

SECTION '2' – Applications meriting special consideration

Application No : 15/01398/FULL1

Ward:

Petts Wood And Knoll

**Address : Mega House Crest View Drive Petts
Wood Orpington BR5 1BY**

OS Grid Ref: E: 544257 N: 167744

Applicant : G K GOLDMAN KLEIN LTD

Objections : YES

Description of Development:

Erection of roof extension over part of building to provide B1(a) office accommodation

Key designations:

Smoke Control SCA 8

Proposal

Proposal

This scheme is for the provision of a mansard roof extension to the existing block to provide additional 2585sq ft. /240 sq. metres of additional floor space at third floor level to create one additional office suite. The proposed mansard roof would occupy the section of roof between the existing projecting core/tank room of the building and a projecting element at the SE end of the building. The extension will include three balconies to the rear elevation.

The proposed plans also include elevational alterations to the existing building, including partial rendering and cladding, the provision of new uPVC windows, and alterations to the existing front glazed entrance to incorporate a dark grey aluminium finish. The application submission states that the existing 50 off-street parking spaces will remain in place.

This application is accompanied by a Planning, Design & Access Statement.

Location

The application site is located to the SE corner of Crest View Drive, in close proximity of its junction with Queensway which forms the western part of Petts Wood District Centre. The site adjoins residential development to the north and west. The neighbouring properties to the north comprise of two-storey suburban houses, whilst the building to the west (along the facing side of the road) forms a four-storey block of 12 flats of modern appearance. A public car park adjoins the site beyond its southern boundary, and a railway line beyond its eastern boundary.

Consultations

Comments from Local Residents

Nearby owners/occupiers were notified of the application and representations were received which can be summarised as follows:

- o current height of Mega House is in keeping with neighbouring properties
- o additional storey will make the building more dominant and taller than surrounding buildings
- o excessive parking demand in the area requires further restrictions
- o proposal will enable the entire building to be updated
- o support for proposal

Comments from Consultees

From a technical Highways perspective, looking at the parking standards for the whole building, including the additional floor, the parking provision would meet UDP standards.

Planning Considerations

Planning Considerations

The application falls to be determined in accordance with Policies BE1, T3 and EMP2 of the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The most relevant London Plan (2015) policies are as follows:

- 6.13 Parking
- 7.2 An inclusive environment
- 7.4 Local character
- 7.6 Architecture

London Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

Housing: Supplementary Planning Guidance. (November 2012)

Planning History

Under application ref. 14/02500, Prior Approval was granted in respect of the change of use of the existing building from Class B1(a) office use to residential

Class C3 use to provide 29 flats. The proposal also reduced the number of parking spaces within the site to around 32 (subject to the final layout being agreed) from the existing 50.

Under ref. 14/04311 planning permission was granted in respect of elevational alterations to the existing building.

Under ref. 14/04309 an application for the erection of a roof extension to form part fourth floor to provide office accommodation was refused on the following ground:

"The proposal, by reason of its excessive scale, bulk and height, would result in an overly prominent structure within the streetscene, which would adversely affect the visual amenities of the area, contrary to Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan."

This application is currently the subject of an appeal.

Neighbouring site: Mortimer House, 40 Chatsworth Parade

Of relevance, under ref. 10/03144 planning permission was granted in December 2010 in respect of a three-storey rear extension and an additional storey to part of the existing block (to form a part-4 and part-3 storey building) to provide additional office accommodation incorporating new entrance and alterations to car parking layout. That scheme was not implemented.

Subsequently, under ref. 11/00538, an application relating to the neighbouring building at Mortimer House (situated to the southern side of the adjoining public car park) involving for a four-storey extension and an additional two storeys to the existing offices to provide part four/ five storey building, was refused for the following reasons:

"The proposal, by reason of its excessive scale, bulk and height, would result in an overly prominent structure within the street scene and would impact detrimentally on the visual amenities of the area, contrary to Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan."

"The proposed development would be detrimental to the amenities now enjoyed by the residents of properties adjoining the site by reason of loss of prospect and visual impact as a result of the four storey rear extension, contrary to Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan."

This latter application was subsequently dismissed at appeal.

Conclusions

Conclusions

The main considerations in this case relate to the impact of the proposal on local character and townscape and on residential amenity; the appropriateness of this

development in this location in light of Policy EMP2 of the UDP and the NPPF; and whether the scheme provides an appropriate amount of parking.

In terms of local character, the application site is situated just beyond the northern periphery of Petts Wood District Centre, and adjoins residential development to the north and west. The development to the north comprises of two-storey houses. The facing block is four storeys in height, but incorporates a substantially smaller footprint (in comparison to Mega House) which measures approximately 300sq metres in area. The buildings to the south fronting Queensway are of two/three storey form and contribute to the modest scale and suburban character of this part of Petts Wood. As noted above, the neighbouring office block at Mortimer House (situated within the opposite side of the public car park) was granted planning permission under ref. 10/03144 for extensions that would have resulted in a part-4 and part-3 storey building. Given its somewhat more concealed location (within close proximity of the railway line and the commercial centre of Petts Wood), it is not considered that this development is directly comparable with the application scheme or provides justification to favour it; furthermore, the Appeal Decision relating to the dismissed 2011 application (ref. 11/00538) highlighted the harm resulting from excessive height.

In comparison to the application refused under ref. 14/04309 the scheme has been amended to omit the mansard roof addition above the northern wing of the building so that the extension will be confined above the part of the building which faces toward and is parallel to Crest View Drive and Queensway. The northern wing will remain three storeys in height and retain its existing flat roof.

Whilst it is recognised that the changes outlined above seek to overcome the objections that arose in respect of the larger 2014 proposal, concerns remain as to the overall impact of the development within the wider streetscene, including from a design perspective and also the relationship with surrounding buildings. Whilst Mega House, in its existing three-storey form, is considered to be of a height commensurate with or not excessively harmful to the neighbouring development, the enlarged building (the height of which will be increased to a maximum of 13.8m) will be of a height and bulk which will appear out of scale and dominant within its surroundings, particularly the neighbouring two-storey houses to the north and the three storey commercial blocks which form Charsworth Parade which front Queensway to the south. The facing building block, despite its four-storey form (with a height of approximately 10.9m), will be lower in height than the enlarged building and, in any case, appears a lot more discreet within the streetscene in view of its relatively modest scale. Accordingly, it is not considered that this proposal fundamentally addresses concerns that were previously raised in respect of the impact on local character.

Additional concerns relate to the finished appearance of the enlarged building which will look unbalanced and incongruous in appearance given the resultant disparity in the height of the Mega House.

In regard to the appropriateness of this office accommodation, Policy EMP2 advises that proposals for office development will be expected to ensure that:

- (i) the shopping functions of the town centres are not impaired;
- (ii) access to the development by means other than the private car can be achieved, if necessary through the use of planning obligations; and
- (iii) on small office schemes mixed use or flexible space for small businesses and start-ups can be achieved.

The policy goes on to advise that schemes that provide facilities for small businesses will be permitted in local centres, provided that the vitality and viability of that centre is not impaired.

In light of the above policy criterion, it is considered that the proposal is acceptable in that the shopping function of the town centre will not be impaired; that there is adequate public transport service provision within close proximity of the site; and that the additional floor space has the potential to provide a beneficial business resource.

On the matter of parking, this application does not refer to the residential scheme which is the subject of Prior Approval for 29 flats within the existing building (with the associated reduction of parking spaces). The application has been submitted on the basis that this scheme provides an extension to the existing office accommodation with the existing 50 parking spaces remaining. As the existing level of parking provision is to remain, Members may consider that this existing level would be acceptable despite there being a net increase in office accommodation within the site.

In summary, whilst the principle of providing new office accommodation is considered acceptable, particularly given the potential loss of the existing office accommodation, the impact of this scheme on local character, particularly in view of its scale, bulk and height, is considered unacceptable.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on the file refs set out in the Planning History section above, excluding exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: APPLICATION BE REFUSED

The reasons for refusal are:

The proposal, by reason of its excessive scale, bulk and height, would result in an overly prominent structure within the streetscene, which would adversely affect the visual amenities of the area, contrary to Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan.

The appearance of the extended building is unsatisfactory with little regard for architectural design in relation to form, use of materials and proportion of individual elements, thereby contrary to Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan.

