

SECTION '2' – Applications meriting special consideration

Application No : 10/03698/FULL1

Ward:
Cray Valley East

Address : Alkham Tower Bapchild Place
Orpington BR5 3PL

OS Grid Ref: E: 547288 N: 168039

Applicant : Broomleigh Housing Assoc.

Objections : YES

Description of Development:

Demolition of 2 fifteen storey blocks and erection of 3 three/ four storey and 2 six seven storey blocks comprising 19 one bedroom, 54 two bedroom and 14 three bedroom dwellings with 94 basement and open car parking spaces, bicycle parking, refuse/ recycling storage, childrens play area and landscaping

Proposal

It is proposed to demolish two 15 storey tower blocks and to redevelop the site with 90 residential units of various designs, including three storey town houses, three/four storey apartment buildings, and six / seven storey residential buildings. The new buildings would be grouped around a series of courtyards. The housing density of the proposal is slightly reduced to that which currently exists on site. Parking will be provided in each courtyard and the new scheme would also utilise the existing undercroft parking. As part of the overall 'Masterplan' for the area, it is also proposed to develop an adjacent site fronting High Street, St Mary Cray, which is subject of a separate application (Ref 10/03697) on this agenda. The proposals also include incorporating an area of woodland which would be used as amenity and a play area for the development.

The scheme is for predominantly open market private housing (80 units) but proposes 11% provision of affordable housing which would take the form of 10 shared ownership units. This is below the Council's usual requirement of 35% but the applicants state this reduced level is necessary to make the scheme financially viable.

The applicants state that the proposals have been designed taking account of "Lifetime Homes" criteria.

The application was accompanied by supporting material including the following documents:

- Planning Statement (Robinson Escott Planning)
- Transport Assessment (Project Centre)
- Travel Plan Framework (Project Centre)
- Engineering Services Report (Aecom)
- Structural Engineering and Drainage Strategy (Fluid Structures)
- Historic Environment and Archaeological Assessment (Museum of London Archaeology)
- Arboricultural Survey
- Energy Assessment (Aecom)
- Sustainability Statement (Aecom)
- Flood Risk Assessment (Phlorum)
- Ecological Survey (Phlorum)
- Bat Survey (Bat Survey)
- Environmental Noise Assessment (Aecom)
- Daylight and Sunlight Report (Waterslade)
- Landscape Proposals (Levitt Bernstein)
- Design Proposals including Design and Access Statement (Levitt Bernstein)
- Pre-Assessment Report (Aecom)

An additional Planning Report was submitted to address the comments of APCA and concerns regarding Crime Prevention.

All these documents, plus any other supporting documentation, are available on file for Members to view.

Location

The application site comprises an elevated area between Oakmore Gardens, Mountfield Way Blacksmiths Lane and High Street, in St Mary Cray. The site is currently occupied by two prominent 15 storey residential tower blocks comprising 102 dwellings. Between the two blocks is a large undercroft parking area. The tower blocks are currently unoccupied, and appear to be in a poor state of repair. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character, with a mix of housing types. The site is adjacent to St Mary Cray Conservation Area. It is also designated as an Area of Archaeological Significance. The application site itself is roughly rectangular in shape and along its western side is a steep bank with a significant number of mature trees. This part slopes down to the lower level site fronting High Street (proposed for development under Ref. 10/03697). Nearby to the west is the Nugent Shopping Park, and the Phase 2 Residential Affinity Sutton Scheme fronting the River Cray, currently nearing completion.

Comments from Local Residents

Nearby owners/occupiers were notified of the application and comments have been received that raise the following issues:

- six and seven storey buildings will appear large and overbearing, especially because of the proximity of existing low rise residential development

- proposals are a considerable improvement over the existing buildings, and are to a more appropriate scale; overall the scheme is welcomed
- overall a good scheme, attractively laid out with proper and safe provision for children

The applicants state that a public consultation was undertaken, which showed general support for the proposals and strong support in favour of the removal of the existing towers. The applicants have stated that, where possible, comments made during this consultation stage have been incorporated into the design of these proposals.

Comments from Consultees

From a Heritage and Urban Design point of view no objections are raised to the overall scheme.

English Heritage (Archaeology) considers that no archaeological field work need be carried out prior to the determination of this planning application, but an archaeological condition should be attached to any permission.

English Heritage (Historic Buildings) has raised no objections and is happy for the application to be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance.

From an ecological point of view, no objections are raised and the findings and recommendations of the ecological report submitted with the application are generally accepted.

APCA has raised objections to the scheme concluding that whilst the proposal is a major improvement over what exists at present, concerns are raised about some aspects of the design. Although the “saw toothed” roofscape of the lower blocks would have some sympathy with the adjacent conservation area, concerns are raised regarding the design of the taller blocks which would be highly visible from within the conservation area, and would lack sympathy in design and form, as well as being several storeys too high.

From a tree and landscape point of view, it is noted that there are a number of mature trees which fall within the St Mary Cray Conservation Area. Concerns have been raised regarding the impact on retained trees. However, discussions have taken place with the applicants and these concerns have now been resolved.

No highway objections are raised subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions. Various queries raised have now been address by the applicants.

From a drainage point of view, the applicants are advised to contact Thames Water about the locations of public sewers and what protection measures may be required.

Thames Water observes that there are public sewers crossing the site, and approval must be sought from Thames Water before development starts. Thames

Water raises no overall objections but suggests various informatives and conditions be attached to any permission.

No objections are raised from an environmental health point of view subject to a standard condition being attached.

Crime Prevention – certain concerns have been raised regarding aspects of the design of the proposals, as levels of crime in this area are quite high. A ‘Secure by Design’ condition is suggested.

Planning Considerations

The application should be determined in accordance with the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan:

- BE1 Design of new development
- BE13 Development adjacent to a conservation area
- H1 Housing supply
- H2 Affordable housing
- H3 Affordable housing – off site provision / payment in lieu
- H7 Housing density and design
- NE7 Development and trees
- T1 Transport demand
- T2 Assessment of transport effects

Applications must also accord with the London Plan 2004. Of particular relevance is:

- 3A.1 Housing
- 3A.3 Maximising the potential of sites
- 3A.5 Housing choice
- 4B.1 Design principles

National policy documents are also relevant including:

- PPS1: Delivering Sustainable Development
- PPS3: Housing
- PPS22: Renewable Energy

As part of the application process, it is necessary for the Council to give a ‘Screening Opinion’ as to whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required. The proposal constitutes Schedule 2 Development within the meaning of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999. After taking into account the selection criteria in Schedule 3 of the Regulations and the terms of the European Directive, it is considered that the proposed development would not be likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature, size and location. This view is expressed taking into account all relevant factors including the

information submitted with the application, advice from technical consultees, and the scale and characteristics of the existing and proposed development on site.

Conclusions

The site is currently developed with high density, high rise housing, and its redevelopment is not considered objectionable. Indeed given the poor condition of the existing housing, and the generally poor quality of the existing local environment, the site's redevelopment is to be welcomed. In terms of character and appearance, the proposed scheme is more domestic in scale than the existing blocks. Centred around three courtyards, it is considered to represent a significant improvement over the visually unattractive and overpowering tower blocks that currently exist. The grouping of the residential dwellings around three courtyards breaks up the mass of development and is considered an appropriate design solution. Different housing types including town houses and apartment blocks provide variations in scale, massing and design. The applicants propose utilising a range of building materials including different coloured bricks and render to provide variation within the scheme. The courtyards would have controlled gated access thus addressing crime concerns. A 'secure by design' condition can also be attached to ensure crime prevention measures are maximised.

The site is adjacent to the St Mary Cray Conservation Area and it is considered that the existing tower blocks materially harm the setting of the Conservation Area. The much lower height of the proposed development would be more in keeping with the "village" feel of the adjacent Conservation Area, thus preserving and enhancing its character. Members may consider that the scheme would result in a high quality residential scheme, with appropriate space between buildings, and would result in a significant improvement to the quality of housing stock as well as the physical environment in this locality.

In terms of amenity for residents, private outdoor space would be provided within the development for the majority of residential units, and a communal amenity space including a children's play space is also integrated into the design.

In terms of car parking, 94 spaces are to be provided which would comply with the Council's requirements.

In terms of trees, previous concerns have now been addressed and no objections are raised.

The application proposal provides for 11% provision of affordable housing which would take the form of 10 shared ownership units. This is below the usual Council requirement of 35% (as required by Policy H2) but a full financial viability study has been submitted which concludes that the development can only support provision at this level, and any higher level would seriously affect the scheme's financial viability. The financial viability study has been audited by the Council's consultants who agree with its overall conclusions. Thus it is considered this reduced provision of affordable housing is justified on viability grounds. In terms of tenure, the combination of private / affordable units is also considered to create a better mix of

housing types in the area, thus contributing to a 'mixed and balanced' community, as required by Government Guidance.

If Members are minded to grant permission, a legal agreement will be necessary to secure the provision of affordable housing. No additional financial contributions (for example for health and education provision) are being sought because of the scheme's financial viability

Overall Members may consider that the proposals would, if implemented, represent a significant improvement over the existing housing on the site.

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.

Background papers referred to during production of this report comprise all correspondence on files refs. 10/03697 and 10/03698, excluding exempt information.

RECOMMENDATION: PERMISSION SUBJECT TO THE PRIOR COMPLETION OF A LEGAL AGREEMENT

and the following conditions:

- | | | |
|----|--------|--|
| 1 | ACA01 | Commencement of development within 3 yrs |
| | ACA01R | A01 Reason 3 years |
| 2 | ACA04 | Landscaping Scheme - full app no details |
| | ACA04R | Reason A04 |
| 3 | ACA07 | Boundary enclosure - no detail submitted |
| | ACA07R | Reason A07 |
| 4 | ACB01 | Trees to be retained during building op. |
| | ACB01R | Reason B01 |
| 5 | ACB02 | Trees - protective fencing |
| | ACB02R | Reason B02 |
| 6 | ACB03 | Trees - no bonfires |
| | ACB03R | Reason B03 |
| 7 | ACB04 | Trees - no trenches, pipelines or drains |
| | ACB04R | Reason B04 |
| 8 | ACC01 | Satisfactory materials (ext'nl surfaces) |
| | ACC01R | Reason C01 |
| 9 | ACD02 | Surface water drainage - no det. submitt |
| | ADD02R | Reason D02 |
| 10 | ACD04 | Foul water drainage - no details submitt |
| | ADD04R | Reason D04 |
| 11 | ACD06 | Sustainable drainage system (SuDS) |
| | ADD06R | Reason D06 |
| 12 | ACH03 | Satisfactory parking - full application |
| | ACH03R | Reason H03 |
| 13 | ACH18 | Refuse storage - no details submitted |

	ACH18R	Reason H18
14	ACH22	Bicycle Parking
	ACH22R	Reason H22
15	ACH30	Travel Plan
	ACH30R	Reason H30
16	ACI21	Secured By Design
	ACI21R	I21 reason
17	ACK08	Archaeological access
	ACK08R	K08 reason
18	ACK09	Soil survey - contaminated land
	ACK09R	K09 reason
19	ACL01	Energy Strategy Report
	ADL01R	Reason L01

Reasons for permission:

In granting permission the Local Planning Authority had regard to the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan and the London Plan:

- BE1 Design of new development
- BE13 Development adjacent to a conservation area
- H1 Housing supply
- H2 Affordable housing
- H3 Affordable housing – off site provision / payment in lieu
- H7 Housing density and design
- NE7 Development and trees
- T1 Transport demand
- T2 Assessment of transport effects

- 3A.1 Housing
- 3A.3 Maximising the potential of sites
- 3A.5 Housing choice
- 4B.1 Design principles

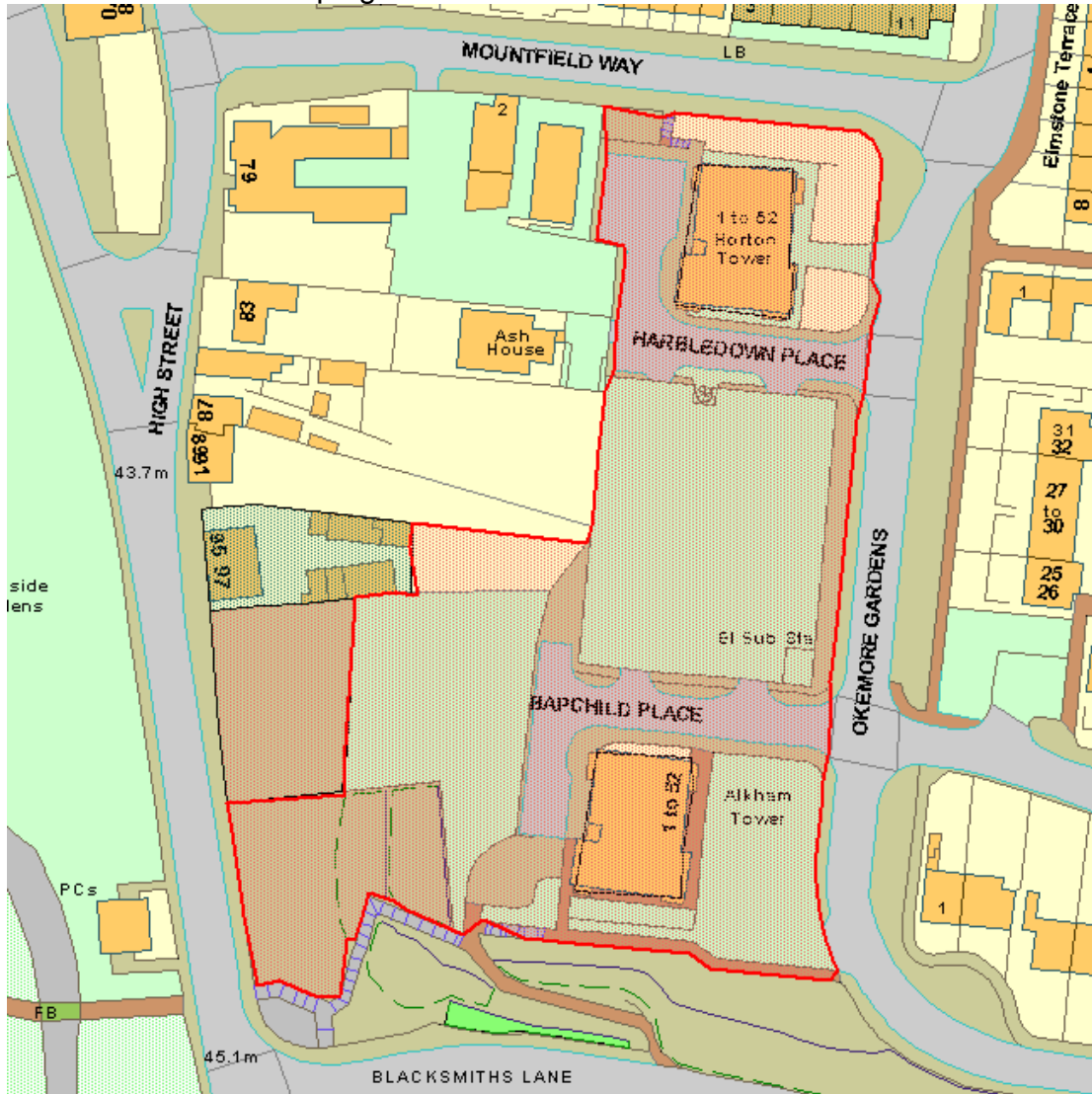
The development is considered satisfactory in relation to the following:

- (a) the appearance in the street scene and in relation to adjacent property
- (b) the effect on the setting of the St Mary Cray Conservation Area
- (c) the design policies of the plan
- (d) all other relevant policies of the plan

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