

OFFICER REPORT FOR DECISION UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY

APPLICATION NO: P1308.24

WARD: Harold Wood **Date Received:** 30th September 2024

ADDRESS: 15 The Parade, Colchester Road
Romford

PROPOSAL: Alterations to front elevation fenestration, refurbishment of existing office building and loft conversion to provide new 2nd floor office space

DRAWING NO(S): 321-A-100
321-A-101
321-A-102
321-A-103
321-A-104
Location Plan

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that **planning permission be GRANTED** subject to the condition(s) given at the end of the report

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site lies within a parade of shops on the south eastern side of Colchester Road, Romford. The premises was formerly occupied by Longwood Construction Ltd. Most recently, Google streetview images would suggest occupation by a company named "Turick", a construction company. The area to the rear of the building has hardstanding for a period of time and this has been corroborated by aerial photography.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

The Council is in receipt of an application seeking consent for alterations to front elevation fenestration, refurbishment of existing office building and loft conversion to provide new 2nd floor office space

RELEVANT HISTORY

P0139.89 -Reconstruction to provide self contained flat at 1st floor & extend ground floor-Approved.
P1895.89 -Amendment to P0139.89 to enlarge store & kitchen - Approved.
P1307.24 Erection of proposed storage outbuilding to rear
Awaiting Decision

P0971.24	Refurbishment to include trade counter, stock room, and office space, with hip to gable roof alteration, rear dormer, alterations to fenestration, and storage outbuilding to rear	Refuse	04-09-2024
P0584.24	Refurbishment of existing building with proposed hip-to-gable roof alteration and rear dormer, and rear outbuilding	Withdrawn - Invalid	17-06-2024
P0407.18	Change of front facing north elevation to include new entrance door and reconfiguration of stairs / reception area.	Apprv with cons	17-05-2018
P0482.97	Proposed single storey rear extension	Apprv with cons	06-06-1997

CONSULTATIONS/REPRESENTATIONS

Neighbouring properties were notified regarding the application and no representations were received.

TfL Spatial Planning has commented that TfL has no comments to make on this planning application regarding strategic transport issues. However, they expect the application to be determined in line with relevant London Plan policy and guidance plus that issued by TfL including the Mayor's Transport Strategy.

RELEVANT POLICIES

Policies 7 (Residential design and amenity), 13 (Town centre development), 19 (Business growth), 23 (Transport connections), 24 (Parking provision and design), 26 (Urban Design), 34 (Managing pollution) and 35 (On-site waste management) of the Havering Local Plan (2016-2031) as well as the Havering Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule are relevant.

Policies D1 (London's form, character and capacity for growth), D4 (Delivering good design), D14 (Noise), E1 (Offices), Policy E9 (Retail, markets and hot food takeaways), SD6 (Town centres and high streets), SI 1 (Improving air quality), T4 (Assessing and mitigating transport impacts), T5 (Cycling), T6 (Car parking), T6.2 (Office parking), T7 (Deliveries, servicing and construction) and T9 (Funding transport infrastructure through planning) of the London Plan 2021 are relevant.

The National Planning Policy Framework is relevant.

MAYORAL CIL IMPLICATIONS

Contributions would be required under CIL regulations. The proposal which is for offices is not CIL liable under the Havering CIL schedule.

However, the London Mayoral CIL is chargeable. The proposal includes alterations to create additional office in the loft and would have a floor area 13.55 square metres which is rounded up to 14 square metres. This would translate to a Mayoral CIL (MCIL2) contribution of £350 /(14 x £25 per sqm). This contribution would be subject to indexation.

STAFF COMMENTS

The main issues in this case are the impact on the streetscene, neighbouring amenity and any highway or parking issues.

In accordance with the current protocol for site visits, an in-person site visit was not undertaken. Site photos were provided by the agent in support of the application. In determining this planning application photos, Google StreetView TM, aerial view images and submitted drawings were used to assess the site constraints.

There are no planning records for the conversion of the first floor flat into offices. From the plans submitted, it seems that the consent for P0407.18 has not been implemented.

This application is a resubmission of a previously refused planning application P0971.24. The key issue in this case therefore is whether the revised proposal overcomes the previously stated concerns. The previous application was refused planning permission for the following reasons.

1. The cumulative impact of the hip to gable roof alteration and rear dormer window would have a top heavy appearance and give rise to development which is disproportionately large and which would unbalance the appearance of this pair of semi-detached properties and appear as an unacceptably dominant and visually intrusive feature in the street scene and rear garden harmful to the appearance of the surrounding area, contrary to Policy 26 of the Havering Local Plan, D4 of the London Plan and the Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document.

2. The proposed large ancillary stock/store room would, by reason of its excessive size, scale, height, bulk and mass give rise to an intrusive and overbearing form of development in relation to the neighbouring residential rear gardens, and would introduce an incongruous built form which would be unsympathetic and visually intrusive and harmful to neighbouring residential amenity and therefore would be contrary to Policies 26 and 7 of the Havering Local Plan, D4 of the London Plan, the Havering's Residential Extensions and Alterations SPD and the guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.

3. The proposal, by reason of noise and disturbance caused by customers entering and leaving the premises, vehicles parking and manoeuvring, would be unacceptably detrimental to the amenities of occupiers of adjacent properties, contrary to Policy 7 of the Havering Local Plan.

This application differs from the previously refused schemes in the following key areas:

1. This application does include the ancillary building to the rear. The removal of this part of the process would deal with previous reasons for refusal nos. 2 and 3.

2. The hip to gable roof alteration and rear dormer have been removed from the proposal.

3. Roof lights have been provided to the front and rear elevation of the loft area.

Furthermore, the agent has e-mailed on the 5th December 2024 to confirm there is no change of use proposed. The trade counter is no longer part of the scheme and the stock room/ storage area to the rear of the building is in conjunction with the office space and day to day running of the business.

The applicant states that there is no intention or anticipation of increased vehicle movements to and from the site beyond the arrival and departure of vehicles owned by the business and its direct employees.

The agent has provided a revised Planning and Design Statement which was e-mailed to the Officer on the 6th December 2024. The agent outlined within the e-mail that :

"As described in the design statement, the office space is intended for the running of the applicant's business which carries out installation, servicing and monitoring of fire alarms and fire safety systems. There are currently 4 or 5 employees with the ambition to grow the business and the workforce by 2 people soon, and then further still in the future as the business continues to grow, hence the desire to enlarge the office space.

All office space in this building will belong to and be used by the applicant's business, there is no desire or ambition to sub-let any space to any other party".

The effect of these changes will be assessed in the context of the following:

PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

The use of the site has been established through the earlier consent under ref: P0407.18 and there is no evidence before officers that the resolution of officers previously does not remain consistent with the objectives of national and local planning policy.

The site was historically/most recently in use as an office used by a construction company, but has since been vacant. While there is an onus to provide adequate social infrastructure and health facilities in the London area, the vacant site does not in itself meet the requirements as set out in the London Plan.

The previous application P0971.24 was submitted for the use of Trade Counter which requires planning consent for a change of use. The proposal will be adding to the existing office and will represent a sustainable use for the vacant site, which will continue to provide an important service and employment for the area.

Given the location of the site, in close proximity to residential property, a condition will be imposed to restrict the use of this building for offices and no other subsection within Class E as other uses within Class E. Other uses such as E(b) for the sale of food and drink to be consumed within the premises or E(d) indoor sports and recreation would represent a significant impact to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers due to noise disturbance and other amenity issues. These uses would be materially different than that of the former or proposed use which are commensurate with one another based on earlier decision making.

No.15 The Parade was being used for offices with the area to the rear being used for parking and finished of unmade materials. The agent has outlined that the offices will be used by his client.

The proposed offices at ground, first and in the loft will be used by the same company. The Parade is of mix residential and commercial units. The proposed additional office space at second floor level is a small area, just 14 square metres, and it is not considered that this would give rise to a significant expansion of the use that would give rise to material amenity or highway issues.

DESIGN/IMPACT ON STREET/GARDEN SCENE

The site is located within a Local Centre known as The Parade, Romford (Harold Park) as indicated within the Havering Local Plan (HLP).

This revised proposal has removed the hipped to gable roof and rear dormer window from the proposal which would address the first reason for refusal.

No objections are raised to the proposed roof lights to the front and rear elevations from a visual point of view.

It is noted that the existing ground floor fenestration on the front elevation would be changed from white Upvc to a dark grey framed storefront doorway & glazing where previously it was white UPVC windows. The white UPVC windows would be retained above. It is not considered that the changes to the shopfront, of themselves, are sufficient to justify a refusal as there is no consistency along this section of the parade in terms of fenestration arrangement, materials and colour.

Taking the above into consideration, it is considered that the proposal would be within the realms of acceptability and addresses the previous reasons for refusal relating to visual impact.

IMPACT ON AMENITY

Consideration has been given to the impact on neighbouring dwellings in terms of loss of light and loss of privacy.

The Havering Local Plan, Policy 7 (Residential design and amenity) notes that:

To protect the amenity of existing and future residents the Council will support developments that do not result in:

- i. Unacceptable overlooking or loss of privacy or outlook;
- ii. Unacceptable loss of daylight and sunlight; and
- iii. Unacceptable levels of noise, vibration and disturbance

The SPD reinforces these requirements by stating that new development should be sited and designed such that there is no detriment to existing residential amenity through overlooking and/or privacy loss and dominance or overshadowing.

The replacement shop front would not have an adverse impact upon the amenity of neighbouring

occupiers.

The roof lights would face the street, which is a public area, as such it is not envisaged that there would be any loss of privacy from this development.

It is not envisaged that the roof lights to the rear elevation would unacceptably impact on the neighbouring amenity. The roof lights would be set in on from either side of the roof.

It is considered that the proposal would not result in any undue overlooking or loss of privacy above existing conditions, particularly as the first floor windows of the application dwelling and the neighbouring properties already overlook the rear garden areas of surrounding residential properties.

The application form states that the opening hours would be from 0900h to 1700h Monday to Friday and a condition would be imposed in this respect. The unit would not be open on Saturdays, Sundays or Bank Holidays.

E uses are expected (primarily) to operate during daytime hours and be in keeping with a town-centre setting. Officers have considered broadly the E grouping and some of those uses would not be appropriate in this setting in principle, for example a restaurant E(b), which may attract high footfall etc and bring with it additional levels of noise and disturbance.

The backland setting and close relationship to nearby residential premises lends itself more to low-key non noise generating uses. Whilst officers are mindful of the historic function which has taken place it is of a small scale and there are restrictions on the use of power tools and operating hours. That aside, the loss of "yard" area would require that activities take place largely within the building and there could be a restriction on the use of tools/activity in outside areas. On that hand it could represent an opportunity to improve the situation further over the historic arrangement.

Officers consider the following appropriate in this setting:

E(c) for the provision of the following kinds of services principally to visiting members of the public

(i) financial services, (banks & building societies)

(ii) professional services (other than health or medical services), or (estate & employment agencies etc.)

Although the number of offices will increase but mindful of previous use as offices, it is considered that the increase would not unacceptable impact on the amenity of the adjacent neighbours, mindful of the various uses / residential nearby.

Officers consider that the above if controlled would not be capable of generating significant levels of noise and disturbance. Any comings and goings would be limited to daylight hours in a manner which would be consistent with the existing use and that of the wider parade which would be serviced throughout the day etc. Whilst there may be potentially be some nuisance to surrounding occupiers, the area is a mixed use environment where the amenity of residents is expected to be less than that of predominantly residential areas. Given the historic use of the site and relative ambiguity of the current use the application represents an opportunity to impose through conditions measures to control the use of the site and mitigate where reasonable undue harm to surrounding occupiers. The very nature of proposing buildings of the scale proposed lends weight to the view

that the bulk of noise would be contained internally.

It is not envisaged that the proposed change of use as described (if restricted to the above and with other measures in place) would result in a level of harm capable of substantiating a decision to withhold permission, in view of existing commercial setting. On the basis that no objection has been made by the Council's Environmental Health team, it is not considered that there are any grounds to refuse permission and that subject to condition any adverse impacts would be mitigated. The proposals comply with Havering Local Plan 2016-2031 Policies 7 and 34.

HIGHWAY/PARKING

TfL Spatial Planning has no strategic comments to make on this planning application but has these specific observations: The development should comply with the transport policies set out in The London Plan 2021. In particular the car and cycle parking standards in tables 10.2 - 10.6 (inclusive). Cycle parking should comply with the London Cycling Design Standards (<https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/streets-toolkit>) including the provision of at least 5 % wider bike space.

If the development is permitted, the developer is reminded of the following: Colchester Road supports numerous bus routes. In the event that implementation of the development impacts users of those services such as alighting or accessing bus stops or requires the temporary re-routing of bus services or other such arrangements, these must be agreed with TfL before the work.

It is considered that the increase in number of offices by a further one would not unacceptably impact on the surrounding area. The unmade car parking area to the rear provides ample parking for employees of the business and mindful that this is an existing arrangement, it is considered that it would be difficult to substantiate a refusal on appeal.

T5 of the London Plan outlines for business offices that rest of London: 1 space per 150 sqm (GEA-Gross External Area). The site would have a GEA less than 150 sqm. Mindful of the small scale of the office use, it is considered that it would not be necessary to condition cycle storage.

No objections are raised to this proposal from a highways point of view.

ARCHAEOLOGY

The application site is within Archaeology Priority Zone as the site is on the London to Colchester Roman Road. A desktop Archaeology Report was submitted with the application.

The proposal is for limited changes to front elevation to create a new shop front with internal alterations. It is considered that it would be inappropriate to impose a condition due to the limited changes being proposed.

KEY ISSUES/CONCLUSIONS

The proposal has been sufficiently revised from the earlier refused scheme to bring the proposal

within the realms of acceptability. The application is considered to be in accordance with the above-mentioned policies and guidance and approval is recommended.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that **planning permission be GRANTED** subject to the following condition(s)

1 SC4 (Time limit) 3yrs

The development to which this permission relates must be commenced not later than three years from the date of this permission.

Reason:-

To comply with the requirements of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

2 SC45B (Restriction of use)

Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, the premises shall only be used for the purposes specified in the application and shall be solely for purposes falling within Class E c) or Class E g) i) and for no other purpose (including any other purpose in Class E of the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) (or any provision equivalent to that Class in any Statutory Instrument revoking and/or re-enacting that Order).

Reason:-

This use only is permitted and other uses, either within the same Use Class, or permitted by the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 are not acceptable to the Local Planning Authority in this location because of the close proximity to neighbouring residential property and the potential harm to amenity arising through noise and disturbance.

3 SC32 (Accordance with plans)

The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the approved plans (as set out on page one of this decision notice).

Reason:-

For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out as approved.

4 SC27 (Hours of use)

The premises shall not be used for the purposes hereby permitted other than between the hours of 0900h and 1700h on Mondays to Fridays and not at all on Saturdays, Sundays, Bank or Public holidays without the prior consent in writing of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason:-

To enable the Local Planning Authority to retain control in the interests of amenity.

5 Non Standard - Office Operation

The proposed office within the loft extension hereby permitted shall be used only in conjunction with the use of the ground and first floor of the building and shall not be used as a separate unit of commercial use at any time.

Reason:-

The site is within an area where the Local Planning Authority consider that the sub-division of existing properties should not be permitted in the interests of amenity.

INFORMATIVES

1 Use of Building Informative

Use of Building Informative

The applicant should not that the proposal has been assessed in line with plans submitted and confirmation from the agent's e-mail of the 5th & 6th December 2024 in that no change of use is proposed and that the trade counter is no longer part of the scheme. The stock room / storage area to the rear of the building is in conjunction with the office space and day to day running of the business. A change of use may require planning consent and it is suggested that the applicant seek clarity prior to any change should this arise.

2 Approval - No negotiation required

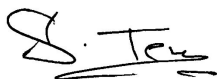
Statement Required by Article 35(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management) Order 2015: No significant problems were identified during the consideration of the application, and therefore it has been determined in accordance with paragraph 38 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

3 Approval and CIL

The proposal is liable for the Mayor of London Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Mayoral CIL levy rate for Havering is £25/m² and is chargeable for each additional square metre of residential gross internal (GIA). Based upon the information supplied with the application, £350 would be payable due to result in a new floor area with 14m² of GIA, however this may be adjusted subject to indexation.

These charges are levied under s.206 of the Planning Act 2008. CIL is payable within 60 days of commencement of development. A Liability Notice will be sent to the applicant (or anyone else who has assumed liability) shortly and you are required to notify the Council of the commencement of the development before works begin. Further details with regard to CIL are available from the Council's website. You are also advised to visit the planning portal website where you can download the appropriate document templates at <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/applications/howtoapply/whattosubmit/cil>

Authorising Officer:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Terry', with a horizontal line underneath.

Suzanne Terry

12th December 2024