

Agenda Item: 6.2

07/01546/P

19/04/2007

Coulsdon East

Application for full planning permission

Agent:

Keith Hiley Associates Limited

Navigator House

60 High Street

Hampton Wick Surrey

KT1 4DB

Applicant:

Ruskin Homes Ltd

1 Harestone Valley Road

Caterham

Surrey

CR3 6HL

Location: Hadleigh, Marlpit Lane, Coulsdon, CR5

Description: Demolition of existing buildings; erection of 1 two storey, 2 three/four storey and 1 three storey buildings to provide a total of 34 two bedroom, 15 one bedroom and 6 three bedroom flats; closure of vehicular access onto Marlpit Lane and alterations to vehicular access onto Reddown Road; provision of associated parking spaces, cycle parking and dustbin enclosures.

Drawing No(s): 1108/101A, 102A, 103A, 104A, 105A, 106A, 107A, 108A, 109A, 110 and RUS15317-10

Recommendation: Refuse Permission

Reason(s) for refusal :-

1. The development would result in a cramped and overcrowded form of backland development that would be dominated by parking, servicing and access arrangements, which together with the limited amenity space for residents would not result in a high quality form of development. The proposal would thereby conflict with Policies UD2, UD13, UD14, H5 and H10 of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (The Croydon Plan).
2. The siting and form of Block B would be detrimental to the amenities of the occupiers of adjoining property resulting in an overbearing impact, visual intrusion and loss of outlook. The proposals would therefore conflict with Policies of UD2, UD3, UD8 and H5 of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (The Croydon Plan).
3. The development would result in the loss of or the putting at risk trees which have amenity value and would thereby conflict with Policies UD14 and NC4 of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (The Croydon Plan)
4. The development would not include an appropriate level of affordable housing and would therefore be contrary to Policy H13 of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (The Croydon Plan) and Supplementary Planning Guidance Note No 6 on Affordable Housing

5. The siting and form of the development would fail to help deter crime and reduce the fear of crime and would thereby conflict with Policy UD6 of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (The Croydon Plan).

Ward: Coulsdon East
Lead Officer: Head of Planning Control

PLANNING COMMITTEE
5th July 2007

APPLICATION NO: 07/1546/P – Hadleigh Garage, Marlpit Lane, Coulsdon

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report concerns an application for full planning permission for the demolition of the existing buildings, the erection of 1 two storey, 2 three & four storey and 1 three storey buildings to provide a total of 34 two bedroom, 15 one bedroom and 6 three bedroom flats, the closure of the vehicular access onto Marlpit Lane and alterations to the vehicular access onto Reddown Road and the provision of 39 parking spaces, cycle parking and dustbin enclosures.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Refuse planning permission for the reasons set out in the Agenda.
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3 BACKGROUND

a. Site Description

- 3.1 The site has an area of 0.61 ha and is of an irregular shape. Several single storey buildings in a poor state of repair occupy the site which was formerly occupied by Grimes, a trade supplier of car parts. The business operation has now ceased. The site also includes two residential properties, Hadleigh and no. 2 Reddown Road.
- 3.2 There are two existing vehicular access into the site, one from Marlpit Lane, adjacent to the railway bridge and one from Reddown Road, between nos. 2 and 4. The major part of the site is situated on ground approximately 6m lower than that of Reddown Road. It is also situated several metres below the nearest residential properties, Charlene Lodge and Tussocks which front Marlpit Lane. These properties are situated above the level of Marlpit Lane and are accessed from Marlpit Lane by steps cut into the embankment. The adjoining properties fronting Reddown Road are also situated above the level of the site and have gardens that slope down from the houses to the site. These comprise two storey single family dwellings of varying size and style, with the exception of Rusper Court which is a two storey block of flats.
- 3.3 There are a number of trees on the site. Most are situated along property boundaries. A group of sycamores, growing into a retaining

wall along the boundary with No. 2 Reddown Road and two yews within the rear garden of this property are covered by Tree Preservation Order 16 1978. A large lime, close to the boundary with 4B Reddown Road, is protected by TPO 05 2005. There is also a large area of trees growing along the railway embankment on the western side of the site.

- 3.4 The embankment rises by some 3m up to the south bound platform of Coulsdon South Station. The station can be accessed via a Public Footpath which bounds the southern side of the site via a series of steps up to the platform level. This is currently well used by residents in the area. Along the western part of the site parallel to the railway embankment is a watercourse/ditch, currently partly culverted and poorly maintained. A public sewer also runs through the centre of the site in a north south direction.
- 3.5 Opposite the site on the other side of Marlpit Lane is the Ullswater industrial area and to the south of this lies the Coulsdon Memorial Recreation Ground.
- 3.6 The site is located within the Hooley Farm Archaeological Priory Zone.

b. Relevant Planning History

- 3.7 04/3317/P - In August 2004 an application was submitted for the demolition of the existing buildings and the erection of a 3, 4 and 5 storey building and a 2 storey building with accommodation in the roof space to provide a total of 59 two bedroom flats, the closure of the vehicular access onto Marlpit Lane and the formation of an access road onto Reddown Road and the provision of 46 parking spaces, cycle parking and a dustbin enclosure.

Due to the site having an area of over 0.5 ha the application was screened under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations and it was determined that an Environmental Assessment was not required. However, the application was subsequently *withdrawn*.

- 3.8 05/0678/P - Planning permission was *refused* on 22 December 2005 for the demolition of the existing buildings, the erection of 1 two storey building, 1 two & three storey building, 1 three storey building and 2 linked four storey buildings with a podium level to provide a total of 40 two bedroom and 16 one bedroom flats, the closure of the vehicular access onto Marlpit Lane and alterations to the vehicular access onto Reddown Road, the provision of 44 parking spaces, cycle parking and dustbin enclosures.
- 3.9 05/0706/P – Planning permission was *refused* on 28 April 2005 for the demolition of the existing buildings, the erection of 2 two & three storey, 1 three storey and 1 five & six storey buildings to provide a total of 55 two bedroom flats, the closure of the vehicular access onto Marlpit Lane and alterations to the vehicular access onto Reddown Road and the provision of 42 parking spaces, cycle parking and a dustbin enclosure.

The decision was the subject of an appeal which was subsequently *withdrawn*.

c. Proposal

- 3.10 The proposal is for the erection of four buildings to provide 55 flats comprising 34 two bedroom, 15 one bedroom and 6 three bedroom units. Within the heart of the site, the largest block, block A, would comprise 24 flats, a mix of one, two and three bedrooms, over four floors. Two further blocks would be situated either side of the main block. To the south block B would comprise 10 two bedroom and 2 one bedroom flats, accommodated in a two and three storey building. In the northern corner of the site block C would contain 14 two bedroom flats over two and three floors. The fourth block would comprise 5 flats, 2 one bedroom and 3 two bedroom, over two floors and would be sited on Reddown Road next to the proposed vehicular access into the site. 39 surface level parking spaces are proposed. The 24 units in block A would provide affordable housing, with the 31 units proposed in the remaining three blocks providing market housing.
- 3.11 The blocks would be constructed principally of brick with string courses and window surrounds, with some tile hanging and rendering to add additional interest. Roofs would be pitched with some pyramidal and finished in plain tiles. Windows, fascias, soffits and rainwater goods would be constructed of UPVC.
- 3.12 The application is accompanied by a Planning Report, an Affordable Housing Statement, a Transport Assessment, an Archaeological Desk Based Assessment, an Environmental Noise and Vibration Assessment, a Report on Likely Impact on Trees, a Landscape Design Statement, an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Preliminary Bat Survey, a Sustainability Statement, a Renewable Energy Feasibility Study, a Pre-Assessment Ecohomes Report, and Design and Access Statements.

4 POLICIES

- 4.1 The relevant policies of the Croydon Replacement Unitary Development Plan (referred to as the Croydon Plan) are SP1, SP2, SP3, UD1, UD2, UD3, UD6, UD7, UD8, UD12, UD13, UD14, UD15, UD16, SP4, UC11, SP7, RO12, SP8, NC4, SP9, SP10, SP11, SP13, EP1, EP4, EP5, EP6, EP16, SP14, T2, T4, T8, T11, EM5, SP18, H2, H4, H9, H10 and H13.

5 CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 The application has been advertised in the press as a 'major application' in accordance with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995.

- 5.2 282 local residents have been notified of the application. 76 letters have been received objecting to the application. The objections are summarised as follows:
- (a) Overdevelopment;
 - (b) Design and materials not in keeping with the locality;
 - (c) Insufficient parking;
 - (d) Increase in traffic congestion on Reddown Road;
 - (e) Buildings would be too high;
 - (f) Noise pollution from increase in number of people in the area;
 - (g) Increased air pollution;
 - (h) Visual intrusion and loss of privacy to existing residents;
 - (i) Poor living environment for the new residents;
 - (j) Insufficient amenity space;
 - (k) Pressure on sewage system;
 - (l) Existing access to the station via the footpath should be improved;
 - (m) Loss of trees and wildlife;
 - (n) 4/4B Reddown Road and this site should be considered together;
 - (o) Unsustainable development;
 - (p) Lack of added value to local amenities;
 - (q) Detrimental impact on local water course.
- 5.3 1 letter has been received in support and 3 further letters 'commenting' on the proposal.
- 5.4 Councillor Brian Udell has referred the application on the grounds of overdevelopment and density; lack of amenity space; failure to take account of the potential development of adjoining sites in proposal; and entrance/exit near to a dangerous junction.
- 5.5 East Coulsdon Residents' Association have objected on the grounds of overdevelopment, increased traffic generation, dangerous vehicular access point, insufficient parking provision, closure of Marlpit Lane entrance into the site and lack of amenity space.

- 5.6 The Coulsdon Branch of the Labour Party are broadly in favour of the application particularly low cost and smaller housing. However there is concern regarding increased parking pressure.
- 5.7 The Crime Prevention Design Advisor has made a number of detailed comments on the proposals. Of particular concern are the safety and security of the cycle stores, the lack of distinction between public, semi-public and private space, and the adequacy of fencing and footpaths within the site.
- 5.8 English Heritage comment that on balance the scheme would not affect archaeology.

6 CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 The principal issues are the impact of the proposal relating to:

- (i) land use and density,
- (ii) appearance in the streetscene and on the character of the area,
- (iii) the impact on adjoining occupiers,
- (iv) the amenities of the occupiers of the development,
- (v) parking and highway implications,
- (vi) trees,
- (vii) affordable housing,
- (viii) sustainability,
- (ix) safety and security,
- (x) Local Open Land provision, and,
- (xi) Public art provision.

Land Use and Density

6.2 Policy EM5 of the Croydon Plan seeks to retain industrial and warehousing uses outside of the main designated areas. In this case, the Council's records indicated that the site was used for storage. However this appears to have been associated with the principal use of the site for the sale of car parts to the trade and members of the public. As such, the designation of the site would be for A1 (retail) rather than storage and, therefore, the use would not be protected by these policies.

6.3 Considering the size of the site, the fact that it can reasonably be categorised as 'brownfield' and its previous use, the site has

development potential consistent with the objectives of PPG3 and the Unitary Development Plan. The density for family housing schemes, as defined in Policy H9 of the Unitary Development Plan, is between 150-250 habitable rooms to the hectare (hrh). This proposal would provide 156 habitable rooms, and the area of the site is 0.61 hectares. The density of this proposal would therefore be 256 habitable rooms per hectare.

6.4 This exceeds the density ranges set out above. Policy H10 of the Croydon Plan permits higher densities for residential development than those set out above on appropriate sites in areas of high accessibility to services and public transport provision. This policy goes on to state that in assessing whether a site is suitable for higher density, the following criteria taken into account will include:

- (i) the accessibility of a site to a centre offering a range of services;
- (ii) whether the scheme is appropriate given the character and context of the area and can meet the requirements for a high quality design;
- (iii) the accessibility of the site to public transport provision; and
- (iv) the impact of the development on the achievement of other policies in the plan including urban design, retailing, leisure, community services and conservation policies.

6.5 The site is not situated within a town or district centre. Nevertheless, it is considered that the site does have relatively good links with public transport and is in reasonable proximity to local shops and services in Coulsdon, located approximately 300m away. As such, the site could be suitable for a higher density development subject to other planning considerations being satisfactory, in particular in relation to its effect upon the character and context of the area and the detailed design of the proposals.

Impact on the streetscene and the character of the area

6.6 The residential property adjoining and within the vicinity of the site is mixed in character with a variety of styles, sizes and materials. Given this, and given the relationship of the site, on significantly lower ground to its surroundings, there is the opportunity for a high quality development that utilises creatively, the changes in level within the site.

6.7 The block fronting Reddown Road would clearly be the most prominent in the streetscene. This would be two storeys in height and with varied roof forms would relate satisfactorily to the streetscene and the general character of the area.

6.8 The blocks to the rear of the site adjacent to the railway are significantly bulkier and larger, being three or four storeys in height. Given the changes in levels within the site this size of building could be

accommodated without adversely affecting the streetscene or the character of the area, subject to other considerations being acceptable.

- 6.9 However, within the development itself there is little definition as to what constitutes private or public space and front entrances to buildings are poorly defined and/or in the wrong place to make best use the land. In particular the proposal tends to turn its back on the public footpath to the station, and the pedestrian links to the station from within the site are poor.
- 6.10 The development is dominated by access and parking arrangements, which in itself appears very convoluted. The resulting form is disaggregated, with buildings that do not seem to have a clear front or back and, consequently no clear private amenity space to the rear for the occupiers.

Impact on Adjoining Occupiers.

- 6.11 Given the changes in levels within and surrounding the site it is considered that there would be no adverse impact on the amenities of adjoining occupiers arising from blocks A, C and D.
- 6.12 However, block B would be in close proximity to the rear of 4-8 Reddown Road, at its closest point being 16m from the rear elevation of these buildings. Whilst an attempt to minimise the impact of the new building on these properties has been made in relation to the positioning of windows, it is considered that the building would still be visually intrusive and overbearing to these properties. Furthermore the design of this building with an entrance and path being immediately to the rear of these properties would not result in a development that would be safe and secure.

Amenities of the Proposed Occupiers

- 6.13 The size and form of the proposed flats in themselves would generally appear to be of a reasonable size and layout, varying from 43sq m up to 83 sq m in area.
- 6.14 Some of the flats would have access to a private balcony, with the communal grounds around all the buildings being accessible to all residents. The amenity space would incorporate some of the adjoining railway land.
- 6.15 The Landscape Design Statement and supporting information produced by the applicant indicates a significant enhancement of the existing ditch and railway embankment, which would be undertaken by the developers under licence agreement from Network Rail. However, it is unclear as to what extent residents would have to access these areas, or whether the area would be particularly useable or not. It would nevertheless be a visual improvement on the current situation.
- 6.16 Given that the site is adjacent to a railway, a PPG24 (Planning and Noise) Noise Assessment has been undertaken by the developers.

This indicates that the site falls into Noise Exposure Category (NEC) B with the northern area of the site NEC C.

- 6.17 NEC B states that noise should be taken into account when determining planning applications and, where appropriate, conditions imposed to ensure an adequate level of protection against noise. NEC C states that planning permission should not normally be granted. Where it is considered that permission should be given, for example because there are no alternative quieter sites available, conditions should be imposed to ensure a commensurate level of protection against noise.
- 6.18 In this case it is considered that the provision of suitable double glazing and acoustic ventilation could ensure an acceptable internal noise environment, and if planning permission were to be granted this could be secured by condition.
- 6.19 The impact of noise on the external space is obviously less easy to control. Given the physical constraints of the site it is not considered that there are any specific noise mitigation measures that could be undertaken to reduce railway noise on the amenity space. However, this does emphasize the need to secure a development that makes best use of the siting and form of buildings integrated with a high quality landscaping scheme to assist in mitigating noise impact.

Highways

- 6.20 The site is located within an area with a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 2 (on a scale of 1a - 6b, where 6b is the most accessible), as indicated on maps produced by Transport for London (TfL). The site would therefore appear to have poor accessibility to public transport links. However, it is immediately adjacent Coulsdon South station and in close proximity to Coulsdon town centre and its associated bus routes.
- 6.21 A total of 39 car parking spaces would be provided for the 55 flats. The car parking standards described in Appendix 2 of the 2nd Deposit of the Croydon Plan require a maximum of 1 space to be provided per flat. Whilst the PTAL index indicates low accessibility to public transport facilities, given its close proximity to Coulsdon South Station, and bus routes and amenities within the nearby Coulsdon town centre, this 20% reduction is considered acceptable. The applicant has also confirmed that they would promote sustainable forms of travel through a Green Travel Plan.
- 6.22 The applicant has made provision for 5 disabled spaces. This is considered acceptable, subject to their detailing being correct.
- 6.23 The applicant has provided covered, secured cycle storage for 55 cycles. This meets the minimum required standard of 1 space per Unit, as required by Policy T14 of the Plan.

- 6.24 However, the siting of the parking spaces and their relationship with the flats and the amenity space are poor. Their siting would not afford for much natural surveillance by the occupants of the flats, and some are remote from the entrances to the flats. Similarly the proposed cycle parking areas are remote from flats. This leads to safety and security concerns.
- 6.25 It is considered that traffic generation from the site would not have a significant impact on the surrounding road network. The transport information concludes that a pro-rata increase in traffic will result in an additional 21 vehicles during the AM peak hour and 17 vehicles during the PM peak.
- 6.26 Similarly the facilities for turning and manoeuvring within the site are also acceptable, albeit tight, and assuming that no additional vehicles are parked outside of the designated parking spaces.
- 6.27 It is likely that new residents would use the station and contribute to footfall along the existing public footpath to the station on the southern side of the site. The station forms part of the Coulsdon Area Regeneration Strategy (SPG 20) and therefore consideration has been given as to possible improvements that could be undertaken in conjunction with this development. However, a ramped access from the public footpath to improve accessibility to the station would not be viable given the land take involved in providing 1:25 ramps. Nevertheless, a programme of improvements is being considered which might include improvements to lighting, improved toilet facilities and lift access etc. at the station. The developer has indicated an agreement to a financial contribution towards such improvements which would include the financial contribution usually directed towards local open land contributions (see below).
- 6.28 The proposal would result in the closure of the existing vehicular access onto Marlpit Lane, this is welcomed as currently the vehicular sightlines at this location are very poor and the closure would improve pedestrian and vehicular safety.
- 6.29 Planning Guidance Note 1 recommends contributions towards Sustainable Transport for residential developments of more than 10 dwellings. These contributions are based on £700 for each 1-2 bed unit and £1000 for each 3+ bed unit. This equates to a contribution of £40,300.

Trees

- 6.30 The site contains a number of trees some of which benefit from a Tree Preservation Order and the proposed scheme would involve the loss of 5 protected trees. These trees have been assessed by the Council's Trees Officer who considers some of them to be of an average to poor condition and of limited visual amenity. It is therefore considered acceptable to allow the removal of four protected Sycamore trees (T17 to T19 and T21), subject to adequate replacement planting being provided in a suitable location within the site.

- 6.31 There are however concerns about the loss of the preserved Yew Tree (T13) which is close to the Reddown Road frontage. This tree is considered to be of moderate quality and value and is more prominent in the streetscene.
- 6.32 Similarly concerns are raised regarding the need to prune a number of existing trees and vegetation, and whether they can be reasonably retained in a satisfactory form during the course of, and on completion of the development.
- 6.33 There is also a lack of detail on the replacement tree planting scheme required to mitigate the proposed loss of trees. As such, the proposal is considered unacceptable in terms of its impact on trees, and consequently the character of the area.

Affordable housing

- 6.34 Croydon's Affordable Housing Policy states that 50% of the habitable rooms or area of the residential development on sites of between 30 or more homes should be provided as affordable housing with 35% of habitable homes to be provided as social rent and 15% as subsidised market housing (shared ownership or intermediate rent).
- 6.35 The affordable housing would be contained within block A, equating to 24 flats or 43% of all habitable rooms. 12 of the parking spaces would also be allocated to the affordable housing.
- 6.36 The applicant suggests that it is not financially viable for the development to support more than 43% affordable housing. Whilst a financial assessment has been submitted to justify this level of affordable housing, the details have not been agreed by the Council's Housing Department. The level of affordable housing proposed is therefore not acceptable.

Sustainability

- 6.37 The submitted Sustainability Statement indicates that the proposal will just meet the 'Excellent' requirement, as required by Council policy. The proposal is therefore considered narrowly acceptable in sustainability terms. However if any of the elements which form part of this assessment were to slip during the course of construction the proposal would fail to meet this standard.

Safety and Security

- 6.38 The proposal fails to adequately demonstrate that the development would ultimately be safe and secure. Parking spaces and cycle stores are generally poorly located, and there is inadequate definition of what constitutes private or public space.
- 6.39 Access to block B is particularly poor, and the design of this block fails to address the need to provide an attractive environment or building that fronts the public footpath to the station. There is also concern as to how all residents of the new development would safely access the station.

Local open land provision

- 6.40 Policy RO12 of the draft Croydon Plan requires that residential schemes meet the recreational open space needs arising from the proposal. The site would not be in an area deficient in local parks being within 400m from Coulsdon Memorial Recreation Ground. Within the terms of the policy, the developer would be expected to make a commuted payment for about 50% of the cost of creating an area of open land for the development. The nearby park has good facilities and given the need to improve facilities at the station, it is considered that in this case, the financial contribution toward improving local open land provision might be directed instead to the improvements associated with the station.

Public Art

- 6.41 Policy UD16 of the Croydon Plan requires the provision of public art within development proposals where appropriate. The proposal does not include a public art element.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The proposal involves the more intensive redevelopment of an existing brownfield site. The scheme would involve the loss or harm to a number of trees, including those protected by a Tree Preservation Order. Further increased pressure on the existing trees that would occur from the intensive use of the site would inevitably harm these trees in the long term.

8 EQUALITIES CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 5 sub-standard disabled parking spaces are indicated. Given the constraints of the site there are significant changes in levels, although these can be accommodated through ramped accesses. The application offers the opportunity to develop properties with level access and improve the accessibility of the station by negotiation.

Case Officer: Billy Tipping
Background Documents: 80 letters of representation
Referral from Councillor Brian Udell
Letter from East Coulsdon Residents Association
Letter from Coulsdon branch of the Labour Party
Letter from the Crime Prevention Design Advisor
Letter from English Heritage

Contact Officer: Mr. P Mills Tel: (020) 8760 5419