

Item No: 5 Reference: B/07/01662/FUL
B/07/01663/LBC

Parish: SUDBURY

Location: Stour House, Stour Street

Proposal: Conversion of hostel into 11 no. flats, 5 no. supported flats with ancillary staff and communal areas. Erection of extension to provide communal accommodation (existing single-storey extensions to be demolished). Erection of single-storey element to include the existing covered walkway and to provide additional living accommodation. Erection of three-storey extension to provide additional living accommodation. Removal of part of existing brick wall to provide new entrance gate (demolition of outbuildings).

Applicant: Orwell Housing Association

Case Officer: Fiona Bradley Date for Determination: 11 January 2008
7 December 2007 (LBC)

THE SITE

1. The site is located on the corner of Gregory and Stour Streets. The building is Grade II listed and the site is within a Conservation Area. Fronting Stour Street is the historic part of the building with a large two and three storey extension to the rear. The building is currently used as a homeless persons reception centre.

THE PROPOSAL

2. The application for the conversion of the existing hostel into 11 self-contained flats and 5 supported flats together with staff and communal accommodation. The proposal includes the demolition of existing single storey extension on the Gregory Street frontage of the site and the erection of a single storey extension to provide staff and ancillary accommodation. This extension features a pyramid shaped roof. An existing single storey element will be extended to provide additional living accommodation.
3. The accommodation schedule is set out below:
 - 8 no. 1 bed self-contained flats
 - 3 no. 2 bed self-contained flats
 - 5 no. 1 bed self-contained supported flats
4. The supported flats are proposed in the front part of the building with pedestrian access provided through a new gate, communal courtyard and communal entrance.
5. The general needs flats for homeless people are located in the large two and three storey extension to the rear of the historic part of the building. A small three-storey corner extension, 1.5m deep by 3.2m long, to the rear part of the building is proposed to provide sufficient living accommodation in the flats at the three levels.

6. An existing covered walkway 1.2m deep and 8.4m long will be enclosed at ground floor level to provide additional living accommodation.
7. Access to the site will be via the existing access from Gregory Street. Two sheds to the rear of the site and adjacent to Gregory Street will be demolished to provide bin storage area, additional parking and a communal drying area.
8. The Design and Access Statement submitted with this application makes the following salient points:
 - A major priority of Babergh's Affordable Housing and Homelessness Strategies is the regeneration of the Council's Homelessness Reception Centre at Stour House. Orwell Housing Association was appointed to partner the Council.
 - The Council will have 100% nomination rights in perpetuity.
 - The shared form of hostel accommodation at Stour House is inappropriate to house a wide range of people, with differing needs. The aim is to provide good quality self-contained accommodation designed to meet the specific needs of the homeless clientele that approach the Council.
 - On average 50 families or single people are accommodated at Stour House, on a temporary basis, each year. The proposal will provide fewer units if accommodation at this location with the provision of other forms of accommodation elsewhere in the District.
 - The need identified is from mainly younger people who require the benefit of supported housing. The provision of the five supported flats will deliver a much needed service to this group, promoting their long term integration into the community.
 - The proposed works are designed to respect and retain the features of the listed building.
 - The demolition of the sheds will enable improvements to the access and visibility splays to the site.
 - The need for this scheme has been agreed by full Council and detailed proposals ratified by the Housing Panel and Strategy Committee.

RELEVANT HISTORY

9. 1986 – Planning permission and listed building consent granted for alterations to the building and conversion of cycle store to warden's office (B/86/80142/LBC and B/86/00737/FUL).
10. 1989 – Planning permission and listed building consent granted for the erection of a two and three storey extension to homeless persons reception centre (B/89/00879LBC and B/89/00878/FUL).

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

11. Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development
Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing
Planning Policy Guidance 15: Planning and the Historic Environment

PLANNING POLICIES

12. The following Development Plan policies are applicable to the proposal:
 - HS01 (Towns/Urban Areas)
 - HS27 (Housing Density and Type)
 - HS28 (Infilling and Groups of Dwellings)
 - HS30 (Design)
 - HS32 (Public Open Space – Developer Contributions)
 - CN01 (General Design)
 - CN05 (Listed Buildings)
 - CN08 (Conservation Areas)
 - TP15 (Parking Standards)

This report only includes policy references. For further details please see Page 4.

OBSERVATIONS

13. TC – No objection supports the application.
14. LHA – approves the application and suggests safe and secure cycle storage be provided.
15. EH – this application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance and on the basis of your specialist conservation advice.

REPRESENTATIONS

16. None received.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principle of development

17. The proposed development will provide a total of 16 no. one and two bedroom flats. The town centre location provides a highly sustainable location in terms of access to services and public transport. The proposal provides a mix of one and two bed flats including five supported flats to meet the needs of homeless people. Accordingly, the proposal is consistent with PPS3: Housing which seeks to provide housing in sustainable locations and to provide a wide choice of good quality housing to address the requirements of the local community.

Impact on listed building

18. Central to the consideration of this proposal are the effects of any external alterations on character of the Listed Building and the impacts of any structural alterations on the historic fabric of the building, especially components which contribute to the special interest and understanding of the original building.
19. The design of the external works, including the proposed extension to provide communal area, is of high quality design and materials which will conserve the character and appearance of the listed building. The removal of part of the brick wall to provide for a new entrance gate will also enhance the appearance of the listed building.
20. The internal works required to convert the front part of the building (the historic part) would minimize the impact on the listed building and to retain and conserve all components which form part of the buildings special interest in accordance with PPG15 and policy CN06. Subject to conditions relating to materials and fenestration the proposed development will conserve the character and appearance of the listed building.

Impact on conservation area

21. Within conservation areas PPG15 and Policy CN08 seek to ensure development preserves and enhances the character and appearance of the area. The conservation area in this location is characterized by buildings immediately adjacent to the public highway and between one and three storeys high. The existing brick wall along part of the Gregory Street frontage will screen the bulk of the proposed single storey extension and, together with the existing building, will screen part of the three storey extension. The pyramid shaped roof will be visible above the wall as will part of the three storey extension therefore it is essential to consider the potential impact on the conservation area. The extensions will be finished in high quality materials to ensure that they will be in keeping with the appearance of the existing building. By virtue of the materials, scale and design of the extensions they will preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Highways/Parking

22. The Suffolk County Council Highway Department have stated that the proposal is acceptable. The LHA has queried the lack of provision of safe and secure cycle storage space on the site. Accordingly, a condition can be imposed requiring the provision of cycle storage space on the site. The removal of part of the wall adjacent to the access onto Gregory Road improves the visibility splay onto the footpath for vehicles leaving the site.

Public Open Space

23. Policy HS32 requires the applicant/developer to either provide 10% of the application site as public open space (where agreed in advance with the Local Planning Authority) or financial contributions towards the upgrade/expansion of existing Local Authority maintained areas of public open space away from the site. In this case, it is considered that the provision of 10% of the application site is not a suitable option given the size of the site and the existing development. The applicant's agent has been advised of the contribution to provide a financial contribution towards the off-site provision of new, or upgrade of existing, public open space for the 11 general needs flats. No contribution will be sought for the 5 supported flats in accordance with the Council's SPG.

REASON FOR APPROVAL

Having regard to the pattern of existing development in the area and the relevant provisions of the Development Plan (namely policies HS01, HS27, HS28, HS30, CN01, CN06 and CN08 of the Babergh Local Plan, Alteration No. 2, 2006) the proposed development would not materially harm the character or appearance of the area, nor would it harm the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, it would not result in the loss of any important trees and would be acceptable in terms of traffic safety and convenience.

RECOMMENDATION

- (1) That, the Solicitor to the Council be authorised to secure a planning obligation agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, to ensure:
 - The payment of contributions towards off-site public open space provision.
- (2) That, subject to the completion of the planning obligation in Resolution (1) above being secured, the Chief Planning Control Officer be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:
 - Materials
 - Cycle storage
 - Boundary treatment/means of enclosure
 - Fenestration
- (3) That, in the event of the planning obligation referred to in Resolution (2) above not being secured, the Chief Planning Control Officer be authorised to refuse planning permission for the following reason:
 - Inadequate provision of public open space and play equipment contrary to Policy HS32 and PPG17.

DECISION

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