

REPORT FOR CONSIDERATION AT PLANNING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE

Reference No:

HGY/2006/1213

Ward: Noel Park

Date received: 15/06/2006

Last amended date:

Drawing number of plans: 217-MPAPB-PLAN-G-001, 217-MPAPB-PLAN-EX-ELEV-A-B-C-004, 217-MPAPB-PLAN-EX-ELEV-D-E-F-005, 217-MPAPB-PLAN-PR-PLAN-G-008, 217-MPAPB-PLAN-PR-ELEV-A-B-C-010, 217-MPAPB-PLAN-PR-ELEV-D-E-F-011

Address: Units 1 and 2 Quicksilver Place, Western Road N22 6XH

Proposal: Change of use of property to police patrol base (sui generis) with associated installation of CCTV cameras, window guards and replacement entrance gates

Existing Use: Industrial (B2) currently unoccupied
Patrol Base (sui generis)

Proposed Use: Police

Applicant: Metropolitan Police Authority

Ownership:

PLANNING DESIGNATIONS

Retrieved from GIS on 19/06/2006
ROAD - BOROUGH
Area of Community Regeneration
Cultural Industry Quarter
Defined Employment Area
Ecological Corridor
Industrial Business Park

Officer contact: Luke McSoriley

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PERMISSION subject to conditions

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application relates to a large 1980's era glass facade commercial building at Quicksilver Place which runs off Western Road, N22 and is located west of Wood green Town Centre. The property is situated between a former swimming pool that is now a conference and event venue and a large depot building with Alexandra School situated directly across the road. The property is not situated within a Conservation Area.

PLANNING HISTORY

OLD/1981/1654 - Change of use from general industrial to use for Middlesex Polytechnic – GRANTED 28/04/81

HGY/2004/1115 - Change of use of units from D1 to B2 - GRANTED 01/09/04

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

Change of use of property from Industrial (B2) use to police patrol base (sui generis) with associated installation of CCTV cameras, window guards and replacement entrance gates. The police patrol base would incorporate training, storage including vehicle storage and office use while the application states that the use would be on a temporary basis for 5 years.

The supporting document included with the application includes the following description of the proposed patrol base:

'Patrol Base' is a term adopted by the Metropolitan Police as a location where police officers are briefed prior to going on patrol. It is not a police station and does not provide any direct access to the public or accommodate detainees. Units 1 & 2 Quicksilver Place would provide a base for officers to store their operational vehicles and equipment, undertake training, handle correspondence and be briefed on operations.

CONSULTATION

Transportation

Ward Councillors

Network Rail

The Decorium, 28 Western Rd, N22

Alexandra School, Western Rd, N22

Depot Western Rd, N22

12/07/06

9 – 17 Tower Terrace

130 – 146 Mayes Rd

109 Mayes Rd

108 – 138 Station Rd

RESPONSES

Network Rail – 'We have no observations to make'.

Avenue Gardens Residents Association -

Heartlands Development Framework

1. Community facilities for Police use in the Heartlands area have already been considered and dismissed. In response to the statement in the Heartlands Development Framework (HDF) 2003, 'Development Principles' page 20.
2. 'There is a need for a new police station in the area. However, the need to create a development which promotes active uses in public areas and the stations requirement for a large surface car park mean that most of the Heartlands area would be unsuitable for this use'.
3. The GLA/LDA made the following objection (id:0226, ob:1138): 'Police station – there is a question mark against this and there is a need to finalise the thinking'.
4. To which the Officer response: 'Neither a police station nor a new library are planned or being contemplated on this site. The text should be amended to reflect this'.
5. AGRA objection to the same point (Id:0161, Ob:02416) states: '1. suggests that local residents extremely irritated and annoyed that the Police Station, one of the most unpopular elements of the last master plan, is not excluded but described by coy little statements such as 'most of the Heartlands is unsuitable', and further '3. suggests that is the Police Station is in then the location of it should be discussed. If the Police Station is out, then the subject should be dropped'.

6. To which the Officer response: 'Currently, it is not anticipated that there is a need to provide a new police station at the Heartlands. Therefore this paragraph stating the need for a new police station should be omitted' and in the section 'Community Facilities' delete the 4th paragraph in respect of the police station'.
7. Police use of sites within the Heartlands area have therefore been considered, consulted upon and dismissed. It is understood that improvement to community facilities refers to improvements to the library, provision of school places and improvement to primary health facilities. The requirement for Police facilities has been excised from the adopted HDF 2005.
8. AGRA objects that the reasons for the Council rejecting Police use of Heartlands sites remain valid and should be adhered to as existing policy.

Employment

9. While the supporting statement makes much of bringing employment to the location, the fact is that this employment already exists at other locations in the Borough. AGRA objects that the scheme will not generate new employment in Haringey, and thus runs counter to one of the two main policy aims of the Heartlands Development Framework.

Piecemeal Development

10. The HDF declares that the Council will resist piecemeal development. The applicant states (Planning Support Statement para 5.18) that the proposed safeguarded Heartlands Access Route, by showing a true route that does not cross the site, has now removed the possibility that use of the site will be an impediment to comprehensive regeneration of the area.
11. The applicant is incorrect in this assertion. The HDF and UDP in its various revisions have never contemplated an access route through the site. The UDP first deposit erroneously showed 'pedestrian/cycle linkages' through the site and across Wood Green Common a clear error that was corrected in later drafts. In direct contradiction to the applicants assertion concerning the supposed impediment of the access route, the site is shown in the HDF as earmarked for part education, part residential purposes.
12. AGRA objects that police use of the site for 5 years will be an impediment to comprehensive regeneration of the area and thus constitutes undesirable piecemeal development. The Borough has already obtained funding for a new school on the adjacent site on the north boundary and which may include part of the Quicksilver site. This is expected to be completed within two years. Residential schemes may come forward at any time on this site, and are in any case expected to be some of the first developments of the Heartlands Regeneration scheme in a premium area. The proposed five year scheme will impede regenerative use of the site.

Trip Generation

13. The applicant has not tabled any information on the traffic impact on local roads in the area, either for the period before construction of the Heartlands Access Route or after. The applicant has not provided impact studies of trip generation by employees arriving or leaving the site, or trips generated from operational uses.
14. The applicant states that a majority of staff will be working shift hours. A substantial portion of these staff will be working during hours when public transport is not available, and will have to make use of private vehicles. The site has a high PTAL rating, but this benefit is not being made best use of by the proposal. AGRA objects that the proposal is thus an inefficient use of the site.

15. Trips generated by operational use may be substantial and also of an emergency and high speed nature. The impact of these trips has not been assessed by the applicant. AGRA objects that the proposal is thus an inefficient use of the site.
16. Trips generated by operational use may be substantial and also of an emergency and high speed nature. The impact of these trips has not been assessed by the applicant. AGRA questions the wisdom of locating these facilities next to two schools – the existing Alexandra Primary School and the proposed new school – with large numbers of young people and children on adjacent streets at certain times of the day.

Impact on Local Amenity

17. Police use of local streets, in particular park Avenue and Station Road, constitute a well documented 24 hour noise nuisance. Numerous complaints have been made about the use of police sirens late at night. Speeding patrol cars are a noise nuisance as well as dangerous in local streets.
18. The applicant has provided no information on the likely destinations of emergency call outs, so the logic of a 'centralised patrol base' in this location and the likely routes to be used cannot be properly assessed. AGRA objects that the impact of the proposal on nearby residential streets from noise and speeding is likely to be great and is currently unexamined.

One objection received from a Local Resident -

1. The application states that the base would be served by 27 external parking spaces for operational vehicles and visitors only. Staff working shifts will not be using public transport and will park on nearby streets. I am already finding it difficult to park outside my house as people from other residential areas are parking there as there is no parking where they live. The development will only make the situation worse.
2. I am very concerned about the increased noise levels from vehicles with sirens blaring at all times of the day and night.
3. there are schools nearby and limited safe crossings facilities – police vehicles emerging at speed from the base would endanger children in the area.

Letter from adjoining occupier The Decorium –

With reference to our telephone conversation a few weeks ago regarding the planning application for the above site. As I mentioned the site is adjacent to the rear of our building The Decorium Banqueting Suite. The rear boundary wall is shared between both of us i.e. the old Middlesex university campus.

There is a double gate to the rear of The Decorium which is the fire exit route from our building into Quicksilver place been the common right of way for both our building and the old Middlesex university, this then leads on to Western Road.

My concerns are that when a planning application is considered for the side; please bear in mind our fire exit route. I would have thought it would be more beneficial for both parties if the gate to the new development could be located further back into Quicksilver place so that we can both use the right of way onto the street and not have any security issues.

Transportation - The proposed police patrol base is in an area with a high public transport accessibility level (PTAL), located within the Wood Green outer CPZ, operating Monday to Saturday from 0800hrs to 18:30hrs.

The site is within walking distance of Wood Green underground station and Alexandra Palace rail station, this combined with the fact that police officers having free use of public transport, means the majority of officers will travel by public transport.

The applicant has provided 50 off street parking space to support the operation of the proposed unite. This is sufficient considering that the maximum number of staff that will be on shift is 50 employees and the maximum number of staff that will be in the unit at any one time is 100 employees at the change over. Considering the site is in a CPZ and it is not directly abutting a Principal Road or a Borough Road where parking outside the CPZ operational hours would impede the flow of traffic and given that there is secure car parking facility available within walking distance of the site. The transportation and highways authority would not object to this application.

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

G4 'Employment'

AC1 'The Heartlands / Wood Green'

UD1 'Planning Statements'

UD2 'Sustainable Design and Construction'

UD3 'General Principles'

UD4 'Quality Design'

ENV6 'Noise Pollution'

EMP1 'Defined Employment Areas – Regeneration Areas'

EMP2 'Defined Employment Areas – Industrial Locations'

M3 'New Development Location and Accessibility'

M10 'Parking for Development'

ANALYSIS/ASSESSMENT OF THE APPLICATION

Impact on amenity

The proposed development would involve some minor changes to the existing elevations of the building with the installation of bars over windows in the western elevation and the installation of 12 CCTV cameras which will be fixed to the building at various locations. New access gates are also proposed. The proposed changes to the building are considered appropriate for the industrial nature of the site.

The police patrol base would be situated within an industrial estate a significant distance from the nearest residential properties. The commercial / industrial nature of the area is considered an appropriate location for the use and it would not give rise to any significant adverse impact on the amenity of the adjoining and surrounding uses which are predominantly industrial / commercial. The use of the property as a police patrol base is not expected to have any detrimental impact on the operation of the school located opposite the site or the functions centre and depot situated on either side. The proposed development is considered consistent with Policies UD3 'General Principles' and UD4 'Quality Design'.

A number of objectors have expressed concern about increased noise levels resulting from the sirens of police vehicles leaving the site and the disturbance this would cause to the nearest residential areas. There is likely to be noise disturbance from police vehicles when responding to emergencies. The use of sirens by police vehicles in emergencies however, is not a material consideration and it would be inappropriate for the Council to refuse the application on these grounds; if it were, it would be difficult to site a police building in most parts of Greater London.

Parking

The proposed plans detail a total of 27 external car parking spaces for use by operational vehicles and visitors only. The application states that all operational vehicles would be kept on the property when not on patrol and that there will be no public access to the patrol base. The application states that no staff car parking is proposed and it is expected that a large number of staff would travel by public transport. The site has good links to public transport with Wood Green tube station, and Alexandra Palace Railway Station situated nearby and a number of bus routes also running near the site. The Transportation team have not objected to the application (see comments above).

Employment & Haringey Heartlands Development Framework

The proposed development would be situated within a Defined Employment Area and as such Policy EMP2 'Defined Employment Areas – Industrial Locations' is relevant. This policy seeks to protect and enhance the Borough's industrial locations and states that proposals for uses that fall outside the 'B' use classes will not be permitted in industrial locations unless they:

- a) are ancillary to primary 'B' class use;
- b) will not compromise the employment status of a DEA and
- c) are a complimentary use needed for the area to function effectively for employment purposes.

The building the application relates to is currently empty and it is considered that the proposed conversion of the building to a police patrol base on a temporary basis would not compromise the long term employment status of the Defined Employment Area. The planning statement that forms part of the application states that approximately 420 police officers and staff would be employed from the base with two shifts of 210 people per team and an average number of staff for each of the three shifts per day of 35 - 50. The ancillary office area would accommodate approximately 45 office based personnel with approximately 30 of these working 9am to 5pm. As the proposed use of the property as a police patrol base would provide a large number of employment opportunities it is considered that it would not compromise the employment status of the Defined Employment Area and therefore meets Policy EMP2 b) .

The application property is also situated within a Defined Employment Area – 'Regeneration Areas'. Policy EMP1 states that The Council will encourage the redevelopment of the regeneration areas (DEAs) as identified in schedule 3 in accordance with policies AC1 and AC2 of the plan. Policy AC1 'The Heartlands / Wood green' is the relevant Policy to consider in terms of this application. This Policy states that development should have regard to the framework for the area which seeks to ensure comprehensive and co-ordinated development. The policy then sets specific criteria for development within the Heartlands area. The current application does not appear to fit within the broad criteria and objectives Policy AC1 sets for this specific area. However the proposed development would only operate from the site on a temporary basis, and would also involve only minor changes to an existing building rather than larger scale redevelopment of the existing building and property. The temporary use of the site as a police patrol base is unlikely to prevent any potential redevelopment of the site in the future that could contribute to the broader aim of regenerating the wider Haringey Heartlands / Wood Green area.

Existing Gateway

A letter from the adjoining occupier The Decorium was received and this letter outlined concern regarding existing access arrangements, the existing gates on the property and the joint access arrangements between Quicksilver Place and The Decorium property. It would appear that this is a private matter and not a relevant planning issue in terms of this application. The contact details for Agent representing the applicants was passed to the Decorium.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The temporary use of the property as a police patrol base would involve only minor changes to the existing building and property and is not considered to constitute a major redevelopment of the site. The temporary nature of the use and minor physical changes to the site would not prevent or discourage future redevelopment or use of the site that could contribute to the regeneration of the Haringey Heartlands Area. The proposed development not considered contrary to Policies AC1 'The Heartlands / Wood Green', EMP1 'Defined Employment Areas – Regeneration Areas' and EMP2 'Defined Employment Areas – Industrial Locations'.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT PERMISSION

Registered No. HGY/2006/1213

Applicant's drawing No.(s) 217-MPAPB-PLAN-G-001, 217-MPAPB-PLAN-EX-ELEV-A-B-C-004, 217-MPAPB-PLAN-EX-ELEV-D-E-F-005, 217-MPAPB-PLAN-PR-PLAN-G-008, 217-MPAPB-PLAN-PR-ELEV-A-B-C-010, 217-MPAPB-PLAN-PR-ELEV-D-E-F-011

Subject to the following condition(s)

1. The permission shall be granted for a limited period expiring on 30th September 2009; further the permission hereby granted shall not enure for the benefit of the land but shall be personal to Metropolitan Police Authority only, and upon the Metropolitan Police Authority ceasing to use the land the use shall be discontinued and shall revert to the authorised use of General Industrial (B2).

Reason: Permission has only been granted with respect to the special personal circumstances of the applicant and would not otherwise be granted.

2. The development hereby authorised shall be carried out in complete accordance with the plans and specifications submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved details and in the interests of amenity.

INFORMATIVE

The new development will require naming. The applicant should contact the Transportation Group at least six weeks before the development is occupied (tel. 020 8489 5573) to arrange for the allocation of a suitable address.

REASONS FOR APPROVAL

The temporary use of the property as a police patrol base would involve only minor changes to the existing building and property and is not considered to constitute a major redevelopment of the site. The temporary nature of the use and minor physical changes to the site would not prevent or discourage future redevelopment or use of the site that could contribute to the regeneration of the Haringey Heartlands Area. The proposed development not considered contrary to Policies AC1 'The Heartlands / Wood Green', EMP1 'Defined Employment Areas - Regeneration Areas' and EMP2 'Defined Employment Areas - Industrial Locations'.