

DESIGN, ACCESS AND PLANNING STATEMENT

In support of Application at

61 THE AVENUE, BECKENHAM BR3 5EE

For

DEMOLITION OF EXISTING DWELLING AND REPLACEMENT WITH TWO BUILDINGS CONTAINING SIX DUPLEX APARTMENTS.

Introduction

1. This statement accompanies a planning application for the replacement of 61 The Avenue with 6 apartment's in two separate buildings. The scheme has been designed to be visually almost identical to the recently approved scheme for 2 houses. The proposal is for 2 less apartments than previous applications.

Planning history

2. 14/03502 was submitted following positive pre-application advice. It was recommended for approval by Officers, but refused by the Planning Committee. The reasons for refusal were: the size, height, bulk and massing of the buildings, resulting in overdevelopment of the site which would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area; and, the proposed rear balconies would result in overlooking of neighbouring properties and be detrimental to residential amenity.

3. The appeal (APP/G/5180/W/14/3001656) against that refusal was dismissed, the key issues raised by the Inspector being: the depth of the buildings relative to neighbouring buildings, eaves and maximum height of Block B, mass of the buildings so close to neighbouring buildings, three driveways and visibility of parking areas giving a more urban appearance to the site at odds with the prevailing character of single detached dwellings.

4. A subsequent proposal, 15/02906/FUL, sought to address the Inspector's concerns, but was refused for one reason, being the scale, height, bulk and mass of the buildings resulting in an overdevelopment of the site, failing to preserve or enhance the character and Appearance of the Conservation Area.

5. The appeal (APP/G5180/W/15/3135153) against that refusal was dismissed, the key issues raised by the Inspector being: Footprint and volume of the buildings such that the proposal would appear cramped and out of keeping with the surrounding area; the uncharacteristically small gap between the buildings; the design of the roofs and their apparent bulk; these matters resulting in harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

6. A proposal for 2 substantial houses on the site (16/05164/FULL1) was submitted and approved 8th march 2017.

Proposed Site Layout and Design

7. The current proposals take the design principles, bulk and massing from the approved scheme. The only variations from the design of the houses are

- a. A small basement level has been incorporated including light well in each building in order to provide additional internal space to allow all apartments to benefit from generous split level accommodation.
- b. Balconies have been added over previous pitched roof bays to allow each apartment to benefit from adequate private amenity.
- c. Fencing that provided privacy for the rear/ side garden of house B has been removed.
- d. 2 No Additional cycle stores have been added.

The appearance and finishes of the buildings are otherwise identical to the previous application which the council found to be acceptable.

Access

8. Access and egress to/from the site is to be provided via two new crossovers directly off The Avenue. As per the previous application the existing access point will no longer be required and will be closed off and the soft verge reinstated. The proposed access provides the necessary 1.5m x 1.5m pedestrian visibility splays being maintained behind the back of the verge and footway with no obstructions above 0.6m in height. Vehicular visibility is in excess of required standards.

9. Traffic generation for the proposed development is minimal in traffic impact terms against the annual average daily traffic flows (AADT) in this area. No adverse comments from the Highways Officer were made in respect of the previous applications which involved much greater levels of traffic.

10. Six car parking spaces are provided as part of the proposals. In previous applications one space per apartment was found to be acceptable. Each of the parking spaces is a minimum of 2.4m x 5.0m in dimension. Sufficient turning heads have been provided within the site allowing vehicles to perform an efficient 3-point turning manoeuvre and egress back onto The Avenue in a forward gear. The amount and layout of hardstanding is exactly the same as the approved application.

Key Planning considerations

11. From the previous appeal decisions and approval, a number of planning issues can be regarded as 'settled' and need not be analysed further here. These include:

- No objection to the demolition of the existing dwelling
- The location is 'relatively accessible'
- The harm to the conservation area arising from the 2015 scheme was categorised as 'less than substantial'
- The style and materials proposed in the 2015 proposal were considered in keeping with much of the conservation area
- There are no insurmountable highway safety, arboricultural or neighbour amenity related matters that would prohibit a two building development of the site.
- The bulk and massing and character of the two buildings is acceptable.
- The site layout and landscape proposals are acceptable.
- A development of flats in principle is acceptable.

- One parking space per apartment is acceptable.

12. From the above, and given the recent approval it can be concluded that the current two buildings proposal is acceptable in principle and in terms of external appearance, materials and detailing.

Planning analysis

13. **Scale of the buildings.** The two buildings are, when viewed from the boundary of the site, the same size as the approved houses.

14. **Appearance within the street-scene** To the extent that the two houses would be glimpsed through the boundary hedge and trees, and through the two driveways, what would be seen would be two buildings which look ostensibly as two houses of similar dimensions to other houses in the vicinity, their layout following existing building lines and sited within generous plots with wide separation between the two buildings which would be accentuated even more than the existing approved scheme by virtue of the removal of the need for a close boarded fence in close proximity to the boundary of the site. The increased floor area of the current proposals is contained wholly in the basement floors and would therefore not be visible from the street and so would not impact on the now accepted character of the proposals.

15. **Impact on character and appearance of the conservation area.** The impact of the development on the road frontage was substantially reduced under the previous application and the current proposals appear almost identical therefore the design clearly preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

16. **Policy compliance** The proposal has been shown to be compliant with the three criteria of saved UDP policy BE11 in that:

- I. The design respects the layout, scale form and materials of existing buildings and spaces;
- II. The layout retains the bulk of the frontage planting and, beyond that, open space, that contributes to the character and appearance of the area;
- III. The level of activity from 6 flats, including traffic generation, parking space and noise would be entirely compatible with that prevailing within the Conservation Area.

Summary and Conclusions

17. This proposal is the culmination of a process that commenced with positive pre-application advice and a recommendation to approve the first scheme of flats. The scheme was initially reduced in scale to meet the concerns of the first appeal Inspector, and has been substantially reduced again and altered to form two smaller scale buildings which have been shown to be of a scale and character that is acceptable to the Council. It would contribute six much needed apartments which would make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness, as compared with the existing sub-standard dwelling, and so would be consistent with paragraph 131 bullet 3 of NPPF.

18. In the absence of harm, the presumption in favour of sustainable development should apply.