

REPORT FOR CONSIDERATION AT PLANNING COMMITTEE

Reference No: HGY/2008/0322

Ward: Seven Sisters

Date received: 06/02/08

Last amended date: 26/6/08

Drawing number of plans: P (00) 00, P (00) 01C, P (00) 02, P (00) 03, P (00) 04, P (00) 05, P (00) 06, P (00) 07A, P (00) 08A, P (00) 09, P (00) 10, P (00) 20, P (00) 21, P (00) 22, P (00) 100A, P (00) 101, P (00) 102A, P (00) 103A, P (00) 110A, P (00) 111A.

Design and Access Statement: Wards Corner Seven Sisters Design and Access Statement and accompanying statements Pollard Thames Edwards Architects January 2008.

Conservation Area Audit and Statement Addendum Report 2008

Former Wards Corner Store – 227 -229 Tottenham High Road – appraisal of options for retention or redevelopment

Public Artwork Outline Brief Dated 20th June 2008.

Address: Wards Corner Site, High Road, London N15

Proposal: Demolition of 227 – 259 High Road. 1a,1b and 1 West Green Road, N15.

Existing Use: Retail and Residential

Proposed Use: Mixed Use

Applicant: Grainger (Seven Sisters) Ltd

Ownership: Grainger PLC and Transport for London and Others

PLANNING DESIGNATIONS

Conservation Area

Classified Road

Officer contact: Paul Smith

RECOMMENDATION

Grant Conservation Area Consent subject to conditions and section 106 agreement and subject to direction of the GLA.

1.0 Site and Surroundings

The Wards Corner site comprises 227 to 259 High Road 709 – 723 Seven Sisters Road 1a – 11 West Green Road and 8 – 30 Suffield Road. The site contains the former Wards Corner Department Store and is situated above the Seven Sisters Victoria Line Underground Station and tunnels.

The site comprises retail and commercial floorspace on the ground and first floors on the High Road footage with residential above on the other two main frontages. Suffield Road is different in character being a relatively quiet residential street.

The front of the site falls within the Page Green/Seven Sisters Conservation Area. The Tottenham High Road historic corridor policy identifies Wards Corner as a key regeneration site. The site falls within the Bridge NDC boundary. The site falls within Wards Corner/Seven Sisters Underground Development Brief dated January 2004.

The existing buildings were originally 3 storey Victorian Terrace residential properties many of which have been altered to provide shops on the ground floor. There are 42 individual buildings on the application site. 18 of these buildings fall within Page Green/Seven Sisters Conservation Area. Two of the buildings are locally listed. There are no listed buildings on the site. The Wards Corner building 227 High Road was purpose built and 1904. English Heritage declined to list this particular building in 2007.

2.0 Planning History

There is no significant planning application history in relation to the application site. There have been many small applications in relation to each of the individual buildings, these are not recorded here in the interests of brevity but can be found on the Councils website and in appendix 1 of the applicants planning statement.

The current outstanding applications are as follows:

HGY/2008/0177 – PENDING - Erection of first floor rear extensions, alterations to rear elevation. Alterations to front elevation, including new bays at first floor level and dormer windows to front roofslope, installation of new shopfront, alterations to 3 storey corner block, internal alterations to create new shops/workshops/offices/cafe (A3) use on ground / first floors and creation of 8 x one bed flats at second floor.

HGY/2008/0303 – PENDING - Demolition of existing buildings and erection of mixed use development comprising Class C3 residential and Class A1/A2/A3/A4 with access parking and associated landscaping and public realm improvements.

3.0 Details of Proposal

Conservation Area Consent is sought for the demolition of the existing buildings on the application site which fall within the boundary of the Page Green and Seven Sisters Conservation Area. These are the Wards Corner building 227 High Road to 259 High Road, 1a, 1b, 1 West Green Road.

4.0 Responses

English Heritage

The area consists of principally late C19th early C20th properties. The former Wards Corner department store and Nos 255 – 259 at the West Green Road junction are identified as positive contributors to the Seven Sisters Conservation Area in the Tottenham High Road Areas Appraisal. 1a-1b West Green Road is locally listed and as such is considered to make a positive contribution to the conservation area. The proposals would entail the demolition of Nos 227 to 259 High Road, including those buildings identified as making a positive contribution above. The applicants have demonstrated that the retention of these buildings would render the current proposal unviable and argue that none of the buildings within the CA make a positive contribution. The supporting information does not however confirm that repair and refurbishment is unviable. English Heritage does not support the view that none of the buildings identified make a positive contribution to the conservation area. In accordance with the criteria for demolition set out in PPG 15 to 3.16 – 3.19 English Heritage does not consider that the replacement buildings offer sufficient merit to justify demolition and considers that a scheme which takes a conservation led approach to regeneration should be pursued.

Recommendation:

That a more sensitive scheme which addresses the conservation area and retains those buildings identified as making a positive contribution to the conservation area is pursued.

CABE

Wards Corner site in one part of a wider regeneration area as identified by Haringey Borough Council and is considered to have the potential to kick start a regenerative process for the wider neighbourhood. We are generally supportive of the principle of mixed use development and associated public realm enhancement work. Despite the challenging constraints of this site – restricted edges and underground railway tunnels running closely beneath the site's ground level – we are happy with many of the basic propositions underpinning this design. Whilst we have a few concerns regarding some aspects of massing and the delivery and maintenance of the public realm enhancement work, we are confident that the design team will be able to address these issues satisfactorily.

Recommendation:

Subject to good quality detailing and materials, we think that this scheme could potentially achieve the main aim to change perception, and ultimately transform the area. Overall, we think that the design has the markings of a good scheme and we support this planning application.

Tottenham Civic Society

Heritage

We believe that regeneration must be heritage-led in order to be successful and to minimise the risk posed by unsustainable overdevelopment. Although not nationally listed, the Wards Corner building at 227 High Road (1909) is unique to Haringey and is an interesting example of an early 20th C steel framed building with large internal spaces and huge plate glass windows – it belongs to the same era of technological innovation as buildings such as Selfridges on Oxford Street (also 1909) and deserves to be conserved. The Ward Stores building is held up as an example of one of the very best and most interesting on the whole historic High Road corridor, and a prime candidate for future restoration. It is an interesting contrast to the 1908 Windsor Parade which has just been so expensively restored. It seems remarkable that the developer does not realise this, or does not choose to, but this is a betrayal of our local heritage.

As noted elsewhere, the ‘lost’ balustrade is stored inside the building. The alterations to the windows are minor and do not affect their quality. The clock is apparently in storage somewhere and though I have yet to determine exactly where, enquiries are being made. I totally disagree that the building is in a ‘poor state of repair’. I think we would all agree that it wears its hundred years very well indeed as recent internal and external photographs show. Detail on interior pillars, skylights and ceiling plaster work is all intact. The developer’s view that its contribution to the Area is ‘only neutral’ is an absolute nonsense, and it is not for the developer, with a serious conflict of interest, to make such a determination in the first place. The measure of a building’s worth is what the local community attaches to it, and the evidence is that Wards Corner has a very strong pull on local affection and cultural memory.

I also think the developer’s assessment of 1a-1b West Green Road is to seriously underestimate this building, which should also be retained. It is also early 20th C and of high quality, part of Tottenham’s Edwardian shopping heritage. They are ideal for restoration. Likewise the homes on Suffield Road – this is good quality family housing with private gardens for children to play in and providing green space in this built up area. I think the developer’s historical description of the site contains factual inaccuracies which further undermines my confidence in their overall submission.

Costs

I have looked at the developer’s estimates of the costs associated with retaining existing buildings and even a layman can see that these costs are not realistic. I do not intend to go through them line by line but to say that the market value of 227 High Road is £350,000 is nonsense – such a building would command a seven figure price tag, £350K is the price of a three bedroom terrace in N15.

Likewise the cost of refurbishing it as £717,000 is a gross overestimate. I believe the building could be brought back into general use for a tenth of that cost. The developer's costs need to be submitted to an independent, impartial review and scrutiny, otherwise we are not serving the best interests of the community, we are simply accepting things on the nod and serving the interests of the developer.

Tottenham Conservation Area – Advisory Committee

There is no substantial community benefit that would result from the total or substantial demolition of these buildings so as to allow demolition as an exceptional case:-

- The proposed development is not in keeping with the Development Brief for the Wards Corner site nor in keeping with the policies for creating a New Town Centre;
- The proposal will not create a high quality gateway;
- It is not an attractive design and does not provide a high quality, imaginative development looked for under PPG 15 and will not enhance the Seven Sisters/Page Green Conservation Area;
- It does not create a sense of place, being bland and lacking individual character
- Its height, bulk and mass are too great for the area and will overpower other buildings and will destroy the character of the Conservation Area.

The Tottenham CAAC object to the application for consent for demolition in a Conservation Area for all the reasons given above.

The Bridge NDC

The Bridge NDC is a regeneration programme funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) as part of a national programme of renewal and regeneration in the most deprived wards in England.

The activities of the bridge NDC are lead by the Communities Partnership Board. The Board is made up of twenty three members, 12 of whom are local residents.

The Partnership Board has been involved in promoting the redevelopment of Wards Corner for five years. The Community Conference day on 1st February 2003 informed residents of plans for the Wards Corner Project.

The NDC sponsored Atis Weatherall studies in 2003 was a baseline report and evidence base which then led to the adoption of the Wards Corner Brief which was approved in draft for public consultation by the Planning Applications Sub Committee on 7th July 2003, 12,000 households were circulated a summary leaflet, and the Development Brief was adopted in January 2004 by the Executive of the Council. Subsequently the NDC funded a selection competition to find a lead developer on the basis of the brief. Grainger PLC the current applicants were competitively selected in that process.

The Bridge NDC have commissioned and submitted in support of the application 3 studies/reports. It is considered that those documents are material considerations in considering this application. The three studies are a report from Cushman and Wakefield March 2006 which is an assessment of the commercial impact of the Grainger planning application on the existing town centre. A report from Shared Intelligence March 2008 which comprises an assessment of this planning application as it relates to the economic social and environmental well being of the local area and a report by Urban Space Management which assesses whether the existing Seven Sisters Market can be incorporated into the proposed development or elsewhere.

The Cushman and Wakefield Report assesses the likely effect of the commercial floor space in the proposed development on the existing Seven Sisters Centre. (it does not deal with the residential proposals or the design). The report states that the problems that have been identified in the past still persist and that the proposal would conform with local planning policy and should significantly enhance the viability and vitality of the Seven Sisters Centre.

The shared Intelligence Report assesses the proposed development in relation to the economic social and environmental well-being of the local area. The report states that in comparison with the existing conditions the proposed development is likely to have positive benefits on all the aspects of social well-being assessed, housing, crime and the fear of crime, public transport services, public realm and training and employment.

The Urban Space Management report assesses whether or not the existing market can be accommodated in the propose development.

The Chair of the Bridge NDC Partnership Board in his letter of support for the proposed development states that the proposed development will bring significant benefits to the locality which would include a positive effect upon the vitality and viability of the Severs Seven Sisters Centre. The provision of new housing, improvements in public transport and the public realm reduction in crime and the perception of crime, and improved employment opportunities and skills training.

5.0 RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy

PPS 1: Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)

PPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment

PPG 16: Archaeology and Planning (1990)

5.1 REGIONAL PLANNING CONTEXT

The Mayor's London Plan Consolidated with Alteration since 2004 Dated February 2008

Policy 4B.11 – London's Built Heritage

Policy 4B.15 - Archaeology

5.2 Adopted Unitary Development Plan, 2006

Policy CSV1: Development in Conservation areas

Policy CSV3: Locally listed building and designated sites of industrial heritage interest

Policy CSV7: Demolition in Conservation Areas

5.3 Supplementary Planning Guidance

SPG2 Conservation and Archaeology

5.4 Other material Planning Documents

English Heritage Publications

Conservation Area Practice

Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas

Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals

Tottenham High Road Historic Corridor Conservation Area Appraisal (adopted in February 2007)

6.0 ANALYSIS/ASSESSMENT OF THE APPLICATION

Main Issues

1. Designations and Character Appraisal
2. Planning Policy – New Development/Demolition of Existing Non Listed Buildings in Conservation Areas
3. Local Listed Buildings
4. Undesignated Buildings
5. Contribution of existing buildings to the character of the Conservation Area
6. Demolition of buildings making a positive contribution
7. Regeneration and community benefits

6.1 Designations and Character Appraisal

The site falls within the Page Green /Seven Sisters Conservation Area. None of the buildings on the site are listed. Two of the buildings are locally listed, these are 227 High Road/ 725 Seven Sisters Road and 1a/1b West Green Road. They were included in the Councils local list in 1997. In February 2007 the Council adopted the Tottenham High Road Historic Corridor Conservation Area Appraisal which includes the 6 Conservation Areas situated along Tottenham High Road including Seven Sisters/Page Green Conservation Area.

The application site falls within that part of the Conservation Area Appraisal which relates to Seven Sisters/Page Green Conservation Area defined as Sub Area / High Road (West Side). Paragraph 8.3 describes the main character of the sub area including land to the north of the application site. Paragraphs 8.5 and 8.7 refer to the two locally listed buildings which fall within the application site 227 High Road and 1a/1b West Green Road. The assessment states that nos 1a & 1b West Green Road are two storey locally listed buildings with a full width ground floor shop front and an early form of a cast iron framework

supporting large plate glass windows surmounted by a balustrade parapet. The building adds to the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation area.

Paragraph 8.7 refers to 227 High Road / 725 Seven Sisters Road as being a three storey locally listed commercial building at the Southern end of the terrace. The appraisal states that “it has an early example of curtain walling in the form of large picture windows within a decorative cast iron framework at first and second floor level” and further states that “although the building is currently vacant and in a poor state of repair it remains of architectural interest and makes a positive contribution to the street scene”.

Paragraph 8.6 states that nos 255 – 259 High Road make a positive contribution to the streetscape in this part of the Conservation Area.

6.2 Planning Policy - New Development/Demolition of Existing Non Listed Buildings in Conservation Areas.

SPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment relates to the protection of all aspects of the historic environment, including Conservation Areas and listed and locally listed buildings.

Para 4.27 of PPG 15 explains that for proposals in Conservation Areas, the general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of a Conservation Area, and that proposals to demolish should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings.

Para 3.19 of PPG 15 states that in exceptional cases, the presumption against demolition may be overridden in favour of development which is desirable on the ground of some other public interest.

Policy CSV1: Development in Conservation Areas states that the Council will require that the proposals affecting Conservation Areas to

- a) preserve or enhance the historic character and qualities of the buildings and/or the Conservation Area;
- b) recognise and respect the character and appearance of Conservation Areas; and
- c) protect the special interest of buildings of architectural or historic interest.

Policy CSV7: Demolition in Conservation Areas states that the Council will seek to protect buildings within Conservation Areas, by refusing applications for their demolition or substantial demolition if it would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

In some exceptional cases, if substantial community benefit would result from total or substantial demolition of buildings in Conservation Areas the Council may consider this to be acceptable. Each case will be judged on its merits and weighed against arguments in favour of a building's preservation.

SPG2 Conservation and Archaeology

Section B amplifies the policies of the UDP in relation to demolition and changes of appearance to buildings in Conservation Areas.

6.3 Local Listed Buildings

Two of the buildings on the site are locally listed. They are 227 High Road and 1a/1b West Green Road. The buildings were added to the local list in 1997. The Councils Conservation Area Appraisal states that both these buildings make a positive contribution to the Seven Sisters Conservation Area.

6.4 Undesignated Buildings

The Councils Conservation Area Appraisal identifies 225-259 High Road which is the corner building at the junction of High Road and West Green Road as making a positive contribution.

The Councils Conservation Area appraisal identifies 229-249 High Road as making a neutral contribution to the streetscene. 251 and 253 High Road are identified as semi derelict as a result of fire damage. 1 West Green Road is not referred to in the Councils Appraisal.

6.5 Contribution of Existing Buildings to the Character of the Conservation Area

The applicants have submitted a Conservation Area Audit and statement dated January 2008 and an addendum report dated June 2008.

The applicants statements assesses firstly the contribution of the existing buildings to the Seven Sisters Conservation Area and secondly the case for demolition.

Each of the buildings or groups of buildings for which consent is sought to be demolished is assessed in the context of the character of the Seven Sisters Conservation Area on the basis of the 10 point test set out in English Heritage guidance on the preparation of Conservation Area Appraisals.

The applicants appraisal of the individual buildings states that none of the existing buildings are considered to make a positive contribution. This is in contrast to the Councils appraisals which identifies 3 buildings or groups of buildings as making a positive contribution.

The applicants refer to paragraph 4.27 of PPG 15 which states that the general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which may be a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a Conservation area. However the paragraph goes on to state that in less clear-cut cases, for instance, where a building makes little or no such contribution the local planning authority will need to have full information about what is proposed for the site after demolition. The applicants conclude that the existing buildings within the Conservation area make either a negative or neutral contribution to its character and appearance.

6.6 Demolition of Buildings Making a Positive Contribution

The applicants state that they have considered the buildings thought to make a positive contribution by the Council as if they were statutorily listed and assessed the case for their demolition in line with the guidance set out in paragraph 3.19 of PPG 15. Three considerations have been applied by the applicants.

- the condition of the building, the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and to the value derived from its continued use;
- the adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in use; and
- the merits of alternative proposals for the site

The applicants have applied the above considerations to each of the buildings that the Councils Conservation Area Appraisal states makes a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation.

For each building and for each consideration the applicants have concluded that, due to the cost involved in repair and maintenance, the value of the property once repaired, the loss of value to the proposed development and that the proposed development enhances the character and qualities of the Conservation Area demolition is justified and is in line with Government and local Planning Policy.

The applicants have submitted a detailed study by their architects which considers the implications of retaining the wards Corner building (227 High Road) in its entirety or retaining the facade or remodelling it in the form of six options A to F.

The report concludes that options A, B C would not be viable or desirable for the reasons listed below

- a) They produce a significant loss of floor space and therefore weaken the commercial viability of the overall regeneration project
- b) They fail to relieve the narrow footway at the corner of seven Sisters Road and the High Road
- c) They are less satisfactory design solutions than the other options
- d) They meet only some of the objectives of the planning brief.

Option D was not pursued at an early stage. It was considered that Options E and F would not be supported by CABE and English Heritage.

6.7 Regeneration and Community Benefits

Paras 3.19 (iii) of PPG 15 states that "There may very exceptionally be cases where the proposed works would bring substantial benefits for the community which have to be weighed against the arguments in favour of preservation.

Policy CSV7: Demolition in Conservation Areas of the Haringey Unitary Development Plan reflects PPG 15 and states that " In some exceptional cases, if substantial community benefit would result from total or substantial demolition

of buildings in Conservation Areas the Council may consider this to be acceptable”.

The community benefits which would result from the redevelopment of the site are:

- The regeneration of the public realm and the provision of a safe, attractive and convenient public square and transport interchange.
- Economic regeneration through a transformation of the quality and range of shops and other services on offer.
- Housing regeneration through the creation of nearly 200 new homes designed and built to the highest standards.
- Physical regeneration, through the creation of a landmark development, of the highest quality in terms of design and construction.
- A reduction in crime and the perception of crime
- The creation of employment and skills based training

6.8 Summary and Conclusion

The application for Conservation Area Consent is for the demolition of 18 buildings which fall within the boundary of the Seven Sisters/page Green Conservation Area within the application site. The remainder of the buildings on the application site fall outside the Conservation Area boundary and do not therefore require consent to be demolished. There are no listed buildings on the site.

The Councils Conservation Area Appraisal identifies 3 buildings as making a positive contribution to the character and quality of the Conservation Area. Two of the buildings proposed to be demolished nos 227 High Road and 1a/1b West Green Road are locally listed buildings having been put on the Councils local list when it was reviewed in 1997. Two of the buildings 251-253 are identified as derelict, No1 West Green Road is not identified, the other 12 are identified as having a neutral effect upon the Character of the Conservation Area.

The Councils Conservation Area Appraisal considers that the two locally listed buildings together with 255-259 High Road make a positive contribution to the character and qualities of the Conservation Area.

Notwithstanding this it is Central Government Advice reflected in the Councils own planning policy that in exceptional circumstances where the redevelopment of the site would bring substantial benefits for the community these would have to be weighed against the arguments in favour of the preservation of the existing buildings.

It is considered that it has been demonstrated that the cost of repair and maintenance and the loss of value associated with retention would be prohibitive in relation to the relation of the existing buildings.

It is considered that it has been demonstrated that the alternatives to demolition in the form of retention of the Wards Corner building or retention, replication or redesign of the facade. (excluding options E and F) would not be viable.

The proposed development is considered to contribute to the character of Seven Sisters Conservation Area and fulfil the vision of the planning brief which is for a landmark development of high quality of design which will result in a range of positive benefits to the community to kick start the regeneration of the locality. The scheme design is supported by CABE.

It is considered that the decision in this case as to whether or not to allow Conservation Area Consent should be made in the context of the significant community benefits which will result from the proposed redevelopment of the application site in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 3.19 of PPG 15: Planning and the Historic Environment and Planning Policy CSV7. Demolition in Conservation Areas .

It is therefore recommended that Conservation Area Consent should be granted on the basis that the community benefits derived from the proposed redevelopment of the application site outweigh the loss of the existing buildings in the Conservation Area.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

Grant Conservatory Area Consent subject to conditions and section 106 agreement and subject to direction of the GLA.

Registered No HGY/2008/0322

Application Drawing Nos P (00) 00, P (00) 01C, P (00) 02, P (00) 03, P (00) 04, P (00) 05, P (00) 06, P (00) 07A, P (00) 08A, P (00) 09, P (00) 10, P (00) 20, P (00) 21, P (00) 22, P (00) 100A, P (00) 101, P (00) 102A, P (00) 103A, P (00) 110A, P (00) 111A.

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Public Artwork Outline Brief Dated 20th June 2008.

Subject to the following condition

- 1) The demolition hereby permitted shall not be undertaken before a contract for the carrying out of the works of redevelopment of the site has been granted for the redevelopment for which the contract provides.

Reason: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the building.