

## PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE 19th October 2017

<u>APPLICATION NO.</u>	<u>DATE VALID</u>
------------------------	-------------------

17/P1089	27/03/2017
----------	------------

**Address/Site:** Unit 7, Priory Retail Park, 131 High Street Colliers Wood, SW19 2PP

**Ward** Colliers Wood

**Proposal** Demolition of existing retail unit (Class A1) and the erection of a bank (Class A2) with 2 x ATMs, associated car parking and landscaping.

**Drawing No's** Existing site location plan ES1.0 and drawings S1.2, A0.0, A1.0, A1.1, A3.0, A3.1, A3.2, A4.0, A4.1, A4.2, A5.0, A5.1, A6.0, A7.1, & T460\_04A and Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) February 2017/ 2160673 / Water Environment Ltd

**Contact Officer** Leigh Harrington (020 8545 3836)

### RECOMMENDATION

#### **REFUSE Planning Permission**

### CHECKLIST INFORMATION

- Heads of agreement: None
- Is a screening opinion required: No
- Is an Environmental Statement required: No
- Has an Environmental Impact Assessment been submitted: No
- Design Review Panel consulted - No
- Number of neighbours consulted - 16
- Press notice - No
- Site notice - Yes
- External consultations – Transport for London, Metropolitan Police, Environment Agency and GLAAS
- Plot ratio – 0.33 to 1
- Number of jobs created – 15 Full Time & 10 Part time.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This application is brought before the Planning Applications Committee at the request of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Environment and Housing, Councillor Whelton.

## **2. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

- 2.1 The application site (1,400 sq.m) is an irregular shaped plot of land to the south east of the new Britannia Point (Formerly Brown and Root Tower) development in Colliers Wood and is currently occupied by the vacant Car Phone Warehouse building.
- 2.2 The site forms part of an island that is encircled by part of Transport for London's strategic road network (Red Route) with residential development and Wandle Park to the west, the main part of Priory Retail Park to the south, and to the east is the site of the former Brown and Root car park which is currently open land with the buildings having been cleared.
- 2.3 The site is located within a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) and has a public transport access level (PTAL) of 5 (1 being poor and 6 being excellent) and as such is considered to be well served by public transport.
- 2.4 The site is not located within a Conservation Area but is within an Archaeological Priority Zone and a flood plain.

## **3. CURRENT PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 The proposal is for the demolition of the existing vacant Car Phone Warehouse premises (328 sq.m) and the erection of a new bank (475 sq.m) with associated ATMs (automatic telling machines) parking and landscaping.
- 3.1 The new building would be of a modern design with the main body of the building being around 6m high, albeit single storey, and with a 7.5m high feature tower above the main entrance. The street facing elevations including the tower would be predominantly glass with rendered panels to the rear. The two ATMs would be located by the main entrance.
- 3.2 Vehicular entrance to the site would be from High Street Colliers Wood, leading to a car parking area (12 spaces of which 1 is a designated disabled bay) to the north of the proposed bank building. Landscaping would be in the form of new areas of grass and low level hedges that would be situated around the street elevations of the site.

## **4. PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 93/P1053 Planning permission granted for the change of use of former petrol filling station to car and light van sales facility, involving the refurbishment of existing buildings, together with the erection of boundary fencing and associated landscaping.
- 4.2 99/P0513 Planning permission granted for the erection of retail unit with associated off street car parking for 12 vehicles (details of siting, external appearance, landscaping and design pursuant to outline planning permission granted 19 September 1996 LBM ref 95/P1147).
- 4.3 17/P0206/NEW pre application advice for the demolition of existing unit and the erection of a bank with associated car parking.
- 4.4 17/P1090 Concurrent application for advertisement consent for proposed bank. Determination of application temporarily in abeyance pending outcome of application for bank.

Land and buildings adjoining application site to north and east - formerly known as Brown and Root Tower.

- 4.5 03/P0202 Planning permission granted for the demolition of the existing multi-storey car park, conversion of, and alterations / extensions to the tower block; erection of a new building (combined ) to provide 218 residential units, 2 retail ( a1 ) units (370 square metres), a new public library facility (629 square metres), class b1 business/office adaptable space (923 square metres), a cafe / bar (a3 ) (102 square metres), creation of public open space, together with car and cycle parking provision and landscaping.
- 4.6 10/P2784 Planning permission granted for demolition of the existing multi-storey car park, conversion of and alterations / extensions to the tower block; erection of a new building (combined) to provide 218 flats, 2 retail (A1) units, a new public library facility (629 square metres), Class B1 business/office adaptable space 923 sq.m, a café/bar (102 square metres), creation of public open space together with car and cycle parking provision and landscaping. Application under S73 for amendments to conditions, attached to planning permission reference 03/P0202 to enable a phased development.
- 4.7 15/P2647 - Planning permission granted for variation of Condition 2 (Approved plans) attached to LBM Planning Permission 10/P2784 for:- The demolition of the existing multi-storey car park, conversion of and alterations / extensions to the tower block; erection of a new building (combined) to provide 218 flats, 2 retail (A1) units, a new public library facility (629 square metres), Class B1 business/office adaptable space 923 sq.m, a café/bar (102 square metres), creation of public open space together with car and cycle parking provision and landscaping (Application under S73 for amendments to conditions, attached to planning permission reference 03/P0202 to enable a phased development). Amendments include flexible A1/A2/A3 use of the commercial units, enlarged

commercial unit in north extension, internal reconfiguration, reduction of flats overall by 5, increase in flats in phase 1 to 177 from 150, reduction in flats in phase 2 to 36 from 68.

- 4.8 16/P4298 – Application for retention of 5 additional self-contained flats in the Brown and Root Tower conversion raising the number of units in Phase 1 from 177 to 182 flats. Application under consideration.

- 4.9 Land adjoining Unit 1 Tandem Centre Tandem Way Colliers Wood SW19  
13/P2748 Planning permission for the erection of a new unit (469 sq.m) for use as a bank (use within Class A2) with associated alterations to car parking and hard landscaping. Permission lapsed September 2016.

## 5. **CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The application was advertised by means of neighbour notification letters and a site notice.
- 5.2 No representations have been received from local residents.
- 5.3 Councillor Draper. Concerns that the proposal is in effect an ‘island’ development, bearing no relation to its surroundings, relying on its own car park, encouraging customers to drive to and from the bank. The Planning Statement which accompanies the application makes little or no reference to Colliers Wood as a community.
- 5.6 Transport for London. Amended layout and site access a layout considered acceptable subject to conditions.
- 5.7 The Metropolitan Police Designing out Crime Officer. No objection in principle. Comments made relating to need for quality CCTV coverage, protection of ATMs, landscaping and boundary treatments.
- 5.8 Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service. No objections to the proposals.
- 5.9 LBM Urban Design Officer - The proposal is essentially a replacement building that will perpetuate the ‘retail park in a town centre’ feel of Colliers Wood. It would undermine existing and future regeneration proposals. The proposals perpetuate a car-driven approach to retail, for which there is no precedent for banks. The proposal would not further the Council and TfL’s policies on reducing the need to travel by car and would detract from initiatives to promote walking, cycling and public transport in this area.
- 5.10 LBM Highways. No objections.

- 5.11 LBM Flood Risk Manager. In terms of flood risk mitigation, the Council require acceptance of the flood plain compensation measures proposed by the Environment Agency as there is an increase in the footprint of the buildings footprint compared to the existing situation.

## **6. POLICY CONTEXT**

### 6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012)

- 2. Ensuring the vitality of town centres.
- 4. Promoting sustainable transport.
- 7. Requiring good design.
- 10. Meeting the challenge of climate change/flooding.
- 12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

### 6.2 London Plan (2015).

- 2.13: Opportunity Areas & Intensification Areas (South Wimbledon/Colliers Wood),
- 2.15 Town Centres.
- 4.7 Retail and town centre development.
- 5.2 Minimising carbon emissions.
- 5.3 Sustainable design and construction.
- 5.12 Flood risk management.
- 5.13 Sustainable drainage.
- 6.13 Parking
- 7.4 Local Character.
- 7.5 Public Realm.
- 7.6 Architecture.

### 6.3 Merton LDF Core Planning Strategy (July 2011)

- Strategic Objectives 2b, 2c, 2d, 3a, 3b, 4a, 5f, 8a, 8b & 8c,
- CS1 Colliers Wood and South Wimbledon
- CS7 Centres (particularly Table 17.2),
- CS14 Design.
- CS15 Climate change.
- CS16 Flood risk management.
- CS18 Active Transport (specifically provision of facilities in buildings and the design of the public realm)
- CS20 Parking, Servicing & Delivery.

### 6.4 Merton Sites and Policies Plan (2014)

- DM D1 Urban Design.
- DM D2 Design considerations.
- DM O1 Open space,
- DM O2 Trees, hedges and landscape features.
- DM F1 Support for flood risk management.
- DM F2 sustainable urban drainage systems.

DM T1 Support for sustainable travel and active travel,  
DM T2 Transport impacts of development,  
DM T3 Car parking and servicing standards  
DM T4 Transport infrastructure.

Merton's Tall Building Background Paper (2010).

## **7.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.1 The main planning considerations include use of the site as a bank, intensification of the use of the site, the design of the new bank building, traffic and access, flood risk and archaeology .

### **Principle of an A2 (Financial and professional services) use.**

- 7.2 Core Strategy policies CS1, CS7 and CS12 seek to promote the development of uses in Colliers Wood that will offer an improved range of town centre uses, especially financial and business services which increase employment opportunities and contribute to a diverse economic base. Policy seeks to ensure that Merton's hierarchy of centres is protected and serviced by appropriate forms of development in order that the vitality and viability of areas is not compromised. No objection is raised to the provision of a bank in this location and the applicants were granted planning permission for a new bank to be built nearby on the Tandem Centre (13/P2748 – Officers understand that issues associated with car parking rights for existing tenants on the retail park hampered this being implemented).

### **7.3 Intensification of the site**

The site is identified within section 2.13 of the London Plan as an intensification site and policy seeks to optimise residential and non-residential output and densities and where appropriate contain a mix of uses in these areas. Policy 2.15 of the London Plan encourages promoting high density, residential led, mixed use development and policy 3.4 seeks to optimise housing potential whilst Core Strategy policy CS9 seeks the provision of new residential development and policy CS7 encourages tall buildings where they are compatible with the existing setting and wider context. Within London the intensification areas are deemed to be capable of accommodating 8000 new jobs and a further 8,650 homes and it is considered essential that a high quality residential environment and public realm is secured in these areas. SPP policy DM D1 requires developments in town centres to provide a mix of compatible uses appropriate to their location which support regeneration initiatives whilst impacting positively on the character and quality of the public realm. SPP policy DM D2 similarly expects proposals to relate positively and appropriately to the siting, scale, density, proportions, height and massing of surrounding buildings and urban layout. In relation to its built form Core Strategy policy CS1 and Merton's Tall Building Background Paper note that the Brown and Root Tower can form the basis for a coherent group of buildings that relate well to each other in terms of scale, massing, form and architecture. In

relation to housing, LDF policy CS9 sought to provide 500-600 new homes in Colliers Wood and South Wimbledon and whilst the Council has met the relevant housing targets set it, there remains an identified need for more housing in London and the overall strategy for Colliers Wood is to encourage further intensification through a mixed use town centre that can support an increase in housing adjacent to a PTAL 5 Underground Station such as Colliers Wood.

- 7.4 London Plan policy 7.7 and Core Strategy policy CS 14 note that tall buildings may be suitable in London's identified intensification areas and areas of the borough where; regeneration is envisaged, there is good public transport accessibility and there is existing high building precedent, all factors present at the application site. This policy, Core Strategy policies CS1 and CS 7 and Merton's Tall Building Background Paper identify Colliers Wood as being suitable for tall building development where they are compatible with the existing setting and wider context. This proposal would consequently not accord with these policy aspirations.
- 7.5 However the proposed development of a single storey bank building on the site is considered to represent a gross underdevelopment of the site in terms of use and physical scale; given its context in a town centre, adjacent to an Underground station, in a GLA Area for Intensification and adjacent to a 19 storey tower.
- 7.6 At the pre application stage the applicants were advised that whilst officers were not suggesting that this site should be another 19 storey tower, it should form part of a perimeter block along with the tower and its second phase site so as to provide meaningful development along the street frontages to the island site. The proposals would be wholly out of context and scale with the emerging pattern of development locally which includes the Holiday Inn Express and Colliers Wood Library redevelopments nearby. It is therefore disappointing that the applicants have not followed officer advice and have submitted the single storey proposals now before members.
- 7.7 **Urban design principles**  
In terms of urban design various policies, ranging from Merton's Local Plan to the London Plan's Area for Intensification, point towards redeveloping Colliers Wood at higher densities and recreating a sense of urbanity that the retail park developments have eroded. This sense of urbanity, is based around recreating the traditional role of well-defined streets and spaces, with active ground floor commercial uses and residential or other mixed use above and London Plan policy 7.4 states that development should have regard to form, function, scale, mass and orientation of surrounding buildings. Every opportunity to re-instate the form of a back-of-pavement, perimeter urban blocks will be essential to establishing a new character for Colliers Wood. Whilst the proposal for a new bank is welcomed, officers consider that the built form and layout of the proposal requires a fundamental rethink to respond to Council policies around growth, and to transform Colliers Wood from an out-of-town format retail centre into a

genuine, mixed use local urban centre. The current proposals bear no relation to either the alignment of the street edge or the shape of the site in general. The existing retail park character is reinforced with the proposal, rather than being urbanised. Officers consider that the proposals fail to accord with Council and GLA aspirations for the site and that this represents underdevelopment that would be grounds for refusal.

#### **7.8 Design of the building.**

London Plan policy 7.6, Core strategy Policy CS 14 and SPP policy DMD2 all require high quality design that makes a positive contribution to a coherent public realm designed to be appropriate to its context. The design of the proposed new bank is of a modern design, similar to other free standing Metro Bank buildings. However although the proposed bank replaces the existing retail park unit, it makes no attempt to improve the site in terms of urban design and significantly undermines the opportunity to create a perimeter block development with the adjacent development. The proposal remains a single storey 'box' with forecourt parking. The parking at the front (instead of the rear) undermines a sense of urbanity and retains the retail park style format. The proposed building does not relate to the sweeping curve of the Priory Road junction, which could create the opportunity for a more pronounced corner building that responds to the site's context. The rectangular box sits uncomfortably on the site, neither addressing what should be a curved building line, and leaves 'left-over' wedges of space to be landscaped and the site boundaries. With a coordinated design across both sites, a mutually beneficial solution can be found. The proposals are generic, and do not respond to either the exiting or historic context of the locality. This high profile site is an opportunity to create a new identity and style for Colliers Wood and officers consider that these proposals are a missed opportunity.

#### **7.9 Design and the public realm.**

In addition to the issues raised in regards to the overall appearance of the building there are also detailed design concerns. The proposals would appear to include no footpath leading from the street and only from the car park which hampers accessibility for pedestrians. The public realm finishes of 'poured concrete sidewalk' would appear uncomfortably out of character in an area where there has just had significant investment in the public realm. The grass at the eastern wedge of the site will not be utilised as any form of useable space and will undoubtedly collect litter and become unsightly.

7.10 The design is considered to be particularly weak in terms of expressing anything in regard to rhythm, proportions and materials. The primary visual identity of the building comes from the glazed walls and high profile advertising and officers consider that the entire approach to the design and redevelopment of the site needs further work.

7.11 In relation to the local urban and historic context it is noted that this is an important, high profile site that is essentially the gateway into Colliers Wood High



Street and has long views from Merton High Street. It can help better define the difference between the two adjacent high streets and the more open space between where the River Wandle flows. The design is considered to fail to address this wider context.

7.12 Colliers Wood is best characterised as a Victorian suburb of south London with a rich creative and industrial heritage that has largely been lost with large retail parks and extensive car parks that have eroded the original urban grain and human scale of the place. There is no coherence to the architectural style or quality of the retail park developments. This proposal is not considered to be an improvement in the built form.

7.13 Merton's regeneration ambitions for Colliers Wood have centred on the transformation of the 19 storey Colliers Wood tower (now nearing completion) The Council and Mayor of London have invested heavily in the public realm and streetscape of Colliers Wood, complemented by a new range of active ground floor retail units at the tower due to open shortly; offering a more human-scale urban experience compared to the retail parks.

7.14 The Council's planning policies are designed to support this and work towards designation of Colliers Wood as a District Centre in the next London Plan and revised Core Strategy, both of which are about to start. The proposal as currently presented would undermine this aim and the implementation of council policies and the successful regeneration of Colliers Wood on such an important site.

7.15 **Landscaping**

The proposals include little in the way of landscaping proposals and London Plan policy 7.5 and SPP policy DM D2 encourages the provision of the highest quality landscaping that forms an integral part of any new development. The landscape strategy is brief and the forecourt is primarily parking. The numerous 'left-over' spaces are simple grass that is likely to become worn as people cut across the site. Some shrubs line the edge of the site and build in a thin barrier. There is no planting around the perimeter with the street and the edge of the site. The approach to landscaping further undermines any edge to the site and coherence to the urban form. Much of the perimeter to the street does not even have a boundary. Where there is a boundary – an existing wall – this partly impedes access to the building as this coincides with the entrance location. The layout embraces the vehicular-orientated form of the existing site and does not promote sustainable means of travel.

7.16 **Strategic objectives**

Merton's Core Strategy sets out a number of strategic objectives for the development of the borough and proposals are expected to accord with these wherever possible. Strategic Objection (SO) 2 b&c seek to meet the needs of the local community by creating an attractive, thriving and safe borough through the

regeneration of Colliers Wood amongst other centres. SO 3 a&b seeks to deliver higher density new homes through incremental growth in residential areas and associated infrastructure that takes into account public transport accessibility, character and infrastructure of an area. SO 4 a and SO 5 f look for Colliers Wood town centre to be attractive, safe and accessible to local residents. SO 8 seeks to promote a high quality environment through good design that enhances the public realm.

For the reasons listed previously the proposals are not considered to effectively meet these strategic objectives particularly with regards to the amount of development proposed for the site, and provide a further policy backdrop as to why the proposals are recommended for refusal.

#### **7.17 Traffic impacts**

The site is located on the A24, a busy TfL trunk road with a complicated layout outside the site. The initially submitted details for the access were not sufficient but following extended discussions and meetings between TfL and the applicant's transport consultants TfL are now satisfied that access to and from the site could take place without presenting a hazard to other road users.

#### **7.18 Flood risk**

The area is one at risk from flooding and as the proposals involve an increase in the footprint of the building and some minor lowering of levels the application was accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment. The Environment Agency raised no objection to the proposals as the FRA was considered satisfactory. Had the scheme been recommended for approval both the EA and the council's Flood risk manager would have required the inclusion of conditions.

#### **7.19 Archaeology.**

The site is located within an Archaeological Priority Zone but GLAAS were of the opinion that the proposals were unlikely to have a significant effect on heritage assets of archaeological interest.

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

- 8.1 The proposal does not constitute Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 development. Accordingly, there are no requirements in terms of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

### **9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The applicant participated in the pre application process at which point they were advised that officers would not support an application for a single storey bank on this site. The applicants were advised that this was a site identified at both a local

and London level as a site for intensification. The applicant was advised to work with other landowners on the adjacent site as well as the council with the intention of formulating development which would allow for the bank to be provided at ground floor level with suggestions being put forward for a small tower of 4-6 storeys providing offices or flats. This basic core objection has not been pursued by the applicant along with a number of smaller design issues and essentially the same pre application scheme was submitted for determination.

- 9.2 Officers consider that there are flaws in the design and the layout of the site whilst the proposals completely ignore the site's physical context and strategic planning policy context and it results in an underdevelopment of the site which the Council do not support. The proposals also significantly undermine urban design and wider planning aspirations for the adjacent tower site in terms of achieving a tall mixed use, urban perimeter block which could provide residential and employment opportunities that would be lost through this underdevelopment of the potential of this site. In view of these considerations the proposals are accordingly recommended for refusal.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

#### **Refuse planning permission on the following grounds:**

The proposed development by reason of design, size, scale, character and location represents a poor standard of design that fails to impact positively on the character and quality of the public realm, failing to relate positively and appropriately to the siting, rhythm, scale, density, height and massing of surrounding buildings and urban layout and undermines the policy goals for the intensification of use of this site to the detriment of the future development of the wider area. The proposals fail to accord with the objectives of policies; DM D1 and DMD2 of the adopted Merton Sites and Policies Plan 2014, Strategic Objectives 2b, 2c, 3a, 3b, 4a, 5f, 8b & 8c & policies CS1, CS7, CS9 & CS14 of the Merton Core Strategy 2011, policies 2.13, 2.15, 3.4, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6 & 7.7 of the London Plan 2016 and supported by the contextual framework of Merton's Tall Building Background Paper (2010).

---

---

[Click here](#) for full plans and documents related to this application.

Please note these web pages may be slow to load

This page is intentionally left blank