



**REGULATORY  
SERVICES  
COMMITTEE**

**REPORT**

15 March 2012

**Subject Heading:**

**P1914.11 – 64 South Street, Romford**

**Alteration of existing buildings including removal of front canopy, replacement shop fronts and full restoration of front elevation. Extension of existing building to the rear at first floor up to four storeys in height to produce 9 no. 1 and 2 bedroom flats and 4 self-contained office units. (application received 9<sup>th</sup> January 2012).**

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**Policy context:**

**Local development Framework**

**Financial summary:**

**None**

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

Ensuring a clean, safe and green borough	[X]
Championing education and learning for all	[ ]
Providing economic, social and cultural activity in thriving towns and villages	[ ]
Valuing and enhancing the lives of our residents	[X]
Delivering high customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	[ ]

## SUMMARY

This application seeks permission for the alteration of existing buildings including removal of front canopy, replacement shop fronts and full restoration of front elevation. Extension of existing building to the rear at first floor up to four storeys in height to produce 9 no. 1 and 2 bedroom flats and 4 self-contained office units.

## 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:

- The prevention of any future occupants of the development, save for blue badge holders, from applying for residents parking permits within any current or future Controlled Parking Zone or other such measure affecting the locality of the application site.
- That the developer/owner or party entering into the planning agreement bear the Council's legal fees in respect of the Section 106 agreement irrespective of whether or not the agreement is completed.

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 Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

3. Materials: Before any of the development hereby permitted is commenced, samples of all materials to be used in the external construction of the building(s) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter the development shall be constructed with the approved materials.

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. Landscaping: No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of for the treatment of the first floor courtyard, which shall include details of screening to the terraces of units 6 and 7 and thereafter the development shall be constructed with the approved materials.

Reason:

In accordance with Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to enhance the visual amenities of the development, and that the development accords with the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61

5. Hours of construction: No construction works or construction related deliveries into the site shall take place other than between the hours of 08.00 to 18.00 on Monday to Friday and 08.00 to 13.00 hours on Saturdays unless agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority. No construction works or construction related deliveries shall take place on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:-

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

6. Construction methodology: Before development is commenced, a scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority making provision for a Construction Method Statement to control the adverse impact of the development on the amenity of the public and nearby occupiers. The Construction Method statement shall include details of:

- a) parking of vehicles of site personnel and visitors;

- b) storage of plant and materials;
- c) dust management controls;
- d) measures for minimising the impact of noise and ,if appropriate, vibration arising from construction activities;
- e) predicted noise and, if appropriate, vibration levels for construction using methodologies and at points agreed with the Local Planning Authority;
- f) scheme for monitoring noise and if appropriate, vibration levels using methodologies and at points agreed with the Local Planning Authorities;
- g) siting and design of temporary buildings;
- h) scheme for security fencing/hoardings, depicting a readily visible 24-hour contact number for queries or emergencies;
- i) details of disposal of waste arising from the construction programme, including final disposal points. The burning of waste on the site at any time is specifically precluded.

And the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme and statement.

Reason:-

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

7. Land contamination: Prior to the commencement of any works pursuant to this permission the developer shall submit for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority;

a) A Phase I (Desktop Study) Report documenting the history of this site, its surrounding area and the likelihood of contaminant/s, their type and extent incorporating a Site Conceptual Model.

b) A Phase II (Site Investigation) Report if the Phase I Report confirms the possibility of a significant risk to any sensitive receptors. This is an intrusive site investigation including factors such as chemical testing, quantitative risk assessment and a description of the sites ground conditions. An updated Site Conceptual Model should be included showing all the potential pollutant linkages and an assessment of risk to identified receptors.

c) A Phase III (Risk Management Strategy) Report if the Phase II Report confirms the presence of a significant pollutant linkage requiring remediation. The report will comprise of two parts:

Part A - Remediation Statement which will be fully implemented before it is first occupied. Any variation to the scheme shall be agreed in writing to the Local Planning Authority in advance of works being undertaken. The Remediation Scheme is to include consideration and proposals to deal with situations where, during works on site, contamination is encountered which has not previously been identified. Any further contamination shall be fully

assessed and an appropriate remediation scheme submitted to the Local Planning Authority for written approval.

Part B - Following completion of the remediation works a "Validation Report" must be submitted demonstrating that the works have been carried out satisfactorily and remediation targets have been achieved.

d) If during development works any contamination should be encountered which was not previously identified and is derived from a different source and/or of a different type to those included in the contamination proposals then revised contamination proposals shall be submitted to the LPA ; and

e) If during development work, site contaminants are found in areas previously expected to be clean, then their remediation shall be carried out in line with the agreed contamination proposals.

For further guidance see the leaflet titled, "Land Contamination and the Planning Process".

Reason:

To protect those engaged in construction and occupation of the development from potential contamination.

8. Secured by Design: Prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a full and detailed application for the Secured by Design scheme shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority, setting out how the principles and practices of the aforementioned 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 residential amenity and creating safer, sustainable communities, reflecting guidance set out in PPS1, Policy 4B.6 of the London Plan, and Policies CP17 and DC63 of the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

9. Refuse management plan: Prior to the commencement of works, a refuse and recycling management plan shall be submitted and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out with the approved management plan.

Reason:

In the interests of amenity of occupiers of the development and also the visual amenity of the development and the locality generally, and in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61

10. Use class: Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) the use of the two ground floor retail units hereby permitted shall be for retail (Class A1) and the first and second floor space hereby permitted shall be used for office accommodation (Class B1(a)) only and shall be used for no other purpose(s) whatsoever, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

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.

11. Hours of use: The two retail units at ground floor shall not be used for the purposes hereby permitted other than between the hours of 08:30 and 19:00 on Mondays to Sundays and the first floor office units between 09:00 and 19:00 on Mondays to Saturdays and between 10:00 and 18:00 on Sundays without the prior consent in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:-

To enable the Local Planning Authority to retain control in the interests of amenity, and in order that the development accords with Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

12. 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, in order that the development accords with Interim Planning Guidance.

Reason: In the interests of providing a wide range of facilities for non-motor car residents, in the interests of sustainability.

13. Piling method statement: No impact piling shall take place until a piling method statement (detailing the type of piling to be undertaken and the methodology by which such piling will be carried out, including measures to prevent and minimise the potential for damage to subsurface water or sewerage infrastructure, and the programme for the works) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the relevant water or sewerage undertaker. Any piling must be undertaken in accordance with the terms of the approved method statement.

Reason: The proposed works will be in close proximity to the underground water and sewerage utility infrastructure. Piling has the potential to impact

on local underground water and sewerage utility infrastructure. The applicant is advised to contact Thames Water Development Services on 0845 850 2777 to discuss the details of the piling method statement.

## **INFORMATIVES**

### **1. Reason for approval:**

The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the aims, objectives and provisions of Policies DC2, DC33, DC30, DC32, DC33, DC36, DC53, DC55, DC61, DC63 of the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document.

Note: Following a change in government legislation a fee is now required when submitting details pursuant to the discharge of conditions, in order to comply with the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications and Deemed Applications) (Amendment) (England) Regulations, which came into force from 06.04.2008. A fee of £85 per request (or £25 where the related permission was for extending or altering a dwellinghouse) is needed.

### **2. Planning Obligations**

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.

### **3. In aiming to satisfy condition 8 the applicant should seek the advice of the Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor (CPDA). He can be contacted through the London Borough of Havering Development and Building control 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 discharging of community safety condition(s)**

### **4. With regards to surface water drainage it is the responsibility of the developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, water courses or a suitable sewer. In respect of surface water it is recommended that the applicant should ensure that storm flows are attenuated or regulated into the receiving public network through on or off site storage. When it is proposed to connect to a combined public sewer, the site drainage should be separate and combined at the final manhole nearest the boundary. Connections are not permitted for the removal of Ground Water. Where the developer proposes to discharge to a public sewer, prior approval from Thames Water**

Developer Services will be required. They can be contacted on 0845 850 2777.

5. The applicant is advised that there are public sewers crossing the site. In order to protect public sewers and to ensure that Thames Water can gain access to those sewers for future repair and maintenance, approval must be sought from Thames Water where the erection of a building or an extension to a building or underpinning work would be over the line of, or would come within 3 metres of a public sewer. Thames Water Developer Services can be contacted on 0845 850 2777 to discuss the options available at this site.
5. Where a developer proposes to discharge groundwater into a public sewer, a groundwater discharge permit will be required. Ground water discharges typically result from construction site dewatering, deep excavations, basement infiltration, borehole installation, testing and site remediation. Ground water permit enquiries should be directed to Thames Water's Risk Management Team by telephoning 020 8507 4890 or by emailing [wwriskmanagement@thameswater.co.uk](mailto:wwriskmanagement@thameswater.co.uk). Application forms should be completed on-line via [www.thameswater.co.uk/wastewaterquality](http://www.thameswater.co.uk/wastewaterquality). Any discharge made without a permit is deemed illegal and may result in prosecution under the provisions of the water Industry Act 1991.
6. 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 and Engineering on 01708 433750 to commence the Submission / Licence Approval process.
7. The developer, their representatives and contractors are advised that planning permission 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.
8. The applicant 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.

## REPORT DETAIL

### 1. Site Description

- 1.1 No. 64 South Street is a locally listed building situated within Romford town centre. Whilst outside the boundary of the conservation area, the building is



considered to make a positive contribution to the street scene. The property was originally the Romford Post Office, built in 1902, in red brick with stone dressings to the windows and doors, and two prominent decorative stone gables which display King George V's monogram just below the parapet level.

- 1.2 The site lies within Romford Town centre and is currently used as a bar/restaurant with ancillary office and storage space within use classes. The building has been altered from its original construction by the addition of a projecting front canopy with signage, replacement timber shop fronts, and demolition of an original entrance porch.
- 1.3 The wider locality is predominantly commercial in character, with the Liberty Shopping Centre opposite the site and the Brewery development to the rear. There are residential units above commercial spaces in South Street; these are accessed from the rear in Exchange Street.

## **2. Description of proposal**

- 2.1 Full planning permission is sought for the restoration and refurbishment of the front elevation. A fourth floor roof extension would be constructed over the roof office building measuring 2.5m high, 6.2m deep and 14.8m wide. The original building would be converted to provide 2 retail units at ground floor with 7 residential units above.
- 2.2 Further extensions to the rear of the building include the provision of a central courtyard over which there would be single and two storey (total three storey) accommodation to provide four office units and two residential maisonettes.
- 2.2 The front facade of the building would be restored and repaired and includes the following works: removal of the existing projecting canopy onto South Street. Replacement shop fronts. Replacement timber sash windows, repair and make good of the existing stone facade and brickwork. Repair of roof and installation of conservation roof lights.
- 2.3 There would be a glass box side extension facing South Street, in place of the existing extended shop front, this serves as access to the residential units and office accommodation on the upper levels.
- 2.4 The building would be arranged as follows:

Ground floor: two A1 retail units measuring 435 square metres and 420 square metres respectively. These have access onto South Street and are serviced from Exchange Street. The site has authorised use for A1/A3 purposes, so the provision of the two a1 units does not require planning permission. To the south is an extension giving access for the upper floors via a staircase and lift and additionally provides an area for refuse storage. This is arranged independently from the two retail units. The site on the upper floors is arranged as follows:

First floor: The stairs and lift from the ground floor extension open onto a first floor courtyard. This is landscaped and has two small office units measuring 30 square metres; these are positioned against the northern boundary. To the rear of the courtyard against the western boundary are two larger office units measuring 274 square metres and 166 square metres respectively. To the southern boundary within the courtyard are the lower level of two residential maisonettes. To the eastern boundary of the courtyard are a set of stairs rising one half level to a raised deck, this gives access to 1 no. 2 bedroom flat and 2 no. 2 bedroom flats, these are located within the original post office building and have an outlook over South Street and raised view over the courtyard. Cycle storage provision is made by the raised deck that serves unit 1-3.

Second floor: At second floor are the upper levels of the maisonette units and larger rear office units within the courtyard and provision of 2 no. 2 bedroom flats within the original post office building. These are accessed from an external walkway over the raised podium of the first floor and share the same access staircase and lift. Both flats have a private terrace set behind the parapet wall of the post office building.

Third floor: In an extension over the post office building to create a fourth level of accommodation, there are a further 2 no. 1 bedroom flats. These are accessed from a third floor level external walkway accessed from the staircase and lift that serve the whole development. Both of these flats have provision for an east facing roof terrace these are set behind the pitched roof of the post office building.

### **3. Relevant History**

3.1 P1407.97 – change of use to a Brannigans live entertainment venue together with additional building at first floor – approved.

P0083.99 – variation of condition 2 of planning permission P1407.97. 0800-0130 Monday to Saturday and 0800-2300 Sundays – approved.

P0762.00 – Variation of condition 2 of planning permission P1407.97 to permit permanent extension of opening hours to 0800-0130 Monday to Saturday and 0800-2300 Sundays – approved.

P1364.10 – Variation of condition 1 of P0762.00 for the permanent extension of opening hours 0800 to 0320 (the following morning) on Fridays and Saturdays, and 0800 to 0220 on all other days – approved.

P0640.11 – Alterations to shop front and variation of condition 1 of P0762.00 to extend opening hours from 0800-0320 Friday and Saturday and 0800-0220 all other days, to 0800-0430 Thursday to Saturday and 0800-0330 Sunday to Wednesday – refused.

P0036.12 – Part change of use to A5 – currently under consideration.

#### **4. Consultations/Representations**

- 4.1 Neighbour notification letters were sent to 31 properties. No representations have been received.
- 4.2 The Highways Authority have no objections but require a restriction of future occupants to apply for parking permits and a financial contribution of £13,000 for street improvement works, please see paragraph 5.8.7 of this report.
- 4.3 The Council's Heritage Officer recommends approval of the application.
- 4.4 Environmental Health require the submission of a land contamination report.

#### **5. Staff Comments**

- 5.1 The issues for consideration in this case are the principle of development, density, layout, design and restoration of the locally listed building, impact upon residential amenity, highway and parking.
- 5.2 PPS1, PPS3 and Policies DC2, DC3, DC32, DC33, DC36, DC53, DC55, DC57, DC58, DC59, DC60, DC61, DC72 of the LDF Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD are considered relevant.
- 5.3 Policies ROM10, ROM14, ROM15, ROM20 of the Romford Area Action Plan are relevant.
- 5.4 The adopted Residential Design and Heritage SPD are also considered relevant.
- 5.5 London Plan Policies 3.3, 3.4 3.5, 3.8, 3.9, 6.13, 7.3, 7.4, 7.6 and 7.8 are also considered relevant.
- 5.6 Principle of Development
  - 5.6.1 The development proposes a mixture of commercial and residential accommodation. The site lies within Romford Town Centre, where ROM14 of the Romford Area Action Plan acknowledges a general presumption in favour of housing provision within the town centre.
  - 5.6.2 ROM15 states that there is a need within the urban part of the Romford PTAL zone for development to include family accommodation incorporating two or more bedrooms, or provision of family accommodation at ground floor level with enclosed private amenity space within a flat or maisonette development.

- 5.6.3 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. PPS3 encourages high quality residential development with access to a good range of facilities. Re-use of previously developed land is also encouraged.
- 5.6.4 Policy CP1 indicated that, due to high levels of housing need, it is important to meet the needs for new housing and gives a target for a minimum of 535 homes to be built per year. Policy 3.3 of the London Plan indicates that Havering should have a minimum 10 year target of an additional 9700 new homes (or 970 per year) to be built on sites which are not designated for other purposes.
- 5.6.5 The principle of residential development on this site is therefore considered acceptable.
- 5.6.6 Commercial space would be retained at ground floor, this has been confirmed by the applicant that it would be in A1 usage. The site currently has an authorised use of A1/A3. The current layout of the facility is not appealing to current retailers, and it is proposed to reconfigure the ground floor to provide two conventionally shaped retail units which should be more attractive to prospective retailers. Staff consider that this is in line with ROM10 which promotes larger, high quality retail units within South Street.

## 5.7 Density and Layout

- 5.7.1 The site is located within a high ranked Public Transport Accessibility Zone (PTAL 5-6). Within this zone, Policy DC2 refers to housing density of between 240-435 dwellings per hectare. The site has an area of 0.1 hectares and the proposal for 7 residential units would have a density of 70 dwellings per hectare. This is significantly below that of the stated range, however, density is not the only measure of acceptability and given the constraints of the site, Staff are considered that a density of 70 dph is acceptable in this instance.
- 5.7.2 Policy 3.8 of the London Plan states that DPD policies should offer a range of housing choices, in terms of the mix of housing sizes and types, taking account of the housing requirements of different groups. Policy DC2 also recommends a mix of housing types. In this instance, a mixture of 1 and 2 bedroom flats are proposed. This is considered to apply with the aims of Policy DC2 and 3.8 of the London Plan in respect of dwelling mix.
- 5.7.3 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 seeks that new residential development conforms to minimum internal space standards set out in the plan. Table 3.3 states provides the following standards for flats: 1 bed, 2 person units, 50 square metres. 2 bed, 3 person units, 61 square metres

and for 2 bed, 4 person units 70 square metres, for 3 bed 4 person units 74 square metres and 3 bed, 5 person dwellings 86 square metres.

- 5.7.4 The proposed 1 bed units have an internal floor area of between 50.5 square metres and 61 square metres. The 2 bed units have a floor area of between 75 square metres to 80 square metres. The maisonette units are shown with 2 bedrooms and a study/ third bedroom. These have a floor area each of 100 square metres. These are all in accordance with the London Plan standards and are therefore acceptable.
- 5.7.5 In respect of amenity space provision, the Council's Residential Design SPD recommends that every home should have access to suitable private and/or communal amenity space in the form of private gardens, communal gardens, courtyards, patios, balconies or roof terraces. In designing high quality amenity space, consideration should be given to privacy, outlook, sunlight, trees and planting, materials (including paving), lighting and boundary treatment. There are no space standards for amenity space, however, all dwellings should have access to amenity space that is not overlooked from the public realm and this space should provide adequate space for day to day uses.
- 5.7.6 A communal courtyard is provide at first floor, this would be landscaped and measure 133 square metres. This courtyard would be set above the main ground floor activity in South Street and screened from surrounding uses. Staff consider that this would provide a secluded high quality communal amenity area. Although it would be shared with the office units and therefore not completely private.
- 5.7.7 Units 1, 2 and 3 on the raised first floor would have no private amenity area, although they would have access to the communal courtyard. Staff recognise that while there is no scope for any provision of private amenity space this is a town centre location, where potential occupants may not need nor want amenity space and would be aware of this layout prior to occupation. The two maisonettes (unit 6-7) each have a secure terrace area on the first floor, this measures 9.8 square metres and 10.5 square metres respectively.
- 5.7.8 Units 4 and 5 on the second floor have private balconies measuring 5.77 square metres and 5.25 square metres. Unit 6 and 7 have a second floor balcony measuring 5 square metres each. In addition to their lower floor terraces, unit 6 has 14.8 square metres of amenity space and unit 7, 15.5 square metres. Units 8 and 9 on the third floor roof extension each have a terrace measuring 12.7 square metres and 9.6 square metres respectively.
- 5.7.9 In terms of layout policy DC4 states that subdivided or converted residential units should have a safe secure access form the street and decent outlook and aspect. The residential units are accessed from South Street via a new glazed extension which would infill the gap currently taken up by the extended club shop front between the original post office building and adjacent building. This is considered to be a safe and secure access.

5.7.10 The policy further states that living rooms should not abut the bedrooms of adjoining units. The layout here is acceptable in this regard.

## 5.8 Design

5.8.1 The development is formed from three key principles; the first is the restoration of the locally listed South Street facade, the second is the development of a shared internal courtyard and third, the improvement of the rear elevation facing Exchange Street. Each of these are discussed in turn.

### Restoration of locally listed South Street facade:

5.8.2 ROM20 of the Romford Area Action Plan states that high quality design-led development will be required. The proposals here include the restoration of the locally listed facade of the former post office. This includes the removal of the projecting canopy and existing shop front; Replacing all existing unoriginal windows with timber sashes; Cleaning and repair of the stone work and brickwork; Installation of conservation style roof lights into the grey slate roof and general repair of the building.

5.8.3 This is a highly prominent building in the streetscene and which at present is characterised by unsympathetic alterations. The proposals to renovate and conserve the building facade is welcomed by Staff as this would make a significant positive contribution to the character and appearance of South Street. It would also revitalise a historically important building, worthy of preservation.

5.8.4 Historic photographs reveal that the ground floor was originally arranged with tall slender windows with ornate stone portico. Unfortunately, none of these original details survive. The existing heavy timber shop fronts have a dated appearance and detract from the original proportions of the building. It is proposed to replace these with large glazed frontages within slim powder coated aluminium frames. This would provide the contemporary appearance of a modern town centre retail unit. A stone frame would be installed around the edge of the shop fronts to match the existing stone work. These works, whilst contemporary in nature are considered to be of a high quality which restore the elegant proportions of the building.

5.8.5 Staff consider that these materials proposed are acceptable, however, samples are requested via condition. Also requested via condition is a method statement for the works to the front of the building as it is currently unclear how much repair work is required or what damage to the building has been caused with the installation of the canopy and existing shop fronts.

5.8.6 The removal of the existing shop fronts would include the extension which infills the gap between main building and No. 66 South Street. This would be replaced with a glass fronted extension which would serve as the residential entrance. This has a highly contemporary appearance and it would also allow for the original flank elevations of the post office building to remain

visible. This is recessed by a couple of brick courses from the main shop fronts so that it appears a subordinate feature to the building. The contemporary appearance and use of glass would also complement the stone work and glazing within the restored post office building and provide a positive contribution to the appearance of South Street.

- 5.8.7 In public realm terms, Staff consider that the restoration of the building would make a significant improvement to the general appearance of the streetscene and serve as a catalyst for regeneration for improvement works in South Street. Representations received from the Highways Authority request a financial contribution of £13,000 for street improvements. This funding would not be used to improve the road network, but be used for pedestrian improvement in South Street i.e. through new seating or paving. Separate discussions with the Council's Regeneration Service have not resulted in the request of any financial contribution as the restoration and repair to the building is considered to be of a higher value than additional street works, of which there is existing improvements in South Street currently taking place. Staff consider that a financial contribution of £13,000 may compromise the viability of the scheme which in turn could result in a less successful restoration of the building. It is on this basis that the contribution is not sought.

#### Courtyard

- 5.8.8 The existing site behind the post office building is filled with a large pitched roof that was added as an extension some years ago. This covers the bar and dance floor areas and is not an original feature, it is also visible across roof tops in Exchange Street and appears to be in a poor condition needing repair. It is proposed to remove this large area of pitched roof to create a first floor open courtyard. This would not be visible from either South Street or Exchange Street. The courtyard is shown indicatively as being heavily landscaped, similar to a roof garden. This would provide screening for the maisonettes and an area of tranquillity and green space in a busy town centre.
- 5.8.9 The courtyard would be developed with the creation of two small office units on the northern boundary. These are arranged on a single level and are accessed from the courtyard. These are arranged with a monopitch roof with roof lights and are shown as being clad in timber on the elevations. To the southern boundary of the courtyard, two maisonettes would be created. They would be faced in timber with large area of glazing and projecting glazed balconies and finished with monopitch roofs. These would be partially visible from Exchange Street, but not from South Street. To the rear of the first floor courtyard are two larger office units, these are clad in timber on the internal courtyard facing elevation and feature large panels of glazing. The eastern edge of the courtyard that forms the rear of the post office building would be dominated by the external staircase which wraps around the lift shaft, off which horizontal glazed decks protrude from the elevation. These face into the courtyard and would be visible from surrounding view points on Exchange Street.

- 5.8.10 As described, all elevations facing the courtyard are shown as being clad in timber with large elements of glazing. The areas of timber are punctuated with cladding which breaks up the elevation. This represents a change in style from the traditional facade. These courtyard facing elevations would not be visible from public view points. Staff consider that they are of a high quality contemporary appearance. The timber cladding is also likely to remain in good condition as it would be protected unlike a traditional exposed timber clad facade.
- 5.8.11 Staff consider that the design is of an exemplar quality and of a workable layout, although a condition is requested for all materials and a scheme for the landscape treatment of the courtyard.

#### Exchange Street Improvements

- 5.8.12 Turning to the rear of the site, the existing site is present with a collection of extensions and alterations to the building which have an untidy appearance. This is typical of buildings in Exchange Street which have been developed over time. The proposals to construct two storey office units here above the ground floor retail accommodation would result in a three storey block facing Exchange Street. This is considered acceptable, where the building heights facing this side of South Street range from 1-3 storey and opposite lies the much taller Brewery development. The highway facing elevations of these two units are to be clad in facing brick, punctuated by glazing. The second floor of this accommodation is set back from the highway by 7.5m -8.6m depending on the point of measurement, although the projecting staircase reduces this to a minimum of 4m. This recessed third floor reduces the overall massing of the building when viewed from Exchange Street. The alterations here would improve the quality and appearance of this section of Exchange Street which is readily visible from the pedestrian link between the Brewery and South Street adjacent to the Starbucks and contribute towards the ongoing improvement of this link.

#### 5.9 Impact on Amenity

- 5.9.1 The existing premises has an authorised use for a bar until 03:20am on Fridays and Saturdays and until 02:20am all other nights. Staff note that the existing facility raises concern from the Metropolitan Police and Community Safety unit, who have issued 7 day closure notices on the site (under Section 19 of the Criminal Justice and Police act 2001). Representations received from the Council's Crime Prevention Design Advisor state that the site is located with the Romford Town Ward which suffers from significantly higher rates of all types of crime (burglary, criminal damage, drug offences, robbery, theft and handling and violence) than is average for the borough. Crime levels are also generally localised to the South Street Area which has the boroughs highest provision of late night establishments.
- 5.9.2 It is considered that the removal of this facility to provide retail accommodation with a mixture of residential and office accommodation above would remove the existing problems which the site creates in terms of



community safety and help towards reducing the existing concentration of late night establishments in South Street.

- 5.9.3 It is not considered that the closure of this facility would lead to an adverse impact upon the night time economy of Romford, where there are other numerous restaurants, bars and public houses.
- 5.9.4 There are numerous residential units in close proximity to the application site. Staff consider that the removal of the existing authorised late night use would result in an improvement of residential amenity.
- 5.9.5 The site would have a mixed use, incorporating retail at ground floor, residential on the first to third floors and office units on the first and second floors. The site has been arranged with the residential units located towards the east of the site and the office accommodation towards the west facing Exchange Street, which serves as a servicing and access road for both South Street and the Brewery development. This street regularly has large delivery vehicles parked and air conditioning units and ventilation equipment fronting onto it and as such has high ambient noise levels. The provision of the residential units away from this frontage is considered acceptable. The construction of the office units here would also buffer noise from Exchange Street.
- 5.9.6 Given this is a town centre location, ambient noise levels will naturally be higher than other locations, although staff consider that the screened first floor courtyard would provide an area of relative seclusion and quiet away from the activity from surrounding uses.
- 5.9.7 With regard to the mixture of uses within the site, the proposals are for A1 retail at ground floor, with the introduction of residential above, Staff consider that a condition be attracted which restricts the use class from any change. The office units are relatively small scale, and although it is unknown how many people would utilise these it is not considered that this would be so significant that it would adversely compromise the amenity of the residential occupiers. It is also recommended that their use class is restricted, so that the Council has control over any future changes.
- 5.9.8 In terms of the hours of use, the applicant has not indicated hours for either the retail use or the office hours. Staff consider that hours of between 08:30 and 19:00 for both retail units 7 days a week and between 09:00 and 19:00 Monday to Saturdays and between 10:00 and 18:00 on Sundays for the first floor office units.
- 5.9.9 With regard to overlooking and privacy. The maisonette units are arranged with the bedrooms on the lower level of the courtyard with kitchen and living rooms above. The bedrooms are screened with a private terrace and landscaped boundary beyond. This arrangement is considered acceptable and would provide adequate privacy for future occupants. The upper level of these maisonette units face north and would have views over Exchange Street, which has several rear accesses to residential units in South Street.

There would be no direct overlooking of other properties in this instance and this raises no objection from Staff.

5.9.10 The bedroom window of unit 1 overlooks the courtyard and is the sole source of light for this room. This unit is raised above the courtyard over the raised deck which stems from the staircase, and Staff consider this to be an acceptable relationship which affords good levels of privacy.

5.9.11 Office unit 1 is located adjacent to the bedroom of unit 1. This residential unit is located at a higher level. Staff do not consider that this would result in a loss of amenity given the ability to control hours of use of the office and insertion of insulation into the dividing wall. It is noted that there is an element of buyer beware with this unit, as one would be aware of its layout prior to occupation.

#### 5.10 Highway/Parking

5.10.1 The site has a PTAL level of 5-6 in a urban setting, where in this locality a parking level of less than 1 space per unit should be provided. This is echoed in the London Plan, where Policy 6.13 encourages parking of less than 1 space per unit for flatted developments. The development proposed would provide no off street parking for either the residential or office accommodation.

5.10.2 Staff consider that a car free scheme would be acceptable in this location, provided the ability to apply for parking permits is removed, with the exception of blue badge holders. This is to be secured by a legal agreement.

5.10.3 The 4 office units also make no provision for car parking. There would be a total of 500 square metres of office space. Current parking standards, as set within DC33, state that a B1 site requires 1 parking space per 100 square metres of gross floor space, which equates to a parking requirement of 5 parking spaces. This policy makes no differentiation between the urban town centres and rest of the borough, where parking demand will vary significantly.

5.10.4 On street car parking is controlled in this location and across the town centre, and it is considered that there would be no significant additional demand for on street parking given the level of surrounding provision available, which is listed below.

Liberty Centre – 850 spaces

The Mall – 996 spaces

Brewery multi storey and surface – 1406 combined spaces

Angel Way – 500 spaces

Town Hall – 61 spaces

## 5.11 Other issues

5.11.1 Representations received from the Crime Prevention Design Advisor state. A Secured by design condition has been attached accordingly as requested by the CPDA.

5.11.2 Cycle storage provision has been made within the first floor courtyard. This is indicatively shown as being in a timber structure which is located adjacent to the raised deck that serves units 1-3. Cycles would need to be brought to the first floor using the stairs or lift, there is no provision nor scope for future provision at ground floor for cycle storage. Staff consider the arrangement to be acceptable, but require further details by condition.

## 5.12 Refuse and recycling

5.12.1 The retail units and office units would be serviced from exchange Street. This raises no objection, as this is a servicing road which serves adjacent units in South Street and the Brewery development opposite.

5.12.2 The residential units are allocated an area for refuse and recycling storage at ground floor. This is located behind the entrance and entry staircase/ lift. Comments received from the Council's StreetCare team have raised concern over the access arrangement due to the tourist information centre which is being erected in South Street. Whilst this is being erected, access still remains in South Street, although is currently blocked due to the repaving of the street. Staff recommend that a condition is attached which requires detail of a refuse management plan.

## 6. Conclusions

6.1.1 In conclusion, Staff consider the proposals to be acceptable, as they would involve the preservation of a highly prominent locally listed building within the town centre. The layout and development of the central courtyard is innovative and high quality. The rear extensions facing Exchange Street would improve this elevation which historically has had an untidy, poorly maintained appearance.

6.1.2 The mixture of uses within the site is acceptable for this town centre location, although it is recommended that their uses be conditioned with hours of use accordingly.

6.1.2 Staff are satisfied with a car free scheme, subject to the restriction of parking permits for the residential units.

## **IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

### **Financial implications and risks:**

Planning and other agreements will need to be prepared.

**Legal implications and risks:**

Legal resources will be required in drafting the Section 106 agreement.

**Human Resources implications and risks:** None

**Equalities implications and risks:**

The Council's planning policies are implemented with regard to Equalities and Diversity. The proposals would provide a mixture of residential units contribute towards the aims of mixed communities and uses within the town centre.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Application forms, site plan, received 9<sup>th</sup> January 2012.