

REPORT FOR CONSIDERATION AT PLANNING COMMITTEE

Reference No: HGY/2008/1020

Ward: Crouch End

Date received: 06/05/2008

Last amended date: N / A

Drawing number of plans: PL01, PL02, PL03, PL04 & PL05.

Address: Land rear of 27 - 47 Cecile Park N8

Proposal: Demolition of existing 39 garages and erection of 5 x 2/3 storey three bedroom houses with associated landscaping and 10 no. car parking spaces

Existing Use: Garages

Proposed Use: Residential

Applicant: Mithril Homes

Ownership: Private

PLANNING DESIGNATIONS

Conservation Area

Road Network: Borough Road

Officer Contact: John Ogenga P'Lakop

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE PERMISSION

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

Approximately 40 lock-up garages currently occupy the site. The garages are situated along the southern boundary of the site. Vehicle access is gained between numbers 37 and 39 Cecile Park. Much of the site is gravelled. The site is within The Crouch End Conservation Area; the southern edge of the site forms the boundary of the Conservation Area.

PLANNING HISTORY

9 applications for the erection of lock up garages were submitted between 1967 and 1984 with the most significant being the granting of permission for 39 garages in 1967.

- OLD/1986/0974 - Erection of 17 lock up garages REFUSED 28/07/86
- OLD/2000/0604 - Residential development to provide 7 x 2 storey houses and 1 self-contained flat with car ports / parking for 14 cars, also 26 lockup garages REFUSED 15/12/00 subsequent appeal DISMISSED
- OLD/2000/0605 - Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of garages REFUSED 15/12/00
- HGY/2000/0935 - Application to erect 7 houses and one flat and garages in basement area REFUSED 05/12/00 subsequent appeal DISMISSED
- HGY/2000/0933 - Conservation Area Consent to erect 7 houses and one flat and garages in basement area REFUSED 05/12/00 subsequent appeal DISMISSED.
- HGY/2001/1696 - Application to erect 6 dwellings and ten garages REFUSED 06/04/04 subsequent appeal DISMISSED.
- HGY/2001/1697- Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of garages REFUSED 27/07/04 subsequent appeal DISMISSED.
- HGY/2005/1985 - Demolition of existing 35 garages and erection of 5 x 2 storey three bedroom houses with associated landscaping and 10 No parking spaces.
WITHDRAWN 14/12/05
- HGY/2005/1987 - Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of 35 garages.
WITHDRAWN 14/12/05
- HGY/2006/0580 - Demolition of existing 39 garages and erection of 5 x 2 storey three bedroom houses with associated landscaping and 10 no. parking spaces REFUSED subsequent appeal DISMISSED

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

The application proposes the demolition of 39 existing garages situated on the site and erection of 5 x 2/3 storey three bedroom houses with associated landscaping and the formation of 10 no. parking spaces. Units 1, 3, 4 and 5 would contain a ground floor level with combined kitchen and dining room with a first floor level of three bedrooms one with ensuite. Unit two would contain the same layout at the first floor level but would have a separate dining room and a living room at ground floor level with a kitchen situated at lower ground floor level.

CONSULTATION

31/03/2006

Site Notice
Transportation
Cleansing
Building Control
Ward Councillors
Hornsey CAAC
Conservation Team
Council Arboriculturalist
63a, 1 – 63 (o) Cecile Park, N8
30 – 52 (e) Cecile Park, N8
17a, 29a, 29b Cecile Park, N8
2 – 46 (e) Tregaron Ave, N8
7 – 29 (o) Elm Grove, N8

RESPONSES

Conservation Officer

I have noted the 2 no. Inspector's decisions on previous proposals for the site and am mindful of their assessments.

The proposals have been amended since my observations in April 2006, and now feature 5 separate detached houses arranged on the site with significant gaps between them. In terms of layout I consider this is a significant improvement as the proposed built form is visually permeable with views through these gaps.

I note how the levels step down across from the south from the houses on Elm Grove to their rear gardens, to the site itself and to the Cecile Park gardens on the north side, and I note the distances between the proposed development and the existing terraces, and that there are no windows proposed at first floor level facing Elm Grove.

The important issue I feel still needs to be resolved is the form of the roof. As proposed it is a mansard form with a roof pitch which is far too steep – essentially it results in internal accommodation which is comparable with a full blown 2 storey house. Visually these 'mansards' appear as a developer's diluted 'mock 'Georgian' roof form which visually jars and looks out of place in this backland context in the Conservation Area. They appear visually too obtrusive - as over bloated roofs – essentially the developer is trying to cram too much in. It is important that the architectural form of the late Victorian terraces should remain visually dominant and any replacement development for the garages should clearly be subordinate in scale, size and visual appearance. This may be achieved by a 'neutral' form and style of development.

I would therefore recommend that the 'mansard' roof form be deleted and that the reduced first floor accommodation be within a double pitched roof form, i.e. say 45

degree pitch. This would reduce the overall mass and bulk of development at first floor level, and I consider that the resulting roof form would appear visually harmonious with the existing Victorian terraces and preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

On this basis I consider that in principle the scheme can be acceptable subject to the receipt of satisfactorily amended drawings and to the approval of good quality external facing materials.

Waste Management - raised no objections.

Transportation - Although this site is located in an area with low public transport accessibility level and within Crouch End restricted conversion area which has been identified as that with car parking pressure, the W7 bus route - Crouch Hill which offers some 26 buses per hour (two-way), for frequent bus connection to and from Finsbury Park tube station, is a walking distance away. We have subsequently considered that majority of the prospective residents of this development would use public transport for their journeys to and from the site. In addition, notwithstanding the loss of the garages, the applicant has proposed 10 car parking spaces, as shown on Plan No. P01.

However, there is the concern with the narrow width of the vehicular access which at just over 4 metres, would not allow refuse or similar servicing vehicles to pass private cars and cannot accommodate a dedicated route for pedestrians and cyclists entering and exiting the site. We would therefore ask the applicant to submit a scheme for a shared use of the vehicular access by pedestrians/cyclists. Also, we would require some control within the site, in the form of signage, warning exiting drivers to give priority to inbound traffic.

Consequently, the highway and transportation authority would not object to this application subject to the following conditions:

(1) The applicant erects a priority signage indicating that 'priority is given to vehicles in the opposite direction', in the form of roundel Ref. No 615, as contained in the 'Traffic Signs and General Directions 2002', at the start of the vehicular access, northbound towards Cecile Park. This would ensure that vehicles entering the site from Cecile Park would have priority over the opposing traffic at all times.
Reason: To minimise disruption to traffic on Cecile Park and curtail vehicular conflict along the site access.

(2) The applicant submits a scheme with appropriate paving materials, typical of a shared surface and which would enable drivers to pay special regard to pedestrians/cyclists along the site access, to the transportation authority for approval.
Reason: To minimise conflict between pedestrians/cyclists and vehicles along the site access.

Hornsey CAAC - We still feel that there are too many houses for this site, which is narrow and unsuitable for housing. But if this is still to be considered there should be only four houses, not five. We reiterate our earlier comments about the design:

the detailing is fussy, the dormers are heavy and the mansard roofs are unsuitable on houses of this size. We also regret the loss of lock-up garages, which will increase the pressure on roadside parking and lead to more parking in front gardens.

21 individual letters objecting to the proposed development were received and the following objections were raised:

- Would disrupt the visual outlook between Cecile park and Tregaron Avenue
- Noise levels would increase as well as vulnerability to crime
- Pollution levels and traffic congestion would increase
- Concern regarding loss of property values
- Site is a backlands property and there is already too much development on sites such as this
- Would have an adverse impact on the conservation area
- Would result in loss of privacy and overlooking
- Loss of valuable open space
- Narrow entrance to site will create difficulties for refuse collection & emergency vehicles
- Amounts to overdevelopment of the site
- Very similar to previous refused scheme
- Would add to pressure on local provision of schooling and healthcare
- Loss of light
- Loss of trees
- Overlooking from first floor side window of No. 11 Elm Grove
- Would result in loss of light to surrounding properties including gardens
- Lack of landscaping details
- In view of the restrictive shape of the site, being long, thin and narrow, redevelopment for residential use will inevitably impact significantly on the numerous surrounding properties which are all in close proximity
- Concern that the front elevation of the dwellings does not accurately reflect the relationship with the houses located to the rear. Is it proposed to reduce the level of the site to achieve the low height of the houses? And if so what effect will the lowering of the houses have on the trees?
- Development would have a significant impact on adjoining properties fronting Tregaron Ave. These Tregaron Ave properties have shorter gardens.
- Site is suited to a maximum of 4 houses
- Further housing in an area already densely populated with many existing buildings converted to flats would add to existing traffic, parking and pollution problems.
- Concern at proximity of the proposed houses to existing neighbouring housing.
- Development inappropriate for narrow site and would lead to a density and building density only found in the most crowded inner city areas.
- Impact of development on wildlife including foxes, squirrels and a range of birdlife.
- Impact on trees.
- Loss of existing garages / parking on the site would exacerbate existing parking issues in the area
- Squeezing further properties into a thin strip of land would be very unpleasant and give rise to issues of overlooking for surrounding neighbours.

- The Council are granting planning permission to developments which only seem to meet the requirements of the very affluent middle classes. I am sure that the proposed housing will not suit the pocket of the average teacher, nurse or Crouch End shop worker. There seems to be far too much emphasis on building luxury properties for people who can already afford existing properties on the market. Why continue to build further properties for only one social group, in an already over-populated area?

To the **initial** consultation, a **petition** with 98 names and addresses attached was received objecting on following grounds:-

The proposed development in its extent and density will have an acceptable adverse effect on the appearance of the Conservation Area with the devastating loss of vegetation and severe damage to mature protected trees.

Haringey's UDP requires 'there should not be any significant loss of privacy from overlooking adjoining houses or their back gardens'. These houses would mean a significant loss of privacy and a complete loss of any open aspect Conservation Area amenity common to the whole area.

We are concerned about the narrow entrance to the proposed site and the difficulties of access for refuse collection and emergency vehicles.

The current proposal barely differs from the previous application (turned down at appeal) to build six x 2 bedroom houses. We consider this to be an overdevelopment on such a small narrow site.

Any development would have a deleterious impact on the natural fauna in the habitat of owls, bats, hedgehogs, jays and other wildlife.

Parking in Cecile Park is already a major safety problem. Inevitable overspill from this development would cause further strain.

Local provision of schooling and healthcare is severely stretched. Further development would exert still greater pressure.

Building Control - 'The proposals have been checked under Regulation B5 – access for the fire service, and we have no observations to make'.

Gladwell Road Residents Association

A separate detailed response was received from glcRAG (Gladwell Road Residents Association). This response goes through the application in great detail and raises a number of objections. glcRAG appeared at the previous public inquiry into the last scheme and made their submission to the Inspector. glcRAG cite 6 specific areas of objection in their submission, viz:

- o *this is a borough wide issue affecting our legacy to future generations*
- o *the loss of 32 lock up garages and 5 on street parking spaces where excessive nighttimes on street parking is increasingly blighting the Crouch End conservation area is unacceptable*
- o *the unsatisfactory access for vehicles and pedestrians creates a low quality, substandard, dangerous environment, particularly for children and people with disabilities, and rules out acceptable arrangements for refuse a recycling collection.*

- *the application site is too narrow to acceptably insert new housing into a traditional terrace housing area*
- *valuable trees will be put at risk*
- *why has the site deliberately been made derelict in contempt of the planning process and what are the implications of this dereliction.*

In particular, glcRAG draw attention to the derelict condition of the garages as what they consider to be a deliberate policy by the owners in order to achieve an alternative use and an appeal decision at another site within the borough, (Alford House), where the Inspector considered,

"...for many years the site has been regarded as a development site by the appellant as landowner. This goes some way to explaining the unkempt and unmanaged state of the land and garages and therefore I attach little weight to the appearance of the site." (para.14, APP/Y5420/A/04/1161239).

Similarly, glcRAG refer to the parking pressures in the local area and the need for lock up garages in the area. Their submission includes a statement from their own traffic engineer regarding parking conditions in the area. The Inspector concluded in the Alford House appeal,

"In my view, a starting point would be to establish the authorised planning position and local parking demand. However, this information is not available to me....Consequently; I am not able to come to an informed conclusion on the effect of the proposal on car parking provision and its implications for on-street parking and highway safety on the surrounding roads."

In order to address this issue, the Council has carried out its own surveys into parking demand and demand for lock up garages in the local area. These surveys are discussed in more detail below.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Policy

PPS1: Sustainable Development

PPS3: Housing

PPG15 PLANNING AND THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Unitary Development Plan

UD 3 'General Principles'
UD 4 'Quality Design'
CSV 1 'Development in Conservation Areas'
CSV 7 'Demolition in Conservation Areas'
HSG 1 'New Housing Developments'
HSG 2 'Change of Use to Residential'
HSG 9 'Density Standards'
M3 'New Development Location and Accessibility'
M10 'Parking for Development'

Supplementary Planning Guidance

SPG 1a 'Design Guidance and Design Statements'
SPG 3a 'Density, Dwelling Mix, Floorspace Minima, Conversions, Extensions and Lifetime Homes'
SPG 3b 'Privacy / Overlooking / Aspect / Outlook and daylight / Sunlight'
SPG 3c 'Backlands Development'

ANALYSIS/ASSESSMENT OF THE APPLICATION

While the current application has to be considered on its own merits the Planning Inspectors Appeal decisions on the previous proposals for the redevelopment of the site provide important guidance in terms of the relevant planning issues that need to be considered. The main issues relevant to this application are:

1. Impact on the Crouch End Conservation Area
2. Design and Materials
3. Impact on Residential Amenity
4. Impact on Trees
5. Retention and Demand for Existing Garages
6. Density
7. Refused and Emergency Access
8. Amenity of Future Residents

1) Impact on Crouch End Conservation Area

The current application follows the refusal of previous similar planning applications for the development of the site as well as four dismissed appeals. The design of refused scheme detailed in applications HGY/2000/0935 & 0933 was considered at appeal in July 2001, and the Inspector found that

'whilst the design of the proposed dwellings would not imitate that of the surrounding buildings, their appearance, because of the use of similar features and materials, would be sensitive to the appearance of the existing buildings. However, the significant mass and bulk of the proposal, running the length of the site without interruption would not, in my opinion, respect the context of the surroundings or preserve the character of the conservation area.'

Following the dismissal of this appeal another planning application was made (HGY/2001/1696 & HGY/2001/1697) and this was refused in April 2004. Although this application was refused and also went to appeal the design of the scheme was different to the previous scheme with detached houses proposed rather than a terrace of dwellings. In the appeal decision relating to this application The Planning Inspector concluded that the proposed development 'would serve to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area'. This appeal was dismissed in January 2005 on grounds relating to overlooking from the first floor windows of two of the houses, rather than its impact on the Conservation Area.

Further to the dismissal in January 2005, another appeal under reference APP/Y5420/A/07/2037862 was dismissed in January 2008. In making a decision in this appeal the Inspector found that

'The very ordinary, plain appearance of the proposed houses, dominated by large expanses of mansard roof would not produce a style and pattern of development which would be easily assimilated into conservation area. They would be visible by surrounding occupiers from where they would detract from the character and appearance of this part of the conservation area. I consider that the proposal fails to reflect the special characteristic of the conservation area which derived to a large extent from carefully crafted and finely designed houses of harmonious proportions, appropriate for their setting'.

The current application is similar in design and layout to the 2004 scheme with detached buildings proposed. Part of one of the dwelling would be visible along the access road from Cecile Park and as such it is considered that the development would detract from the character and appearance of the buildings fronting Cecile Park, which provide a visual focus for this part of the Crouch End Conservation Area. The site of the proposed development is a backland site and as such the development would form a visually prominent group of buildings within the Crouch End Conservation Area.

The application also proposes the demolition of 39 existing garages on the site. These garages might not have any historical value but their removal would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area by virtue of additional on street parking. The proposed development is therefore not considered to be consistent with Policy CSV 7 'Demolition in Conservation Areas'.

2) Design and Materials

The proposed dwellings would have a low profile mansard style first floor set in at the front and rear of the buildings with a height of 5.9 metres at the eaves. The sides of the mansard roof would be constructed of grey coloured Cambrian slate while the ground floor front and back walls would be constructed of brick that would match the brickwork of adjacent properties. The plans propose two options for this brickwork either red stock or yellow multi. The proposed side walls of the dwellings would also be constructed of this brick.

The Council's Conservation Officer recommends that the 'mansard' roof form be deleted and that the reduced first floor accommodation be within a double pitched

roof form, i.e. say 45 degree pitch. In this Officers opinion this would reduce the overall mass and bulk of development at first floor level, and would result in the roof form being more visually harmonious with the existing Victorian terraces and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

In the decision of January 2005 however the Inspector found that

'(para8 the proposal would not cause any harm and (para11) the proposed development would serve to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area'). It should be noted that the current proposals are of a design based upon that submitted in 2001.

3) Impact on Residential Amenity and Privacy & Design

SPG3b states that for two storey developments all rear facing habitable rooms situated directly opposite each other should be a minimum of 20 metres apart. All the proposed dwellings would be situated in excess of 20 metres from the nearest rear walls of the dwellings to the north fronting Cecile Park. As the proposed development meets this 20 metres distance requirement it is considered that the proposed development would not cause an unacceptable degree of overlooking or be overbearing to residential properties situated to the north along Cecile Park. This is consistent with the conclusions drawn in previous Inspectors appeal decisions.

The proposed dwellings would be situated between 10 to 14 metres from the rear walls of the existing houses to the south, which front Tregaron Avenue and as such would not adhere to the 20 metre set back requirement. In terms of the potential impact of the development on residential amenity the main issue to consider is whether the development would cause an unacceptable degree of overlooking or be overbearing to these adjoining residential properties to the south.

All the proposed dwellings in the current scheme would face towards the north and no windows are proposed in the rear elevations at first floor level. In addition no roof lights are proposed in the rear roof slopes of the dwellings. Two sets of French doors are proposed in the rear elevation of the proposed dwellings at ground floor level. Due to the slope of the land which runs down from Tregaron Avenue towards Cecile Park the French doors of proposed dwelling numbers 3, 4 and 5 would be set lower than the rear garden levels of the adjoining Tregaron Avenue properties. This would prevent any overlooking or loss of privacy arising from these French doors. Proposed dwellings 1 and 2 would be situated at a higher ground level than the other three houses however it is considered that through the use of appropriate conditions requiring adequate boundary screening any potential loss of privacy or overlooking could be avoided.

The layout of the proposed dwellings has been altered from the previous scheme with the dwellings spread out along the width of the backlands site more. One less dwelling is now proposed and this enables all the dwellings to be set off the boundaries of the site. All the proposed dwellings would be situated between 3.8 and 6 metres from the northern boundary of the application site and between 3.2 and 5.2 metres off the southern boundary of the site. The two end dwellings Numbers 1 and 5 would be situated 4.8 metres and 3.4 metres off the side

boundaries of the site. The plans detail a large amount of landscaping along the property boundaries with fencing to be erected around the boundary and large number trees planted along the boundary. The fencing and tree planting would screen the development and if permission is granted it is recommended that landscaping conditions be attached requiring details of the fencing and planting prior to work on the site commencing. It is considered that the current layout of the dwellings, the removal of all first floor windows and roof lights from the rear elevations and the proposed landscaping measures would prevent the issues of overlooking and loss of privacy which was the sole reason for dismissal of the last appeal on this site.

SPG 3c 'Backlands Development' states that where backland development is proposed, careful consideration will be given to all design issues with particular attention given to density and height of the proposal, privacy and outlook from existing houses and gardens, access arrangements, levels of traffic and reduction in sunlight to existing rear gardens. The design of the proposed development is considered consistent with SPG 3c 'Backlands Development' in that it would not give rise to overlooking or a loss of privacy is an appropriate density and height for a backlands site and would not be detrimental to the living conditions of the adjoining properties surrounding the site.

4) Impact on Trees.

A large number of objectors to the scheme have identified potential loss of trees on the site as a concern. Within the confines of the site there are no trees that will be affected by the proposed development. There are a number of significant trees on both the northern and southern boundaries of the site, located just within the rear gardens of properties in Cecile Park and Tregaron Avenue.

All the proposed dwellings would be situated between 3.8 and 6 metres from the northern boundary of the application site and between 3.2 and 5.2 metres off the southern boundary of the site. The two end dwellings Numbers 1 and 5 would be situated 4.8 metres and 3.4 metres off the side boundaries of the site.

In terms of the trees on the southern boundary (in Tregaron Avenue gardens) a number of lock-up garages currently abut this boundary. Of these garages, all but two at the western end of the site will be removed, and their place occupied by the gardens of the new dwellings. These trees should therefore have more space for root development.

In terms of the trees situated on the northern boundary (in gardens of Cecile Park), the driveway serving the new housing is adjacent to the boundary, and the area is already surfaced with gravel or concrete. Subject to there being careful excavation for the sub-base of the access road within 2 to 3 m. of the stems of these trees, no adverse impact on trees adjacent to the boundary is likely and an appropriate condition could be attached if permission is granted to ensure this.

There is a large Horse Chestnut tree situated at the rear of 38 and 40 Tregaron Avenue which is covered by a Tree Protection Order. The excavation for the foundations of the nearest proposed dwelling (No.2) should be subject of a

condition requiring special construction details in order to ensure protection of this tree.

The distance the dwellings would be situated off the boundaries of the site means that with the use of appropriate conditions no trees situated along the rear boundaries of adjacent properties are likely to suffer any adverse effects from the proposed development.

The Council Arboriculturist has commented on the application and concluded that through the use of appropriate conditions the new development can be constructed without any detrimental effects on the existing trees in adjacent gardens.

5. Retention and Demand for Existing Garages

The application site comprises a lock up garage court. The site is a long, narrow rectangle surrounded on all sides by rear gardens of neighbouring residential properties. Another site at rear of 60-88 Cecile Park for which planning permission was sought for demolition of existing garages and redevelopment for residential use recently had a similar proposal refused planning permission because it was considered that there is need for the garages. This became clear after two separate surveys were carried out by Consultants on behalf of the Council and this site falls within the survey area. The surveys were carried in response to issues raised by The planning inspector in relation to the appeal which was dismissed concerning the development of 60-88 for four houses (Council's ref: HGY/2002/0094 and Inspectorate ref: APP/Y5420/A/05/1181367). The Inspector considered the issues of the loss of the lock up garages and the potential demand for such garages. She noted that the Unitary Development Plan 2006 no longer includes a policy resisting the loss of lock up garages and that little weight should be attached to SPG3a as it does not make clear who should be responsible for the assessment of local need for the existing lock up garages (para. 29). She also considered the low level of usage did not necessarily mean that there is no need for lock up garages in the area, (para. 30). She also noted there was considerable doubt over how well the garages had been marketed and that if the garages were in use it could ease the pressure for on-street parking which in turn would enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, (para.31).

In order to address these issues, the applicant has submitted information from a local agent regarding the marketing of and demand for the garages. A letter from Drivers Norris is submitted dated 18 June 2007 stating that as agents letting many garages in the local area, it is their opinion that these garages are in such condition as to be unlettable. In addition, a schedule of occupation at May 2007 shows 10 out of the 38 garages are occupied, but only one is used for storing a vintage car. In order to assess these additional issues raised by the Inspector, the Council undertook its own surveys of both on street parking demand in the local area and the demand for lock up garages in the area. Both surveys were developed with the involvement of the GLCRAG.

The on-street parking demand survey was carried out on the 20 and 21 November 2007 by a private survey company, Modal Data, who specialise in this type of survey work. A survey area was agreed to cover streets within 200 metres walking

distance of the entrance to the application site. The survey comprised a visual count of vehicles parked on those streets at 4.30am on both days. This time was chosen as evenings and night time are the periods when parking pressure are perceived to be highest. The survey was based on the Lambeth method, which is a recognised method of carrying out surveys of this type. Additional specific parameters were agreed for the Haringey survey.

The survey found that on both nights there were more vehicles parked in the survey area than there were spaces available. The average parking stress was 102% although parking stress on some streets was higher, 108% in Womersley Road. These results clearly indicate that severe parking pressures do exist in the area surrounding the application site.

The second survey looked at the potential demand for lock up garages in the area. The same survey area was used as with the parking stress survey to achieve consistency. The survey was based on a questionnaire designed by the Councils Communications Unit. The questionnaire contained twelve questions designed to assess where people park at the moment, how far they would be prepared to walk to use a garage, whether they would wish to rent a garage at the application site and how much they would be prepared to pay.

This survey was carried out in March/April 2008 and a total of 629 questionnaires were sent to addresses in the survey area including a pre-paid envelope for reply. In addition, an on-line version of the questionnaire was made available. In total, 127 replies were received from the postal and on-line surveys. The results of the survey showed over 80% of respondents owned at least one car and the vast majority of these were parked on the street. 58 people said they had tried to rent a garage on the application site. Of these 5 were successful, (although these may have been rented on other sites), but 52 responded that none were available. One respondent said it was too expensive. The overwhelming majority (79.5) responded that they would like to rent or buy a garage on the application site if one was available.

The results of both these survey demonstrate clearly that the local area suffers from parking stress and that if garages were available the majority of local people would wish to rent or buy one. These results bear out the views expressed at a parking debate held in Hornsey Town Hall in October 2007 at which local people discussed their perceptions of parking conditions in the area in the light of the potential introduction of a CPZ in the area.

It should also be noted that the application site falls within a Restricted Conversion Area as identified in policy HSG11 of the Unitary Development Plan 2006. The primary criteria for identifying a restricted conversion area is the high level of parking pressure experienced in that area, due to a large number of converted properties in the area. The application site falls within the Crouch End restricted conversion area.

These results would support the Inspectors view that the area does suffer from parking stress and that there is demand for off street parking in the area. She took the view that if the garages were available and in use it could ease the pressure for

on-street parking in the area which in turn would enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, (para. 30 and 31).

The Inspector then considered the issues of the loss of the lock up garages and the potential demand for such garages. She noted that the Unitary Development Plan 2006 no longer includes a policy resisting the loss of lock up garages and that little weight should be attached to SPG3a as it does not make clear who should be responsible for the assessment of local need for the existing lock up garages (para. 29). She also considered the low level of usage did not necessarily mean that there is no need for lock up garages in the area, (para. 30). She also noted there was considerable doubt over how well the garages had been marketed and that if the garages were in use it could ease the pressure for on-street parking which in turn would enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area, (para.31). In order to address these issues, the applicant has submitted information from a local agent regarding the marketing of and demand for the garages. A letter from Drivers Norris is submitted dated 18 June 2007 stating that as agents letting many garages in the local area, it is their opinion that these garages are in such condition as to be unlettable. In addition, a schedule of occupation at May 2007 shows 10 out of the 38 garages are occupied, but only one is used for storing a vintage car. In order to assess these additional issues raised by the Inspector, the Council undertook its own surveys of both on street parking demand in the local area and the demand for lock up garages in the area. Both surveys were developed with the involvement of the GLCrag. It is considered that as this site falls within the survey area, the same issues concerning the loss of garages and demand for them applies.

6) Density.

The recommended density in Policy HSG 9 'Density Standards' states that residential development in the borough should normally be provided at a density of between 200 – 700 habitable rooms per hectare (hrh) and should have regard to the density ranges set out in Table 4B.1 of the London Plan.

The application site is 0.17 hectares in area including the access road and the proposed development would have a total of 26 habitable rooms. The density of the proposed development would therefore be 153 hrh.

Given that the application relates to a backland site situated within the Crouch End Conservation Area a density of 153 habitable rooms per hectare is considered appropriate. A development with higher density is unlikely to be compatible with the existing pattern of development in the area. SPG 3c 'Backlands Development' states that the Council's Density Standards will not generally apply to backlands sites unless it can be shown that the scheme does not constitute town cramming and the density of the proposed development is considered consistent with this statement.

7) Refuse Collection and Emergency Services Access

The Council's Building Department has assessed the proposed development and confirmed that the proposal has been checked under Regulation B5 – access for the fire service, and stated that they had no further observations make.

The Councils Waste Management Department has also provided comments on the application. They have recommended a number of conditions that would have been attached were permission was to be granted.

8) Amenity of future residents

Proposed houses 1, 2, 4 and 5 would all meet the 50 square metre garden amenity space requirement. The detached layout of the proposed dwellings and spacing of the dwellings along the width of the site would avoid issues of overlooking and loss of privacy between the new dwellings. The proposed development would create a satisfactory environment for the future owners / occupiers of the dwellings.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The application site comprises the lock up garage court at the rear of 27-47 Cecile Park. The current application proposes the demolition of the existing garages and the redevelopment of the site for residential use, comprising the erection of 5 x 2/3 storey three bedrooms houses and 10 no. car parking spaces. Each house has 2 parking spaces. Access is from Cecile Park via the existing access way for the garage court.

The site is located within the Crouch End Conservation Area and has been subject to a number of applications for change of use to residential in recent years. Whilst the current scheme has been revised to address some of the issues identified by the Inspector in dismissing previous planning appeals, it is considered that the current scheme fails to overcome the problems created by parking stress in the area and the consequential need for the garages, issues recognised by previous Inspectors in their decisions. As such, the scheme is considered to conflict with the aims of policy UD3(c) of the Unitary Development Plan 2006 which states that development should not significantly affect the public and private transport networks, including highways or traffic conditions. As such, the scheme is considered to fail to meet the requirements of PPG15 and policy CSV1 of the Unitary Development Plan 2006 and is therefore recommended for refusal.

RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE PERMISSION

Registered No. HGY/2008/1020

Applicant's drawing No. (s) PL01, PL02, PL03, PL04 & PL05.

For the following reason(s)

1. The loss of the lock up garages would result in the loss of valuable parking facilities in a congested area which would result in increased demand for on-street parking thereby,

i) prejudicing the free flow of traffic and conditions of general safety along the neighbouring highway as a contrary to Policy UD3(c) 'General Principles', and

ii) adversely affect the character and appearance of the Crouch End Conservation Area contrary to Policy CSV1 'Development in Conservation Areas' of the Unitary Development Plan 2006.