

PART 5: Planning Applications for Decision

Item 5.2

1.0 SUMMARY OF APPLICATION DETAILS

Ref: 18/04316/FUL
Location: 1-8 Lancing House, 43 Coombe Road, Croydon
Ward: Fairfield
Description: Use of ground floor garages as Caretaker HUB for Croydon Council, to include staff WC, Kitchenette, clothes store and general storage space.
Drawing Nos: CD/C353-P01; P02; P03; P04; P05; P06; P07; Email from Adam Curtis dated 05 February 2018; FAQ document.
Applicant: Croydon Council, Tenancy and neighbourhood services team
Agent: Mrs Ann Fan, Mulalley & Company Ltd
Case Officer: Kate Edwards

- 1.1 This application is being reported to Planning Sub-Committee because a referral from Cllr Niro Sirisena has been received.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Planning Committee resolve to GRANT planning permission.
- 2.2 That the Director of Planning and Strategic Transport has delegated authority to issue the planning permission and impose conditions and informatives to secure the following matters:

Conditions

1. In accordance with the approved plans
2. Use not for storage of flammable liquids.
3. Details of bin storage and signage to be submitted.
4. Commence within 3 years
5. Any other planning condition(s) considered necessary by the Director of Planning and Strategic Transport

Informatives

- 1) Community Infrastructure Levy
- 2) Site notice removal
- 3) Any other informative(s) considered necessary by the Director of Planning and Strategic Transport.

3.0 PROPOSAL AND LOCATION DETAILS

Proposal

3.1 The applicant seeks full planning permission for the following:

- Use of lower ground floor garages as Caretaker HUB for Croydon Council, to include staff WC, Kitchenette, clothes store and general storage space.
- It is understood that the space would be utilised by the caretakers who visit Croydon's housing stock throughout the borough.
- The FAQ document submitted with the application states that "It would be a "central storeroom used by caretakers and caretaker managers. It would be used to store caretaking equipment such as clothing and wheelie bins. It would not be used to store any fuel, flammable liquids or gases."
- It is anticipated by the applicant that the development would generally only result in only 1 or 2 additional vehicular visits to the site a week, which would mostly be with smaller vehicles such as transit vans, between 9am and 2pm. Deliveries may come in come in larger vehicles, and would be anticipated to be needed quarterly.
- The only physical changes proposed would be within the building, where internal partitioning and a new kitchenette and toilet would be provided.

Site and Surroundings

3.2 The application site lies on the northern side of Coombe Road and is occupied by a three storey building with a semi basement. The upper floors are in use as 6 flats in total. The forecourt of the building is used for car parking. The lower ground floor (hereafter the basement) has been vacant for some time and suffering from significant damp issues.

3.3 The site is within the Chatsworth Road Conservation Area, and the Opportunity Area. The area is predominantly residential, although the Coningsby Centre, a secondary stage educational facility, adjoins to the east. The adjoining property to the west, number 41 Coombe Road, a flatted building, is on the Council's Local List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Merit.

Planning History

3.4 None or relevance to this proposal.

4.0 SUMMARY OF KEY REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- The principle of the development is acceptable given that there would be no nett loss of residential units.
- The development would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- The highway impact would be managed by the users of the facility and would not be significant.

5.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSE

5.1 The views of the Planning Service are expressed in the MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS section below.

6.0 LOCAL REPRESENTATION

6.1 The application has been publicised by way of consultation letters sent to the properties which are adjacent to the application site, and by site and press notice. The number of representations received from neighbours, local groups etc in response to notification and publicity of the application were as follows:

No of individual responses: 5 Objecting: 5 Supporting: 0

6.2 One of these representations was from the Chatsworth Residents Association.

6.3 The following issues were raised in representations. Those that are material to the determination of the application are addressed in substance in the MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS section of this report:

- Residents forecourt parking spaces affected
- The basement should be utilised for housing instead of the proposed use.
- Deliveries and pick-ups could cause congestion if vehicles are parked on Coombe Road, or disruption to residents if parked on the forecourt.
- Disturbance to residents of the site and neighbouring buildings.
- There are likely to be lots of visits to the site.
- Not in keeping with the Conservation Area.
- No details of additional bins or signage have been provided. This would be detrimental to the Conservation Area.

6.4 The following comments have been received and raise procedural matters which will require no further assessment:

- No site notices have been erected [Officer Comment – Site and press notices were erected shortly after residents had been consulted. A representation was received after site notices were erected stating that they were not visible. The Case Officer visited the site the next day and confirmed that the site notice was on display in Coombe Road, with some water damage but still legible. New street facing notices with the same consultation date were erected. The proposal has been advertised in accordance with all relevant procedures.]
- There has been no prior meaningful engagement with residents. [Officer comment – Although encouraged, resident engagement is not a requirement of a planning application. The applicant has advised that information was given to residents prior to the submission of the planning application.]
- Use of the basement for storing liquids represents a health and safety risk [Officer comment – The applicant is not proposing to use the premises for the storage of flammable liquids or gases and a condition is recommended to this effect.]
- No details of additional fire protection measures have been submitted. [Officer comment – Details of fire protection are not a requirement of the planning system. Compliance with the Building Regulations with regards to fire safety would be necessary.]
- There is a storage facility in Park Hill park which could be used for the purpose proposed for Lancing House. [Officer comment – Within the context of this application, the presence of another facility of the same use does not represent a reason to restrict planning permission].
- Local Residents should be given an opportunity to comment on any revised drawings. [Officer comment – No revised drawings have been submitted as part of

this application. Only revisions to drawings which would have a materially greater impact to the original drawing are subject to additional consultation.]

6.5 A referral to planning committee has been received from Cllr Niro Sirisena. The additional reasons for referral (other than those outlined above) are as follows:

- Out of character with the residential area
- An underdevelopment of the site which should be utilised for residential intensification

7.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

7.1 In determining any planning application, the Council is required to have regard to the provisions of its Development Plan so far as is material to the application and to any other material considerations and the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Council's adopted Development Plan consists of the Consolidated London Plan 2015, the Croydon Local Plan 2018 and the South London Waste Plan 2012.

7.2 Government Guidance is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), re-issued in July 2018. The NPPF sets out a presumption in favour of sustainable development, requiring that development which accords with an up-to-date local plan should be approved without delay. The NPPF identifies a number of key issues for the delivery of sustainable development, those most relevant to this case are:

- Requiring good design.
- The preservation of the heritage assets
- The provision of community facilities

7.3 The main policy considerations raised by the application that the Sub Committee is required to consider are:

- 7.4 Local character
- 7.6 Architecture
- 6.3 Assessing effects of development on transport capacity
- 6.9 Cycling
- 6.13 Parking
- 7.2 An inclusive environment

7.4 Croydon Local Plan 2018:

- SP1.1 Sustainable development
- SP1.2 Place making
- SP4.1 and SP4.2 Urban design and local character
- SP4.11 regarding character
- SP8.6 and SP8.7 Sustainable travel choice
- SP8.17 Parking
- DM10: Design and character
- DM16: Promoting Healthy Communities
- DM23: Development and construction

- DM25: Sustainable Drainage Systems and Reducing Flood Risk
- DM29: Promoting sustainable travel and reducing congestion
- DM30: Car and cycle parking in new development

7.5 There is relevant additional guidance as follows:

- Chatsworth Road Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (CRCAAMP)
- Conservation Area General Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (CAGG)

8.0 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 The main planning issues raised by the application that the committee must consider are:

- Principle of development
- Impact on character and appearance and heritage assets
- Residential amenity for neighbours
- Transport
- Other planning issues

Principle of development

8.2 The existing space has not been used for many years, but it is understood that it was previously used for parking, which is a purpose that was ancillary to the residential accommodation above. No residential units would be lost as a result of the proposal, and the predominant use of the site for residential purposes would remain with the flats above. There is no designation which requires the provision of further residential accommodation on the site. It is also noted that there's alternative parking to the forecourt of the building. Although many of the policies of the NPPF and Croydon Local Plan highlight the need to provide additional residential accommodation, it is the applicant's prerogative to also consider other uses on an undesignated site. The caretaking service has identified a need for a new storage facility. Notwithstanding that justification is not required by planning policy, the applicant has indicated that the space could not viably be brought into residential use given the damp and drainage issues present. Overall, therefore, given that there is no nett loss of residential accommodation, the development is acceptable in principle subject to the details considerations below.

Impact on character and appearance and heritage assets

8.3 The site is within the Chatsworth Road Conservation Area and Number 41 Coombe Road (adjacent) is on the Council's Local List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Merit. It is therefore essential that any proposed development has a high quality appearance and responds appropriately to the rich historical context. The building on the site itself is identified in the CRCAAMP as making a neutral contribution to the conservation area. Given that no external changes to the building are proposed, it is considered that the development would preserve the special historic interest. It is noted that if additional bin storage or signage is required as a result of the proposal this has potential to lead to harm, and conditions to control these matters are therefore recommended.

Impact on the residential amenity of adjoining occupiers

- 8.4 No additional built structure or windows are proposed and therefore the outlook, light and privacy of adjoining residential occupiers would be unharmed. It is not considered that the proposed use, which would be staffed by a maximum of two people at a time, would lead to a significant level of noise and disturbance by reason of comings and goings, noise within the building, or vehicular movements. The residential amenity of adjoining occupiers would therefore be unharmed.

Transport

- 8.5 It is anticipated by the applicant that the development would result in only 1 or 2 additional vehicular visits to the site a week, which would mostly be with smaller vehicles such as transit vans, between 9am and 2pm. Deliveries would come in larger vehicles, and would be anticipated to be needed quarterly. These levels of trip generation would be very low and given the infrequency would not have a significant impact on the functioning of either the Highway or the use of the existing forecourt by residents. The transportation impacts of the development would therefore be acceptable.

Other Planning Issues

- 8.6 None to report.

Conclusions

- 8.7 The proposed change of use is acceptable in principle and would preserve the appearance of the existing building, the character of the Conservation Area and adjacent locally listed building. The proposal would also preserve the amenity of adjoining occupiers, and Highways safety and efficiency.
- 8.8 All other relevant policies and considerations, including equalities, have been taken into account.