

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE
15 SEPTEMBER 2016**

Item No:

UPRN

APPLICATION NO.

DATE VALID

16/P1623

24/04/2016

Address/Site 247 The Broadway, Wimbledon SW19 1SD

(Ward) Abbey

Proposal: Demolition of existing office building and construction of a new five storey office building (Class B1 use) together with associated car/cycle parking and landscaping.

Drawing Nos A GA (10_ 001 Rev 02, 002 Rev 01, 003 Rev 01, 004 Rev 01, 005 Rev 01, 006 Rev 02, 007 Rev 02, 008 Rev 02, GA (11) 001 Rev 02, 002 Rev 02, 003 Rev 02, 004 Rev 01, GA (12) 001 Rev 01, 002 Rev 01, Planning Statement, Flood Risk Assessment, Geotechnical and Geo-Environmental Desk Study, Transport Statement, Travel Plan, Daylight/Sunlight Report, BREEAM Report and Energy Statement

Contact Officer: Richard Allen (8545 3621)

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Planning Permission subject to completion of a S.106 Agreement and conditions

CHECKLIST INFORMATION

- Heads of agreement: Yes – Contribution to Public Transport Initiatives.
- Is a screening opinion required: No
- Is an Environmental Impact Statement required: No
- Press Notice: Yes
- Site notice: Yes
- Design Review Panel consulted: Yes
- Number of neighbours consulted: 36
- External consultants: None
- Density: N/a
- Archaeology: N/a

1. **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This application is being brought before the Planning Applications Committee due to the number of representations received and the requirement for a S.106 Agreement.

2. **SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

- 2.1 The application site is located on the south side of The Broadway and is currently occupied by a three storey office development constructed in the 1980's. Opposite the site are the Holy Trinity Church and the Polka Theatre. To the south of the site are two storey houses in Griffiths Road. The site is flanked by a three storey Victorian villa converted into offices to the west and to the east by the Antoinette Hotel dating from the 1970's. The application site is not within a conservation area. A Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ W3) operates in The Broadway and in adjoining streets.

3. **CURRENT PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 The existing building provides approximately 1,007m² of office accommodation (class B1) set within a landscaped hard standing with 28 car parking spaces. Access to the building is not up to current standards and there are no lifts. Planning permission was granted subject to a S.106 Agreement on 21 March 2014 for the redevelopment of the site by the erection of a five story building for B1/D1 uses and a three storey building comprising 9 x 2 bedroom flats, together with associated parking and landscaping works (LB Ref.13/P0952). The current application seeks planning permission for a wholly (B1) office development.
- 3.2 The current proposal involves the demolition of the existing office buildings and the redevelopment of the site by the construction of a new five storey office building (B1 use) with 3,565m² floor space, together with associated car/cycle parking and landscaping.
- 3.3 The proposed development would be 29m in width extending across The Broadway frontage of the site, with the proposed building having an 'L' shaped foot print. The rear section of the building would be 14 metres in width and the overall length of the building at ground floor level would be 36 metres. The proposed building would have an overall height of 24 metres (to the top of the plant room) with The Broadway frontage ranging between 16 – 20 metres in height. The height of the building would reduce to 12.5 metres at the rear of the site, with the rear section being sited 4.5 metres away from the boundary with gardens of residential properties in Griffiths Road.
- 3.4 Internally, at ground floor level a reception area, office suite, plant and storage areas would be provided, whilst on the first to fourth floors open plan office space would be provided with a plant room above.

3.4 Access to the proposed building would be from The Broadway frontage and six parking spaces would be provided together with a loading bay and secure cycle parking for 26 cycles.

3.6 A contemporary design has been adopted for the proposed building which would be constructed mainly of glass with coloured panels to The Broadway frontage.

4. **PLANNING HISTORY**

4.1 In July 1984 planning permission was granted for the redevelopment of the site by the erection of a three storey office building (Ref.MER536/84).

4.2 In December 2010 a pre- application submission was made in respect of the redevelopment of the site involving the erection of a five storey building (LBM Ref.11/P0128/NEW).

4.3 Design Review Panel

The plans submitted for pre-application discussions were considered by the Design Review Panel at their meeting on 24 July 2012. The Panel were impressed by the amount of development that was being proposed on the site, but felt that there were a few areas of concern that might suggest that a little too much was being proposed, or that some issues were being given too much weight at the expense of others, this being evident in the architectural approach taken for the rear of the building in particular. This led the Panel to question whether the site layout and massing approach taken was the best one, but felt that it was up to the applicant to justify their approach in this respect. From an architectural point of view the Panel were very supportive particularly with respect to the offices and their environmental credentials. Regarding the flats, there were concerns regarding the design, where on one side the flats were overlooked by the offices in a small light well; and on the other there were full room height solid balcony walls, giving the flats an exceptionally constrained and hemmed in feel, with little in the way of views or prospect.

4.4 On this south elevation, it was felt quite strongly by the Panel that the applicant was being over cautious about the perceived (rather than actual) overlooking of houses and gardens of properties in Griffiths Road. Given the relatively generous building to building distances, it was felt that there was considerable scope to improve the quality of light and views from the flats without unduly prejudicing the amenities and rights of adjacent gardens. The Panel also noted there was no external amenity space for the flats other than the balconies, which made it all more important these were of a high quality environment. It was felt that the rear landscaping strip was effective a privacy tool for the rear gardens and this role should be maximised. The Panel felt that there was no particular design precedent for a courtyard on the street but that it could be made to work well. The Panel advised that it's design should bleed out onto the footway to feel inclusive, and that the groundscape should be kept free from clutter, such that it feels like a pedestrian place, even though vehicles need to cross it to access the parking.

- 4.5 It was felt that the parking area was too cramped, that some spaces were unworkable and that this needed to be reduced to make it work efficiently. This would help in achieving a better layout for the route across the courtyard and the planting of trees and having a dedicated pedestrian space. It would also help in improving the quality of the access to the residential entrance. These improvements would give the courtyard more identity and meaning. Overall the Panel appreciated the complexities of the site in achieving an intensified development, but felt enough further work was required to make the proposal successful, such that it did not yet warrant a Green verdict. It was felt that the overall balance of various aspects of the proposal had not yet been got right and this was probably achievable and had the potential to get a Green verdict. Verdict: Amber
- 4.5 In March 2014 planning permission was granted subject to a S.106 Agreement in respect of the demolition of the existing office building and erection of a five storey mixed use building for office/healthcare B1/D1 uses and 9 x 2 bedroom flats within a separate three storey block (LBM Ref.13/P0952).
- 4.6 In November 2015 a pre-application submission was made in respect of the redevelopment of the site involving the demolition of the existing building and erection of a new five storey office building (B1 use) together with associated parking and landscaping (LBM Ref.15/P4368/NEW).
- 4.7 Design Review Panel
The Design Review Panel were again consulted on the revised scheme for the site and considered the current proposals at the meeting on 26 January 2016. The Panel were of the opinion that the proposed building contrasted a little too strongly with its neighbours and did not relate to its location within Wimbledon Town Centre. Concern was also voiced about the 'chequer board' appearance of the side elevations and the Design Review panel suggested that this appearance should be avoided. The design Review panel advised the building has to relate to buildings at the rear of the site, however this aspect should not dictate the design of the building. The Panel also felt that the scheme would benefit from a reduction of one storey and a different approach to the plant room enclosure. Further work was needed on parking arrangements as well as clarity on servicing and waste collection. The Design Review Panel considered that the scheme would be acceptable with modifications.
Verdict: Amber
- 4.8 Following the Design Review panel verdict various revisions have been made to the scheme:-

-The front elevation of the original scheme had an angled projection to the top north eastern corner. Following the first pre-application meeting this was revised so that the front elevation is now flat.

- The roof top plant room is now incorporated within the design of the building. This element has also been pushed back from the front elevation of the building.
- The shape of the building was revised at the rear to a series of recessive planes that descend and narrow to the south elevation. This revision has reduced the impact of the building on properties in Griffiths Road.
- Following the comments received at the public exhibition held by the developer the colour scheme has been revised, deleting the 'chequer board' effect on the flank elevations.

5. **CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 Major site and press notice procedure and letters of notification to occupiers of neighbouring properties. In response 23 letters of objection have been received. The grounds of objection are set out below:-

- The height and design of the building is out of context with the surrounding part of Wimbledon Broadway. This section of the road is the gateway to Wimbledon and still has many original Victorian buildings and many original shopfronts, the Polka theatre, Holy Trinity and St Winifred's Churches and William Morris House. The developer should be taking inspiration from those buildings.
- Lego-style boxes that tower over the Antoinette Hotel and cast shadows on the pavement are not what Wimbledon want.
- Residents of Griffiths Road will be faced with a loss of sky as the roof line is much greater than the current building.
- Parking is a major problem in this part of Wimbledon.
- The design is out of keeping with the area.
- The building should be set back to provide greenery on the frontage.
- The proposal will turn Wimbledon into a high rise town.
- The character of the area is Victorian not concrete and glass.
- Local heritage is being overlooked by planning proposals and more sympathetic structures will not be proposed.
- The proposal is overdevelopment of the site and has a lack of car parking.
- The proposal will increase traffic generation and make congestion even worse.
- There should be a reduction in floor space and an increase in on-site parking.
- A lower less dense scheme would be more appropriate.
- Any replacement building should be no higher than the adjacent hotel.
- The application should be rejected until a more sympathetic design can be achieved.
- rather than enhancing visual amenity the proposal will seriously prejudice and detract from the current character of the surrounding area. The increased height compounds the overbearing nature of the already poor architectural design that the existing building suffers.
- The side elevation of the proposed building is uninteresting whilst the front façade is slightly more interesting.
- Although the site falls within the Wimbledon Town Centre for planning purposes, the site is on the edge of the town centre and is basically residential

in character. The building would be much more appropriate near the station. It is not a building for this end of The Broadway.

- The proposed building is too close to the pavement. The building should align with the frontage of the Antoinette Hotel.

- A more traditional design approach and a brick built building would be more appropriate in this location.

- The building is larger and closer to the rear boundary with properties in Griffiths Road than the existing building.

- The proposed building would affect light to gardens of properties in Griffiths Road.

- The adjacent hotel requests that conditions on hours of construction be imposed on any grant of planning permission.

5.2 Wimbledon East Hillside Residents Association

The WEHRA state that overall it is good to see this site come up for regeneration. The existing buildings do not make the best use of the available space and look dated and appear to be of low environmental standards. The proposal has some interesting ideas but there are flaws that outweigh benefits to the community. The proposed building is too tall and takes up far too much of the site and would tower above everything in the vicinity. The front elevation should be no higher than the adjacent hotel and the rear elevation should be further back from the rear boundary. The building should also be set back from the frontage to allow space for tree planting. The proposal would result in the tripling in size of the offices but half the number of parking spaces. Therefore the development should be made 'permit free'. This condition has proved successful in controlling parking in other developments in Wimbledon.

5.3 Councillor Neep

Councillor Neep has raised an objection to the proposed redevelopment of the site and the grounds of objection are set out below:-

- Height- whilst the application stated five storeys, the building is closer to 6 storeys in height with the plant room included and the building would be significantly higher than other buildings at this end of The Broadway.

- The height of the building would affect light to residential properties on Griffith's road. It would also dwarf the Holy Trinity Church which is directly opposite.

- The bulk and massing is out of keeping with this end of The Broadway which is much lower both in height and density reflecting its proximity to residential areas and historic buildings such as William Morris House and Holy Trinity Church.

- The previous application was only five storeys across the frontage and was 15% shorter so the current scheme is completely out of keeping compared to the previous proposal. It was also noted at the pre-application stage that the bulk and massing would be a consideration at the back of the development adjoining Griffiths Road.

- The proposed materials are completely unsympathetic to the surrounding buildings and the Design Review Panel noted that the use of metal cladding and glass 'contrasted too strongly' with those buildings it surrounds; notably the Holy Trinity Church, William Morris House and the office's next door.

-Parking is also a concern for residents who fear that the already pressured places on the nearest residential roads will be further increased. The proposal will increase the number of cars in the area but reduce the number of spaces provided.

5.4 Sustainability

The Council's Climate change office has confirmed that at 3,565m² of GIA floor space the proposed development is considered to be a major non-domestic application and thus should be designated in accordance with Policy CS15 of Merton's Core Planning Strategy (2011) and the development should therefore:-

-achieve a high standard of sustainability and make efficient use of resources and material and minimise water use and CO₂ emissions.

-demonstrate that it has been designed in accordance with the Mayor's energy hierarchy (be lean, be clean, be green) outlined in Policy 5.2 of the London plan 2015 and Policy CS15 part b of the Merton's Core Planning Strategy 2011. This advocates a 'fabric first' approach and maximising energy efficiency before seeking renewable technologies.

-be sited and designed to withstand long term climate change.

-be built to BREEAM Building Research Establishment Assessment Method) 'Very Good' standard and meet CO₂ reduction targets in line with policy 5.2 of the London plan 2015. This equates to a 40% improvement on the building Regulations Part L 2010.

5.5 Transport Planning

The submitted Transport Statement acknowledged that the expected number of tram and bus trips is probably on the low side. Similarly only 6 parking spaces are provided for the development and vehicle trips appear to be overstated. This should be better reflected in travel plan targets. The high PTAL 6a and the Controlled Parking Zone in neighbouring streets means that there is little opportunity for on-street parking other than for short stay purposes. The business occupiers would not therefore be eligible for parking permits. It is clear from the trip analysis that there will be a significant increase in the net pedestrian movements to/from the main entrance. Therefore it is important to enhance the public realm to support the additional demand, in particular behind the bus shelter fronting the site. Similarly, the modified crossing should be constructed as a continuous footway with pedestrians being given clear priority over vehicles entering the parking/servicing area. These requirements could be achieved by setting the back of the footway across the site to better align with neighbouring frontages. This needs to be secured through a S278 Agreement funding the construction of the footway in the vicinity of the site. The proposed cycle parking is acceptable and a planning condition would be required to ensure the cycle parking facilities are provided before occupation of the building.

5.6 The increased number of pedestrian movements being generated by the site will be approximately 600 per day. As shown by the collision report in the Transport statement there is a known problem with pedestrian and vehicle collisions on the zebra crossing at the corner of The Broadway, Merton road

and Latimer Road. There are concerns that the additional 600 pedestrian movements generated by the development which is only 100 metres from this junction will exacerbate these problems. As such the Council will require £50,000 in S106 funding to undertake a road safety improvement study and to investigate improvements to this junction. Overall there are no fundamental objections to the proposal from a highway or transport perspective. However, it is recommended that the public realm improvements outlined above are incorporated into the design and the Council would seek a S278 Agreement to undertake these works in addition to the S106 funding for safety improvements at the Merton Road crossing as well as planning conditions in respect of a Travel Plan, Delivery and Servicing Plan, Cycle parking Implementation and Construction traffic management Plan.

5.7 Amended Plans

Following discussions with the Design Officer the design of the roof top plant room has been revised and the hard and soft landscaping plan amended and the study of relative building heights (shown on plan) has been revised. A reconsultation has been undertaken and any further comments will be reported to committee.

6. **POLICY CONTEXT**

6.1 The relevant policies within the Adopted Merton Core Strategy (July 2011) are CS6 (Wimbledon Town Centre), CS7 (Centres), CS12 (Economic Development), CS14 (Design), CS15 (Climate Change) and CS20 (Parking, Servicing and Delivery).

6.2 The retained policies within the Adopted Merton Sites and Policies Plan (July 2014) are DM E2 (Offices in Town Centres), DM E4 (Local Employment Opportunities), DM D1 (Urban Design and the Public Realm), DM D2 (Design Considerations in all Developments), DM T2 (Transport Impacts of Developments), DM T3 (Car Parking and Servicing Standards).

6.3 The Policies contained within the London Plan (March 2015) 2.15 (Town Centres), 4.1 (Developing London's Economy), 5.1 (Climate Change Mitigation), 5.3 (Sustainable Design and Construction), 7.5 (Public Realm) and 7.6 (Architecture).

7. **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

7.2 The principal planning considerations concern employment issues, together with design, neighbour amenity, transport/parking and sustainability issues and planning obligations.

7.3 Employment Issues

The existing office building dates from the 1980's and has no lifts and does not make the best use of the site. The existing building accommodates 1,005m² of (B1) office floorspace on a site of approximately 0.13ha. The proposed scheme would provide 3,565m² of floor space for B1 office use

within a modern building. In terms of employment, the existing building provides 69 full time jobs whilst the proposed building could potentially accommodate 213 people. Policy CS12 supports the intensification of and creation of additional floor space on an existing employment site and the proposal will enhance employment opportunities within Wimbledon Town Centre.

7.5 Design Issues

Adopted Core Strategy policy CS14 relates to design matters and paragraph 22.20 of the Core Strategy specifically refers to high buildings and states that tall buildings of exceptional architectural quality may be appropriate for town centres. It is noted that a number of objections have been received from local residents concerned about the height of the proposed buildings. The proposed office building would comprise a five storey block 24 metres in height (to top of the plant room). Although the area is predominately made up of three and four storey buildings there are other five storey buildings in the vicinity including the YNCA building. A five storey building (plus plant room) is therefore considered to be acceptable in this location and is in keeping with the current and emerging street scene. The front elevation has been designed to fill the width of the site and repair the gap in the street scene created by the existing building on the site. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of policy CS14.

- 7.6 The proposed design is well considered utilising modern materials to form a contemporary appearance in this part of the Broadway. It is not considered to visually detract from the setting of adjoining buildings and although higher, it provides a visual contrast to other nearby architecture without being out of keeping in the overall town centre context. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of policy CS14.

7.7 Neighbour Amenity Issues

A number of objections have been received from occupiers of properties in Griffiths Road concerned about the impact of the proposed development upon their properties. The previous permission granted at the site is still relevant and established a relationship to the properties to the rear. Whilst there are marginal changes in that relationship proposed in the current scheme, overall those changes are considered to be acceptable. The closest part of the development would be 23 metres from the rear elevations of properties in Griffiths road and the ground, first and second floors of the building would be set back from the rear boundary by 4.5 metres, with the third floor being set 10.5 metres back from the rear boundary. It is also proposed to plant a row of eight semi-mature trees along the rear boundary that would screen the development from residential properties in Griffiths Road. Although a roof terrace is proposed at third and fourth floor levels, balcony screening would prevent overlooking and/or loss of privacy to residential properties at the rear of the site. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of policy DM D2.

7.7 Transport/Parking Issues

The existing development has 24 off street parking spaces and the proposal would reduce the number of spaces to 14 spaces (including two disabled spaces). The proposed development would provide 6 car parking spaces and a loading bay and 26 secure cycle parking spaces. Given that the application site has a PTAL score of 6a and that there is limited on street parking available in surrounding streets, the office accommodation should be designated 'permit free' secured through a section 106 Agreement. The cycle parking provision is acceptable and the provision of secure cycle parking should be secured by planning condition. The proposal is therefore considered to be acceptable in terms of policy CS20.

7.8 Sustainability

The Climate Change officer has confirmed that the BREEAM design stage assessment provided by the applicant indicates that the development should achieve an overall score of 58.58% which surpasses the minimum requirements of BREEAM 'Very Good' in accordance with Merton's Core Planning Strategy Policy CS15. Furthermore the applicant has indicated in the submitted Energy Statement that the development will also achieve a 41% improvement in the Building Emissions Rate, exceeding the 40% improvement over Part L 2010 required under policy 5.2 of the London plan 2015. This is to be achieved by using passive and low energy technologies with the use of low/zero carbon technologies to be specified as appropriate. This approach is in accordance with the Mayor's energy hierarchy approach outlined in Policy CS15 of Merton's Core Planning Strategy and Policy 5.2 of the London Plan 2015. It is also noted that the development is located in 'The Broadway' decentralised heat opportunity area, as identified on the GLA London Heat map. It is noted that the applicant has explored the potential of CHP but has ruled this out on the basis of insufficient hot water and heating demand. Taking into account the sole commercial (office) based use of the development, and its close adherence to the mayor's energy hierarchy in seeking to maximise fabric efficacy and minimising onsite energy consumption. The Climate change officer is therefore satisfied that the development is policy compliant subject to the standard non-domestic BREEAM pre-commencement condition being imposed on any grant of planning permission.

7.10 Planning Obligations

The proposed office accommodation will be required to be designated 'permit free' and a financial contribution towards road safety improvements at the The Broadway/Merton Road pedestrian crossing (£50,000) secured through a S.106 Agreement.

7.11 Local Financial Considerations

The proposed development is liable for the Merton Community Infrastructure Levy and the Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy, the funds of which will be applied by the Mayor towards the Crossrail project. The CIL amount is non-negotiable and planning permission cannot be refused for failure to agree to pay the CIL.

8. **SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS**

- 8.1 The application does not constitute Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 development. Accordingly, there are no requirements in terms on EIA submission.

9. **CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The design of the proposed office building is considered to be acceptable and the proposed development would not affect neighbour amenity. The proposal would provide new high quality office space in a town centre location with good public transport accessibility. Accordingly, it is recommended that planning permission be granted.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT Planning Permission (subject to any further material considerations being raised by the latest consultation on minor alterations to the scheme which expires on 17/8/2016)

Subject to completion of a S.106 Agreement covering the following heads of terms:-

1. The developer making a financial contribution to road safety improvements in the vicinity of The Broadway/Merton Road pedestrian crossing (£50,000).
2. The development being designated 'Permit Free',
3. The developer paying the Council's legal and professional costs in drafting, completing and monitoring the agreement (£500).

and subject to the following conditions:-

1. A.1 Commencement of Development (5 Years)
2. A.7 Approved Plans
3. B.1 (Approval of Facing Materials)
4. B.4 (Details of Site Surface Treatment)
5. C.6 (Refuse and Recycling – Details to be Submitted)
6. C.7 (Refuse and Recycling – Implementation)
7. D.1 (Hours of Construction)
8. D.5 (Soundproofing of Plant and Machinery)
9. D.9 (No External Lighting)

10. H.4 (Provision of Parking)
 11. H.6 (Cycle Parking)
 12. H.8 Travel Plan
 13. H.9 (Construction Vehicles – Major Sites)
 14. H.12 (Delivery and Servicing Plan to be Submitted)
 15. L.7 (BREEAM Pre-Occupation New Build Non-Residential)
 16. INF12 (Works Affecting the Public Highway)
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Please [click here](#) for full plans and documents related to this application.

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