



# REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE

19 July 2012

# REPORT

**Subject Heading:**

P0452.12 – Levelling out to provide car park with new vehicular access from Hilldene Avenue – Abercrombie House, Harold Hill (received 10th April 2012; revised plans received 1<sup>st</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> June 2012 and additional plans received 14<sup>th</sup> June 2012)

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**Policy context:**

Local Development Framework  
The London Plan  
National Planning Policy Framework

**Financial summary:**

None

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

- Clean, safe and green borough
- Excellence in education and learning
- Opportunities for all through economic, social and cultural activity
- Value and enhance the life of every individual
- High customer satisfaction and a stable council tax

## SUMMARY

This report concerns an application for the levelling out of the site fronting onto Hilldene Avenue to provided a new car parking area together with a new vehicular

access onto Hilldene Avenue. The site is Council-owned. Staff consider that the proposal would accord with residential, environmental and highways policies contained in the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Documents and approval is therefore recommended.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:

1. **SC04 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 Act 1990.

2. **SC06 parking provision:** Before the building(s) hereby permitted is first occupied, the area set aside for car parking shall be laid out and surfaced to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority and retained permanently thereafter for the accommodation of vehicles visiting the site and shall not be used for any other purpose.

**Reason:** To ensure that car parking accommodation is made permanently available to the standards adopted by the Local Planning Authority in the interest of highway safety.

3. **materials:** Before any of the development hereby permitted is commenced, samples of all external materials to be used in the construction of the car parking area including hard surfacing, retaining wall, railings and colour application for the palisade fencing 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.

4. **landscaping:** No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of hard and soft landscaping, which shall include indications of all existing trees and shrubs on the site, and details of any to be retained in the course of development. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised within the scheme shall be carried out in the first planting season following completion of the development and any trees, hedging to be retained or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the

development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** In accordance with Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to enhance the visual amenities of the development.

5. 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.

**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.

6. SC58 refuse storage: Prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted, provision shall be made for the storage of refuse awaiting collection according to details which shall previously have been agreed in writing by the local planning authority. Unless otherwise agreed in writing these details shall include provision for underground containment of recyclable waste.

**Reason:** In the interests of the amenity of occupiers of the development and also the visual amenity of the development and the locality generally.

7. SC59 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.

8. NSC01 Prior to works commencing the applicant shall provide full details of all works to relocate the bus shelter, remove street trees and relevant road and pavement markings to the satisfaction of the Highways Authority. Once approved in writing, the said approved works shall be completed prior to first use of the approved parking area.

**Reason:** In the interests of highway safety

## **INFORMATIVES**

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

The proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the aims, objectives and provisions of Policies DC2, DC32, DC33 and DC61 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.

## **REPORT DETAIL**

### **1. Site Description**

- 1.1 The application site comprises a 2-storey building with single-storey sections to the western side of the main building which is centrally located within the site. The application site has a frontage onto Bridgewater Road and onto Hilldene Avenue. Abercrombie House provides accommodation of 33 units for Council tenants with a grassed play area to the south and east of the building. The existing parking area is located to the Bridgewater Road frontage where it is shared with parking for the Youth Centre (16 spaces being allocated to the occupiers of Abercrombie House). There is a bricked/gated pedestrian access to Hilldene Avenue to the south-west of the application site. There are a few trees to the south of the building with a row of conifers to the western boundary and an overgrown Beech hedge to the back edge of the footpath to Hilldene Avenue, behind which is a 2m high close-boarded fence. Ground levels rise to the rear (north) and east of the site. The site area is 517 Sq.m.
- 1.2 The area is mixed in character with 2-storey residential properties to the north (houses) and east (flats and houses) and community buildings including a Library and Youth Centre to the west. To the south is the main shopping centre with commercial to the ground floor and residential above. To the north-west of the application site former development has been cleared in advance of a Harold Hill Ambitions Project which also includes the Library, Youth Centre and the existing car park at Abercrombie House. Directly outside the site to the south is a bus stop and there is also marked pavement parking and a couple of street trees.

## 2. **Description of Proposal**

- 2.1 The proposal is for the levelling out of an area to the south of the building to provide a car park with a new vehicular access from Hilldene Avenue. The proposed vehicular access to the site would replace the existing pedestrian access onto Hilldene Avenue and provide 10 parking spaces - two of which would be of the larger disabled users standard size. Retaining walls would be provided to the ramp down and around the edge of the raised hardstanding area. The maximum height of the proposed parking area from existing ground level would be 0.35m with a retaining wall with a maximum height of 0.46m with railings on top at a height of approximately 0.9m. The proposal would also include a pedestrian emergency access part and gate onto Hilldene Avenue skirting around the eastern side of the proposed parking area.
- 2.2 It is proposed to remove the existing trees within the site and along the western boundary replacing the boundary trees with 1.8m high palisade fencing. The beech hedge along the Hilldene Avenue frontage would be retained, with the exception of where the new pedestrian access exits onto the highway. It is proposed to provide 1.8m high palisade fencing to the rear edge of the Hilldene Avenue and along the boundary with 253/257 Hilldene Avenue alongside the new emergency footpath replacing the existing chain link fencing.

## 3. **History**

- 3.1 None relevant.

## 4. **Consultation/Representations**

- 4.1 92 neighbouring occupiers were notified of the proposal. There were no replies.
- 4.2 The Metropolitan Police Crime Prevention Design Advisor has written to indicate that as security features from part of an on-going project that he raise no issues and that no planning conditions are necessary.
- 4.3 Transport for London have written to advise that there would be no detrimental impact on passenger access to buses stopping here (providing the bus stop is moved as indicated on the plans).

## 5. **Staff Comments:**

- 5.1 The issues in this case are the principle of development, its impact in the streetscene, on residential amenity and parking/highways. As such, Policies DC2, DC33 and DC61 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan are relevant. Also relevant are The London Plan Policies 6.11, 6.13, 7.4 and 7.6 and the NPPF.

### *Principle of development*

- 5.2 The proposal is for the re-provision of an existing car park area to the south of the existing building with a new vehicular access onto Hilldene Avenue. Policy DC32 indicates that development would be acceptable providing it does not result in any highways safety issues which affect the free flow of the road network and Policy DC33 (which also refers to Policy DC2) relate to parking associated with residential development. It is considered that parking is required in connection with the existing development and that the proposal to relocate the existing parking area and provide a new vehicular access would therefore be acceptable in principle, subject to the details also being acceptable.

### *Design/Impact on Streetscene/rear garden environment*

- 5.3 The proposal would involve the levelling out of the application site such that a retaining wall of a maximum height of 0.46m above the existing ground level would be provided together with a vehicle ramp sloping down onto Hilldene Avenue. Railings would be provided on top of the retaining wall to a height of 0.9m. All trees would be removed from the western boundary of the application site and palisade fencing of 1.8m in height would be erected along the flank boundaries and the front boundary to Hilldene Avenue. The palisade fencing to Hilldene Avenue would, unlike existing close boarded fencing, be located closer to the highway such it would be in advance of the existing Beech hedge. The proposed development would open up views of and into the application site nonetheless the car park itself would be limited in height above existing ground level and would be mainly screened by the retained Beech hedge to the Hilldene Avenue frontage. Staff therefore consider that the proposed development would not result in any significant adverse impact on visual amenity in the streetscene in line with Policy DC61, providing the proposed colour application to the palisade fencing is suitably muted and the proposed bin store is screened from direct view.
- 5.4 The car park would be provided to the side of No. 253/257 Hilldene House. A new improved play area would be located to the eastern side of the building to compensate for the loss of the grassed area to the south which would align with the rear garden area of these flats. The level of the car park and the provision of 1.8m high palisade fencing (replacing chain link fencing) to this boundary would not it is considered result in any adverse impact in the rear garden environment.

### *Impact on Residential Amenity*

- 5.5 The nearest residential properties are those to the east and north of the application site. Those most affected by the proposal would be No.s 253/257 Hilldene Avenue.
- 5.6 The proposal would introduce a car park to the site where there is currently a grassed play area. The proposed vehicular access would be located to the far side in relation to the Hilldene Avenue Properties. While it is unusual, few

properties to this side of Hilldene Avenue to the east of the application site have hardstanding to the front for vehicle parking. This is partly due to the deep green further to the east but also due to marked out pavement parking and that the directly adjoining buildings are flats. The proposal would therefore introduce an element of noise and car-borne activity to the application site where none currently exists.

- 5.7 Nonetheless, the site is opposite the main shopping area in Harold Hill and there is a heavily used bus shelter directly outside the site which takes passengers to and from the shopping centre and other community buildings to the west of the application site. Staff do not consider in the light of the general noise and activity levels that the noise, lights and manoeuvring activity associated with up to 10 vehicles using the parking area would result in significant harm to the existing residential amenity of the occupiers of No.s 253/257 Hilldene Avenue.
- 5.8 The raised parking area would be 0.35m above existing ground levels. Staff consider that as the existing fencing would be retained to this neighbouring rear garden, that there would not be any overlooking or privacy issues raised as a result.
- 5.9 Occupiers within Abercrombie House would not be screened from the parking area, nonetheless parking is proposed on the opposite side of the driveway/access such that there would be a reasonable separation distance (about 6m) between the building and parked vehicles. As the occupants of Abercrombie House will be the beneficiaries of the parking area Staff consider that any noise etc. associated with the relocated parking area would not be so harmful to their amenities as would the loss of a parking area itself.

#### *Highway/Parking*

- 5.10 Abercrombie House currently provides Hostel-type accommodation. As such, Annex 5 of the LDF indicates that 1 space should be provided per 2 resident spaces. There are 33 units such that 15/16 spaces would be expected. However, Annexe 5 indicates that the level of parking will depend on the type of hostel accommodation owing to the wide variation in parking demand generated by different types of hostels. The applicant indicates that the proposed 10 parking spaces would meet their normal demand levels.
- 5.10 Suitable refuse and recycled materials storage and cycle store conditions can be attached to any grant of planning permission, partly to ensure that they result in no significant impact on visual amenity.
- 5.11 The proposal for a new vehicular access would result in the need for highway works including the relocation of the existing bus shelter, removal of at least 1 street tree and the provision of new road and pavement markings relating to the bus stop and marked on-pavement parking spaces. A suitable condition would be attached to ensure that details are acceptable

before works commence and that they are in place prior to first use of the car park.

- 5.12 There are no highways objections to this scheme.

*Other issues – secured by design*

- 5.13 As the security measures to the car park form part of a package of on-going security measures, the Crime Prevention Design Advisor has no specific objections.

- 5.14 A number of trees would be removed from the application site to provide the new parking area and vehicular access. The Beech hedge to the southern boundary with Hilldene Avenue would be retained between the retaining wall/railings to the car park area and the proposed 1.8m high palisade fencing to the boundary with the footway. The proposed SUDS drainage system to be employed should ensure that the hedge is maintained. A suitable condition would be attached to ensure that if it fails, that it is replaced.

**6. Conclusions**

- 6.1 Staff consider that the proposal would be acceptable in principle and, would not have an adverse impact on residential amenity. And, that it would be acceptable on other grounds in accordance with policies contained in the LDF.

**IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

**7. Financial Implications and risks:**

- 7.1 None

**8. Legal Implications and risks:**

- 8.1 This application is considered on its merits independently of the Council's interest as owner of the site.

**9. Human Resource Implications:**

- 9.1 None

**10. Equalities and Social Inclusion Implications:**

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



## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. The planning application as submitted or subsequently revised including all forms and plans.
2. The case sheet and examination sheet.
3. Ordnance survey extract showing site and surroundings.
4. Standard Planning Conditions and Standard Green Belt reason for refusal.
5. Relevant details of Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Article 4 Directions.
6. Copy of all consultations/representations received and correspondence, including other Council Directorates and Statutory Consultees.
7. The relevant planning history.