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Mrs V Wood
Principal Planning Officer
London Borough of Bromley
Civic Centre
Stockwell Close
Bromley
Kent BR1 3UH

06 December 2017

OUR REF:JA/RP/15/37

Dear Vicki,

**FLAT 39 BLYTH WOOD PARK, 20 BLYTH ROAD, BROMLEY – 17/03032/FULL1 –
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FOR THE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The above planning application is being considered by Members of Plans Sub-Committee 2 on the 7th December. I note your very comprehensive assessment of this revised planning application concludes with a recommendation that planning permission should be granted, and that there are no technical objections raised from either the Council's Highways Engineers, Tree Officers or other technical consultees.

However, I am also aware that this site is the subject of significant local interest and a number of objections have been raised. I wanted to respond to these directly to provide Members with our response.

Firstly, it is important to stress that this site has a detailed planning history relating to Mr Pooke's desire to create a vehicular access point and a car parking area for himself and his family to utilise, now that his property (the former gymnasium of the Blyth Wood Park Development) no longer forms part of the flatted development accessed via Blyth Road. Mr Pooke's property has been allocated the address 21 Bracken Hill Lane and will be, in effect, a single family dwelling house which currently does not have any parking or vehicular access from Bracken Hill Lane.

You will be well aware of the earlier appeal decision (reference APP/G5180/W/15/3136177) where the Inspector identified the three issues for consideration were:

- Highway safety
- The character and appearance of the area
- The living conditions of neighbours

Within the Inspector's decision it was clearly concluded that there would be no harmful impact to the character and appearance of the area by virtue of the creation of what was accepted as being a proportionate area of hard standing, relative to the overall site. The Inspector was satisfied that there would be no significant risk to the health of trees to be retained on site, and Members will be mindful of the lack of objection from the Council's Tree Officer. There can, therefore, be no reasonable resistance to the granting of retrospective planning permission based on any impact on the character and appearance of the area or any potential effect on trees to be retained on site. I would reiterate the lack of objection from the Council's tree specialists and the earlier findings of the Planning Inspector in this regard.

In respect of the living conditions of neighbouring occupants, the Inspector was very clear that the site is located within a high density residential area where a vehicular access point and parking to serve a single dwelling would not have any material impact upon the amount of noise and disturbance in the area. The significant distance between the application site and surrounding neighbours and the overall residential context of the street are such that there can be no reasonable suggestion of any harm being caused to existing levels of residential amenity. The Inspector was very clear on this point in paragraph 17 of her report.

The sole issue arising from the earlier planning appeal related to conditions of highway safety. As you know, Mr Pooke and his architect have engaged extensively with the Council's Highways Engineers, with a number of visits to the site being undertaken and detailed discussions taking place between Mr Pooke's highways consultant and the Council's Highways Officers. **There is no technical objection raised by the Council's Highways department.** Therefore, there can also be no reasonable or justified refusal of planning permission based on any perception of harm to conditions of highway safety.

I am aware that comments have been raised by local residents in respect of the accuracy or validity of the speed survey and technical data provided as part of this planning application. Whilst comments and objections raise anecdotal suggestions of higher volumes of traffic and higher vehicle speeds along Bracken Hill Lane, this is not borne out by the evidence provided by the applicant's consultants, nor is this a view supported by the Council's own Highways team.

The speed survey utilised a static radar system, which is no different to a hand-held radar gun that is commonly used by the Police force. On this occasion, a static radar camera was the most appropriate system due to the low volume of traffic along the cul-de-sac. This meant that the camera needed to be in place for a lengthy period to gather sufficient data. For example, only 261 vehicles were recorded travelling northbound over a full seven day period (average of 38 vehicles a day).

The equipment was placed on posts erected within the site, clearly visible from all public viewpoints. This ensured a clear view of approaching vehicles in both directions. I have attached two photographs showing the locations of the equipment for Members information.

The radar measures the speed of the objects (in this case, vehicles) at which it is pointed by detecting a change in frequency of the returned radar signal. When the vehicles are approaching the radar, the frequency of the wave is higher; when the vehicle is moving away, the frequency is lower. From that difference, the speed of the vehicle is measured.

The results demonstrated how slow all vehicles were travelling; many were recorded as travelling less than 10mph, whilst no vehicles travelled over 20mph. The nature of the cul-de-sac means that many vehicles would be entering/exiting drive-ways in the immediate vicinity of the radar. Allegations from local residents that vehicles travel at much higher speeds along Bracken Hill Lane is simply not the case.

The cul-de-sac only continues for a short distance past where the radar was placed. Put simply, it is highly unlikely that a car passing the access (where the radar was placed) could accumulate any significant speed in the space available. On this basis, the speeds recorded fall in line with what you would expect. This is supported by our own anecdotal evidence and the views of the Council's own highways officers.

On that basis, I would urge members to consider carefully the detailed analysis and evidence provided as part of this submission when making their determination.

In all the circumstances and in light of all material planning considerations in this case there can, in my view, be no reasonable, justifiable or evidence-based reason for a refusal of planning permission. Any allegation of a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area or the living conditions of neighbouring occupants is entirely contrary to the earlier findings of the Planning Inspectorate. The prevailing conditions of highway safety or levels of vehicular movements would not be affected.

Whilst I appreciate the level of local objection in this case, on the basis of the evidence, I fully endorse your recommendation to Members that retrospective planning permission be granted. I trust that Members share this view.

Yours sincerely



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