

REPORT FOR CONSIDERATION AT PLANNING COMMITTEE

Reference No: HGY/2008/1067

Ward: Highgate

Date received: 13/05/2008

Last amended date: N / A

Drawing number of plans A5415/2.1/01, 102 - 115 incl.; A5415/2.0/01; 01

Address: 2 - 4 Broadlands Road N6

Proposal: Conservation Area Consent for demolition of existing buildings and erection of part 4 / part single storey building to accommodate 40 extra care units, and provision of 8 off-street parking spaces.

Existing Use: Residential / Vacant Care Home

Proposed Use: Extra Care / C2

Applicant: Mr Joe Scullion Hill Homes

Ownership: Private

PLANNING DESIGNATIONS

Conservation Area
Contaminated Land
Road Network: Borough Road

Officer Contact: Matthew Gunning

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT

SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

The application site is occupied by two converted and extended villas (No's 2 & 4), known respectively as The Trees & Homfray House, and which form a vacant nursing home, which was formed from the merger of these respective properties. Part of the site (No 4) has reverted back to residential use. There have been substantial extensions to these two properties on site, in particular No 2 which has undergone substantial external changes by way of unsympathetic additions and extensions. No 4 has undergone less significant external changes and retains many of its original architectural details (fine brickwork, a canted bay, timber sash windows, high dormer gables). This property is an important focal point in view along Broadlands Road. There is high degree of screening along the front of the site which partly obscures

views of these buildings, particularly No 2 and to a lesser extent No 4. The application site is 0.5 ha. in size and fronts onto Broadlands Road and has frontage along its western boundary onto Grange Road (a private road). The side adjoins the rear garden boundaries of a number of residential dwellings as well a residential block and Church Hall on North Hill, along its eastern boundary. Along the rear boundary the site adjoins No's 7 & 9 Grange Road. The site is populated with many trees (39 in total) of various age and species some (10) of which are protected by TPOs.

Broadlands Road is generally residential in character with low-density development of relatively large properties set in substantial grounds. There are some higher density schemes along this road; including a scheme of 12 terrace properties opposite, known as Broadlands Close. There is no prevailing architectural style in the area, being a mix of Victorian, Edwardian and 20th century development. The road contains some impressive Victorian mansion houses, some of which are unique, as well as some more modern flats on either side of the road. The application site is located within Highgate Conservation Area.

PLANNING HISTORY

HGY/2008/1065 - Demolition of existing buildings and erection of part 4 / part single storey building to accommodate 40 extra care units, and provision of 8 off-street parking spaces.- Pending

HGY/2007/2191 - Demolition of existing buildings and erection of part 4 / part single storey building to accommodate 41 extra care units, and provision of 8 off-street parking spaces – Refused 21/01/2008

HGY/2007/2192 - Conservation Area Consent for demolition of existing buildings and erection of part 4 / part single storey building to accommodate 41 extra care units, and provision of 8 off-street parking spaces. – Refused 21/01/2008

DETAILS OF PROPOSAL

This application is for conservation area consent for the demolition of the existing buildings and the erection of a part 4 / part single storey building to accommodate 40 extra care units, and provision of 8 off-street parking spaces.

CONSULTATION

Ward Councillors
Conservation Officer
English Heritage
Highgate CAAC
Highgate Society

RESPONSES

As outlined in HGY/2008/1065

RELEVANT PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy

Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment

The London Plan - 2004

Policy 4B.7 Respect local context and communities

Policy 4B.11 Heritage Conservation

Adopted Unitary Development Plan, 2006

Policy G10 Conservation

Policy CSV1 Development in Conservation Areas

Policy CSV7 Demolition in Conservation Areas

Supplementary Planning Guidance

SPG1a Design Guidance and Design Statements

SPG2 Conservation & Archaeology

ANALYSIS / ASSESSMENT OF THE APPLICATION

The application has been accompanied by an application for the redevelopment of the site consisting of a four storey building fronting onto Broadlands Road with two projecting wings to the rear, to accommodate 40 extra care residential units.

The Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 15 states that in the exercising of conservation area controls, local planning authorities are required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area. It also states that proposals to demolish any building in a conservation area should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings. The existing buildings on site have been reviewed against the relevant PPG15 criteria, as listed below:

- 'the condition of the building, the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and the value derived from its continued use';
- 'the adequacy of efforts made to retain the building in use';
- 'merits of alternative proposal for the site/ design / impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area'.

Conditions of the Existing Buildings

In terms of No 2 it is acknowledges that it has undergone substantial external changes by way of unsympathetic additions and extensions in recent decades

and that its contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area has been eroded. It can be accepted that this building makes only a 'neutral' contribution to the Conservation Area; given the various unsympathetic additions and extensions and the fact that it is less visible from the road, than that of No 4.

On the other hand No 4 has undergone less significant external changes and retains many of its original architectural details. No 4 was built as a large house in the late Victorian era, sited on the corner of Broadlands Road and Grange Road. It is constructed of red brick, in Flemish bond, and in terms of masonry features it has gauged arches, with staff bead moulding to the lower edge and the jambs, with simple stone cills. The property has timber sliding sash windows with large panes of glass. This property is an important focal point in view along Broadlands Road, and it is argued, does make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

No 2 (Trees) plus the link building was previously used as a registered nursing home consisting of 30 bedrooms; while No 4 (Horfray House) was previously a registered residential care home with 17 bedrooms but has temporarily reverted back to a dwelling house. 'Trees' was closed in October 2004 as the building is no longer fit for purpose.

Attempts to retain the building

A remodelling exercise has been submitted with this application indicating that 22 residential units could be provided by re-using the existing building and creating two new single storey wings. A number of difficulties associated with such a remodelling exercise have been outlined; namely the restrictive room sizes, the difficulties with internal circulations/ access, the limited potential to connect the upper floor of Nos. 2 & 4, and the possible need to make alterations to the façade of the building. Overall the applicant's consider this option to be unviable and stress the need to have 40 plus units to make such a facility financially viable and workable in the future.

The premise of retaining No 4 and demolishing No 2 and the link building and incorporating it with a new extension has also been investigated. This scheme has also been proven to be unsatisfactory: to provide the levels of accommodation required for an extra care facility. The exercise shows that No 4 could only provide two flats per floor and therefore significantly reduces the amount of accommodation that can be provided effectively. A ground floor difference of approximately 800mm would exist between a new building and No 4. Digging down the new building to the same level would possibly be destructive on the roots of TPO trees. As outlined by the applicant's extra care scheme for the elderly needs to be the same level throughout to give maximum accessibility for staff and residents. The existing entrance to No 4 is stepped therefore causing further difficulty in terms of accessibility. If No 4 were to be used as part of an extra-care scheme it would be essential for it to be linked at all levels. However these floors could not be easily linked through therefore requiring a separate wheelchair accessible lift within No 4. It is

highly likely that changes to the internal floors of No 4 would necessitate changes to the position of window openings.

Building regulation and energy issues would come into play with the material change of use of No 4 to flats. These would include acoustic separation and fire restricting properties. Such works would have obvious implications for internal features, namely cornices and also clashes with window heads. The existing windows would have to be replaced to achieve the necessary U values. A form of timber sliding sash windows could be used however technical elements such as trickle vents would prevent them from looking exactly the same. The Local Planning Authority accepts that it would be very difficult to achieve the required building regulations upgrades and energy saving measures without compromising the original building fabric of No 4.

The sketches submitted with the remodelling exercise show that the appearance and setting of No 4 would be dominated by a new building fronting into Broadlands Road. In addition the junction between such a new building and No 4 would be awkward and detrimental to its character, appearance and setting.

Merits of an alternative proposal for the site

PPG15 para. 4.27 states that “consent for demolition within a conservation area should not be granted unless there are acceptable and detailed plans for any redevelopment”.

The merits of the replacement scheme have been considered in detail in the concurrent planning application LPA: HGY/2008/1065. As set out in the report the design and form and architectural detailing of this replacement building, in particular its facing materials and relationship to neighbouring buildings is now considered more acceptable, however there are some reservations in the treatment of the frontage/ corner with Grange Road

The strong arguments made about the community benefits of the proposal against the loss of the existing buildings are noted. The proposed scheme will represent an imaginative new service and will be of significant benefit to the local community, in that it will provide extra care housing to allow residents to live independently while having some shared community facilities and opportunities to socialise.

In this case the substantial community benefit associated with this proposal is considered to represent an exceptional case and the argument for the retention of No 4 is relaxed.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In terms of No 2 it is acknowledges that it has undergone external changes by way of unsympathetic additions and extensions in recent decades and that its contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area has been eroded to the point that the building makes only a 'neutral' contribution to the Conservation Area. No 4 has undergone less significant external changes and retains many of its original architectural features. This property is an important focal point in view along Broadlands Road, and does make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. A remodelling exercise has been submitted with this application demonstrating that there are many difficulties in re-using the existing buildings on site in order to provide the quantum and level of accommodation required for an extra care facility. The remodelling exercise has looked specifically at the retention of No 4 and incorporating it with a new extension/ building. Although the Council's Conservation and Design Team consider it unfortunate to lose such a building (No 4) it is recognised that a well designed extra care facility would be a social asset for the local community. On this basis the substantial community benefit associated with this proposal is considered to represent an exceptional case and the argument for the demolition is considered acceptable. The proposal is therefore considered to be in accordance with the provisions of PPG15, policy CSV7 'Demolition in Conservation Areas' of the adopted Haringey Unitary Development Plan (2006) and Supplementary Planning Guidance SPG2 'Conservation & Archaeology'. Given the above this application is recommended for APPROVAL.

RECOMMENDATION

GRANT CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT

Registered No. HGY/2008/1067

Applicant's drawing No.(s) A5415/2.1/01, 102 - 115 incl.; A5415/2.0/01; 01

Subject to the following condition(s)

1. The development hereby authorised must be begun not later than the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission, failing which the permission shall be of no effect.

Reason: This condition is imposed by virtue of the provisions of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and to prevent the accumulation of unimplemented planning permissions.

2. The demolition hereby permitted shall not be undertaken before a contract for the carrying out of the works for redevelopment of the site has been made and planning permission granted for the redevelopment for which the contract provides.

Reason: In order to ensure that the site is not left open and vacant to the detriment of the character and visual amenities of the locality.

REASONS FOR APPROVAL

The substantial community benefit associated with this proposal is considered to represent an exceptional case and therefore the argument for the demolition is considered acceptable and to be in accordance with the provisions of PPG15, Policy CSV7 'Demolition in Conservation Areas' of the adopted Haringey Unitary Development Plan (2006) and Supplementary Planning Guidance SPG2 'Conservation & Archaeology'.