

**Application No :** 16/04390/FULL1

**Ward:**  
**Chislehurst**

**Address :** 5 White Horse Hill Chislehurst BR7 6DG

**OS Grid Ref:** E: 543433 N: 171244

**Applicant :** Bromley Conservative Association

**Objections :** YES

**Description of Development:**

Three storey rear extension, change of use of ground floor from Office (Class B1) to Residential (Class C3) and creation of 2 one bedroom and 1 two bedroom flats on ground, first and second floors

**Key designations:**

Biggin Hill Safeguarding Area  
London City Airport Safeguarding  
Smoke Control SCA 16

**Proposal**

Planning permission is sought to convert the ground floor office into a residential flat, along with the conversion of the upper floor flat and storage space into 2 one bedroom flats. The proposal includes a three storey rear extension.

The proposed extension will have a rear projection of 3.3m at ground floor level, with a flat roof with a height of 2.9m. The first and second floor aspect of the extension will also have a rear projection of 6m from the existing rear wall, incorporating a bay feature and an overall height of 10.1m with a flat roof.

Elevational alterations include changes to the front elevation to provide an additional front door for the new ground floor flat.

The application was deferred from Plans Sub-Committee on the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2017 in order to seek a reduction in the rear projection of the ground floor rear extension. Amended plans have been submitted dated 01/02/17 indicating a reduction from 4.2m to 3.3m. The previous report is repeated below, updated where necessary.

**Location**

The site is located on the western side of White Horse Hill and comprises an end of terrace three storey building with a ground floor office occupied by the Bromley and Chislehurst Conservative Association. The upper floors contain a single flat and additional storage space. The wider area is largely residential in nature, with housing development sites under construction to the rear.

## **Comments from Local residents**

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

- Additional dwellings will require car parking in order to avoid further parking stress in the local area.

## **Consultations**

Highways – given the relatively minor nature of the proposal there is unlikely to be a significant increase in demand for parking and no objection is raised.

Environmental Health – concerns are raised that the floor areas of the flats proposed do not appear to meet the minimum space standards. The flats proposed will be above a commercial premises and therefore noise transfer would be a potential issue. Internal doors should be included to improve escape routes in case of fire. The proposed ground floor flat lacks external amenity space for family habitation.

## **Planning Considerations**

The application falls to be determined in accordance with the following:

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012)

The NPPF confirms that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Chapter 1 – Building a Strong and Competitive Economy  
Chapter 4 – Promoting Sustainable Transport  
Chapter 6 – Delivering a Wide Choice of High Quality Homes  
Chapter 7 - Requiring Good Design

The London Plan (2015)

Policy 3.3     Increasing housing Supply  
Policy 3.4     Optimising Housing Potential  
Policy 3.5     Quality and Design of Housing Developments  
Policy 4.2     Offices  
Policy 5.13    Sustainable Drainage  
Policy 6.9     Cycling  
Policy 6.13    Parking  
Policy 7.4     Local Character  
Policy 7.6     Architecture

Unitary Development Plan (2006)

BE1    Design of New Development

H1 Housing  
H11 Residential Conversions  
H7 Housing Density and Design  
T3 Parking  
T7 Cyclists  
T18 Road Safety  
EMP3 Office Development  
EMP5 Development Outside Business Areas  
EMP7 Business Support

#### Other Guidance

Supplementary Planning Guidance 1 - General Design Principles  
Supplementary Planning Guidance 2 - Residential Design Guidance

#### Emerging Bromley Local Plan:

The Council is preparing a Local Plan and commenced a period of consultation on its proposed submission draft of the Local Plan on November 14th 2016 which closes on December 31st 2016 (under The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 as amended). It is anticipated that submission of the draft Local Plan to the Secretary of State will occur in the early part of 2017. These documents are a material consideration. The weight attached to the draft policies increases as the Local Plan process advances.

Draft Policy 1 - Housing Supply  
Draft Policy 4 - Housing Design  
Draft Policy 9 – Residential Conversions  
Draft Policy 30 - Parking  
Draft Policy 31 - Relieving Congestion  
Draft Policy 32 - Road Safety  
Draft Policy 33 - Access for All  
Draft Policy 37 - General Design of Development  
Draft Policy 77 - Landscape Quality and Character  
Draft Policy 83 – Non-Designated Employment Land  
Draft Policy 86 – Office Uses Outside Town Centres and Office Clusters  
Draft Policy 113 - Waste Management in New Development  
Draft Policy 116 - Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)  
Draft Policy 117- Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Capacity  
Draft Policy 119 - Noise Pollution  
Draft Policy 120 - Air Quality  
Draft Policy 122 - Light Pollution  
Draft Policy 123 - Sustainable Design and Construction  
Draft Policy 124 - Carbon Dioxide Reduction, Decentralise Energy Networks and Renewable Energy

#### **Planning History**

There is no recent and relevant planning history at the site.

## **Conclusions**

The main issues relating to the application are the effect that it would have on the character of the area, the standard of accommodation provided for future occupants, the impact that it would have on the amenities of the occupants of surrounding residential properties and the impact on highway safety.

The application site was visited by the case officer and the aims and objectives of the above policies, national and regional planning guidance, all other material planning considerations including any objections, other representations and relevant planning history on the site were taken into account in the assessment of the proposal.

### Standard of Accommodation

The application includes the conversion of the existing upper floor office space and flat into 2 one bedroom flats and the creation of a two bedroom flat at ground floor level. The access to the ground floor flat will be via the existing commercial door, with access to the upper floor flats via the existing front door, providing a hallway to the side of the ground floor commercial premises similar to the existing situation at the site.

The Technical Housing Standards advise that one bedroom two person flats should have a GIA of 50 square metres and 61 square metres for a two bedroom three person flat. Each of the proposed one bedroom flats will have a GIA of 55 square metres and the two bedroom flat will have a GIA of 61 square metres. Therefore all the flats would meet this requirement. The upper floor one bedroom flats would not provide private amenity area and this would usually be expected for residential conversions. There are occasions where this is not possible and it is accepted that in this case, the provision of private amenity space would not be possible without further alterations to the building that may be considered unacceptable. In light of the neighbouring residential development that is currently under construction, it is considered that further outdoor amenity space for the upper floor flats may be unsuitable in this location. The site falls within an area that has a low PTAL rating, however it is in close proximity (150m) to the Walden Recreation Ground, therefore the lack of private amenity space is not considered to be harmful to the amenities of future occupants of the upper floor flats in this case. These units are one bedroom and will not therefore be inhabited by families.

The ground floor proposed flat will have two bedrooms and will be likely to home a family. The ground floor is provided with a 15 sqm amenity area, which has increased in size from 9 sqm originally submitted. This increase results from the reduction to the rear extension. This amenity area meets the London Plan SPG requirement and the layout is improved to provide a higher quality external amenity space for family occupation. The standard of accommodation throughout the scheme is therefore considered to be acceptable on balance.

### Impact on the Character of the Area

The proposed extension will be to the rear of the building and will not affect the front elevation or the street scene in general. The roof will be flat and lower than the main roof height, and it will not be possible to view the extension from public areas. The extensions will not dominate the host building and are therefore considered to be acceptable in regards to the local character of the area.

### Impact on Neighbouring Amenities

The proposed development will present a ground floor flat roofed extension that will project 3.3m to the rear of No. 7, which has been converted into a residential dwelling. The relationship resulting from the ground floor extension would not impact significantly on the amenities of No. 7, and the reduction in the rear projection would respect the light and outlook from the neighbouring rear window.

At first and second floor level, the proposed extension will be sited 1.5m from the flank boundary with No. 7, and will have a rear projection of 3.7m. The extension provides a bay that reduces bulk and it is considered that the impact from the first and second floor at No. 7 is acceptable on balance.

It is noted that the redevelopment of No. 1-3 White Horse Hill is currently in progress and therefore the extensions to the building must be considered in regard to the potential impact on this neighbouring property. The redevelopment of No. 1-3 comprises a three storey side and rear extension to provide flats. The approved plans indicate no significant flank windows facing No. 5 and therefore it is not considered that the development of No. 5 would impact harmfully on the amenities of future occupants of No. 1-3.

### Loss of Office Accommodation

The proposal would result in the loss of the existing office use at ground floor level. Nos. 7 and 9 benefit from planning permission for the ground floor to be used as residential accommodation, with No. 9 changing use from a dry cleaners under ref. 12/01237 and No. 7 changing from a betting office. Neither of these two neighbouring examples therefore involved the loss of an office.

Policy EMP3 of the Unitary Development Plan only permits the conversion of an office to other uses where it can be demonstrated that there is no local shortage of office floorspace and there is evidence of long term vacancy despite marketing of the premises; and where there is no likely loss of employment resulting from the proposal.

Policy EMP5 states that development of business sites outside of designated Business Areas will be permitted provided that:

- (i) the size, configuration, access arrangements or other characteristics make it unsuitable for uses Classes B1, B2 or B8 use, and
- (ii) full and proper marketing of the site confirms the unsuitability and financial non-viability of the site or premises for those uses.

In this case, the unit is occupied and no such evidence has been submitted to support the change of use in line with the requirements of the relevant planning Policies EMP3 and EMP5. No demonstration of the availability of local office floorspace and information on any loss of employment has been provided. No evidence of an unsuitability of the unit for continued office use in terms of its characteristics or failed marketing and long-term vacancy has been forthcoming. It is therefore considered that the proposal would result in the unacceptable loss of a viable office.

### Summary

Having had regard to the above it was considered that the proposed conversion would be unacceptable as it would result in the unacceptable loss of an office unit with no evidence submitted to justify its loss. It is therefore recommended that Members refuse planning permission.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on file ref(s): 16/04385 and 16/04390 excluding exempt information.

### **RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE for the following reason:**

**1. The proposal would result in the loss of the ground floor office use and no evidence has been submitted to justify the loss of the commercial use in this location, thereby the proposal is contrary to Policies EMP3 and EMP5 of the Unitary Development Plan.**