

RECEIVED: 20 February, 2006

WARD: Kenton

PLANNING AREA: Kingsbury & Kenton Consultative Forum

LOCATION: 254 & 256, Woodcock Hill, Harrow, HA3 0PH

PROPOSAL: Demolition of 2 houses and construction of 2 blocks comprising a total of 14 flats

APPLICANT: Hexport Ltd

CONTACT: Designed Images

PLAN NO'S: WOOD – PPE01 “Proposed Plans/Elevations – Block 1”, WOOD – PPE01 “Proposed Plans/Elevations – Block 2”, 254WOOD – BP01 “Site Plan”

RECOMMENDATION

Refusal

EXISTING

The subject site contains a pair of two-storey semi-detached residential dwellinghouses, situated on the south side of Woodcock Hill. The surrounding area is suburban. The existing buildings are not listed, nor are they within a Conservation Area.

PROPOSAL

Demolition of 2 houses and construction of 2 blocks comprising a total of 14 flats.

HISTORY

No directly relevant history for this site. Please see attached sheet for full history.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Brent UDP 2004

- *STR14 New development to make a positive contribution to improving the quality of the urban environment in Brent*
- *STR18 A minimum of 9,600 additional dwelling units shall be provided*
- *STR19 New housing development should be located on sites which reduce the need for travel*
- *BE2 Local Context*
- *BE3 Urban Structure: Space & Movement*
- *BE6 Public Realm: Landscape Design*
- *BE7 Streetscene*
- *BE9 Architectural Quality*
- *BE12 Sustainable Design Principles*
- *H1 Additional Housing*
- *H8 Resist Loss of Housing*

- H12 *Residential Quality – Layout Considerations*
- H13 *Residential Density*
- H14 *Minimum Residential Development*
- TRN3 *Environmental Impact of Traffic*
- TRN15 *Forming an Access to a Road*
- TRN23 *Parking Standards – Residential Developments*
- PS14 *Parking Standards – Residential Developments*

SPG

- SPG3 *Forming an Access onto a Road*
- SPG17 *Design Guide for New Development*

Central Government Guidance

PPG3: Housing

The Mayor of London: London Plan February 2004

Policy 4B.3 Maximising the Potential of Sites

The Mayor will and boroughs should ensure development proposals achieve the highest possible intensity of use compatible with local context, the design principles in Policy 4B.1 and with public transport capacity. Boroughs should develop residential and commercial density policies in their UDPs in line with this policy. Residential development should conform to the density ranges set out in Table 4B.1. The Mayor will refuse permission for strategic referrals that under-use the potential of the site.

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

The applicants have not submitted a Sustainability Checklist. This is an important component of the application process which should be submitted and assessed by the Council prior to the approval of planning permission. The applicants have been asked to submit these details. However, as the refusal of planning permission has been recommended, these details are not required prior to the completion of this report.

CONSULTATION

Public

Consultation period (**6 March to 28 March 2006**)

99 local residents were consulted.

A site notice was erected on 7 March 2006.

No letters of objection were received prior to the completion of this report.

All subsequent comments will be reported within a supplementary report for this application.

Internal

Transportation Planning: Acceptable on transportation grounds.

Urban Design: Proposal does not improve the architectural quality in the locality in accordance with Policy BE9 of the UDP, but is consistent with the character and appearance of the adjoining building, Woodcock Court.

Landscape Design: Section 106 contributions would be required to provide off-site planting. This could be implemented in the immediate vicinity of the subject site.

Environmental Health: Historical pond located on this site. A contamination report would be required if this application is to be approved.

External

Thames Water:

With regard to surface water drainage it is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, water courses or surface water sewer. It must not be allowed to drain to the foul sewer as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding.

There are public sewers crossing this site.

REMARKS

Setting

The proposed development is adjacent to Woodcock Court, a large two-storey building with an additional floor within the loft space. To the west of this site lies four two-storey blocks of residential units which provide accommodation for old age pensioners. The area to the north of the site are characterised by two-storey semi-detached properties.

This site is highly visible from public spaces to the north, south and west. These include Woodcock Hill, Silverholme Road, Tenterden Sports Ground and the public open space that provides pedestrian access to the ground.

Residential Density and Potential for Site Development

The site area is approximately 0.1565 hectares. The Woodcock Hill frontage is approximately 28 m wide, thus giving a total site area for the residential density calculation of 0.1733 hectares.

The applicants have proposed a total of 44 habitable rooms, which corresponds to a residential density of 254 habitable rooms per hectare.

The PTAL rating for this site is 2. Bus services run along Woodcock Hill and the distance to the Preston London Underground Station is 375 m as the crow flies, 645 along the Woodcock Hill and Preston Road, or 465 m via Preston Way and the paved footpath through Tenterden Sports Ground.

The corresponding residential density range, as specified within SPG17, is 240 to 450 habitable rooms per hectare (hr/ha) while the density specified within Table 4B.1 of the London Plan is 200 to 250 hr/ha.

The proposed residential density falls within the SPG17 density range and is only marginally above the range specified within the London Plan.

Policy H14 of the Brent UDP 2004 specifies that planning permission will be refused where a development would under-utilise a site while it is noted that the development offers a number of generously sized flats but falls short of the threshold for the provision of affordable housing. The total floor area of the development is 984 m². This is comprised of 384 m² within Block 2 and 600 m² within Block 1. Theoretically, rearrangement of the Block 1 could provide 2 x 80 m² three bedroom units and 7 x 60 m² two-bedroom flats, thus reaching the threshold for the provision of affordable units. However, there are concerns regarding the feasibility of the Block 2, which could affect the development potential of the site. This is discussed later in this report.

Siting, Massing, External Appearance and Streetscene

The siting of the proposed front block is in accordance with the building line created by Woodcock Court. The rear projecting element of this development projects approximately 1.2 m rearward of the adjacent wing of Woodcock Court. However, this is to be situated approximately 4.2 m from the side boundary and accordingly will not cause any significant loss of light or outlook to the residents of this building.

The proposed rear block is adjacent to the southern wing of Woodcock Court. There are no habitable room windows within the adjacent flank wall of Woodcock Court. The proposed block projects approximately 3 m north and south 2.6 m south of the Woodcock Court. These elements of the block do not comply with the 45 degree line as specified within SPG17 and accordingly are deemed to cause a loss of light and outlook from the central and rear gardens of Woodcock Court.

Policy BE9 of the UDP 2004 seeks to achieve a quality of design that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. The proposed development does not exhibit a quality of design that lifts or improves on the local architecture. However, the proposed buildings are consistent with the architecture of the adjoining building and as such are not detrimental to the character and appearance of the area.

It is noted that the large roof overhang increases the perceived bulk of the building.

Internal Layout of the Flats

Block 1:

The proposed flats within Block 1 exceed the minimum floor area as specified within SPG17.

Five kitchens within this block suffer from a lack of outlook and natural light. The windows within the eastern and western flank walls should be glazed with obscured glass and fixed closed. This will ensure that the use does not result in a loss of privacy or disturbance of the residents of the adjoining building and that use of the proposed rear access road does not result in a loss of privacy or disturbance of the future occupants of the proposed development. A high level of sound insulation will be required within the windows of the western flank wall due to the proximity to the access road.

The two larger family units are located on the second floor and do not have direct access to external amenity space. This is contrary to SPG 17 and accordingly is considered to constitute an inadequate standard of family accommodation.

Block 2:

The proposed flats within Block 2 are 1 m² less than the minimum floor area for a two-bedroom flat for four people as specified within SPG17. However, this deficit is minor and the internal spaces are such that this alone does not result in an unacceptable standard of residential accommodation.

The kitchens within this block have windows that are situated 2 m from the eastern side boundary of the property. SPG17 specifies habitable room windows within a flank wall must be at least 5 m from the boundary while such windows within a rear wall must be at least 10 m from the boundary. The proposal does not comply with either standard and these windows represent the sole source of light for a habitable room. It is accordingly unacceptable to glaze these windows with obscured glass. The outlook from these habitable room windows is unsatisfactory and the windows will also result a loss of privacy for the residents of the adjoining property.

The northern wall of this block includes windows that are to provide light, outlook and ventilation for the second bedrooms of three of the flats. These windows are to be located 1 m from the rear parking area. The use of the parking area will result in an unacceptable level of disturbance for the residents of the aforementioned flats.

Loss of Existing Family Housing

Policy H8 specifies that where "a development entails demolition of other loss of dwellings, comparable replacement will be required". The applicants have accordingly included two three-bedroom units within this development. While development includes the replacement with two units of equivalent size, these units suffer from a lack of direct access to external amenity space. These two units are not considered to constitute "comparable replacement" as they do not provide an adequate standard of family accommodation.

Parking and Traffic Considerations

The proposed development includes 14 off-street parking spaces, one of which is suitable sized to provide disabled access. Four of the parking spaces are situated to the rear of the site, adjacent to Block 2. The impact of these four spaces has been discussed previously.

The provision of parking is below the UDP standard, however, Transport Planning have indicated that the proposed development is unlikely to contribute to excessive levels of on-street parking. The rear access road is suitably sized to provide shared access (vehicles and pedestrians) providing suitable paving is used and is also adequate to provide access to the site for servicing and emergency vehicles.

The bicycle store measures 2 m x 3 m and as such is unlikely to be sufficiently sized to provide weatherproof, secure storage for the required minimum of 14 cycles let alone the 20 cycles as specified within the supporting letter.

It is also likely that the turning adjacent to the rear parking spaces will be used for the parking. Should the application be approved, a condition should be attached to ensure that suitable means are undertaken to ensure that the turning area is not used for parking.

Landscape Design and Proportions of Hard and Soft Landscaping

The proposed development includes two large elements of hard landscaping associated with the parking and turning areas. The development is contrary to Policy BE7 which specifies that hardsurfacing should not occupy more than half of the front garden area. It is noted that more than half the forecourt of the adjacent building, Woodcock Court, is covered by hard landscaping, however, new developments should make a positive contribution to the streetscape. The provision of an additional development which includes an excessively large hardsurfaced area will be detrimental to the character and appearance of the surrounding

area. Additionally, the large area of hard landscaping within the central element of the site detracts from the setting of the proposed buildings and reduces the potential for planting large vegetation within the site.

The proposed site layout is such that off-site planting would be required to secure an acceptable level of planting for the site. This could be achieved through Section 106 contributions toward planting within the public open space adjacent to the site.

Refuse storage

The siting of the refuse storage areas is acceptable given that the access road is suitably sized for service vehicles.

Contaminated Land

Your officers have been informed that the subject site historically contained an old pond. Should the application be approved, a contaminated land study must be submitted to and approved by the Council prior to the commencement of works.

Accuracy of Drawings

It is noted that there are minor discrepancies between the site area as detailed within the submitted drawings and that detailed within the Council's OS Plans. The applicants should undertake a detailed survey of the site area to ensure that the submitted plans are accurate.

Conclusion

The proposal confirms that there is potential for development of higher density than currently existing on this site. However, the current proposal suffers from a number of issues of non-compliance with Brent Council Policy and Policy Guidance. These include siting and massing that would cause a loss of light and outlook from the external amenity space of Woodcock Court, an inadequate standard of residential accommodation through the lack of natural light and outlook from a number of kitchens within both blocks, the disturbance of three bedrooms within the block 2 due to the proximity to the rear parking area, overlooking of the adjoining property through the siting of habitable room windows less 2 m from the side boundary, the failure to provide accommodation that is comparable to that of the original dwellings, the inadequate provision of cycle storage and an excessive proportion of hard landscaping within the site. Additionally, the site may be capable of supporting a larger number of residential units which would facilitate the provision of affordable housing.

The refusal of planning permission is recommended.

RECOMMENDATION: Refuse Consent

CONDITIONS/REASONS:

- (1) The proposed development, by reason of the siting and excessive size of Block 2 together with the siting of six habitable room windows in close proximity to the boundary between the subject site and Woodcock Court, would have an unduly detrimental impact on the residential amenities enjoyed by the occupants of Woodcock Court with regard to the loss of light, outlook and privacy. This is contrary to policies BE9 of the Brent Unitary Development Plan 2004 and Supplementary Planning Guidance No 17.
- (2) The proposal constitutes a residential development for which an inadequate standard of residential accommodation is provided for most units due to the inadequate provision of light to and/or outlook from the kitchens of 9 of the flats, an inadequate separation between the rear parking area and the second bedroom of northern flats within block two and the inadequate provision of cycle storage. This is contrary to policies BE9 and H12 of the Brent Unitary Development Plan 2004 and Supplementary Planning Guidance No 17.
- (3) The proposed three-bedroom units, by reason of their siting on the second floor of the building and the lack of direct access to external amenity space constitutes an inadequate standard of family accommodation and as such, represents a failure to provide replacement accommodation that is comparable to that which currently exists. This is contrary to Policy H8 of the Brent Unitary Development Plan 2004 and Supplementary Planning Guidance No. 17.
- (4) The proposal includes an excessive proportion of hard landscaping within the front and

central elements of the site, detrimental to the setting of the proposed building and the character and appearance of the surrounding area. This is contrary to Policies BE6 and BE7 of the Brent Unitary Development Plan 2004 and Supplementary Planning Guidance No. 17.

INFORMATIVES:

- (1) A sustainability checklist has not been submitted for this application. This is a requirement for all major applications in accordance with Policy BE12 of the Brent Unitary Development Plan 2004 and Supplementary Planning Guidance No. 19. Any subsequent applications should be accompanied by a completed sustainability checklist.
- (2) There are discrepancies between the site area as detailed within the submitted drawings and that of the OS Plans. An accurate site survey should accordingly be undertaken prior to the resubmission of any further applications for planning permission.
- (3) Thames Water Informative: With regard to surface water drainage it is the responsibility of a developer to make proper provision for drainage to ground, water courses or surface water sewer. It must not be allowed to drain to the foul sewer as this is the major contributor to sewer flooding. Thames Water recognises the environmental and economic benefits of surface water source control and encourages its appropriate application where it is to the overall benefit of their customers. Hence, in the disposal of surface water, Thames Water recommends that the Applicant a) Looks to ensure that new connections to the public sewerage system do not pose an unacceptable threat of surcharge, flooding or pollution; b) check the proposals are in line with advice from the DETR which encourages, wherever practicable, disposal on site without recourse to the public sewerage system – for example in the form of soakaways or infiltration areas on free draining soils; c) looks to ensure the separation of foul and surface water sewerage on all new developments.
- (4) There are public sewers crossing the site, therefore no building will be permitted within 3 metres of the sewers without Thames Water's approval. Should you require a building over application form or other information relating to your building / development work, please contact Thames Water on 0845 850 2777.

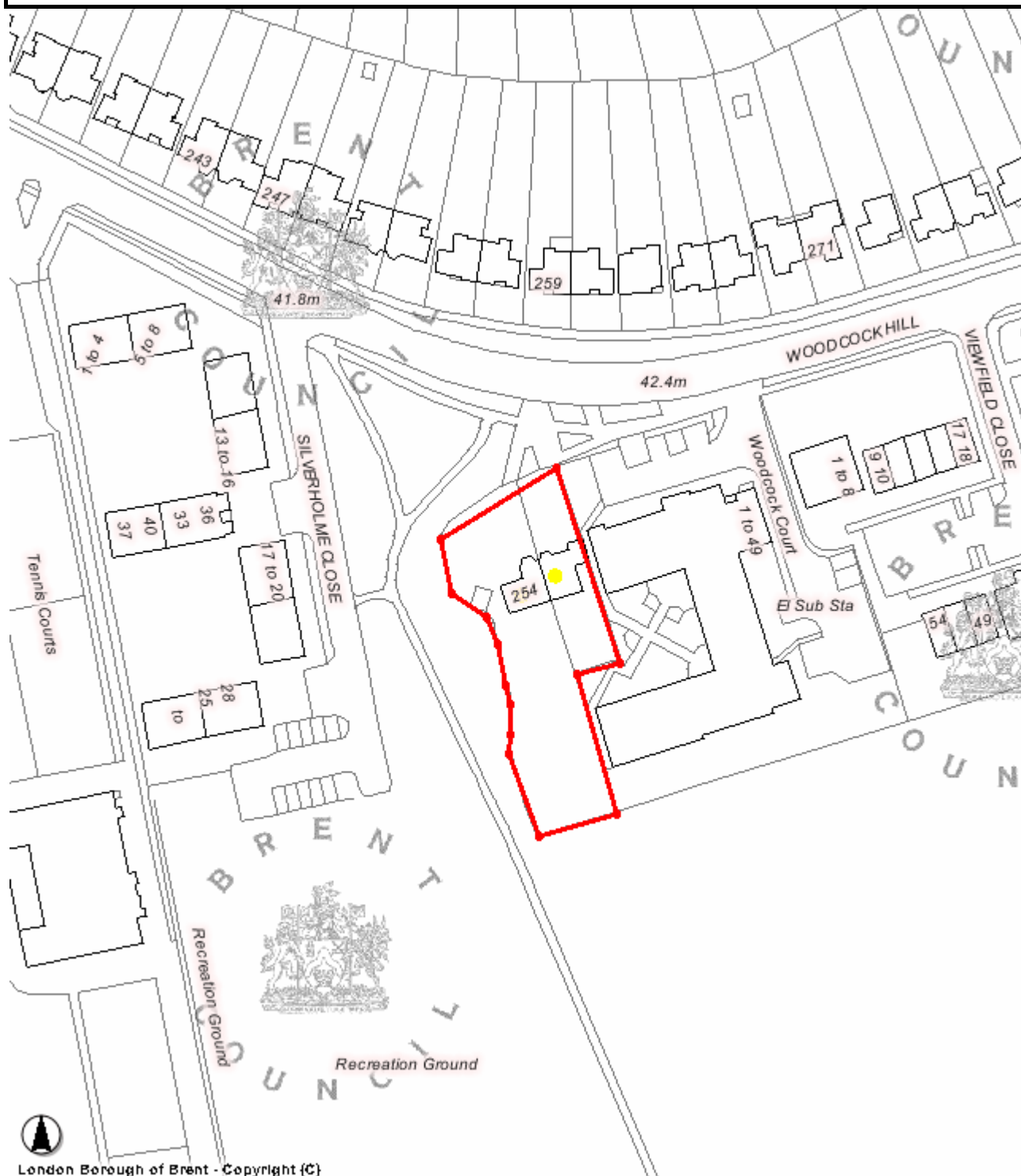
Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact David Glover, The Planning Service, Brent House, 349 High Road, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 6BZ, Tel. No. 020 8937 5337



Planning Committee Map

Site address: 254 & 256, Woodcock Hill, Harrow, HA3 0PH

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