

Agenda Item: 6.5

06/03053/P

26/07/2006

South Norwood

Application for full planning permission

Agent:

Howard Fairbairn & Partners
439 London Road
Croydon
Surrey
CR0 3PF

Applicant:

Howard Fairbairn Project Services
439 London Road
Croydon
Surrey
CR0 3PF

Location: 15 & 15a Sylvan Hill, Upper Norwood, London, SE192QB

Description: Demolition of existing building; erection of three storey building with basement comprising 7 two bedroom and 6 one bedroom flats; formation of vehicular access and provision of associated parking

Drawing No(s): 5371-PL01, 02RevA - 06RevA & 07

Recommendation: Refuse Permission

Reason(s) for refusal :-

1. The proposal would result in an over-development of the site, out of keeping with the character of the locality and detrimental to the visual amenity of the street scene and the Church Road Conservation Area by reason of its scale, massing, design and prominent siting and would thereby conflict with Policies UD2, UD3, SP4, UC3 and H2 of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (The Croydon Plan)
2. The development would not provide a high standard of design and layout, nor would it respect the visual character of the area in which it is located and would thereby conflict with Policies SP3, UD1, UD2 and UD3 of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (The Croydon Plan)
3. The development would be detrimental to the amenities of the occupiers of adjoining property by reason of its size and siting, resulting in loss of light, loss of privacy, dominance and visual intrusion and would thereby conflict with Policies UD2, UD8 and H2 of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (The Croydon Plan)
4. Inadequate provision is made for car parking within the site and the development would thereby conflict with Policy T8 of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (The Croydon Plan)
5. The application does not offer a contribution towards sustainable transport initiatives in the vicinity to alleviate traffic generation created by the development. The development would therefore be contrary to Policies SP14 and T2 of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (The Croydon Plan) and Planning Guidance Note 1 on Planning Obligations

6. The development would not provide any accessible public open space and no contribution has been offered in lieu of providing or improving public open space in the vicinity. The development would therefore be contrary to Policy RO12 of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (The Croydon Plan) and Planning Guidance Note 1 on Planning Obligations
7. The proposed vehicular access is of inadequate width to serve the development and would be contrary to Policy T11 of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (The Croydon Plan)
8. No ecological report has been submitted with the application to justify that the proposed development would not result in the loss of nature conservation interests, thereby conflicting with Policies NC2 and NC3 of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (The Croydon Plan)

Ward: Upper Norwood
Lead Officer: Head of Planning Control

PLANNING COMMITTEE
12th October 2006

Application Number: 06/03053/P - 15 & 15a Sylvan Hill, Upper Norwood, SE19

1. SUMMARY

1.1 Full application for :

- Demolition of existing houses.
- Erection of a three-storey building with basement, comprising 7 two bedroom and 6 one bedroom flats, provision of vehicular access and provision of associated parking.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Refuse planning permission for the reasons set out in the agenda.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Site Description

- Occupied by part rendered, part red brick two-storey hipped tiled roof houses (consisting of numbers 15 and 15a Sylvan Hill, although currently used as a single-family house) with detached single-storey garage to the southeast and two-storey extension to the northwest. There is a single-storey rear lean-to extension located to the northwestern boundary. There are two driveways leading to the house. Substantial rear garden with mature trees. A 2.5m high established fence along front boundary.
- Site area is 0.4acres (0.16ha)

3.2 Surrounding Area

- Uses – single-family house to the south-east and converted flats to the north-west, purpose built block of flats opposite, backs onto terraced houses on The Dell.

- Form – Extended two-storey part tile-hung part red brick house with part gable, part flat roof adjoins to the southeast. Converted two and a half storey Victorian houses adjoin to the northwest, three to five storey purpose built flats with hipped roof opposite.
- Sylvan Hill slopes down from the north-west to the south-east.

3.3 Designations

- Church Road Conservation Area.
- Within an area of local park deficiency.

3.4 Relevant history

- None relevant.

3.5 Proposal

Full permission is sought for:

- Demolition of the existing pair of semi-detached houses, low level front boundary wall and front boundary hedge.
- Amended plans indicating the erection of a Victorian-style building; the street elevation consists of a three-storey building with hipped roof and feature gable; which slopes down to the southeast to a two-storey building with dormer in the front roof slope. The rear elevation consists of a three-storey building with basement, near the south eastern end of the site.
- The proposed building would have a width of 19.2m and stagger in depth from 11.5m to a maximum of 18m. It would be sited 10.2m from the Sylvan Hill frontage and between 0.8m from the north western boundary and 1.2m-1.5m from the south eastern boundary. The building would rise to an overall height of between 10m and 11m to the ridge (excluding basement level). The eaves are proposed to measure 6.7m in height nearest the south eastern boundary and extend to 7.5m in height to the north western boundary.
- The building is proposed to comprise 6, one bedroom and 7, two bedroom flats that range between 49.1m² and 92.7m² in size. The basement flat is proposed to have an excavated terrace area; flats 3, 4 and 5 would have balconies or a terrace at upper ground level. In addition the scheme proposes an area of communal amenity space to the rear of the site.
- The materials include London Stock brickwork, imitation slates to the roof and sash windows with stone features.
- Two trees and the front boundary hedge from the front garden would be removed.
- 7 car parking spaces are proposed to the front of the site (one would be a disabled space), which would be accessed via a centrally located vehicular access. Soft landscaping is proposed to the front of the parking area and side boundary with number 13 Sylvan Hill. A flat roof refuse store is proposed in the front garden near the boundary with number 13 Sylvan Hill.
- Provision of 13 secured and covered cycle parking spaces to the rear of the site.
- Density of approximately 200 hrh.
- A design and access statement and an EcoHomes preliminary report has been submitted with the application.
- The application has been amended during the course of consideration to reduce the depth of the building to 13m nearer the boundary with No.19 Sylvan Hill; to provide landscaping to the car park area, to reduce the maximum height of the building by 1.3m and remove the pitched roof to the refuse store.

4 PLANNING POLICIES:

- Replacement Croydon Plan : SP1, SP2, SP3, UD1, UD2, UD3, UD6, UD7, UD8, UD13, UD14, UD15, SP4, UC3, SP8, SP9, SP13, NC2, NC3, EP16, T2, T3, T8, T11, SP18, SP20, SP22, H2, H13, H14, RO15, UC8 and UC12.

5. CONSULTATIONS

- Advertised: press / site notice.
- 89 adjacent occupiers notified. 10 replies received, objecting on the following grounds:
 1. Excessive bulk, (width, depth and height) of building;
 2. Existing building should not be demolished, as it is unique in it's setting
 3. Height in relation to sloping character of the street, insufficient separation between buildings;
 4. Three storey building not in character with street;
 5. Overdevelopment, out of scale with neighbouring buildings;
 6. Materials inconsistent with surroundings;
 7. Visually intrusive;
 8. Loss of light;
 9. Loss of outlook to dormer bedroom window of top floor of number 13 Sylvan Hill;
 10. Overlooking from windows in side elevations;
 11. Reduce the amenities of the surrounding properties;
 12. Large area of hardstanding to front and loss of boundary detail;
 13. Loss of garden habitat and biodiversity;
 14. Loss of family house and diversity to resident mix;
 15. The conversions at numbers 9 and 11 Sylvan Hill can not be used as precedent as these have a different character;
 16. Loss of front garden, trees and hedge;
 17. Habitat for stag beetles and bats;
 18. Too high density;
 19. Inadequate sun/daylight for future occupiers;
 20. Increase in traffic problems;
 21. Noise and disturbance from construction and less sustainable form of development than re-use of existing building;
 22. Loss of privacy;
 23. Loss of view;
 24. Overshadowing;
 25. Insufficient parking provision; and
 26. Increase in pollution.

The North Croydon Conservation Area Advisory Panel objects to the application:

- 'Building is far too large and too high for this location and context.
- From the street frontage the building appears to be a very large family residence, but without the surrounding space expected of such a unit. Being on three floors it does not respect the stepping down characteristic of the buildings on this side of the road reflecting the general slope of the land. Even by reducing the impact of the height by placing the third floor rooms in the roof space at the south east end of the building the relationship with no. 19 is awkward and unsatisfactory.
- The style of the building and the adoption of the details of no. 9, 11 and 13 would possibly be satisfactory on a building of the same size as these

but on a building as large and of the form as proposed fails to produce acceptable design as can be clearly seen by the north east elevation and particularly the south east and north west elevations which have an institutional appearance.

- The proposals extend far too deep into the site and the extent of the projection to the rear of the property in relation to the rear walls of the adjoining properties will have a detrimental effect on the enjoyment of no.s 13 and 19.
- The proposals would not enhance the conservation area’.
- The Norwood Society objects to the application:
 - ‘The size, massing and height of the proposed building is out of proportion to its neighbours and the design is well below the standard required for a conservation area.
 - Pseudo-Victorian features to a large cube with cliff like side elevations are likely to cause severe loss of visual amenity to the inhabitants of the houses on either side.
 - Front garden which would be hard standing for motor vehicles would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
 - The setting of number 19 would be badly affected by the looming and bulky building proposed for the full width of the site, and the transition viewed from the street scene would be stark and unattractive.
 - Flats not suitable for families with children, may be profitable for land-owners, but do not always meet the needs and achieve a balanced inclusive community.
 - The applicants should be required to produce a far higher standard of design, preferably in a good modern idiom rather than pseudo-Victorian pastiche’.
- Referral from Councillor Sue Bennett:
 - Out of character with streetscene; height of building in comparison with other properties.

6. CONSIDERATIONS

Use policies

- 6.1 The existing pair of semi-detached houses is located within the Church Road Conservation Area, however the house itself is not locally listed or of architectural importance. In principle the demolition of the pair of houses does not raise any objection; however the acceptability of demolition depends on a well detailed proposal which would respect the character and appearance of the Church Road Conservation Area.

Policy H2 of the Replacement Croydon Plan states that the Council will permit housing development within the existing built up area provided this does not conflict with the aim of respecting the character of residential areas and there is no loss of other protected uses.

Policy RO15 of the Replacement Croydon Plan relates to local open space in residential schemes. The application site is located within an area of local park deficiency. As such, the Council would expect a commuted payment for the enhancement of a nearby local park. The application does not include a

contribution towards local open land. This contribution would be in the region of £15,251.

Townscape issues

- 6.2 The applicant states that the building has been designed to follow the Victorian style of the buildings adjoining to the northwest (Nos.9, 11 & 13), all of which consist of two-storey dwellings with accommodation in the roofspace. Some of these properties have been extended with pitched roof two-storey side extensions. These houses are located on a hill sloping from northwest to southeast and there is a difference in ridge heights of between 0.5m-0.7m from No.9 to No.11. The proposed three storey building, extending almost the full width of the site on three floors, set approximately 0.3m below the ridge height of number 13 Sylvan Hill would not relate satisfactorily to Nos. 9, 11 & 13, in either scale or form. The development would appear dominant in the street in terms of its scale, bulk, massing and height. This is accentuated by the scale of the smaller two-storey modern house, with accommodation over the garage located to the southeast of the application site at No.19. The gable-ended features to the front elevation would not be in keeping with the detailing of the Victorian properties to the north-west, which includes hipped roof details over the front bays. The proposed building appears stretched with the smaller two-storey addition with accommodation in the roof, being the same height and form as the main body of the houses adjoining to the northwest. The prominent form and massing of the roof adjoining No.19 would appear stark when viewed from the south-east. The development would, therefore, have a detrimental effect on the character and visual amenity of the streetscene and the character and appearance of the Church Road Conservation Area.

The amendments made to the front of the building to show landscaping to the front boundary and the reduced height and revised location of the refuse store, set back from the front boundary would be more in keeping with the streetscene. The loss of the two trees in the front garden area does not raise any objection as they are not worthy of inclusion in a Tree Preservation Order. However, the loss of the existing established hedge and the overall sparse area that would be retained for landscaping would be unacceptable, and when compounded with a new building occupying the majority of the width of the site and to the scale and proportions proposed would be detrimental to the visual amenities of the locality and the Church Road Conservation Area.

Amenities of adjoining and nearby occupiers

- 6.3 It is acknowledged that the proposed building has been reduced by 1.5m in depth where it would be closest to No.19 Sylvan Hill, however it is still proposed to extend 2.3m beyond and a minimum of 1.2m higher than the adjoining house, replacing a single-storey garage nearer this boundary. This is considered a large addition which would appear dominant when viewed from the rear habitable rooms and garden of No.19. Although the proposed development would be located on a lower level to No.13 Sylvan Hill, it is proposed to extend 6m beyond the rear elevation of this property over three floors, with the upper two floors on the same ground level as No.13. This would replace an existing single-storey rear lean-to extension and would appear dominant when viewed from the rear garden and habitable rooms of the flats at No.13 Sylvan Hill. The bulk of the new building would overshadow neighbouring properties and their gardens. The height of the new building would be considerably higher than the houses it would replace and would have a detrimental impact in terms of loss of outlook to the bedroom dormer window at No.13 Sylvan Hill. There are windows proposed in both side elevations of the new building which

would serve kitchens and dining areas directly overlooking the adjoining properties' gardens and some of the habitable rooms in the flats in No.13.

The proposed balcony to Flat 3 closest to No.19 Sylvan Hill would be provided with a glazed screen. It is considered that this requirement for a screen is symptomatic of the overdevelopment of the site, with the balcony of this flat within 1.5m of the boundary with No.19.

Furthermore, the staggered rear of the building would extend well beyond the neighbouring properties, where a fairly consistent building line exists. This would result in a dominant building and an overbearing impact on the adjoining properties.

Amenities of future occupiers

- 6.4 All the flats and room sizes are of an acceptable standard. There would be adequate communal amenity space to the rear of the property.

Highways and parking

- 6.5 The site is located within an area with a PTAL rating of 2, as indicated on maps produced by Transport for London. The site is therefore considered poorly accessible to public transport links. A single vehicular access is proposed at 3.3m wide. A width of 3.5m is considered adequate to allow a car to pass a pedestrian/cyclist, whereas a crossover width of 4.1m is sufficient for two cars to pass each other in opposite directions. Considering the number of units that the car park will serve, a crossover width of 4.1m would be required to serve the proposal. The car parking standards require a maximum of 1 space to be provided per flat, equating to a total of 13 spaces. The applicant refers to recent permissions which relate to the conversion of some of the Victorian houses adjoining to the northwest of the site where lower levels of parking provision have been permitted. There is a clear difference between a conversion of a property and a new build proposal. For a new build and given the low PTAL rating, it is considered necessary to provide 1 parking space per flat. This amount of parking cannot be provided satisfactorily on site with the form of development proposed and is therefore, another symptom of the overdevelopment of the site. Cycle parking is proposed for 13 cycles which is satisfactory.

Planning Guidance Note 1 recommends contributions towards sustainable transport for residential developments of more than 10 units. No indication has been given that this would be provided (which would have been in the region of £9,100).

Ecological matters

- 6.6 A ground of objection raised by adjoining occupiers to the application is that it would result in the loss of a habitat for stag beetles and bats. The applicants have not carried out a full ecological survey of the site to identify whether any of these species are present and if so, what remedial action would be required. This survey must be provided for approval prior to any grant of planning permission.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The applicants have indicated that an EcoHomes "excellent" pre-assessment rating is achievable which is acceptable. Further details are required including the size, location and infrastructure to support the technology proposed to achieve the 10% renewable energy requirement carbon reductions.

8. EQUALITIES CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 One disabled car parking space is proposed.
Level Access would be secured under the Building Regulations.
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Case Officer: Johanna de Villiers
Background Documents: Ten letters of objection
Letter from North Croydon Conservation Advisory Panel
Letter from Norwood Society
Referral from Councillor Sue Bennett
Contact Officer: Mr. P. Mills 020 8760 5419