



REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE

REPORT

17 November 2011

Subject Heading:

P1334.11 – 142 South Street, Romford

Conversion of existing first and second floor office space (Class B1) to 2 no. residential units. (Application received 13th September 2011)

Report Author and contact details:

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Policy context:

**Local Development Framework
London Plan
National Planning Policy**

Financial summary:

None

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

Ensuring a clean, safe and green borough	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Championing education and learning for all	<input type="checkbox"/>
Providing economic, social and cultural activity in thriving towns and villages	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value and enhance the life of our residents	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delivering high customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	<input type="checkbox"/>

SUMMARY

This application relates to the conversion of the upper floors of the building to form two residential flats. Staff consider the proposals to be acceptable, subject to a legal agreement to secure a restriction on future occupants from obtaining

residents parking permits together with conditions. It is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the proposal is unacceptable as it stands but would be acceptable subject to the applicant entering into a Section 106 Legal Agreement under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), to secure the following:

- *A restriction on residents of the development, save for blue badge holders, applying for parking permits within the local area.*

That staff be authorised to enter into a legal agreement to secure the above and upon completion of that agreement, grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out below.

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 accord with the approved plans, particulars and specifications.

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. Sound attenuation - The flats shall be so constructed as to provide sound insulation of 43 DnT, w + Ctr dB (minimum values) against airborne noise and 64 L'nT, w dB (maximum values) against impact noise to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To prevent noise nuisance to adjoining properties in accordance with the recommendations of Planning Policy Guidance Note 24 "Planning & Noise" 1994, and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policies DC55 and DC61.

4. Scheme for protecting flats from commercial uses - Before any development is commenced, a scheme for protecting the proposed flats from noise from adjacent commercial uses shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Any works which form part of the approved scheme shall be completed before any of the permitted dwellings are occupied.

Reason: To prevent noise nuisance to adjoining properties in accordance with the recommendations of Planning Policy Guidance Note 24 "Planning & Noise" 1994.

5. Road noise assessment - Prior to the commencement of any development an assessment shall be undertaken of the impact of road noise emanating from South Street upon the development in accordance with the methodology contained in the Department of Transport/Welsh office memorandum, "Calculation of Road Traffic Noise", 1988. Reference should be made to the good standard to be found in the World Health Organisation Document number 12 relating to community noise and BS8233:1999. Following this, a scheme detailing measures, which are to protect occupants from road traffic noise shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and shall be implemented prior to occupation.

Reason: To protect future residents against the impact of road noise in accordance with Department of Environments, Planning Policy Guidance Note 24, "Planning and Noise".

6. Cycle storage - Prior to completion of the works hereby permitted, cycle storage of a type and in a location previously submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority shall be provided and permanently retained thereafter.

Reason: In the interests of providing a wide range of facilities for non-motor car residents, in the interests of sustainability and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC36.

7. Refuse and recycling - Before the development hereby permitted commences, details of the proposed refuse storage and recycling facilities to be provided at the site for the use, together with arrangements for refuse disposal and details of recycling and collection shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The facilities as approved shall then be provided at the site prior to the commencement of the use and retained at the site thereafter in accordance with the approved drawings at all times.

Reason: In order to ensure that any such facilities respect the visual amenity of the locality, and the amenity of surrounding residents.

8. Secure by Design - Prior to the commencement of the development hereby approved a full and detailed application for the Secured by Design award

scheme shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority, setting out how the principles and practices of the Secured by Design Scheme are to be incorporated. Once approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the Havering Crime Prevention Design Advisor the development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: In the interest of creating safer, sustainable communities and to reflect guidance in PPS1 and Policies CP17 and DC63 of the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

INFORMATIVES

1. In aiming to satisfy condition 8 above, the applicant should seek the advice of the Borough Crime Prevention Design Advisor (CPDA). He can be contacted through the London Borough of Havering Planning Control Service or Romford Police Station, 19 Main Road, Romford, Essex, RM1 3BJ. It is the Policy of the Local Planning Authority to consult with the Borough CPDA in the discharging of community safety conditions.

2. Reason for approval:

The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the aims, objectives and provisions of Policies CP1, CP2, CP4, CP9, CP17, CP18, DC2, DC3, DC4, DC33, DC35, DC36, DC40, DC55, DC61, DC63 and DC72 of the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document. The proposal is also considered to accord with Policies ROM1, ROM14, ROM20 and ROMSSA6 of the Romford Area Action Plan Development Plan Document, Policies 2.15, 3.3, 3.5, 3.8, 4.2, 6.9, 6.10, 6.12 and 6.13 of the London Plan as well as the objectives of PPS1, PPS4 and PPG13.

3. The planning obligations recommended in this report have been subject to the statutory tests set out in Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 and the obligations are considered to have satisfied the following criteria:-

- (a) Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
- (b) Directly related to the development; and
- (c) Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development.

REPORT DETAIL

1. **Site Description**

- 1.1 The application site is located on the western side of South Street to the south of Romford railway station. The site is occupied by a three storey building terraced building with commercial uses at ground floor and a mix of either offices or residential flats to the upper floors. The application building comprises a mini cab office at ground floor with two floors of offices above. To the rear of the building is a yard area for the parking of cars associated with the ground floor mini cab office. The character of the area surrounding the application site is drawn predominantly by ground floor commercial uses with residential uses to the upper floors. The main access to the building is from the front onto South Street with access also possible from the rear via Atlanta Boulevard.

2. Description of Proposal

- 2.1 The proposal is for the conversion of the existing first and second floors of the building from offices to residential in the form of 2 no. one bedroom flats.
- 2.2 No external alterations to the building are proposed. Internally, the first and second floors will be converted and reconfigured with one flat on each floor. Each of the proposed flats would comprise a single double bedroom, a lounge, bathroom and kitchen. Each flat would have an internal floor area of 45 square metres excluding the shared stairway and landing areas.
- 2.3 The new residential units would be accessed via the existing doorway in the rear elevation of the building. No parking or amenity space is proposed as part of the scheme.

3. Planning History

- 3.1 P0263.94 – Change of use to mini-cab book office – Approved
- 3.2 P1016.95 – Permanent use as a mini-cab office – Approved

4. Consultations/Representations

- 4.1 Neighbour notification letters were sent to 42 adjoining properties with no letters of representation being received.
- 4.2 The London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority advise that the proposal should comply with Approved Document B. This is something that would be addressed through Building Regulations in the event that planning permission is granted.

5. Staff Comments

- 5.1 The main issues to be considered by Members in this case are the principle of development, design/street scene issues, amenity implications and parking and highways issues.

5.2 Relevant LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policies to be considered are Policies CP1 (Housing Supply), CP2 (Sustainable Communities), CP4 (Town Centres), CP9 (Reducing the need to Travel), CP10 (Sustainable Transport), CP17 (Design), DC2 (Housing Mix and Density), DC3 (Housing Design and Layout), DC4 (Conversions to Residential and Subdivision of Residential Uses), DC33 (Car Parking), DC35 (Cycling), DC36 (Servicing), DC40 (Waste Recycling), DC55 (Noise), DC61 (Urban Design), DC63 (Crime) and DC72 (Planning Obligations) of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document are considered to be relevant. The Romford Area Action Plan Policies ROM1 (Romford Station Gateway), ROM14 (Housing Supply), ROM20 (Urban Design), ROMSSA6 (Station Gateway and Interchange) and the Supplementary Planning Document on Residential Design are also considered to be relevant.

5.3 Policies 2.15 (Town Centres), 3.3 (Increasing Housing Supply), 3.5 (Quality and design of housing developments), 3.8 (Housing Choice), 4.2 (Offices), 6.9 (Cycling), 6.10 (Walking), 6.12 (Road network capacity) and 6.13 (Parking) of the London Plan are further material considerations, together with PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development) and PPS3 (Housing), PPG4 (Planning for Economic Growth) and PPG13 (Transport).

5.4 Principle of Development

5.4.1 The policy presumption outlined by Policy CP1 is such that new housing development is normally directed outside of allocated areas. However, the Romford Area Action Plan generally supports the principle of residential development above existing ground floor commercial development. The site forms part of the Site Specific Allocation known as Station Gateway and Interchange where new housing is specifically encouraged.

5.4.2 In terms of Government guidance PPS1 encourages a mixture of uses within town centres, which can assist in creating vitality, diversity and a reduction in the need to travel. PPS1 also seeks to ensure that housing is available where jobs are created and encourages the provision of a mixture and range of housing. PPS6 encourages diversification within town centres and acknowledges that the occupation of flats above shops can increase activity in town centres during the evening and night, thereby contributing to personal safety. In order to include an element of housing within town centres planning authorities are encouraged to take a flexible approach to residential car parking and other standards. There is, therefore, general support for the principle of providing additional residential units in the town centre.

5.4.3 The proposal would also contribute to the Mayor's London Plan objective of increasing the overall supply of housing, specifically relevant is Policy 3.3.

5.4.4 The site does not fall within the Romford Office Quarter where office accommodation should be retained and as such the loss of office space in this case is considered, on balance and in principle, acceptable.

5.5 Density and Layout

- 5.5.1 Policy DC2 seeks to guide a higher density of development to those parts of the Borough having good access to public transport. In this instance, the application site falls within the Romford PTAL zones where higher densities are anticipated, within the range of 240-435 units per hectare for predominantly flatted development. In this case the density would provide approximately 100 units per hectare based upon the site area of the building. The proposed density of development would be below the recommended range however it is recognised that this proposal relates to a conversion rather than a new build, therefore achieving the anticipated range would be difficult.
- 5.5.2 Policy DC4 advises that planning permission will only be granted for proposals involving conversions to residential provided the certain criteria are satisfied. These criteria state that proposals should provide adequate parking, not result in a conflict with adjoining uses, not result in an unacceptable loss of privacy, provide adequate amenity space and ensure that the living rooms of new units do not abut the bedrooms of adjoining dwellings. Furthermore where the conversion involves the provision of self contained residential accommodation each flat should have a reasonable outlook and aspect and secure access from the street.
- 5.5.3 The layout of this proposal makes use of the existing urban fabric in being a conversion of part of the building. The proposed flats are considered to be adequately sized and are self-contained. In terms of internal layout, the relationship between each of the proposed flats and their stacking is considered to be acceptable. The bedrooms of the proposed flats would be located at the rear with an outlook over Atlanta Boulevard with the proposed lounge sited at the front of the building onto South Street. The upper floors of the adjoining building at no. 140 South Street are presently in residential use (permission for their conversion from office was granted in 2004). The proposal would result in an acceptable relationship with the adjacent units. The attractiveness of these units as living accommodation would essentially be a matter of choice for a prospective purchaser. However, staff are of the view that each of the units would have an acceptable aspect and outlook.
- 5.5.4 Members will be aware that the Council has adopted a Supplementary Planning Document for Residential Design. This document does not specifically refer to the need to provide amenity space within a development of the nature proposed. Members will be aware that in recent years, following Government guidance, the Council has approved a number of residential schemes within the town centre with limited or no amenity space provision. The application site is located in an area which is characterised by predominantly commercial uses where residential uses on upper floors are usually provided without any amenity space. Staff are of the view that the absence of amenity space is acceptable in this instance and is not considered to be a reasonable ground for withholding planning permission.

5.6 Design/Impact on Street scene

- 5.6.1 The proposed conversion would not result in any material change in the building's appearance and therefore no concerns are raised with regards to the impact on the street scene.

5.7 Impact on Amenity

- 5.7.1 The adjoining buildings within the terrace predominantly have retail or service uses at ground floor with either office or residential uses on the upper floors. The upper floors of the adjoining building at no. 140 South Street are presently in residential use. The upper floors of the adjoining building at no. 144 South Street are presently in office use. Given that the offices are closed at night it is not considered that they would disturb occupiers of the proposed flats. Nevertheless a sound proofing condition is recommended to ensure that amenity is safeguarded. Similarly, users of the office accommodation would not be materially affected by the proposed residential use. The relationship of flats adjacent to existing office premises has previously been accepted elsewhere within the parade at no. 142 in 2006 (reference P0375.06).

- 5.7.2 Opposite the site and further along South Street are a number of late night uses including numerous public houses. The site is located within Romford town centre, where a certain amount of late night activity is to be expected and it is considered that prospective occupiers would take this into account before deciding whether to occupy a flat in this location. The proposal should however ensure that there is adequate noise insulation between the properties as well as insulation from external noise. This could be controlled by way of condition in the event that Members are minded to grant planning permission.

5.8 Highway/Parking Implications

- 5.8.1 The site lies within the Romford PTAL zone and in accordance with guidance in PPG13, the London Plan and in Policy DC2 staff consider it would be acceptable for no parking provision to be made for the proposed flats. Parking in South Street and other roads in the town centre is prohibited by way of a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) and as such it is unlikely that the proposal would contribute to on street traffic congestion. However, Policy DC2 requires that the applicant enter into a S106 planning obligation to prevent future occupiers applying for resident parking permits where no car schemes are considered appropriate. This obligation would prevent future occupiers of the residential units from purchasing parking permits in the vicinity of the development. The applicants have agreed to enter into such an agreement.

5.9 Other Matters

- 5.9.1 No details have been submitted to demonstrate how the handling of waste and recycling would be managed for the proposed residential units.

Sufficient space exists however for refuse bins to be stored in the rear yard area of the site with collections taking place from the highway within Atlanta Boulevard. A condition is therefore recommended to ensure that the waste generated by the proposed users would be appropriately managed and disposed of.

5.9.2 Policy DC63 requires new development to address safety and security in the design of new development. The proposal is considered acceptable in principle in this respect, subject to the imposition of the condition requested by the Borough Crime Prevention Design Advisor.

6. Conclusion:

6.1 Staff consider that the proposed conversion of the upper floors of building to residential use is acceptable and is supported in principle by the Romford Area Action Plan and relevant Government guidance. Staff are of the view that subject to the conditions indicated in the report, an acceptable living environment would be created for those wishing to live in the centre of Romford. There would be no provision for parking or amenity space and there is no scope to provide either. Nonetheless, the proposal is entirely acceptable in policy terms given the town centre location. It is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted subject a legal agreement and conditions.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

None.

Legal implications and risks:

Legal resources will be required for the drafting of a legal agreement.

Human Resources implications and risks:

None.

Equalities implications and risks:

The Council's planning policies are implemented with regard to Equalities and Diversity.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Application form, plans and supporting statements received on 13th September 2011.