooklands	<b>Date Received:</b> 11th July 2013 <b>Expiry Date:</b> 10th October 2013
<b>ADDRESS:</b>	111-115 North Street Romford	
<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Change of use of property from B1 to mix use comprising D1 (education, religious meetings and training centre) Additional Information received 20.11.13	
<b>DRAWING NO(S):</b>	Site Location Plan 2009/C182/01 2009/C182/02 2009/C182/04 2009/C182/03	
<b>RECOMMENDATION :</b>	It is recommended that <b>planning permission be GRANTED</b> subject to the condition(s) given at the end of the report given at the end of the report.	

## **BACKGROUND**

This planning application was brought before Members on 12th September, 2013, but was deferred to enable additional information about the proposal to be gathered. The queries raised by Members, and the information submitted by the applicants in response to these, are detailed below. The remainder of the report is as previously presented, save for some changes to the description reflecting amendments to the proposal, as follows.

- Exactly what education facilities are being proposed?

The proposed facility would be an independent special education day school for children with autistic spectrum disorders.

- What is the age range of children/young people proposed?

4-10 years.

- What is the defined educational need, by whom and why no supporting evidence, eg agencies?

The applicants have submitted a business plan, which states that the school is to be established by the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Jubilee House as a separate charity and a company limited by guarantee. The school is being established to meet what is considered to be an inadequate provision of schools for autistic pupils in the United Kingdom. The school will serve, in particular, those from Christian homes and others whose parents believe that divine healing and an educational environment based on Christian values, ethics and beliefs would benefit their children. According to the submitted information:

"Figures suggest that there are about 90,000 children with autism in the United Kingdom. There are about 7500 places for these children. There is a division of opinion on how many of these children actually require specialist school places but recent surveys indicate conservatively that

there are about 26,000 children who need a place in a specialist autism school. There are currently about 4000 specialist places across the United Kingdom."

The school will be operating within the independent special education school system. These schools operate side by side with government provisions to meet the need of children with special education requirements. The operators of the school aim to attain National Autistic Society accreditation and to establish close links with the Local Education Authority.

· What is the basis of the autistic education and what safety measures will be in place to safeguard children?

The school will adopt the Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) approach to teach its pupils. The submitted information states that ABA has been used successfully in the United States and Scandinavia over the past twenty years to teach pupils with autism. It was also pioneered in the United Kingdom by the Treehouse Trust about seven years ago. Other safety and security features include the employment and retention of a consultant to manage the statutory compliance including security and access control.

· Confirm teacher/pupil ratios, class sizes and numbers.

The submitted information states that it is proposed that there will be only 10 pupils in total for the school at the ratio of 1 teacher per pupil to meet statutory requirements.

· What justification for residential on site if not to permit access to others overnight?

The applicants have submitted revised plans; residential accommodation and over night stays are no longer proposed.

· How is "family" defined and what is proposed here?

The application has been amended and no longer includes any family-related uses.

· Confirm whether or not parking provision is adequate for the component parts of the use, once clarified.

The highway authority has been consulted about this aspect of the proposal and raised no objections owing to the provision of off-street parking, the availability of public car parks in the local area, and public transport connections.

In considering the additional information outlined above, Members may find it helpful to have regard to Havering's Education and Skills Delivery Strategy, which was approved by Cabinet on 20th November 2013. One of the objectives of that strategy is to improve the provision of services to children with special educational needs.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The site comprises an existing, 3 storey office building and its curtilage located at 111-115 North Street, Romford. The building under consideration is currently vacant. The site fronts onto North Street, and includes a car park between the front of the application building and the highway. A further parking area, in the basement of the building, is accessed from Brooklands Lane.

The site's eastern boundary runs alongside North Street, with a bus stop being located

immediately adjacent to the site. On the opposite side of the highway are numerous retail units and residential properties. The southern boundary adjoins Brooklands Lane, beyond which are several residential properties. The western and northern boundaries adjoin the car park and premises associated with a large retail shed development; this site is allocated in the Romford Area Action Plan for future residential development.

The site is located towards the northern end of Romford Town Centre and has a public transport accessibility level (PTAL) of 5-6. The Como Street car park is located in close proximity to the site.

Whilst the site is located in Romford Town Centre, there are numerous residential properties located in close proximity to the site, including those along North Street, Como Street and Ingrave Road, the nearest of which are located approximately 25m from the site.

### **DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL**

This planning application proposes the change of use of an existing office building to a mix of D1 uses, primarily a centre of worship and educational facility. According to the submitted plans, the proposal would include the following elements:

- a) A multi-purpose hall with capacity for 90 people at ground floor level;
- b) Classrooms, break out areas, playroom, therapy room, office and waiting area at first floor level. These aspects of the proposal would relate to a school for autistic children;
- c) An office, resident pastor's office, library/bookshop, counselling suites.

The proposed use would include various weekly clubs, including childrens clubs during the school holidays and lunch clubs for the elderly.

The proposal would include 25 car parking spaces along with a bicycle storage area.

### **RELEVANT HISTORY**

The previous planning decision of most relevance to this proposal is as follows:

P1095.12 - Change of Use of offices(B1) to a facility for the homeless, including daytime drop in centre and cafe, meeting & counselling services on the ground floor, accommodation for homeless people on first floor, addiction rehabilitation services and provision of worship facilities and temporary overnight rough sleeper accommodation at second floor - Refused on the following grounds:

"1) The proposal is considered to be out of proportion to the actual identified need for such specialist accommodation within Havering. It is considered that the proposed development would attract vulnerable adults with complex care needs into the local area. It is considered that the resultant concentration of such individuals in the locality would give rise to significant adverse impacts on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers as a result of anti social behaviour. The proposal is therefore considered to be contrary to Policy DC61 of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD and Policy 7.1 of the London Plan.

2) It is considered that the proposal would give rise to a significant fear of crime amongst local residents and that it would therefore be detrimental to peoples sense of place, safety and community. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy 7.1 of the London Plan."

## **CONSULTATIONS/REPRESENTATIONS**

Notification letters were sent to 152 neighbouring properties.

Objection letters have been received from 6 neighbouring occupiers. The objections raised are as follows:

- i) The application is associated with an applicant for a previous application, which was refused;
- ii) The proposal would be harmful to the amenities of local businesses and residents;
- iii) The proposal could contribute to an increase in crime in the local area;
- iv) More homeless people and drug addicts will be encouraged to come to the local area and will cause a nuisance during the day time;
- v) The proposal would result in significant adverse parking and traffic impacts;
- vi) The proposal would have harmful noise impacts.

2 letters of support have been received. The comments received are as follows:

- i) Hope4Havering provide a high quality and much needed service to the homeless;
- ii) The proposal will benefit homeless people.

Comments have also been received from the following consultees:

Environmental Health - No objections; conditions recommended.

Highways - No objections.

Crime Prevention Design Advisor - No objections; condition recommended.

## **RELEVANT POLICIES**

The following policies of the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD ("the LDF") are of relevance:

- DC26 - Location of Community Facilities
- DC32 - The Road Network
- DC33 - Car Parking
- DC61 - Urban Design
- DC63 - Delivering Safer Places

The following planning guidance is also of relevance:

The Romford Area Action Plan DPD ("the DPD")

The London Plan: Policy 7.1 "Building London's Neighbourhoods and Communities"

National Planning Policy Framework ("the NPPF")

## **MAYORAL CIL IMPLICATIONS**

The proposed development would not give rise to any financial contribution under the Mayoral CIL Regulations.

## **STAFF COMMENTS**

The main issues in this case are still considered to be the principle of development, design and

visual impact considerations, the impact on amenity, highway impact, and other considerations.

### **PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT**

The proposed development would result in the change of use of an existing building to a mix of D1 uses including a place of worship. Policy DC26 states that planning permission for new community facilities, such as churches, will be granted under given circumstances. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in principle.t

### **DESIGN/IMPACT ON STREET/GARDEN SCENE**

Policy DC61 of the LDF states that planning permission will only be granted for development which maintains, enhances or improves the character and appearance of the local area.

The proposal would not result in any significant changes to the external appearance of the application building. It is recommended that a condition be imposed, should planning permission be granted, requiring the submission of details relating to any proposed superficial changes to the building's external appearance, such as the colour scheme.

Subject to the afore mentioned condition, it is considered that the proposal, in terms of its visual impact, would be in accordance with Policy DC61 of the LDF.

### **IMPACT ON AMENITY**

Policies DC26 and DC61 of the LDF states that planning permission will not be granted for proposals that would significantly diminish local and residential amenity. Policy 7.1 of the London Plan states that development should contribute to people's sense of place, safety and security.

The proposal is for the redevelopment of an existing building, which is located within Romford Town Centre. It is considered that a facility of the size and type being proposed in this case would generally be inappropriate in predominantly residential areas. However, whilst the site is located within the Town Centre, there are numerous residential properties located nearby and the potential impacts on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers therefore need to be given careful consideration.

Objections received from neighbouring occupiers state that the proposal would result in an increase in people with drug and alcohol abuse issues being attracted to the local area and a resultant increase in anti-social behaviour and crime. It is stated that the proposal would be detrimental to the amenities of residential occupiers and local businesses.

A previous planning application for a centre of worship and a homeless hostel (reference: P1095.12) was refused on the grounds that it would be likely to attract homeless people into the local area from beyond the borough boundaries and that the resultant concentration of such individuals in the local area could give rise to significant adverse impacts on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers as a result of anti social behaviour. It was also clear from the representations received that the proposal would give rise to a significant fear of crime and be detrimental to peoples sense of place, safety and community. The proposal was therefore considered to be contrary to Policies DC5, DC26 and DC61 of the LDF and Policy 7.1 of the London Plan.

The current proposal would not include the provision of a hostel facility, and the submitted information does not make any reference to counselling or other activities associated with drug and alcohol abuse, or homelessness. However, it is understood that the applicant does have

close links with the applicants of the previous application. To ensure that the proposed activities would not attract individuals with complex needs into the area, it is recommended that conditions be imposed preventing the use of the building as a hostel facility, or for any purpose associated with drug and alcohol misuse or homelessness.

The Council's Environmental Health officers have raised no objections subject to the use of conditions to prevent a noise nuisance to neighbouring occupiers. These conditions can be imposed should planning permission be granted. A further condition controlling operating hours, in accordance with those proposed by the applicants, is also recommended.

### **HIGHWAY/PARKING**

Policy DC26 of the LDF state that proposals for community facilities will only be granted where they are accessible by a range of transport modes, including cycling and public transport, and would not be detrimental to highway and pedestrian safety. Policy DC32 states that development should not be detrimental to the highway network.

Neighbouring occupiers have raised concerns about the impact the proposal would have on local parking and access arrangements.

The site is located in a relatively accessible location, within walking distance of Romford Town Centre and on a major bus route. The proposal would include 25 parking spaces and the site is located in very close proximity to the Como Street public car park. The Council's Highway officers have raised no objections to the proposal subject to any planning consent granted being for a temporary of time. Whilst a temporary consent would offer the opportunity for the Local Planning Authority to test the highway impact of the proposal, it is considered to be unreasonable, given the expense to the applicants of converting the building to the proposed use.

Given the highly accessible location of the building and the range of local vehicle parking opportunities, it is considered that the proposal would not result in any significant adverse impacts on highway safety or amenity, subject to the use of a condition requiring the approval of a Travel Plan. The Travel Plan shall include provisions for the encouragement of car sharing, the use of public transport, and highlighting the locations of public car parking.

### **OTHER ISSUES**

#### **Crime Prevention**

The Crime Prevention Design Advisor has raised no objections to the proposal.

#### **Environmental Matters**

The Council's Environmental Health officers have raised no objections to the proposal subject to the use of conditions relating to the control of noise. These conditions should be imposed if planning permission is to be granted.

### **KEY ISSUES/CONCLUSIONS**

Subject to the afore mentioned conditions, the proposal is considered to be acceptable having had regard to Policies DC26, DC32, DC33, DC61, and DC63 of the LDF and all other material considerations.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that **planning permission be GRANTED** subject to the condition(s) given at the end of the report

**1. SC4 (Time limit) 3yrs**

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. SC32 (Accordance with plans)**

The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved plans, particulars and specifications (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. Non Standard Condition 31**

No development shall take place until details of any proposed alterations to the external appearance of the building have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be undertaken in accordance with the approved details and retained as such for the life of the development.

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity and in accordance with Policy DC61 of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD.

**4. Non Standard Condition 32**

No part of the application building shall be used as a hostel or to otherwise provide over night accommodation.

Reason: In accordance with Policy 7.1 of the London Plan and to ensure that the proposal does not attract people with complex needs into the local area. It is considered that the resultant concentration of such individuals in the locality would give rise to significant adverse impacts on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers as a result of anti social behaviour. It is also considered that such development could give rise to a significant fear of crime amongst local residents and that it would therefore be detrimental to peoples sense of place, safety and community.

**5. Non Standard Condition 33**

Before the development commences details of a scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority which specifies the provisions to be made for the control of noise emanating from the site. Such scheme as may be approved shall be implemented prior to first occupation and thereafter retained in

**6. Non Standard Condition 34**

Before any works commence a scheme for any new plant or machinery shall be submitted to the local planning authority to achieve the following standard. Noise levels expressed as the equivalent continuous sound level LAeq (1 hour) when calculated at the boundary with the nearest noise sensitive premises shall not exceed LA90 -10dB and shall be maintained thereafter to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To prevent noise nuisance to adjoining properties in accordance with Policy DC61 of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD.

**7. Non Standard Condition 35**

The building shall only be used for educational and club activities between the hours of 10.00am and 9.00pm Monday to Friday, and between 10.00am and 4.00pm on Saturdays, and not at all on Sundays, Bank or public holidays.

The building shall only be used for religious activities between 7pm and 9pm on Wednesdays and Fridays, and between 8.00am and 3.00pm on Sundays. Religious activities may take place between 7.00pm and 2.00am on the First Friday of each month.

Reason: To prevent noise nuisance to adjoining properties in accordance with Policy DC61 of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD.

**8. Non Standard Condition 36**

No counselling or other activities associated with drug and alcohol abuse or homelessness shall take place at any time.

Reason: In accordance with Policy 7.1 of the London Plan and to ensure that the proposal does not attract people with complex needs into the local area. It is considered that the resultant concentration of such individuals in the locality would give rise to significant adverse impacts on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers as a result of anti social behaviour. It is also considered that such development could give rise to a significant fear of crime amongst local residents and that it would therefore be detrimental to peoples sense of place, safety and community.

**9. Non Standard Condition 37**

The development shall not be brought into use until a Travel Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Travel Plan shall include provisions for the encouragement of car sharing, the use of public transport, and highlight the locations of public car parking in close proximity to the site. The Travel Plan shall be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis. The use shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved scheme.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and amenity, and in accordance with Policy DC32 of the Development Control Policies DPD.

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**INFORMATIVES**

**1 Highways Informatives**

The Applicant is advised that planning approval does not constitute approval for changes to the public highway. Highway Authority approval will only be given after suitable details have been submitted, considered and agreed. Any proposals which



involve building over the public highway as managed by the London Borough of Havering, will require a licence and the applicant must contact StreetCare, Traffic & Engineering on 01708 433750 to commence the Submission/ Licence Approval process.

Should this application be granted planning permission, the developer, their representatives and contractors are advised that this does not discharge the requirements under the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 and the Traffic Management Act 2004. Formal notifications and approval will be needed for any highway works (including temporary works) required during the construction of the development.

The developer is advised that if construction materials are proposed to be kept on the highway during construction works then they will need to apply for a license from the Council.

**2 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.