



<b>Application Reference:</b>	P1596.24
<b>Location:</b>	Century Youth House, 67 Albert Road Romford
<b>Ward</b>	St Albans
<b>Description:</b>	Full planning application for the partial demolition and conversion of the main building and demolition of all other buildings and structures, and development of the rear section of the site to provide 9 residential dwellings, with car parking, landscaping and related infrastructure
<b>Case Officer:</b>	Habib Neshat
<b>Reason for Report to Committee:</b>	A Councillor call-in has been received which accords with the Committee Consideration Criteria

## 1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The school building closed 1979, and the subsequent social/educational use terminated 7 years ago. The Council has determined that the Former Century Youth House is surplus to requirements and determined to seek a disposal, pursuant to the securing of a change of use application for the site, to residential development. The site was last used as Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), but the use ceased at this site due to Ofsted requirements.
- 1.2 The PRU services have already been re-provided elsewhere. In relation to whether the site is needed for an existing or potential free school or other community uses, it was assessed (in 2016) that “the existing accommodation is not suitable for education use and we are not aware of any group expressing an interest in retaining the site for a free school.”

## 2 SUMMARY OF KEY REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The proposal would retain and enhance the locally listed building whilst providing 9 high quality family houses. The proposal would not have a significant impact upon the amenities of the adjoining occupiers of the

neighbouring buildings. Further the proposal would have an acceptable impact upon the safe and free flow of the highway.

### **3 RECOMMENDATION**

3.1 That the Committee resolve to GRANT planning permission subject to:

- The prior completion of a legal agreement pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), Section 15 of the greater London Council (General Powers) Act 1974 and all other enabling powers to secure the following planning obligations:
  - To ensure the future occupiers of the site would not be able to acquire Residential Parking Permit in the Controlled Parking Zone.
  - A financial contribution (to be agreed) to be paid by the developer to the Council to reimburse the Council's legal costs associated with the preparation of the planning obligation and a further financial obligation (to be agreed) to be paid to reimburse the Council's administrative costs associated with monitoring compliance with the obligation terms.
  - Any other planning obligation(s) considered necessary by the Head of Planning

3.2 That the Assistant Director Planning is delegated authority to negotiate the legal agreement indicated above.

3.3 That the Assistant Director Planning is delegated authority to issue the planning permission and impose conditions and informatives to secure the following matters:

The following conditions;

1. Time for commencement
2. Scheme to be carried out in accordance to plans
3. No additional windows on the flank elevations
4. Removal of Permitted development – (outbuildings, extension, roof enlargement).
5. Materials
6. The retention of the foundation stone on the facade
7. Car parking to be provided according to plan
8. Prior to the commencement of the development, the details of pedestrian markings to be incorporated in the proposed vehicular access “to be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority, subsequently before the buildings hereby permitted is first occupied, the approved details shall be implemented and retained as such thereafter.
9. Landscaping
10. Trees on the boundary of the site to be protected
11. Boundary treatment (walls and fences) surrounding the site.

12. Refuse and recycling
13. Cycle storage
14. Hours of construction 8.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday, and between 8.00am and 1.00pm on Saturdays and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays/Public Holidays.
15. Construction management plan
16. Sustainable drainage, including Surface water management
17. Electric Charging
18. Secure by design
19. Boiler
20. Water efficiency
21. External lighting
22. Energy to secure reduction in CO2 Ecology
23. No development shall take place until the Developer has submitted a scheme of mitigation to and obtained a European Protected Species Licence from Natural England. The scheme is to include details of mitigation, including the proposed installation of bat boxes within the development, details of which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority indicating how the development will be undertaken in accordance with the recommendations of the submitted ecological assessment and mitigation strategy. The development shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details and retained for the life of the development.
24. Should demolition and construction works relevant to the identified bat roosts at the site not be commenced within one year of the date of the Licence approval condition discharge referred to in condition 23 above, then a further bat survey shall be undertaken and submitted for the LPA's written approval prior to any relevant demolition works taking place.
25. Inclusive design in terms of access;
26. Maximising the use of PV panels
27. Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP Feasibility)
28. Noise – from plant and machinery.
29. Noise The building(s) shall be so constructed as to provide sound insulation
30. Land contamination;
31. Archaeology
32. The parking arrangement shall be implemented in accordance to parking management plan.

## **Informatives**

CIL, Highways works, reason for granting permission, new numbers

### **4. Site and Surroundings**

- 4.1 The proposal relates to a former Victorian School, with buildings dating from 1883 and 1979. In more recent years it had been used primarily by Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) — an "alternative education facility for pupils who have received a permanent exclusion, or who cannot attend school due to long term medical needs"
- 4.2 The main building to the front displays high quality design, incorporating 4 gables, with decorative features making a positive contribution to the street. The building is not statutory listed, nor it is within a conservation area, however it designated as a locally listed building.
- 4.3 The site is generally rectangular shaped, however, there is a small area to the northeast of the site protruding to the rear gardens of the neighbouring buildings, formerly housing a basketball court. The rear section of the site includes three outbuildings as a later addition. Much of the unbuilt space is hard-surfaced providing car parking spaces.
- 4.4 The site is located in a suburban location, with a significant number of buildings comprising domestic dwellings dating from the Victorian period. All neighbouring buildings bordering the site are in residential use. The buildings vary from traditional semi-detached dwellings and terraced houses to a more contemporary apartment building and new terrace housing scheme.
- 4.5 There is one large mature tree on the site along the Albert Road boundary with some mature tree branches overhanging the land from the neighbouring gardens along the southern and south-eastern site boundaries.
- 4.6 The site is located in a highly accessible location within close proximity to the town centre with a local shopping centre nearby. There is easy access to a number of bus routes as well as Romford Train Station, approximately 750m away. The site lies close to a number of schools, including Hylands Primary, Frances Bardsley Academy for Girls, and a Montessorri Nursery, all located less than a kilometre from the site. The site also benefits from proximity to Hylands Park less than kilometre away.
- 4.7 The site is located in flood zone 1. The surrounding roads are subject to parking restrictions.

## **Proposed development**

5.1 Full planning application is submitted for the partial demolition and conversion of the main building and demolition of all other buildings and structures, and the total provision of 9 residential dwellings, associated car parking and landscaping. The proposal would create;

- 1 x two-bedroom house
- 8 x three-bedroom houses.

The main building would be converted to 4 houses, to the rear a terrace of two storey buildings with accommodation within the roofspace would be formed to provide 5 dwellings.

5.2 Car parking is provided, as on-plot parking spaces, all accessed from the internal access road and courtyard to the rear. In total 8 car parking spaces would be provided. All three-bedroom dwellings would incorporate a car parking space. Cycle parking spaces are provided for each dwelling with two spaces for all unit sizes. Two visitor cycle spaces are provided in the form of a Sheffield stand adjacent to the access road and central courtyard.

5.3 Each house would have a front and rear garden.

5.4 The applicant is Mercury Land Holdings, a company wholly owned by London Borough of Havering.

## **6. Planning History**

6.1 Apart from planning permission for small scale developments including the erection of a disabled access ramp and the provision of a lift, the site has not been subject to any planning scheme with direct relevant to the proposed scheme.

6.2 The scheme however, has been subject to a number of pre application discussions, resulting the modification from the original development concept.

## **LOCAL REPRESENTATION**

7.1 205 letters of notifications were sent to the adjoining occupiers. 7 objections have been received, concerning the following;

- There is a need for community hall in Romford this would be perfect. And the grounds at the back could be used as a new ambulance depot
- Concerned about the traffic flow on Albert Road which is already significant and is expected to grow further with the completion of the project. Loss of parking

- There is a need for a community venue for existing groups who are forced to use other venues on temporary basis.
- Suggestion for off-street parking to front of the frontage units - make rear gardens bigger
- Concern with impact upon amenities in particular loss of privacy, daylight and sunlight impact
- Reduce value of property
- Security / fear of crime / rear boundaries
- Retain existing conifer trees / holly tree and provide more evergreen shrubs / trees
- Seek future owners be required to maintain all landscaping on site in perpetuity
- Construction timescale and management issues
- Conditions re hours of construction (limited on Sat and none on Sundays)
- Concern that there are rats nesting on the site

7.2 The Romford Civic Society has made a representation in support of the proposal, which conserves and restores a significant registered heritage asset. Care and attention will need to be taken around the detail of materials and finishes as the scheme develops, and argue that the architects should be retained throughout the process until completion as a condition of approval..

#### **Councillor Call-In**

7.3 Councillor Jane Keane has called-in the application for the following reasons; Whilst there is a general support for the scheme, the councillor is concerned with respect to the impact of the development upon the amenities of the existing neighbouring occupiers with respect to loss of privacy, daylight and sunlight as well as overbearing impact from the rear gardens. In terms of infrastructure, there would be insufficient of parking.

Councillor Judith Hall has also raised a concern as follows;

1. *Parking is already at an absolute premium in this street, with residents often struggling to find parking. If this development means residents who currently use the bay in front of the Youth House, will lose the ability to do so, the knock-on effect will be detrimental to the community.*
2. *Whilst housing is listed as 9 properties, will all 9 properties have parking for two vehicles per property or will the pressure be pushed on to the street parking?*

3. *Given the current parking bay and its location, will the proposed four properties at the front feel they are 'entitled' to use them? Or will the council be 'allocating' the bay to them?*
4. *All points related to the parking bay are clearly linked. All concerns are valid and I would like them to be taken seriously.*
5. *Regarding general use of the street, having additional traffic will not be appreciated, the street is already extremely busy, especially because of the dance studio and the traffic created by their patrons (ones who also feel they have the right to park and block dropped kerbs whenever it suits them). They operate 7 days a week, the traffic created by this 'establishment' already creates utter carnage, residents are already majorly inconvenienced by them, I'm not sure if the street will cope with anymore disruption.*
6. *Assuming the development will go ahead, how long will the building work and disruption to the street go on for? What will the hours of operation be? I've witnessed council vehicles on site recently and they left huge trails of mud all over the street. Given they weren't even the builders, I dread to think of the mess a new development will cause. Will the parking bay be out of use during construction?*

### **Comments with respect to consultation response**

- 7.4 The impact on property values is not a planning matter. With respect to nesting rats the applicant has commented they are not aware of such issue. In any event, this is a public health issue, and not directly related to the application. However, other concerns will be considered and addressed within the body of the report below.

### **Internal and External Consultation:**

- 7.5 Lead Local Flood Authority - Drainage - no objection rec.

Environmental Health – No objection subject to condition; air quality, land contamination, noise, Construction Management.

Built Heritage and Historic Environment; Concern with regards to the change of use of the purpose-built school and its part demolition. However, the heritage adviser explains that given the site is a non-designated heritage asset, the Local Planning Authority should exercise a balanced judgement in line with Paragraph 216 of the NPPF (December 2024) considering the significance of the heritage asset. The issue with respect to impact on heritage asset is discussed further in the report.

Waste and Recycling - Please ensure there is sufficient numbers of refuse and recycling bins at this site, suitable storage areas, and that the collection crew access requirements are adhered to in particular with the distance to the bin store. Bins are not provided by Havering Council, nor is Havering Council liable for them. Bins need to be purchased and maintained privately. Please adhere to the attached guidance.

Highways -Car free scheme acceptable, but require making pedestrian zone on the access way.

Fire Brigade (water) - no additional hydrants required,

MET Police - request condition relating to community safety/secure by design standards

Ecology; Need additional Bat Survey

## **8 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

8.1 The main issues for consideration for this application are:

- The principle of development
- Housing Mix - size
- Heritage, scale, height, bulk and design
- Quality of the proposed accommodation
- Impact on Neighbouring Amenity
- Parking and Highways Issues
- Environment Issues
- Sustainability
- Flooding and Drainage
- Ecology
- Energy Efficiency
- Community Infrastructure Levy / s106
- Equality

### **The principle of development -**

8.2 Policy S1, criteria (G) of the London Plan, adopted March 2021, stipulates that redundant social infrastructure should be considered for use as other forms of social infrastructure before alternative developments are considered. Policy 16 of the Havering Local Plan 2016-2031 (the Local Plan), adopted November 2021, specifically requires assessment be made of the suitability of the site for accommodating those forms of social infrastructure for which there is a defined need in the locality. In carrying out this assessment, the policy states that site constraints and the feasibility and viability of retaining the site for alternative social infrastructure provision should be taken into account.

8.3 The Former Century Youth House was last in use as Pupil Referral Unit (PRU). The site was also at that time referred to as Manor Green (The Arc) in

Albert Road, and housed the Key Stage 4 (KS4) provision (pupils aged 1416) of the Pupil Referral Service (PRS)

- 8.4 In 2015 Ofsted adjudged that "there were identified performance issues with provision for the authority's pupils who are permanently excluded or cannot attend school due to long term medical issues, being housed on four separate sites" and in February 2015, placed Manor Green College (the Site) into special measures.
- 8.5 It has further been considered whether the site is needed for an existing or potential free school or other community uses. In 2016, the education service decided that "the existing accommodation is not suitable for education use and we are not aware of any group expressing an interest in retaining the site for a free school."
- 8.6 Further, the Applicant has consulted with LBH's Asset Management and Education Services departments who each confirmed that there was no requirement, and no permanent Council use identified for the premises. All Departments confirmed they did not have a need for the site, for any community use.
- 8.7 The LBH Executive determined in 2016 that the Century Youth House site was to be sold, to generate funding for the works required for the new Olive Academy – subject to agreement from the Secretary of State for Education. A key part of the reasoning for the proposed and agreed disposal of the Albert Road site was that the Olive Academies Trust was unwilling to take on the existing Albert Road site as part of the permanent solution due to the building's location and condition.
- 8.8 In relation to whether the site is needed for an existing or potential free school or other community use, it was assessed (in 2016) that "the existing accommodation is not suitable for education use and we are not aware of any group expressing an interest in retaining the site for a free school, or other community uses"
- 8.9 The 'loss' of the former school use at the site is compliant with planning policy as the former use has been re-provided within Havering (at the Robert Beard site) and funding — premised on the disposal of this site — already provided to ensure the delivery of these alternative enhanced facilities elsewhere.
- 8.10 Policies 3 and 4 of the adopted Local Plan, aims to maximise the potential for housing supply. The site within a suburban location, is considered suitable for housing, in support of the aims and objectives of strategy to maximise the supply of housing - albeit- the development would need to be subject to compliance with other relevant policies of the development plan. New housing development on this site will meet the economic, social and environmental sustainable development goals of the NPPF.

## **9 Affordable housing, and the Mix of dwelling unit - size;**

- 9.1 Havering residents should have access to high quality, affordable new homes and the Council will seek to maximise affordable housing provision from development proposals. Policy 4 of the Local Plan requires, all developments of 10 or more dwellings or residential developments with a site area of more than 1,000 sqm are required to provide at least 35% affordable housing based on habitable rooms (gross).
- 9.2 The site extends to 2,362 m<sup>2</sup> (0.23 hectares) and hence it would qualify for the provision of on-site affordable housing.
- 9.3 The reason for the site area as set out in the policy is to prevent underdevelopment of the site to avoid affordable housing. However in this instance, had the proposal comprised the re-development of the entire site, then it would have been likely that a higher density development could have been achieved with the potential provision of affordable housing on site. However, in this case the proposal comprises the retention of the bulk of the original building having historic value, thereby limiting the opportunity for a higher density development.
- 9.4 At the pre-application stage, more intense developments comprising the conversion of the main buildings into flats were considered unacceptable and ruled out due to unacceptable damage to the historical interest of the building as well as the formation of cramped and poor quality of dwellings being created.
- 9.5 Similarly due to site constraints at the rear, it has not possible to conceive a development greater than 5 family houses, which could have achieved suitable quality dwellings, to comply with the required standard floor space as well as adequate amenity space, whilst protecting the amenities of the adjoining occupiers.
- 9.6 It is therefore concluded that a denser development of 10 or more dwellings (e.g. converting front building to flats or having a block of flats to the rear) would be inappropriate for this site. Hence, the proposal with respect to housing tenure is considered acceptable.
- 9.7 Policy 5 states, the Council will support development proposals that provide a mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures. All housing schemes should include a proportion of family sized homes and reflect the recommended housing mix identified in Table 4 of the Plan unless it can be robustly demonstrated that a variation to the mix in Table 4 is justified having regard to individual site circumstances including location, site constraints, viability and the achievement of mixed and balanced communities.
- 9.8 The proposed scheme would provide 8 three-bedroom houses and one two bed family house. The provision of significant number of family units is welcomed, particularly as major housing schemes permitted within the Romford area recently have tended to be flatted schemes skewed toward 1 and 2 bed.

## **10. Heritage, Layout, scale, bulk and Design assessment**

- 10.1 The site comprises of a good example of late-Victorian purpose-built school, designated as a locally listed building. The building was constructed as the Albert Road School a mixed junior and infant school, opened in 1884 and enlarged in 1890 and then 1903. A handicraft centre was opened in 1913. The mixed department was reorganised for juniors in 1930 and amalgamated with the infant's department in 1952. The school was renamed in 1956 as Manor Junior Mixed 8 and Infants School, and the school closed in 1979.
- 10.2 The building was later used as a youth community centre and then a PRU. However, the centre closed a few years ago and the building has since been vacant with windows boarded up.
- 10.3 The locally list described the building as follows;, *“A large building constructed in red brick, symmetrical form with four gables fronting on to the road flanking a central range parallel to the street, octagonal cupola in the ridge. Two principal gables are projecting and wider than the side gables. These have large windows with three-point brick arches and hood mould. Two outer ranges are later additions with set back and have lesser depth, square first floor windows with stone lintels. All four gables feature courses of blue bricks, decorative brickwork at the gable end. Side boundary walls, front piers with stone capital. Currently vacant with ground floor windows boarded shut.”*
- 10.4 A detailed Heritage Impact Assessment has concluded that, the two outbuildings at the rear are not of heritage interest, and they have no significant group value. The assessment explains, “Of notable features, is 'The foundation stone of 1883 is of historical note. Such features are required by NPPF to be preserved.”
- 10.5 The planning policies both in London Plan and the Havering Local plan explain, "Development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets' significance and appreciation within their surroundings. The cumulative impacts of incremental change from development on heritage assets and their settings should also be actively managed. Development proposals should avoid harm and identify enhancement opportunities by integrating heritage considerations early on in the design process." Policy 28 of the Local Plan emphasises, "The Council recognises the significance and value of Havering's heritage assets and will support Proposals that seek to conserve and enhance the significance of heritage assets at risk in the borough.”
- 10.6 The application site is neither statutory Listed nor it is within a conservation area. However, not all of Havering's heritage assets are designated. There are also many non-designated heritage assets that contribute to the character and distinctiveness of the borough's historic environment, including locally important historic buildings. In order to ensure that these elements of the historic environment are conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, the development proposals affecting non-designated heritage assets will be dealt with in accordance with the NPPF.
- 10.7 The NPPF at para 217, explains, “Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred”.

And at paragraph 221, the NPPF, explains, “Local planning authorities should assess whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development, which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset, outweigh the dis-benefits of departing from those policies.

- 10.8 The scheme would include the demolition of parts of the building, including one of the bay features to the front as well as part of the rear element of the building and the removal of the outbuildings. The outbuildings (structures) are not original, they are poorly designed, constructed in inappropriate materials, with negative impact upon the original historic character of the site, and hence there would be no objection to their removal, so long as the replacement building would of high quality of the design.
- 10.9 Essentially, the proposed development involves the conversion and preservation of the frontage and the most significant aspects of the former school. The lower quality structures would be removed and replaced with high quality design buildings. The proposed replacement building to the rear would be of domestic scale – mews style configuration, with the design reflecting the key features of the original form the building. The main building except for one minor wing would be retained with the retention of much of original fabric.
- 10.10 The materials proposed for the new building are also reflective of those within the conversion thereby ensuring consistency in the design approach and delivering a high quality development as expected by national and local policy.
- 10.11 As set out in the LB Havering Characterisation Study, this site is deemed to be an infill development typology. As such, this infill site is set within a predominately suburban context, any infill development should observe building footprints that are of a finer quantum than to that of the existing surrounding built character, likewise, massing should be subservient to existing surrounding building context. The proposed development in terms of its scale, mass, bulk and height would follow this principle. Further design features ensure that the proposal seek to respect the existing grain of the area. Currently the rear of the site is occupied by ad-hoc buildings of non-conforming design with the much of the unbuilt space to the rear dominated by parking and hard surfacing. The proposal would introduce a degree of soft landscaping and buildings of compatible scale and massing. The proposal to the rear would follow a mews style concept which is the appropriate typology for an infill development site of this nature.
- 10.12 Further the proposed design for the new building would feature pitched roofs, feature brickwork details to upper and lower storeys and fenestration that would be in keeping with the proportions of the distinctive main block and neighbouring dwellings. The proposed material would include multi-stock red / brown brick walls with a newly introduced black brick to the gable end facade infill of the existing historic building to compliment the character and finishes of the existing historic facade.
- 10.13 The strategy to retain much of the original building with sensitive conversion, and putting them to viable use is considered to be the appropriate approach for the development of the site. Without further investment to support the upkeep, there is a fear that the heritage asset would further fall into disrepair. Concerted effort has been paid to prevent a significant detrimental loss of the original

building and instead much of the fabric would be retained and the original materials would be reused and any new materials would be closely matched to the originals.

- 10.14 By removing the existing unsympathetic development, the construction of well-designed buildings and the opportunity to better secure the continued use of the locally listed building within the site, is considered that the proposal would enhance the values of the heritage asset. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the NPPF in this regard.
- 10.15 It is considered that the proposed development would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area, thereby complying with Policies 7 and 26 of the Havering Local Plan (2021) and Policy D6 of the London Plan (2021). Collectively, these policies require, amongst other things, that residential development is of high-quality design, respects and complements the distinctive qualities, identity and character of the site and the local area; provides creative and site-specific design solutions; and responds to distinctive local building forms and patterns of development having regard to the established scale, mass, building lines and heights of the surrounding physical context. The proposed development would also comply with the requirement of the Framework that developments are of high-quality design, sympathetic to local character.

## **11 Quality of the housing provision**

- 11.1 Policy D6 of the London Plan stresses that, housing development should be of high quality design and provide adequately-sized rooms with comfortable and functional layouts which are fit for purpose and meet the needs of Londoners without differentiating between tenures. And that the qualitative aspects of a development are key to ensuring successful sustainable housing.
- 11.2 The dwellings are provided with private gardens of adequate size and layout. All dwellings would comply with internal space standard. The proposal would also comply with Part M4(2) or M4(3) of the standard of mobility with respect to building control regulation.
- 11.3 Appropriate condition would be recommended to ensure the dwelling units would be insulated against external and internal noise.
- 11.4 Having regard to this arrangement, the proposed development would provide acceptable living conditions for future occupants in terms of light, outlook and privacy. It would comply with Policy 7 of the Havering Local Plan (2021) which seeks, amongst other things, to ensure developments achieve a high standard of amenity. The proposed development would also comply with the requirement of the Framework that developments seek to ensure a high standard of amenity for future users.

## **12 Impact on Neighbouring Amenity**

- 12.1 Policy 7 states the council will not support applications where the proposal results in unacceptable overshadowing, loss of sunlight/daylight, overlooking or loss of privacy to existing and new properties and has unreasonable adverse

effects on the environment by reason of noise impact, vibrations and disturbance.

### **Noise**

- 12.2 The lawful use of the site is for a school or a community use, both which could generate significantly greater associated noise than the proposed residential use. The use of the site for residential purposes along with restriction in the number of car parking spaces would mean that there would be no significant noise issues. An appropriate condition would be imposed to ensure the noise from any plant / machinery would have acceptable impact upon the amenities of the adjoining occupiers.

### **Daylight / sunlight**

- 12.3 London Plan Policy D6 and policy 7 of the Local Plan, sets out that the design of development should provide sufficient daylight and sunlight to new and surrounding housing that is appropriate for its context, whilst avoiding overheating, minimising overshadowing and maximising the usability of outside amenity space.
- 12.4 Concerted effort has been made to ensure the proposed scheme in terms of its layout, scale, height and siting, would ensure the amenities of the adjoining occupiers. The scheme has significantly been amended since its original concept to ensure the amenities of the adjoining occupiers are protected.
- 12.5 For the present scheme the proposed buildings to the rear have been located at the furthest distance possible from the neighbouring buildings. Also, the mass of built form on the site has considerably been reduced, especially for the western (conversion) block, which will improve the daylight, sunlight and reduce any overshadowing to 65 and 53 Albert Road, to the north.
- 12.6 For the eastern terrace (the new build block) would be located at 30 metres away from the houses in Albert Road and 37 away from the habitable rooms of the properties in Shakespeare Road. Therefore, there would be no impact upon the daylight or sunlight upon the habitable rooms of these buildings.
- 12.7 The proposed new block would be about 9m away from the gardens of the buildings in Shakespeare Road, but abuts the far end of the gardens of 53 and 65 Albert Road. However, there are either outbuildings or significant tree coverage to the rear of these properties as well as all houses benefiting from deep gardens which means the impact upon the sunlight to the gardens would not breach the sunlight standards.

### **Privacy;**

- 12.8 The rear block of the proposed development site is 9.15 metres away from the rear boundary and 37 metres to the rear habitable room windows of dwellings in Shakespeare Road. There are additionally outbuildings (sheds, garages etc) to the Shakespeare Road dwellings at the farthest extent of their gardens. The distance of the proposed 2.5 storey houses is about 37m for back-to-back habitable room windows. This ensures that there would not be potential overlooking towards the rear windows of properties within Shakespeare Road

and thus the development proposals would not lead to overlooking and will not adversely affect the privacy of neighbours.

- 12.9 There would be a degree of loss of privacy to the gardens of the adjoining properties from the windows to the upper floors of the proposed block to the rear. However, the gardens are already overlooked from the upper windows of the adjoining buildings. In urban areas, it is often the case that the gardens are mutually overlooked from the corresponding upper floor windows which is unavoidable. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the windows are at quite distance from the patio areas of the neighbouring buildings where they are generally used for outdoor amenity space gathering and relaxation.
- 12.8 Given the above, it is considered that overall, the scheme would not have a significant impact upon the amenities of the adjoining occupiers.

### **13 The highway impact**

- 13.1 The site has a good PTAL rating (part 4), with direct access to the buses and train station in close vicinity as well as access to range of shops, local post office, health provision, educational facilities as well as a recreational park. Hence, the site is located within sustainable location where a car free scheme would be acceptable.
- 13.2 The proposal would provide a total of 8 car parking spaces. Each house, with the exception of the two-bed house would have an on-plot allocated car parking space that would be allocated to each house.
- 13.3 The maximum parking standard for the site at The PTAL is 4 is 0.75 per dwelling, equating to a maximum of 7 spaces. Therefore there would be over provision of car parking for the site. However, this is considered as a minor increase which is unlikely to be demonstrably add to car use or congestion in the borough. It is recommended that a legal agreement be entered into to prevent occupiers (other than Blue Badge holders) from obtaining residential parking permits. The applicant have agreed with the terms of legal agreement.
- 13.4 Further, the provision of cycle facilities would be in accordance with the London Plan requirements.
- 13.5 The access road and small elements of landscape (the five courtyard trees) would be managed and maintained by a resident's management company. Given the car parking provision on each plot, parking management would not be required. There is potential issue if someone parks outside designated parking spaces, in which case the RMC would have the power to issue tickets and enforce against the illegally parked cars to ensure that the turning and manoeuvring of cars and delivery / fire vehicles etc would not be adversely affected. A condition is recommended to ensure the implementation of the scheme according to the submitted management plan.
- 13.6 All servicing would take place on site. The applicant has provided track diagrams indicating that any service vehicle including refuse vehicles and fire

engines, as well as small delivery vans would be able to enter and egress the site.

- 13.7 The existing access would be slightly widened resulting in loss of half the bay area with respect to residential parking zone. However, the designated parking bay which might be partially lost, is positioned in front of an existing driveway, where effectively this would not provide an appropriate opportunity for public parking.
- 13.8 Whilst there appear to be some concern with respect to the impact of the proposal upon highways condition, it should be noted there would be significantly less trip generation in comparison with the lawful use of the site as a school or a community centre. Consequently, the impact upon the highways safety and free flow of traffic would be acceptable.
- 13.9 Highways officers are happy with the proposed scheme. They have however requested that the vehicular access to the site should be marked / configured so that the pedestrian would be aware of the traffic movement in and out the site. Hence, a suitable condition is recommended to this effect.

## **14 Other issues.**

### **Flood Risk & Drainage**

- 14.1 The site is located within Flood Zone 1 (defined as indicating a 0.1% chance of annual flooding from rivers or seas), therefore no flood risk assessment was required to be submitted with the application.
- 14.2 The application includes study with respect to Sustainable Urban Drainage Strategy, which by implementing the drainage strategies, it can be concluded that the proposed development could be safely carried out without increasing the risk of flooding to itself or the surrounding area, aiming to meet policy SI13 of the London Plan.

### **Land Contamination**

- 14.3 A Phase 1 Desk Study Report has been submitted with the application to explain the anticipated ground conditions of the site. The site and surrounding land were historically used for manufacturing and gravel extraction. Like many similar brownfield sites, the application might contain contaminants.
- 14.4 Potential pathways through which contaminants might travel are identified, along with potential receptors - the impacts on whom are predicted to have a low to medium risk. The report recommends that a Phase 2 ground investigation be undertaken to better understand the ground conditions and identify any mitigation measures to further reduce the risk of harm from contaminants during construction and operation of the site.
- 14.5 Subject to appropriate conditions (as recommended by LB Havering Public Protection Officers), the issue with Land Contaminations would be mitigated..

### **Energy Efficiency**

- 14.6 Information provided would address the issue with energy efficiency. The information provided would suggest incorporating mechanism such as air heat source pump, passive cooling including formation of balconies to combat overheating, introduction of solar panel and other measures to achieve 70% reduction in CO2 emission to comply with the London Plan policies. Given this is not a major scheme there would be no requirement for carbon offset contribution.

### **Ecology and Biodiversity**

- 14.7 The London Plan Policy GI 'Green infrastructure' part D requires development proposals to incorporate appropriate elements of green infrastructure that are integrated into London's wider green infrastructure network and Policy G6 'Biodiversity and access to nature' seeks development proposals to "manage impacts on biodiversity and aim to secure net biodiversity gain. This should be informed by the best available ecological information and addressed from the start of the development process. "
- 14.8 Local Plan Policy 27 Landscaping, provides that "the Council will support development proposals that incorporate a detailed and high quality landscape scheme which vi. Supports natural habitats and opportunities for enhancing biodiversity". Further, Policy 30 'Biodiversity and geodiversity' provides that the Council will protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity and seek to increase the quantity and quality of biodiversity in Havering, including by "iv. Encouraging developments where there are opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around the development".
- 14.9 The applicant has submitted a study which evaluates the ecological value of the site and provided advice as how appropriate measure to be taken to safeguard the ecological value of the site. The submitted study suggests the current site has a low quality ecological value. Further the assessment found that the site is not located within designated sites for nature conservation or within priority habitats for nature conservation. However, the study has found that "There are designated sites and priority habitats within 1 km of the site" and that " records of protected species and species of conservation concern within the 1km study area..". Given the condition of the buildings it is suspected that there may be reasonable likelihood that roosting bats may be present within the building.
- 14.10 The council's ecological consultant have explained that, "We have reviewed the documents supplied by the applicant including the 'Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment,'(Thomson environmental consultants, November 2024) and 'Bat Emergence Survey,'(Thomson environmental consultants, November 2024), relating to the likely impacts of development on designated sites, protected & Priority species and habitats and identification of proportionate mitigation. We are not satisfied that there is sufficient ecological information available for determination of this application and recommend that details of survey results are required to make this proposal acceptable/additional information is provided prior to determination." They have required addition bat survey to be carried out prior to the determination of the

application. However, it is considered that a suitably worded condition could be imposed to ensure the protection of the protected species. Such condition should ensure,

1. the undertaking and completion of further bat emergence surveys, to include one additional survey visit for Building B3 and two additional survey visits for Buildings B1 and B2, to be carried out during the bat active season (between May and August), and
2. there are no adverse findings from the results (i.e. the ecologists confirm that a strategy for the development impacting the roosts can be prepared and submitted to Natural England to seek a Licence for the works).
3. A Report of the survey findings should be submitted to and agreed by the local planning authority.

14.11 The Ecology Report also reveals that the existing site was found to have a baseline biodiversity value of 0.34 habitat units, with the post-development plan for the site delivering 0.37 units. "The outcome is a biodiversity net gain of 10.71% for habitat units." Overall, with respect to biodiversity, the Report's conclusions set out that "In the scenario set out in this report, the assessment has concluded that a net gain in biodiversity can be achieved on site based on the current proposals, and the works will meet the legislative requirements of Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021), the NPPF or the Local Plan."

14.12 The council's ecological consultants have advised that the proposals would accord with the requirements of the policies.

### **Air quality**

14.13 An Air Quality Report (including air pollution impact) has been submitted with the application. The Environment Protection officers have examined the report and are satisfied that subject to conditions the proposal would be acceptable.

14.14 It is considered that through appropriate measures including the provision of suitable boilers the proposed development would not have significant negative effects on the environment.

### **Trees and landscaping**

14.15 Currently a significant part of the site is generally covered by hard surfacing and does not benefit from any trees. The site is not within a conservation area and is not subject to a Tree Preservation Order. There is only a single tree within the proposed development area. This is a Holly to the front of the site. The intention is to retain the Tree. The remaining trees are 3<sup>rd</sup> party trees where the Root Protection Area (RPA) overspill into the site. The main issues are the careful treatment of the construction phase. In particular, the removal of hard surfaces and the walls which already curtail the RPA. The proposal would include safeguarding the trees during the construction phase, including the use of "no dig" approach with respect to the removal of the hardstanding. The proposal provides pockets of soft landscaping throughout the site. A condition is recommended to ensure the trees would be protected and to ensure an appropriate landscape scheme is achieved.

## **Secure by design.**

- 14.16 The proposals for back-to-back private gardens to the existing rear private gardens of neighbours will enhance the security for neighbouring dwellings compared to the vacant, semi-derelict and insecure old school buildings that currently occupy the site. Garden boundaries for the new dwellings will be appropriate to the private houses.
- 14.17 The scheme would be subject condition to ensure it would follow the advice by the metropolitan police to follow the secure by design principal and mitigating measures.

## **15 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY**

15.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, which came into force on 5th April 2011, imposes important duties on public authorities in the exercise of their functions, including a duty to have regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

15.2 For the purposes of this obligation the term protected Characteristics includes: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

15.3 In recommending the application for approval, officers have had regard to the requirements of the Act and have concluded that a decision to grant planning permission for this proposed development will comply with the Council's statutory duty.

## **16 CIL and other Financial and Mitigation measures**

16.2 The net additional floor space would be 628.9m<sup>2</sup>. The development would be liable for a Mayoral CIL at the rate of £25 per square metre amounting to £15,747.5 and Havering CIL at rate of £125 per square metre amounting to £78,737.5, subject to indexation.

16.3 The proposed development would be car free, for which a legal agreement would be required to ensure the future occupiers of the site would not be able

to use the parking spaces within the Residential Parking Zone. The application would be obliged to contribute to the drafting of the legal agreement as well as its monitoring cost.

- 16.4 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.

### **Housing supply;**

- 17.1 On the 12th December 2024, the Government published the Housing Delivery Test result for 2023. The Housing Delivery Test Result for Havering for 2023 is 61%. In accordance with the NPPF the "Presumption" due to housing delivery therefore applies.
- 17.2 In terms of housing supply, based on the latest 2024 Housing Trajectory, Havering is able to demonstrate 3.4 years supply of deliverable housing sites. The Havering Local Plan was found sound and adopted in 2021 in the absence of a five year land supply. The Inspector's report concluded:
- "85. Ordinarily, the demonstration of a 5-year supply of deliverable housing land is a prerequisite of a sound plan in terms of the need to deliver a wide choice of homes. However, in the circumstances of this Plan, where the housing requirement has increased at a late stage in the examination, I ultimately conclude that the Plan, as proposed to be modified, is sound in this regard subject to an immediate review.
86. This is a pragmatic approach which is consistent with the findings of the Dacorum judgement. It aims to ensure that an adopted plan is put in place in the interim period before the update is adopted and the 5-year housing land supply situation is established."
- 17.3 The Council is committed to an update of the Local Plan and this is set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme. Therefore, in the meantime whilst the position with regard to housing supply is uncertain, the "Presumption" due to housing supply is applied.
- 17.4 The Presumption refers to the tilted balance set out in Paragraph 11(d) of the NPPF as if the presumption in favour of sustainable development outlined in paragraph 11(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been engaged.

- 17.5 Para 11(d) states that where the policies which are most important for determining the proposal are out of date, permission should be granted unless (i) the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a strong reason for refusing the development, or (ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. Fundamentally this means that planning permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as a whole.

## **18 Conclusions**

- 18.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004 outlines that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 18.2 The outcome of the Framework paragraph 11 d) process above indicates that the decision should be taken in accordance with the development plan.
- 18.3 The loss of community use is considered acceptable as the services with respect to the previous use have already been re-provided elsewhere. The building has been deemed unsuitable for other similar uses. The proposed development would result in an increase in the Council's overall housing number and would be in a sustainable location on previously developed land. When combined with the Council being unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, collectively, this matter carries significant weight in favour of the proposed development.
- 18.4 It is considered that the proposed development would have an acceptable impact upon the amenities of the adjoining occupiers with enhanced landscaping and ecological value to the site.
- 18.5 The proposed scheme would provide high quality dwellings whilst preserving the interest of the local heritage asset.
- 18.6 It is considered that the proposed development would comply the Local, London and National policies and hence it is recommended for approval subject to the terms of legal agreement and conditions set out above.