

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

23rd May, 2016

Item No:

UPRN

APPLICATION NO.

DATE VALID

15/P3079

29/12/2015

Address/Site:

1 Sibthorp Road, Mitcham CR4 3NN

Ward:

Figges Marsh

Proposal:

Erection of an additional third and fourth floor extension to the existing residential building to provide 3 x 1 Bedroom and 2 x 3 Bedroom Self-Contained Flats

Drawing No.'s:

'Site Location Plan AM/246/01', 'AM.246.06 Proposed Plans', 'AM.246.07 Proposed Plans', 'AM.246.08 Rear and South Flank Elevations as Proposed', 'AM.246.09 Front and Flank Elevations as Proposed', 'AM.246.10 Front and Flank Sections as Proposed'

Contact Officer:

Felicity Cox (020 8545 3119)

RECOMMENDATION

Refuse planning permission

CHECKLIST INFORMATION

- Is a screening opinion required: No
- Is an Environmental Statement required: No
- Has an Environmental Statement been submitted: No
- Press notice: No
- Site notice: Yes
- Design Review Panel consulted: No
- Number of neighbours consulted: 50
- External consultations: 0
- Controlled Parking Zone: No

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application is being brought to the Planning Applications Committee for determination at the request of Councillor Geraldine Stanford.

2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The application site is a three storey with basement mixed-use building located at the corner of Sibthorp Road and London Road in the Mitcham Urban Village. To the rear, the site backs onto a car park area off Holborn Way, which is designated under the Merton Sites and Policies Plan (Site Proposal 69) for potential redevelopment for town centre and residential uses.
- 2.2 The building is two storeys at the frontage to London Road, with the third storey recessed behind the front façade so that it is not readily visible from the London Road streetscene. The building has flats at ground and second floor (nine flats) which are accessed from an entrance off Sibthorp Road. The first floor is occupied by the Mitcham Islamic Centre which is accessed from London Road.
- 2.3 The site's frontages to Sibthorp Road and London Road are pedestrian only zones (only delivery vehicles permitted on road).
- 2.4 Being located within the Mitcham Town Centre, the surrounding area is characterised by a mixture of town centre and residential uses. The surrounding buildings vary in height from two to four storeys with a combination of flat and hipped roofs, generally oriented towards the London Road high street.
- 2.5 The application site is not in a conservation area. The site is not located in a controlled parking zone and has a PTAL Rating of 4 (good).
- 2.6 The application site is designated within the Core Shopping Frontage and an Archaeological Priority Zone.

3. CURRENT PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The current proposal is to erect an additional third and fourth floor to the residential building comprising 3 x 1 Bedroom and 2 x 3 Bedroom Self-Contained Flats.
- 3.2 The third floor matches the existing building footprint of the second floor, and incorporates balconies to the eastern (London Road) and western (Holborn Way) elevations. The fourth storey has been designed as a loft level in the form of two new gabled roofs which will be connected by a lower set hipped roof above the stair core and communal lobby.
- 3.3 An internal courtyard has been provided from which the flats will be accessed off. The building will have 2 x 2 bed 3 person flats in the eastern side of the building with balconies oriented towards London Road, and 3 x 1 bedroom, 2 person flats in the western side of the building with balconies oriented towards the rear carpark and Holborn Way. The bedrooms for each flat will be located within the roof area, whilst the living/dining/kitchen and main bathrooms of the flats will be contained within the third floor.
- 3.4 Ten (10) additional bicycle spaces are proposed within the basement which is accessed from the internal hall. A new communal bulk bin store is proposed

within the ground level of the building accessed from Sibthorp Road. No other alterations are proposed to the ground level, and no alterations are proposed to the first and second floors of the building.

- 3.4 All units will utilise the existing point of access from Sibthorp Road.
- 3.5 Materials proposed include use of Eternit Slate to the new roof and rendered walls to match the existing.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 The site has the following relevant planning history:

14/P2964 - REPLACEMENT OF, AND ALTERATION TO, EXISTING GROUND WINDOWS AND DOORS (LINKED WITH THE PROPOSED CHANGE OF USE FROM OFFICE (CLASS B1(a))TO RESIDENTIAL (CLASS C3) UNDER PLANNING REFERENCE 14/P2776) - Grant Permission subject to Conditions

14/P2776 - PRIOR APPROVAL IN RELATION TO THE CHANGE OF USE OF GROUND FLOOR FROM OFFICE (USE CLASS B1(a)) TO 5 X SELF-CONTAINED FLATS (USE CLASS C3) - Prior Approval Granted

13/P2846 – PRIOR APPROVAL IN RELATION TO THE CONVERSION OF EXISTING SECOND FLOOR OFFICE SPACE [CLASS B1] INTO 4 x SELF-CONTAINED FLATS (CLASS C3) - Prior Approval Granted

10/P2628 - CHANGE OF USE OF FIRST FLOOR LEVEL FROM OFFICES (USE WITHIN CLASS B1) TO A PLACE OF WORSHIP (NEW MOSQUE) (USE WITHIN CLASS D1) Permission refused.

Reason for refusal:

The proposals would result in the unacceptable loss of employment (B.1) floor space in Mitcham Town Centre and would undermine the Council's objectives of safeguarding employment land and floor space for jobs, and adversely affect the prospects for the regeneration of the town centre, contrary to policies E.6 and L.14 of the Adopted Unitary Development Plan (October 2003).

10/P0988 - APPLICATION FOR CHANGE OF USE FROM JOB CENTRE (USE WITHIN CLASS A2) TO POLICE SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD UNIT (USE WITHIN CLASS B1), INCLUDING NEW SHOPFRONT AND ROLLER SHUTTER, WITH REPLACEMENT SIDE WINDOWS AND TO THE REAR NEW BRICKWORK, A DOOR, LOUVRES AND ROLLER SHUTTERS - Grant Permission subject to Conditions

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Fifty (50) neighbouring properties were consulted by letters and a site notice was displayed. Re-consultation was undertaken to notify of an amended proposal description. No objections were received.
- 5.2 Transport Officer: Provision of no off-street parking not considered to be a

severe issue. However, objected to proposal due to design of cycle parking being unsafe.

6. POLICY CONTEXT

6.1 NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework (2012):
Part 6 Delivering a wide choice of high quality homes
Part 7 Requiring Good Design.

6.2 London Plan Consolidated (2015).
3.3 Increasing housing supply;
3.4 Optimising housing potential;
3.5 Quality and design of housing developments.
5.3 Sustainable design and construction.
6.9 Cycling
7.4 Local character
7.6 Architecture

6.3 Merton Sites and Policies Plan (July 2014).
DM D2 Design considerations in all developments
DM D3 Alterations and extensions to existing buildings

6.4 Merton Core Strategy (2011).
CS 2 Mitcham Sub-Area
CS 7 Centres
CS 8 Housing choice;
CS 9 Housing provision;
CS 14 Design;
CS 15 Climate change
CS 18 Active transport
CS 20 Parking, servicing and delivery

6.5 Supplementary Planning Guidance:
Merton Council Supplementary Planning Guidance – Design (2004)
London Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (2012)

7. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

7.1 The main planning considerations include assessing the principle of development, the need for additional housing and housing mix, design and appearance of the proposed building, the standard of the residential accommodation, the impact on residential amenity and impact on car parking and traffic generation.

Principle of Development

7.2 Core Planning Strategy Policy CS9 encourages the development of additional dwellings within residential areas in order to meet the London Plan target of 42,389 additional homes per year from 2015-2036 (Merton - 411 per year). The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and London Plan policies 3.3 & 3.5 promote sustainable development that encourages the development of additional dwellings locations with good public transport accessibility.

- 7.3 Policies CS2 and CS 7 encourage a mix of appropriate uses that support the vitality and viability of new centres, and respects and improves the character of the local environment. CS 2 aims to improve the overall environment of the town centre by providing quality shopping, housing, community facilities, improving the quality and mix of homes.
- 7.4 The site has a PTAL rating of 4 which is considered to be good and is surrounded by a mixture of residential and commercial development. The building is currently used for primarily residential purposes.
- 7.5 Although the proposal would provide five additional flats to the existing residential building within a new roof extension, the Council requires new development to protect streetscene character in accordance with policies set out in various SPP and Core Strategy policies, and the London Plan 2015. Officers consider that for the reasons outlined below, the need for additional housing should not be given more weight than the negative impacts of the proposal and it is consequently considered unacceptable.

Character and Appearance

- 7.6 London Plan policies 7.4 and 7.6, Core Strategy policy CS14 and SPP Policies DMD2 and DMD3 require well designed proposals that will respect the appearance, materials, scale, bulk, proportions and character of the original building and their surroundings.
- 7.7 The site is located within the Mitcham Town Centre. The Draft Merton Borough Character Study states that the pedestrianised section of London Road, in which the subject site is located, retains an attractive architectural quality, and is an area in which new development should reinforce the existing character. This section of London Road features a mix of architectural styles ranging from more traditional buildings (such as the King's Arms and White Lion pubs) to contemporary mixed-use buildings (such as 1 Sibthorp Road and 205-211 London Road), with ground floor shopfronts oriented to the London Road frontage. Whilst the architectural style in this section of London Road is varied, the building height and scale is a relatively consistent three to four storeys, often with the upper storey accommodated within a gabled/hipped roof form.
- 7.7 The additional two storeys to the existing three storey building is considered to be a substantial addition that would significantly increase the massing of the building, resulting in a top heavy building that is not respectful or complementary of the design, height, scale, massing and form of the host building and the streetscene. The additions overall would not be subservient to the main body of the building and would appear as unduly bulky and increasingly incongruous, to the detriment of the streetscene. In particular, the extensions would be visually overbearing on the London Road streetscene by virtue of the narrow width of the pedestrianised high street and substantial increase in height and bulk proposed.
- 7.8 The design and scale of the resulting 5 storey building would not be in

keeping with the more modest 3-4 storey built form of this section of London Road. Although the applicants have made reference to the peak height of the roof matching the ridge height of 242-244 London Road, it is recognised that the roof of 242-244 has a central hipped roof over the main body of the building before stepping down to a lower ridge height to the rear of the building, overall having a lesser visual impact on the streetscene. The gabled design of the roof and substantial footprint of the building extensions would consequently have a significantly greater visual impact on the streetscene.

- 7.9 It is therefore considered that the proposal would fail to provide a high standard of design that would complement the character, height, massing, form and scale of the host building and the streetscene of London Road contrary to Policy DM D2 and DM D3.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 7.10 SPP policy DMD2 states that proposals must be designed to ensure that they would not have an undue negative impact upon the amenity of neighbouring properties in terms of loss of light, quality of living conditions, privacy, visual intrusion or noise.
- 7.11 Windows to the new flats have primarily been oriented to the front and rear elevations where there is sufficient separation distances from windows of surrounding buildings to ensure no loss of privacy will result. Windows have been proposed to the internal courtyard, however these are for the purpose of bathrooms and could be conditioned to be obscure-glazed so to maintain adequate privacy between units. The new windows to the northern elevation are adjacent to stairs and similarly could be conditioned to be obscure-glazed to restrict overlooking to the flats to the north. The orientation and design of the balconies is such that they would not overlook each other.
- 7.12 The building to the north of the site at 242-244 London Road is located on the opposite side of Sibthorp Road. Based on historical plans of the building, it is understood that all windows on the southern flank elevation are to habitable rooms of flats located on the first, second and third levels (ground level used for commercial purposes), and form the primary windows to these habitable spaces. A BRE assessment using the 25 degree test indicates that the windows on the third floor would only just maintain an acceptable degree of daylight and sunlight, however the proposal would impede access to daylight and sunlight from the habitable rooms of flats on the first and second floors.
- 7.13 Sibthorp Road is a narrow carriageway, and consequently will only provide a separation distance of approximately 6 metres between the subject building and 242-244 London Road. The resulting height and bulk that would result from the proposal is considered to be visually intrusive on the outlook of the flats at 242-244 London Road given this minor separation distance, particularly those on the lower floors. Considered collectively with the loss of daylight/sunlight that would result, the proposed additional storeys are considered to be harmful to the amenities of the occupiers of the adjoining flats contrary to Policy DMD2.

Standard of residential accommodation

- 7.14 Policy DM D2 and DM D3 of the Site and Polices Plan states that all proposals for residential development should safeguard the residential amenities of future occupiers in terms of providing adequate internal space, a safe layout and access for all users; and provision of adequate amenity space to serve the needs of occupants. Policies CS 8, CS9 and CS14 within the Council's Adopted Core Strategy [2011] states that the Council will require proposals for new homes to be well designed.
- 7.15 Policy 3.5 of the London Plan 2015 states that housing developments should be of the highest quality internally and externally and should ensure that new development reflects the minimum internal space standards (specified as Gross Internal Areas) as set out in Table 3.3 of the London Plan (Amended March 2016).
- 7.16 The proposed two bedroom, three person flats will have gross internal floor areas of 74 and 75 square metres. This exceeds the London Plan minimum requirement of 70 square metres. The proposed 1 bedroom, 2 person flats will have a gross internal floor area of 62 square metres or greater, which will also exceeds the London Plan minimum requirements of 58 square metres.
- 7.17 The proposed floor areas for all double bedrooms exceeds the London Plan requirement of 11.5 square metres, and the proposed single rooms exceed the London Plan requirement of 7.5 square metres. It is considered that all rooms will have reasonable outlook and access to daylight.
- 7.18 SPP policy DMD2 and London Plan Housing Standards requires that for all new flats, the Council will seek a minimum of 5 square metres of private outdoor space for 1-2 person flatted dwellings and an extra 1 square metre for each additional occupant. All flats have been provided with a private balcony that meets the minimum area requirements specified under the London Plan.
- 7.19 It is therefore considered that the proposed flats would provide a satisfactory standard of accommodation in accordance with the above policy requirements.

Transport and parking

- 7.20 Core Strategy policy CS20 requires that development would not adversely affect pedestrian or cycle movements, safety, the convenience of local residents, on street parking or traffic management.
- 7.21 Sites and Policies Policy DM T3 states that development should only provide the level of car parking required to serve the site taking into account its accessibility by public transport (PTAL) and local circumstances in accordance with London Plan standards unless a clear need can be demonstrated.
- 7.22 The site is PTAL 4 and is outside a parking control zone.

7.23 No off-street parking is proposed. LMB Transport Officers have commented that provision of one space per 3-bedroom unit would be desirable. However, as there are no available on street parking opportunities in the immediate vicinity and the site is well-connected to public transport, the provision of no off-street parking is not considered to be a severe issue as owning a vehicle would not be attractive to future residents. The provision of no off-street parking is therefore considered to be acceptable in this instance.

Refuse storage and collection

7.24 Policy CS20 of the Core Strategy [July 2011] states that the Council will seek to implement effective traffic management by requiring developers to incorporate adequate facilities for servicing to ensure loading and unloading activities do not have an adverse impact on the public highway.

7.25 The submitted plans show the provision of refuse stores within the ground level of the building, which is considered to be an improvement on the existing scenario where bins are stored outside the Sibthorp Road façade. This is considered to be unobtrusive and will facilitate safe refuse collection from the street in accordance with policy.

Cycle storage

7.26 Core Strategy Policy CS 18 and London Plan policy 6.9 call for proposals that will provide for cycle parking and storage. A new 1 bedroom flats would be required to provide 1 bicycle space, and new two bedroom flats would be expected to provide a store for at least 2 bicycles.

7.27 The proposed plans show the provision of storage for 8 additional bicycles within the existing basement which is accessible from the ground floor shared corridor.

7.28 Whilst the provision of 8 spaces will exceed London Plan requirements, LBM Transport Officers have objected to the proposal based on the location of bicycle parking within the basement. As the store can only be accessed by stairs, the location of bicycle parking would be unacceptable from health and safety grounds and would therefore be considered contrary to policy. Officers consider this matter could be resolved by the imposition of a condition and it may be unreasonable to cite this as a reason to withhold permission.

Developer Contributions

7.29 Policy CS.8 of the Merton LDF Core planning Strategy (2011) considers the Council's requirements for schemes of less than 10 units to contribute to the provision of affordable housing within the borough.

7.30 Based on the median of the open market values provided by the applicant and using the Council's calculator it is estimated that the scheme could deliver an off-site affordable housing contribution of £94,995. Although the application included three estimates from local estate agents, the absence of a draft unilateral undertaking to deal with the requirements of policy CS 8 means that it is considered that the proposal currently fails to accord with this policy.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposal would provide five additional flats to the existing residential building in an area of good public transport access and local services. However, it is considered that the design, massing, height, form and scale of the proposed additional two storeys would fail to respect or complement the character of the host building and London Road streetscene, and would be detrimental to the amenities of neighbours due to loss of daylight and sunlight, and visual intrusion.
- 8.2 In view of these planning considerations, the desire to provide additional housing is not considered sufficient to set aside the detrimental impact of the proposal on the amenity of neighbours and the streetscene, and it is therefore recommended that permission be refused.

RECOMMENDATION:

Refuse planning permission for the following reasons:

The proposed additional third and fourth floor by virtue of its bulk, form, scale, height and design would constitute an obtrusive and incongruous form of development that would detract from the appearance of the original building and be out of keeping with, and detrimental to, the visual amenity and character of the London Road streetscene, and would be harmful to the amenity of neighbours in terms of loss of daylight and sunlight and visual intrusion. Therefore, the proposal would be contrary to London Plan policies 7.4 and 7.6, Merton LDF Core Planning Strategy policy CS14 and Merton SPP policies DMD2 and DMD3.

The proposed development would fail to contribute to meeting affordable housing targets and in the absence of a legal undertaking securing a financial contribution towards the delivery of affordable housing off-site would be contrary to policy CS8 of the Merton LDF Core Planning Strategy (2011).

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