



## **Everything you always wanted to know about planning but were too afraid to ask**

This document contains, in the first part, information about planning in general (e.g. a new block of flats) and in the second part information about Tree Preservation Orders.

### **1) Planning in general**

Our involvement with planning applications is usually stimulated by the 'Weekly List'. The Weekly List is the list, which is produced weekly by Bromley's Planning Department, of all applications, decisions and appeals made in the previous week. On request, the planning department can add you to the mailing list to receive it every Monday morning.

When a planning application is submitted, neighbours and other interested parties are advised of it and given three weeks to make any comments. Residents' Societies might be advised of planning applications in this way or they may have to rely upon regular scrutiny of the weekly list. It is at this point that Residents' Societies and residents might contact their Councillors to seek support in objecting to applications.

Information about applications can be found on the [search page](#) of the Bromley web site.

This page is a gateway to most information that one needs about planning applications in general and about specific applications. This is it:

The screenshot shows the Bromley Council website's Planning Simple Search page. The header includes the Bromley logo, the text 'THE LONDON BOROUGH www.bromley.gov.uk', and navigation links for Home, A to Z, and Site map. A search bar is located in the top right corner. The main content area is titled 'Planning » Simple Search' and includes a search bar with a 'SEARCH' button. The search bar has a dropdown menu for 'Search' and a 'My Profile' link. Below the search bar, there are tabs for 'Simple', 'Advanced', 'Weekly / Monthly Lists', 'Property', and 'Map'. The 'Simple' tab is selected. The search bar has a placeholder text 'Enter a keyword, reference number, postcode or single line of an address.' and a 'SEARCH' button. The footer includes social media links and the text 'Follow us on:'. The page is branded with 'an idox solution'.

Putting in a reference number in the above screen, press 'search' and you get this screen:

The screenshot shows the Bromley Council website's Planning Application Summary page. The page header includes the Bromley logo, navigation links (Home, A to Z, Site map), and a search bar. A sidebar on the left lists various topics. The main content area displays the application details for reference 14/00993/FULL6, including the description of the application, a public consultation notice, and a table of important dates and documents. Red arrows point to the search bar and the 'Track' button.

**Planning » Application Summary**

14/00993/FULL6 | Single storey side/rear extension, first floor balcony to rear. Alterations to roof to provide side and rear dormer extensions and front and side roof lights | 41 Beadon Road Bromley BR2 9AS

[Back to search results](#) [Track](#) [Print](#)

The public consultation period for this application has ended. We are no longer accepting comments from the public on this application.

**Details** | **Comments** | **Constraints (8)** | **Documents (12)** | **Related Cases (4)** | **Map**

**Summary** | **Further Information** | **Important Dates**

Reference	14/00993/FULL6
Alternative Reference	PP-03254460
Application Received	Tue 18 Mar 2014
Address	41 Beadon Road Bromley BR2 9AS

The page above has useful information including 'Important Dates' and 'Documents'. These documents are the plans and other documents relating to the application. NOTE: You can log in and then 'Track' the application – this means you will be notified as soon as anything happens with the application – e.g. a meeting being arranged.

### How decisions are made

For applications involving three or fewer units, and which are otherwise uncontentious, the Planning Officer himself can make a decision under delegated powers. For larger or contentious applications, the application is referred to one of the four planning Sub-Committees, meeting fortnightly, together with a recommendation of either 'permission', 'refusal' or 'members' views requested'. The Councillors sitting on each Sub-Committee are not bound to accept this advice – but see below. Also, when an application is considered by a Sub-Committee, it is possible for members of the public to speak for 3 minutes either for or against the application. Important information about this is included in the appendices below.

Amongst other things, the Planning Officer considers whether the application meets the policies in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) although this is gradually being supplanted by the Local Development Framework. For some issues, the Planning Officer seeks reports from specialists within the Council, notably the Highways Department who comment on issues such as parking and access. These reports from specialists confirm whether or not there are any 'technical issues' on which an application can be refused. If there are not, and then the Planning Officer or the Sub-Committee refuses the application on these issues (e.g., the Highways Department says there are no parking issues but the Sub-Committee thinks there are and refuses permission on this basis) then the Council is likely to have to pay costs at any subsequent Appeal.

The council generally has eight weeks from the start date to make a decision, and failure to do so may result in the applicant registry and an appeal on the grounds of “non determination”. For larger applications, the council has up to twelve weeks to make a decision. All these relevant dates and the date of the committee meeting, if any, can be found on the web site.

Applicants can appeal a refusal and these Appeals can be held under a number of different procedures ranging from “fast track” which is determined by the Inspector solely on the basis of the information already held by the Council up to an “inquiry” which is an expensive and formal legal procedure.

### **Planning issues**

Objections to applications can only be made on the basis of applications having failed to meet the policies contained within the [unitary development plan](#), the planning Bible. [The UDP is currently being superseded bit by bit, by the Local Development Framework and the Mayor’s London Plan. We not quite sure how all these three interact but for the most part it is quite sufficient to rely upon the UDP.]

Although there are many policies in the UDP which an application might contravene, the major issues tend to be: --

- Loss of amenity to neighbours especially by overlooking
- Out of character to the area for example by style or size
- Of such a size that the separation between the proposed property and existing properties would not be of the spatial standard of the area
- Overdevelopment by way of bulk, mass, height and perhaps footprint.
- Insufficient or inappropriate parking arrangements.

### **Conditions**

Applications are often given permission subject to conditions. Almost invariably this means that the building must be built within three years but conditions can also include taking precautions to protect existing trees, the external materials to be used and the treatment and nature of boundary enclosures.

### **Objecting to an application**

It is easiest to object online. Here is an example of a (redacted) real life objection: -

April 2014

Mr. J. Alderman,  
Planning Dept.,  
LB Bromley,  
Stockwell Close,  
Bromley

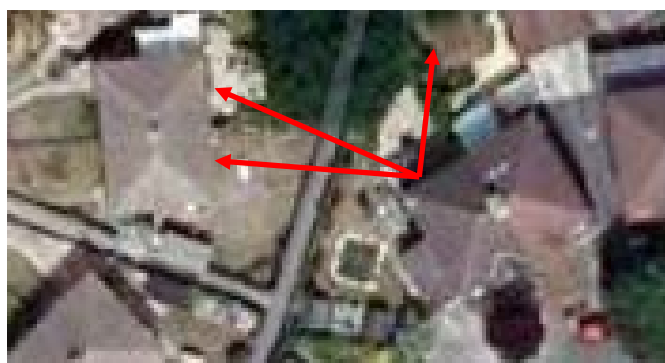
Dear Mr. Alderman,

**[Roof alterations and extensions], [ ] Close**

We object to this application on the following grounds: -

**1) UDP Policies BE1(v) and H8(iii)**

The proposed dormer window on the second floor is a real cause for concern. Whilst an improvement on the Juliet Balcony of the earlier application, nevertheless there would still be a considerable loss of privacy in gardens from being overlooked and this will particularly affect [ ] Close to the rear. In addition, overlooking down, across and into the bedrooms of 5 and 6 [ ] Close will be unacceptably intrusive. By submitting application 14/[ ] (an application at this site but without the proposed dormer window) the applicant is tacitly admitting that the dormer window would be unacceptable.



**1 Looking down and into gardens and bedrooms**

**2) UDP Policies BE1 (ii) & H8 (i),(ii)**



[ ] Close constitutes four pairs of semi-detached houses which, apart from one hipped roof which has been converted to a gable roof, retains a remarkable degree of similarity and indeed symmetry. The addition of a two storey side extension would destroy the symmetry, be over dominant to the main building and impact negatively on the street scene.

### 3) UDP Policies BE1(i) & H7(iii), (iv)



The development site is already cramped and is indeed the smallest plot in [ ] Close. The development would result in a very small and inadequate garden. Again, the applicant, by submitting application 14/[ ] (which has no rear extension), tacitly accepts that this application is excessive.

The proposal constitutes a cramped overdevelopment of the site resulting in an over intensive use of the site and retrograde lowering of spatial standards to which the area is at present developed.

- 2 The plot is already the most cramped and awkward in [ ] Close

### 4) UDP Policy T3 Parking

We note that Section 8 of the Application Form states incorrectly that parking arrangements would not be affected by this proposal: clearly they would be as the garage will be demolished.

We are concerned that with the proposed removal of the parking space (garage) and the addition of living space to the property in question, there would be additional pressure on street parking. We understand that should the property be extended, there will be three vehicles and a van to be accommodated. Parking is limited in [ ] Close either because the access is narrow (below left picture) or because space is needed for manoeuvring at the head of [ ] Close.

Further, [ ] Way (below right) has many dropped curbs for vehicular access and as such parking in this road is somewhat limited.





As a result, the excess parking is likely to lead to unsafe road conditions.

### **Conditions**

Without prejudice to the foregoing, if the Council is minded to permit this application, then we would request that the following conditions are raised: -

#### **1. Construction Method Statement**

No development shall take place, including any works of demolition, until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction period. The Statement shall provide for:

- the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors
- the timing of deliveries
- loading and unloading of plant and materials

Reason: access to the site is via a narrow road and parking near the site is limited or likely to cause obstruction. In addition, lorries over 5 tons are already prohibited from entering [ ] Close outside of the hours 08:00 to 18:30.

#### **2. Working Hours**

Demolition or construction works shall not take place outside 08:00 hours to 18:00 hours Mondays to Fridays and 09:00 hours to 13:00 hours on Saturdays nor at any time on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Reason: the site is in a quiet residential area and the residents might reasonably expect not to be inconvenienced by noise.

#### **3. Materials**

In particular, and as far as possible, materials must match those of 6 [ ] Close.

For all these reasons, we ask you to refuse this application.

Yours sincerely,

## 2) Trees and their Conservation

This note is a quick introduction to the protection of trees in our area.

Trees in our area are protected by one of three means.

### 1) Within the Downs Hill Conservation Area

The law requires that anyone planning to cut down or carry out work to a tree in a conservation area must legally give the Council six weeks' notice of their intention to do so. The purpose of this notice is to give the Council the opportunity to consider whether a Tree Preservation Order should be made.

You do not need to notify the Council if you want to cut down or work on a tree that is less than 7.5 cm in diameter (measured 1.5 m above ground) or 10 cm if you are thinning to help the growth of other trees. There is also no need to follow the notification procedure when a tree is dead, dying or has become dangerous and action needs to be taken quickly for safety reasons, although you should let the Council know if you are taking down a tree in these circumstances.

If in doubt contact the Tree Officer on:

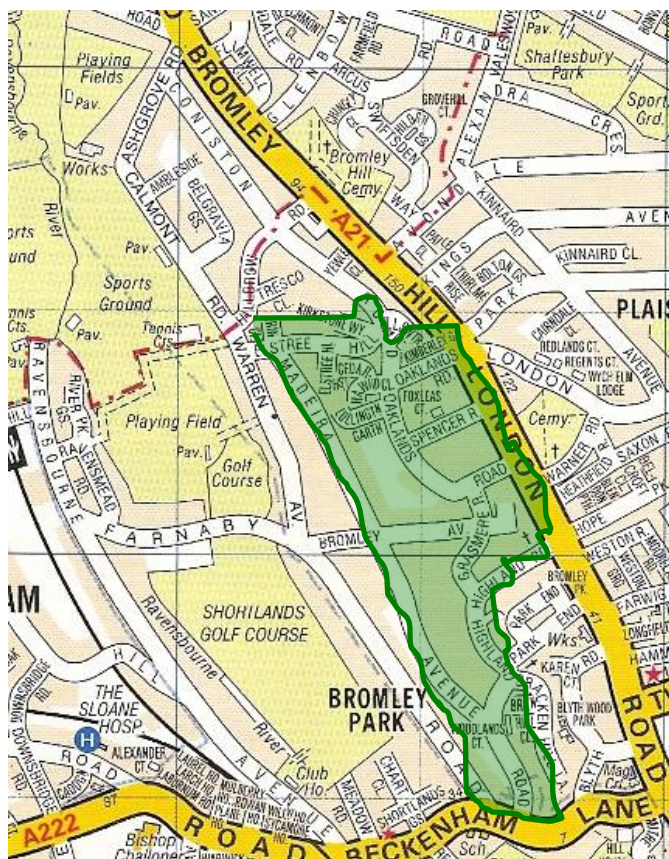
**Telephone:** 020 8313 4516 / 020 8313 4515

**Fax:** 020 8313 0095

**e-mail:** [trees@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:trees@bromley.gov.uk)

### 2) Within the area covered by various 'blanket' Tree Preservation Orders

A large part of our area is covered by 'blanket' tree preservation orders and the **approximate** area covered by these is shown in the map below.



In essence, no work may be carried out on trees within this area without the council's permission but full details can be found [here](#).

### **3) Spot Orders**

Within our area, a large number of trees are covered individually by so called spot orders. Individual owners of these trees will know of the Preservation order. The rules are the same as for those trees covered by a blanket order – please see the above link for further details.

### **Concerns about trees**

If you have any concern that a tree should be protected, or believe that work has been carried out to a protected tree please do not hesitate to contact council on

**Telephone:** 020 8313 4516 / 020 8313 4515

**Fax:** 020 8313 0095

**e-mail:** [trees@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:trees@bromley.gov.uk)

It should be noted that trees are often at risk in the period immediately before a planning application is submitted.

### **Help**

Members should feel free to contact RVPS at [rvps@talktalk.net](mailto:rvps@talktalk.net) if you require any assistance with planning issues.

Ravensbourne Valley Preservation Society  
1 January 2015



## **Appendix one**

If you have the opportunity to speak for 3 minutes in front of a committee, please read the following which we have prepared to assist you.

The Bromley Council has produced the advice below on the matter. In addition to the formal advice provided by Bromley, speakers may wish to take the following into account.

- Find out which committee is hearing the application [here](#) having found out the date of the meeting from the ‘important dates’ page of an application – typically like [this](#).
- Prior to the meeting, the Council Planning Officer’s ‘delegation report’ on the application will be available [here](#) or on the ‘documents’ page of an application, typically like [this](#).

By tracking your application (which you can do after ‘searching’ for it on the council website, and after ‘logging in’) you will receive notification when this report is available.

The report will tell you whether Permission is recommended or not.

- Speakers are required to attend half an hour before the meeting in order to register. They then sit at the front of the public gallery in the council chamber waiting their turn to speak.
- It is always highly recommended to get a Councillor to speak against the application as well as yourself. This ensures that the application is dealt with early in the evening, rather than having to wait, literally, for hours.
- When you speak, remember to switch the microphone on!
- Prepare a speech thoroughly beforehand of approximately 400 words – the most that can be reasonably spoken in 3 minutes.
- Your speech should concentrate only on planning issues e.g. out of character with the locality, too big, too high, loss of amenity and privacy. Importantly, inconvenience from demolition /construction or loss of property values are not planning issues and therefore irrelevant.
- Do submit photographs of the site to illustrate your speech. Some of the committee will not have been to the site.
- At the end of your speech, you may be asked questions by the committee but this is rare.

## PLANNING DIVISION INFORMATION SHEET 1.4 PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

**The Plans Sub-Committee** meets fortnightly. They consider planning applications, alleged contraventions of planning law and tree preservation.

**The Development Control Committee** meets on average once every eight weeks. Committee Members consider major or contentious planning applications and other planning issues affecting the Borough. The reports on white paper concern a whole range of issues, including service planning, strategic and London-wide issues, planning and transport policy, conservation, and countryside management. Part II of the agenda, printed on pink paper, contains items, which, because they relate to legal, or financial or personnel issues, are confidential and cannot be heard in public.

- Members of the public making written comments on planning applications have the opportunity to address Councillors at Committee if they wish. However, this does not apply where a planning application is decided by the Chief Planner under delegated powers, i.e. where the application will not be considered by a Committee.
- Anyone wishing to speak must have already written in expressing his or her views on the application.
- Committee agendas can be inspected on our website, at the Civic Centre or in public libraries from five working days before the Committee meeting. Alternatively, you may contact the Planning Division to find out if an application is included on an agenda.
- Speakers must give notice to the Directorate of Legal and Democratic Services of their intention to speak by calling 020 8313 4745 **no later than 10 am on the working day before the meeting**. At the Chairman's discretion, items will be taken in an order that reflects the level of public interest and having regard to visiting Ward Members.
- Should speakers wish to table any correspondence or photographs, all documents must be submitted to the Directorate of Legal and Democratic Services by 5.00 p.m. on the working day before the meeting.
- The proposal plans will be available to the Committee and the report may be updated by the Chief Planner or his representative before anyone speaks.
- Order of public speakers: if the recommendation is '**permission**' or '**Members' views are requested**' then it will normally be the opponent first, supporter second. If the recommendation is 'refusal', the reverse order will apply.

Continued overleaf...



- Normally one person is permitted to speak for an application and one person permitted to speak against it. If there are more than two requests to speak for or against, people with similar views should get together and agree spokespersons, failing that, the first people who notified Legal and Democratic Services of their intention to speak will be called. Among supporters, the applicant (or if the applicant wishes, the agent) takes precedence, and if the applicant or agent do not wish to speak, the first supporters will be called.
- Residents' Associations or other organisations wishing to make use of these arrangements must appoint a single spokesperson to represent their views.
- Speakers are reminded that only material planning considerations are relevant to the determination of planning applications.
- Each speaker will normally be given up to three minutes and this will be indicated by the warning light system in the Council Chamber: - an amber light will show the passing of two-and-a-half minutes and a red light will show the completion of the three minute period.
- Members of the Committee (not visiting Ward Members) may ask speakers to clarify points raised. Otherwise, once members of the public have spoken, no further intervention will be permitted.
- Council officers attending the Committee may be called upon to clarify any points raised before Members of the Committee discuss the item.
- The Chairman has absolute discretion to vary the established programme described above or to curtail it when considered appropriate.

## **AFTER THE MEETING**

For planning applications, a Decision Notice is normally issued within a few days after the Committee meeting. Planning conditions or the grounds for refusal will be listed on the Decision Notice. These are available on our website at [www.bromley.gov.uk/planningaccess](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/planningaccess).

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further information regarding the arrangements public speaking please contact Legal and Democratic Services on 020 8313 4745.

For further information regarding planning reports and decisions please contact the Planning Division at [planning@bromley.gov.uk](mailto:planning@bromley.gov.uk) or by telephone on 020 8313 4956, or write to us at the Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley BR1 3UH

This form is also available upon request in large-print format.  
Issued by the Planning Division July 2004 Updated June 2011



## **Appendix two**

What follows is a typical speech: -

“Thank you Chairman,

I live at [.....] and represent all the other householders [ ] who unanimously object to these two applications.

We object to both on account of the negative impact on the street scene, the loss of the garage which would exacerbate the already bad parking situation, the over intense use of a small and cramped site and, with regard to the larger application, the loss of privacy on account of overlooking from the dormer window.

Both applications would see an unacceptable change to the street scene. The Close retains a remarkable degree of symmetry and these applications would result in the first side extension and first substantial loss of symmetry to the detriment of the overall attractiveness of the road.

Both applications would result in the loss of the garage. As my pictures show [*hold up the parking handout and keep on talking*], vehicles associated with the application site are already causing difficulties by blocking the driveway of a neighbour. Access to the Close is via a very narrow access road which is already difficult to negotiate whilst the turning head at the top of the Close is frequently congested making manoeuvring in and out of properties difficult. The situation will only worsen with the loss of the garage.

The application site is already by far the smallest within the Close as my picture shows [*hold up the cramped site handout and keep on talking*]. Both applications would result in a cramped overdevelopment of the site resulting in minimal garden space for the occupiers, with one application being even worse than the other. The spatial standards to which the area is currently developed would be diminished unacceptably.

The larger application also suffers from the proposed addition of a dormer window [*hold up the relevant handout and keep on talking*]. This would give rise to an unacceptable degree of overlooking to the relatively small back garden of [ ] Close. In addition, it would be possible to look down across and into the bedrooms of 5 & 6 [ ] Close which is very nearby.

Without prejudice to the foregoing, should the committee decide to grant permission, we would ask that a Condition of the permission be that a robust Construction Method Statement be prepared to control the movement of large delivery trucks and plant which may well cause difficulties for residents leaving and entering their properties.

For all the above reasons we ask that you refuse permission for both these applications.”

The documents (handouts) to which it refers are shown below. We have found it extremely helpful to provide documents to the Sub Committee as ‘a picture is worth 1,000 words’



**Handout 1**

**[Address and application number]**

**Plans Sub-committee 5<sup>th</sup> June 2014**

**Submitted by name and address**



The application site is already the most cramped in the Close and development would diminish the spatial standards of the area.

## **Handout 2**

**[Address] and [application number]**

**Plans Sub-committee 5<sup>th</sup> June 2014**

**Submitted by [ ], of [ ]**

Parking is already a major issue with the vehicles belonging to the applicant property already blocking access to other driveways and garages. (The blocked garage can just be seen behind the van). The situation would worsen with the loss of the parking space (i.e. garage).



Access to the Close is already difficult along the narrow approach road:



### Handout 3

[Address]

Plans Sub-committee 5<sup>th</sup> June 2014

Submitted by [ ] of [ ]



*Indicative drawing*

The dormer window will permit overlooking into, and a sense of dominance over, the small rear garden of No. 6.



Above: looking down across and into the gardens and back rooms of neighbouring properties