

Committee Report

Planning Committee on 4 November, 2009

Case No.

09/2223

RECEIVED: 8 September, 2009

WARD: Alperton

PLANNING AREA: Wembley Consultative Forum

LOCATION: 1A-E 2A-F-14 A-F Inc, MIDDLESEX HOUSE, Northwick Road, Wembley

PROPOSAL: Proposed renovation of existing 14-storey building housing 84 flats, recladding of exterior with insulated render system, demolition and replacement of ground-floor entrance canopies, new third-floor roof terrace, 6 first-floor balconies, proposed pedestrian-access gates from Northwick Road and facing Grand Union Heights, with associated amenities and landscaping

APPLICANT: Stadium Housing Association

CONTACT: King Sturge LLP

PLAN NO'S: 01: Site Photographs, 02: Site Photographs, 03: Existing location plan, 04: Existing site plan, 05: Proposed site plan, 06: Block Plan, 07: Existing site sections (north/south), 08: Proposed site sections (north/south), 09: Existing south elevation, 10: Existing east elevation, 11: Proposed north elevation, 12: Proposed west elevation, 13A: Proposed south elevation, 14: Proposed east elevation, 15: Proposed north elevation, 16: Proposed west elevation, 17: Perspective 1, 18: Perspective 2, 19: Existing ground floor plan, 20: Existing first floor plan, 21: Existing typical floor plan, 22: Roof plan, 23A: Proposed ground floor plan, 24A: Proposed first floor plan, 25A: Proposed 2-3-4 floor plan, 26A: Proposed typical floor plan, 27A: Proposed roof plan, 28: Proposed roof terrace, 29A: Proposed landscape plan, 30: Proposed ground floor unit plan, 31: Proposed first floor unit plans, 32: Proposed first floor unit plans, 33: Proposed 5th to 14th floor unit plan, 101: Proposed wall tie, 102: Proposed cladding detail, 103: Proposed cladding detail, 104: Proposed cladding detail, 105: Proposed fins plan and elevation, 106: Proposed fins detail, Location Plan, Statement of Community Involvement as at September 2009, Planning Statement as at September 2009, Transport Statement (dated September 2009), Design and Access Statement (dated September 2009), Form TP6 - Sustainable Development Checklist (dated 01/09/2009), Energy Assessment (dated October 2009), SAP assessment (dated 16/10/2009), SAP assessment (dated 15/10/2009)

RECOMMENDATION

Approval, subject to conditions.

EXISTING

The subject site contains Middlesex House, a fourteen-storey building bounded by Ealing Road to the east, Northwick Road to the south and the Grand Union Canal to the north. Originally an

office block constructed in the 1960s, planning permission was granted for a change of use to 84 temporary residential accommodation units in 1987. At this time, the building was clad in a blue/grey cladding with red aluminium box windows.

The residential units are 100% affordable. The applicants have advised, however, that many of the residents have resided within the building for a significant period of time and the building is currently overcrowded. As a result, these works are proposed to improve living conditions for the existing residents.

One section of the building is also dedicated to Brent Play, a specialist childcare facility. Part of the ground floor of the building would be retained for this facility.

PROPOSAL

Proposed renovation of existing 14-storey building housing 84 flats, recladding of exterior with insulated render system, demolition and replacement of ground-floor entrance canopies, new third-floor roof terrace, 6 first-floor balconies, proposed pedestrian-access gates from Northwick Road and facing Grand Union Heights, with associated amenities and landscaping.

HISTORY

98/0234 - Formation of 4 additional flats at first-floor level, and creation of meeting area, kitchen and office within ground-floor block.

Granted – 18 March 1998

BC 88/6546 - Conversion of office block to 80 flats (Building Regulations record)

87/1645 – Change of use to 78 flats with communal facilities

Granted – 14 October 1987

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Brent UDP 2004

BE2 – Townscape: Local Context & Character

BE6 – Public Realm: Landscape Design

BE7 – Public Realm: Street scene

BE9 – Architectural Quality

BE12 – Sustainable Design Principles

BE14 – Grand Union Canal Corridor

H12 – Residential Quality – Layout Considerations

TRN 23 – Parking standard Residential Developments

SPG

SPG 17 – Residential Design Standards

SPD

Planning Obligations

SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT

A TP6 form has been with a score of 51%. This is currently being reviewed by officers and will be reported in more detail within the supplementary.

CONSULTATION

Standard three-week consultation period carried out between 18 September 2009 and 09 October 2009, in which 312 properties were notified. Ward councillors were also notified. Notices were posted at the site, advertising the application, and a press notice was produced. No objections have been received regarding the scheme.

Internal Consultees

Transportation – Raise objection due to loss of off-street parking.

REMARKS

This application does not involve a change in the use of the existing building rather a refurbishment and improvement of the existing accommodation in response to housing need.

The scheme proposes the re-cladding of the building with an insulated rendering system which will improve the energy efficiency of the building. The cladding also seeks to improve the existing appearance of the building, proposing sharp fins on the ends of the building and a providing a modern finish to the external appearance of the building.

Other works proposed include infilling the existing canopy to provide new units suitable for disabled persons, improvements to the ground-floor amenity space and the formation of a new third-floor roof terrace. Internal alterations will also be undertaken to reconfigure the accommodation to provide larger units and externally, private balconies will be installed at first-floor level.

Finally, landscaping and boundary treatment improvements are proposed. Works are proposed along the northern boundary of the site which abuts the canal path and along the southern boundary.

Principle of Use

The mix of units will be changed as a result of this scheme. These changes are shown in the table below:

Existing Accommodation Mix		Proposed Accommodation Mix	
1-bed/2 persons	26	1-bed/2 persons	6
2-bed/3 persons	31	2-bed/3 persons	16
2-bed/4 persons	27	2-bed/4 persons	48
3-bed/6 persons	0	3-bed/6 persons	14
Total Flats	84	Total Flats	84

As this mix is more appropriate for the existing residents of the building, no significant issues are considered to result from this.

Quality of Accommodation

The existing accommodation is overcrowded and the reconfiguration of the development is necessary in order to improve living conditions for the existing residents. Although the scheme proposes an increase in residential floorspace and an increase in the number of bedrooms within the building, the number of units will remain at 84.

All of the reconfigured units exceed SPG17 minimum unit-size guidelines by between 10 and 15 square metres. The units which will not be subject to the layout changes marginally fail to meet these standards being approximately 1.5 square metres less than the recommended standard. Nevertheless, as there is no reduction in the existing floor area for these units, this is not considered to raise any significant concerns regarding the quality of accommodation offered to residents.

With regards to amenity space provision, this is offered through the creation of private balconies for six of the first-floor units, private gardens for ground-floor units and a roof terrace at the third-floor level. The ground-floor communal amenity space will also be improved. This area includes play equipment in the south-eastern corner of the site.

The private gardens proposed for the ground-floor units are between 20 and 50 square metres in area exceeding SPG17 standards. The proposed balconies have an area of approximately 4 square metres however this would be supplemented through the use of the communal roof terrace. The roof terrace has an area of approximately 435 square metres. The amenity space provision within that roof terrace would be approximately 5.4 square metres per upper-floor unit.

Currently, the ground-floor communal play-space cannot be classed as communal amenity space for the residents as no separate provision has been provided for the nursery facility on the site. Amendments have been requested to provide a private area for the nursery facility in order to ensure adequate secure play-space for the use. If this is provided, then the ground-floor communal area can be considered to contribute towards the amenity space provision for the flats increasing the provision per unit to 7.8 square metres. Whilst both circumstances result in a significant shortfall in amenity space standards, which unlikely to be supported in the case of a new-build development, this is a significant improvement on the existing provision to the existing residents and is therefore welcomed. Details of the subdivision of the amenity space will be provided in the supplementary report.

The new ground-floor units are provided with landscaping buffers from the entrance pathway to ensure adequate privacy. Currently a number of the units have kitchens with no natural light. This is contrary to policy and amendments have been requested to ensure a satisfactory layout is achieved. Confirmation of these amendments will be reported in the supplementary report.

Design and Appearance

The proposed cladding is considered to significantly improve the appearance of the existing building providing a modern finish to a building which currently fails to positively contribute to the character of the area and improving its thermal efficiency.

Detailed sections have been provided showing how the cladding would be attached to the building in order to prevent awkward junctions. These details are considered to result in a satisfactory appearance.

As the quality of the development rests on providing good quality materials, details of samples will be secured by condition prior to the commencement of works on site.

Landscaping

Landscaping improvements on the site are proposed. Details of these will be secured by condition. This includes improvements to the boundary treatment around the perimeter of the site, along the pathway to the main entrance and where possible, within the parking area.

Improvements are also being made along the northern boundary of the site to improve the link between the site and the canal. Whilst the applicants note it is not possible to provide public access to the canal without the consent of British Waterways, a gate is proposed which provides a possible link in the future and fencing improvements will also improve the canal path from Ealing Road, providing a more attractive link which encourages the use of this path by both residents of the building and members of the public. The applicants have agreed to provide these measures and a condition is recommended to ensure satisfactory details would be secured.

Parking and Access

The site is situated within an area of good accessibility to public transport due to close proximity to the Piccadilly line at Alperton and Alperton bus garage. The PTAL level for the area is therefore 4 which is considered a good level of accessibility.

The scheme does not increase the number of residential units on the site. As a result, Transportation have specified that the replacement of the existing parking provision would be sufficient. The existing parking provision of 39 parking spaces has been retained in the form of 32 parking spaces on the western portion of the site and 7 new spaces on Northwick Road. The applicant has stated that the existing provision is under-utilised and no increase in demand is

envisaged as no new residential units are proposed. Furthermore, although 39 spaces are currently available on site, the applicants state that this provision does not include disabled parking and presents a number of constraints for vehicles turning, and the proposed layout is therefore considered to an improvement to the existing parking arrangement.

Transportation have raised objection to this, however, due to the need to create 7 spaces on Northwick Road. It should, however, be recognised if the parking provision on-site was insufficient, there are very few places within the vicinity of the site that on-street parking is available, due to parking controls in the area. The nearest on-street parking would be in Carlyon Road which is over 350m walk from the site. This significant distance is considered sufficient to discourage residents to park on-street. The Council's maximum parking standards would allow up to 52.6 spaces including the reduction for affordable housing. However, had this site been situated within a Controlled Parking Zone, this would reduce to a maximum of 32.9 spaces. Given the aforementioned distance to the nearest area of uncontrolled parking, your officers consider it appropriate to apply the reduced parking standard. The proposed provision of 32 parking spaces is therefore 0.9 below the maximum permissible and is accordingly considered acceptable. As a result the provision proposed is not considered to warrant a refusal of the scheme.

Refuse arrangements for the units are in the form of a refuse-chute system on every floor of the building. As such, the location of the bins store away from the entrance of the building is considered acceptable. Confirmation of satisfactory servicing provision for the building has not yet been provided by Transportation and will be supported in the supplementary.

S106 Provision

The scheme does not increase the number of residential units on the site, however, it is noted that 34 new bedrooms will be created which, in turn, increases the potential child yield by 30 children. This would normally require a financial contribution in accordance with the standard tariff set out within the Planning Obligations SPD. No contributions have been proposed and the applicants have highlighted financial viability as the reason for this.

Nevertheless the primary aim of this proposal is to improve the standard of accommodation for the existing residents. The increase in the number of bedrooms responds to the housing needs of the existing residents, alleviating overcrowding issues within the building. In addition, new amenity space provision is offered to residents, including playspace for children. The thermal efficiency of the building would also be significantly improved through the recladding, improving living conditions for residents and mitigating the impact of the building on climate change. The scheme also benefits the visual amenities of the area more generally through the modernisation of the building and improving the access to the canal from Ealing Road through the provision of new, better-quality fencing and landscaping.

Evidence is being sought which demonstrates that the scheme would result in a loss. Financial viability alone cannot, however, be used as justification for a scheme which may potentially result in harm which would need to be mitigated.

However, the proposal results in significant benefits as previously specified, and does not increase the number of units on site. As such, the benefits are considered to outweigh the harm which would arise from the development and as such, on balance, the lack of financial contributions is not considered to warrant a refusal of the scheme.

Sustainability

Information regarding the benefits of the cladding has been provided which demonstrate approximately a 50% improvement in the Dwelling Emission Rate. This is a significant improvement in energy efficiency.

As the scheme is a refurbishment rather than a new-build development, there is no requirement to comply with the London Plan sustainability policies. A feasibility study has been supplied which justifies focusing on energy efficiency rather than renewable technologies. This is considered to be appropriate for the refurbishment scheme proposed.

Summary

The proposal is considered to offer significant benefits to the existing residents of the building, the visual amenities of the area, reducing the impact of the building on climate change and improving the existing access to the canal from Ealing Road. As such, the proposal is considered, on balance, to comply with relevant policies within Brent's Unitary Development Plan adopted 2004 and it is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions.

RECOMMENDATION: Grant Consent

REASON FOR GRANTING

- (1) The proposed development is in general accordance with policies contained in the:-

Brent Unitary Development Plan 2004
Central Government Guidance
Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance
Relevant policies in the Adopted Unitary Development Plan are those in the following chapters:-

Built Environment: in terms of the protection and enhancement of the environment
Housing: in terms of protecting residential amenities and guiding new development
Transport: in terms of sustainability, safety and servicing needs

CONDITIONS/REASONS:

- (1) The development to which this permission relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning on the date of this permission.

Reason: To conform with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- (2) No development shall commence unless details of materials for all external work, including samples, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The work shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development which does not prejudice the amenity of the locality.

- (3) All areas shown on the plan and such other areas as may be shown on the approved plan, including the roof terrace, shall be suitably landscaped in accordance with a scheme to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of any work on the site. Such landscaping work shall be completed in full during the first available planting season following completion of the rest of the development hereby approved.

Such scheme shall also indicate:-

- (i) The planting scheme for the site, which shall include species, size and density of plants.
- (ii) All proposed walls, fencing and boundary treatments, detailing materials, designs and heights, which shall include the replacement of the boundary treatment along the northern site boundary.

- (iii) All hard landscaping, including materials and the means by which the parking spaces will be marked out.
- (iv) The provision of green/living roofs within the roof terraces detailed on the submitted drawings.
- (v) Other appropriate matters within the context of a landscaping scheme, such as details of signboards, seating, footways and other paved pedestrian pathways.
- (vi) The detailed size, siting, design and layout of the children's playspace, including all equipment.

Any trees and shrubs planted in accordance with the landscaping scheme which, within 5 years of planting, are removed, dying, seriously damaged or become diseased, shall be replaced in similar positions by trees and shrubs of similar species and size to those originally planted, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory standard of appearance and setting for the development and to ensure that the proposed development enhances the visual amenity of the locality in the interests of the amenities of the occupants of the development and to provide tree planting in pursuance of section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- (4) Details of the provision of a minimum of 84 secure, weatherproof, cycle-parking spaces shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to commencement of any work on the site. These details shall include the configuration and layout and the external appearance of any such areas. Thereafter the development shall not be occupied until the cycle-parking spaces have been laid out in full accordance with the details as approved and these facilities shall be retained.

Reason: To ensure satisfactory facilities for cyclists and a sustainable development.

- (5) The development shall not be occupied unless a detailed car-park management plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The management plan shall include the means by which the parking spaces will be allocated, secured and enforced and the approved plan shall be implemented in full for the life of the development. The car park shall be used only for the parking of private motor vehicles for the residents of the building and shall not be used for any other purposes.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory development that does not result in overspill parking within the surrounding area.

- (6) Details of any external lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, prior to the commencement of any works on site and the approved details shall be implemented in full, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of safety and the amenities of the area.

- (7) No development shall commence unless a detailed Sustainability Strategy has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Strategy shall demonstrate how the measures that have been identified in the TP6 Sustainability Checklist hereby approved shall be incorporated into the development. The approved Strategy shall be implemented in full prior to first occupation.

Reason: To ensure a sustainable development.

INFORMATIVES:

None Specified

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

Brent's Unitary Development Plan - 2004
SPG17 - *Design Guide for New Development*
SPD - *Planning Obligations*

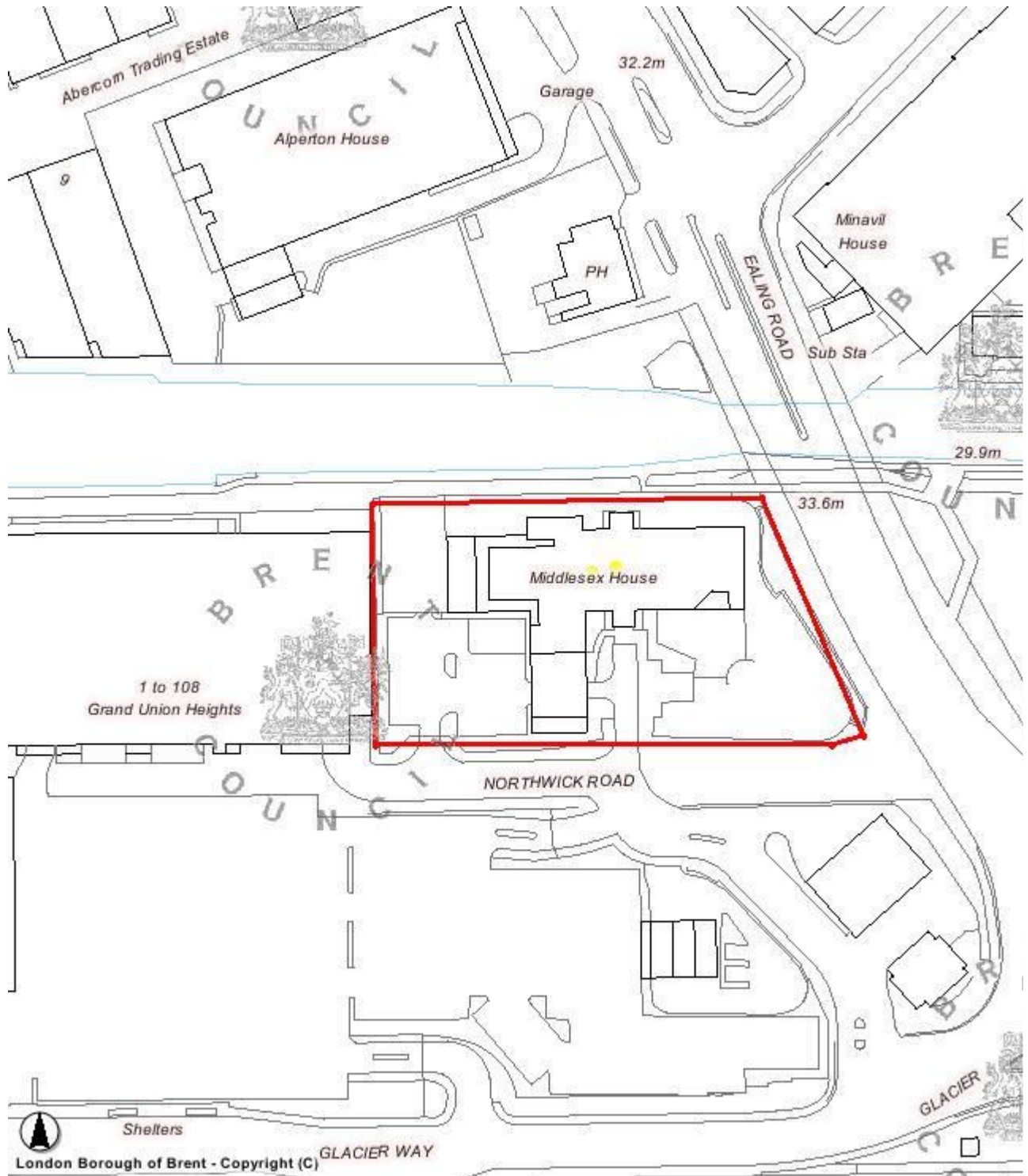
Any person wishing to inspect the above papers should contact Sarah Crew, The Planning Service, Brent House, 349 High Road, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 6BZ, Tel. No. 020 8937 5234



Planning Committee Map

Site address: 1A-E 2A-F-14 A-F Inc, MIDDLESEX HOUSE, Northwick Road, Wembley

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