



# REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE

# REPORT

5 September 2013

**Subject Heading:**

**P0830.13 – 40 High Street, Romford**

**Change of use from a mixed class  
A3/A5 to a community centre (faith  
group) for young adults (D1) and a  
garage conversion  
(Application received 4<sup>th</sup> July 2013)**

**Report Author and contact details:**

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**Policy context:**

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

**Financial summary:**

**None**

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

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

**SUMMARY**

This matter is brought before committee as the site is Council owned. The application seeks full planning permission for a change of use from a mixed class A3/A5 to a community centre (faith group) for young adults (D1) and a garage

conversion. Staff conclude the proposal to be acceptable. The application is recommended for approval subject to conditions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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 accordance with the approved plans as detailed on page one of the decision notice.

Reason: The Local Planning Authority consider it essential that the whole of the development is carried out and that no departure whatsoever is made from the details approved, since the development would not necessarily be acceptable if partly carried out or carried out differently in any degree from the details submitted. Also, in order that the development accords with the LDF Development Control Policies Development Plan Document Policy DC61.

3. Hours of use - The premises shall not be used for the purposes hereby permitted other than between the hours of 9.00am and 10:00pm every day 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.

4. Use - Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 the use hereby permitted shall be for a community centre (faith group) and shall be used for no other purpose(s) whatsoever including any other use in Class D1 of the Order, 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.

5. Noise - Before the development hereby permitted commences, details of a scheme shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning

authority which specifies the provisions to be made for the control of noise emanating from the site. Such scheme as may be approved shall be implemented prior to first occupation and thereafter retained in accordance with such details.

Reason: To prevent noise nuisance to adjoining/adjacent properties.

## **INFORMATIVES**

1. Statement Required by Article 31 (cc) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management) Order 2010: No significant problems were identified during the consideration of the application, and therefore it has been determined in accordance with paragraphs 186-187 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.
2. A fee is required when submitting details pursuant to the discharge of conditions. In order to comply with the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications, Deemed Applications, Requests and Site Visits) (England) Regulations 2012, which came into force from 22.11.2012, a fee of £97 per request or £28 where the related permission was for extending or altering a dwellinghouse, is needed.

## **REPORT DETAIL**

### **1. Site Description**

- 1.1 The application site is located on the north-western side of the High Street, Romford, approximately 18 metres east of the junction with Angel Way. The site is sited in the retail fringe area as defined by the Local Development Framework (LDF) Romford Area Action Plan. The application premise forms the ground floor of a four storey mid terrace building. There are offices on the first floor and the third and fourth floors of the building are in residential use.
- 1.2 The subject property is a ground floor unit within a commercial parade with mixed uses. The frontage of the site is within the Romford Conservation Area. The application premise is presently vacant and formerly an A3/A5 use. The surrounding area is characterised by commercial properties with a variety of shops and services.

### **2. Description of Proposal**

- 2.1 The application seeks permission for a change of use from a mixed class A3/A5 to a community centre (faith group) for young adults (D1) and a garage conversion. The garage would be converted into offices. The proposed change of use would cover an area of 142m<sup>2</sup>.

- 2.2 The application has been submitted on behalf of a registered charity that has been operating several youth focussed projects in central Romford since 2009. Until April 2003, activities have been operating under the umbrella of St James Church, Collier Row with St John's Church, Havering-atte-Bower. The charity is planning to take on its own premises at 40 High Street as a base for its work. The charity is aiming to establish an attractive, high quality and safe space for various community focussed projects.
- 2.3 A draft weekly programme of activity has been provided as a guide, which outlines that the premises would be utilised for morning, afternoon and evening sessions, which involve young adults (aged between 13 to 35 years). The numbers of people per session would vary between a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 35. The agent has indicated that there would be a maximum of 35 people at the application site at any one time. Some of the help and assistance offered by the charity would involve mentoring and supporting young adults on a one-to-one basis.
- 2.4 The charity's current work has been focussed around two specific projects:  
1) DIY (Deeply Impacting Youth) is led by a full time youth worker, who mainly works with teenagers who spend their time in the parks in Romford and the shopping centres. The DIY team have established significant relationships with large groups of teenagers and are engaging with up to 80 teenagers every week. The DIY team assist pupil's with their homework.  
2) The Deeper Lounge has been operating every Friday night from 10pm - 2am on Saturdays since 2009. Working in conjunction with Street Pastors and with the support of various departments and councillors within the London Borough of Havering and the Metropolitan Police, refreshments are served to young adults (who visit pubs and clubs) from a gazebo in South Street, where the majority of clubs are located. Staff talk to the young adults and offer pastoral support.
- 2.5 40 High Street would become a base for all the activities of the charity. There are plans to introduce new activities, which will enable the organisation to further its defined charitable objectives including the advancement of religion, promotion of social inclusion and engagement with young people.
- 2.6 The agent has advised that there would be a total of approximately eight members of staff, who would operate on a four hour shift rota basis. The staff live locally within a five mile radius of the application site. There would be an average of three staff on site at any one time, which includes one person covering the core hours between 10am to 5pm. Additional staff are available on call if required.

### **3. Relevant History**

- 3.1 P0631.12 – Replacement shop front – Withdrawn.  
A0028.12 – Various advertisements – Withdrawn.

P1318.09 – Change of use of ground floor from A1 to a mixed class A3/A5 – Approved.

A0070.09 – One non-illuminated fascia sign – Approved.

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

- 4.1 Notification letters were sent to 100 neighbouring properties. No letters of representation were received.
- 4.2 Crime Prevention Design Advisor – No material objections concerning any significant crime issues caused by the application as it stands. The CPDA would like to be re-consulted should the proposed opening hours be extended beyond 10pm on any day.

#### **5. Relevant Policies**

- 5.1 Policy ROM11 (Retail Fringe) of the Romford Area Action Plan. Policies CP8 (Community needs), CP17 (Design), DC26 (Location of community facilities), DC33 (Car parking), DC34 (Walking), DC35 (Cycling), DC55 (Noise), DC61 (Urban Design) and DC63 (Delivering safer places) of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Documents are material planning considerations. Policies 3.1 (Ensuring equal life chances for all), 6.9 (Cycling), 6.10 (Walking), 6.13 (Parking), 7.1 (building London's neighbourhoods and communities) and 7.4 (Local character) of the London Plan are relevant. Chapters 4 (Promoting sustainable transport), 5 (Supporting high quality communications infrastructure) and 8 (Promoting healthy communities) of the National Planning Policy Framework are relevant.

#### **6. Staff Comments**

- 6.1 This proposal is put before the Committee as the site is Council owned. The main issues to be considered by Members in this case are the principle of development, the impact on the streetscene, amenity implications, and parking and highways issues.
- 6.2 Principle of Development
  - 6.2.1 The site is sited in the retail fringe area as defined by the Local Development Framework (LDF) Romford Area Action Plan. Policy ROM11 states that planning permission for non-retail uses will be granted at ground floor level provided that the use complements the retail function, has an active frontage, is open for a significant number of core retailing hours and does not significantly harm the character, function and vitality and viability of the centre.
  - 6.2.2 Policy ROM16 states that the Council will work in partnership with other bodies to enable the provision of a suitable range of health and educational

facilities in Romford town centre to meet existing and future demand. In addition, the fringe retail destinations (referred to in ROM11) allow for the provision of community facilities provided that active frontages are maintained. This will allow health and other community facilities to be located in the fringe retail areas of the High Street. When considering the merits of this application, consideration was given to the fact that the application site has been vacant for up to twelve months and the proposal would bring the unit back into use. Staff consider that the proposal would comply with Policies ROM11 and ROM16 and would contribute to the vitality and viability of this retail fringe area in Romford town centre. Therefore, the proposed change of use is deemed to be acceptable in principle.

### 6.3 Design/impact on street/Garden scene

6.3.1 The application seeks consent for a garage conversion. There would be a stud partition wall fitted internally, which does not require consent and the garage door would remain in situ. It is considered that the garage conversion would not adversely affect the streetscene.

### 6.4 Conservation Area

6.4.1 The frontage of the site is within the Romford Conservation Area. It is considered that the garage conversion would not affect the Romford Conservation Area, as it is located to the rear of the site and the garage door is remaining in situ.

### 6.5 Impact on amenity

6.5.1 In view of the residential properties located on the third and fourth floors of the building, consideration needs to be given to the potential impact on amenity. Staff consider that the proposed opening hours would not result in a significant increase in noise and disturbance to neighbouring properties. It is considered that in this location close to the town centre where daily ambient noise levels are fairly high, any possible noise and disturbance which might occur would be set against the background of existing noise levels and would not result in demonstrable harm to the amenities of adjacent residents. Staff consider that a closing time of 10pm every day is reasonable in this retail fringe area of Romford town centre. When considering the merits of this application, consideration was given to the fact that the Council's Crime Prevention Design Advisor has no objection to the proposal.

6.5.2 The agent has advised that there would be a total of approximately eight members of staff, who would operate on a four hour shift rota basis. There would be an average of three staff on site at any one time, which includes one person covering the core hours between 10am to 5pm. Additional staff are available on call if required. It is considered that several staff would help to organise and manage the activities provided by the charity, which would help to minimise any noise and disturbance. In addition, the numbers of people per session would vary between a minimum of 10 to a maximum of

35. Some of the help and assistance offered by the charity would involve mentoring and supporting young adults on a one-to-one basis. Planning conditions could be used to control hours of operation and noise if minded to grant planning permission.

## 6.6 Highway/parking issues

6.6.1 Havering has a parking standard for church halls/community centres of 1 parking space per 4m<sup>2</sup>. The total gross internal floor space for the unit has been listed as 141.58m<sup>2</sup>, making a requirement of approximately 35 spaces. The proposal does not provide any parking spaces. However, the site is situated in Central Romford and has a PTAL score of 6a, which indicates good public transport facilities. It is also situated close to Angel Way car park (open 7am-8pm, Mon – Sat) and The Brewery car park (open 24hours – 7 days a week). Further it is not envisaged that many of the people attending the community centre particularly during the day would travel by motor vehicle but would use public transport. The Highway Authority does not object to the proposals. The agent has advised that the staff live locally within a five mile radius of the application site. Given the town centre location, Staff consider that the young adults and staff would walk or use public transport to access the site. It is considered that the proposal would not create any highway or parking issues.

## 7. Conclusion

7.1 Having regard to all relevant factors and material planning considerations staff are of the view that this proposal for a change of use from a mixed class A3/A5 to a community centre (faith group) for young adults (D1) and a garage conversion would be acceptable. Staff are of the view that the proposal would not have an impact on the streetscene or result in a loss of amenity to neighbouring occupiers. The proposal is considered to be acceptable in all other respects and it is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

## IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

### Financial implications and risks:

None.

### Legal implications and risks:

None.

### Human Resources implications and risks:

None.

**Equalities implications and risks:**

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

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The plans and application form were received on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2013.