

Item No 30/06	Classification OPEN	Committee PLANNING COMMITTEE	Date 04. 03.2003
From DEVELOPMENT & BUILDING CONTROL MANAGER		Title of Report DEVELOPMENT CONTROL	
Proposal Demolition behind retained facade on Kings Bench Street and flank wall to provide new office building comprising ground and three upper floors.		Address 38-40 Glasshill Street SE1 Ward Cathedrals	

1. **PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To consider the above application, which is for Committee consideration because of the number of objections received.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 Grant planning permission.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The item was previously reported to the Planning Committee on 13 January 2003 (see previous report), where it was decided to defer consideration of the proposal so that the applicant and the occupier/owner of the nearby residential property at 4 St George's Cottages (the Almhouses) could explore a scheme involving a reduction to or removal of the top floor. The applicant indicates that he has contacted the resident at least seven times in order to arrange a meeting but the resident appears not to have been available. Revisions have been made to address concerns raised at the planning committee.
- 3.2 The proposal has been amended by setting back the second and third floor levels of the building a further 2.2m on the northwest flank elevation. The new building would therefore be sited some 6.2m and 13.8m away from the southeastern curtilage boundary of the adjacent Grade II listed 'Almhouses' cottages at second and third floor level, respectively.

4. **FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION**

4.1 **Main Issues**

As previous report

4.2 **Planning Policy**

Southwark Unitary Development Plan (1995):

As previous report

Draft Deposit Unitary Development Plan, November 2002

As previous report

4.3 **Consultations**

Site Notice: As previous report

Press Notice: As previous report

Consultees: As previously reported

Replies from:

Conservation officer: No objections. Recommends same conditions as in previous draft recommendation.

4.4 Planning Considerations

4.4.1 No responses to neighbour re-consultations made on 03.02. 2003 have been received. Members will be duly informed if any new issues are raised.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 As previous report.

6. LOCAL AGENDA 21 [Sustainable Development] IMPLICATIONS

6.1 As previous report.

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CASE FILE	TP/1447-38	
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PREVIOUS REPORT PRESENTED TO PLANNING COMMITTEE ON 13.01.2002

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider the above application, which is for Committee consideration because of the number of objections received.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Grant planning permission.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The application site comprises two linked groups of two storey buildings with frontages on King's Bench Street and Glasshill Street, situated west of and adjacent to the main railway viaduct to Blackfriars Station. The buildings surround a central courtyard area accessed from both street frontages and are adjoined to the southeast by an industrial works building and to the northwest by a terrace of Grade II listed residential cottages known as the Almhouses. There is a three storey block of residential flats, known as 'Marrow House' directly opposite the site in King's Bench Street. Planning permission was granted in June 2001 for demolition of the adjoining buildings to south east for a four storey office building (20-24 Kings Bench Street). A revised scheme is currently being considered for a 6 storey mixed use building. The surrounding area comprises a mixture of residential and light industrial uses.
- 3.2 Planning permission was granted in May 1976 for use of the site for light industrial purposes and is currently used as offices/studio workshops. The site was previously occupied for residential and light industrial/office purposes. In April 2001 outline planning permission was refused for the erection of a part 2 storey part 3 storey extension over the existing buildings on grounds of excessive bulk, mass, size and position in relation to surrounding buildings including the listed Almhouses. Another application for outline consent to rebuild the ground and first floors and erect a second floor level extension on both frontages was refused in February 2002. It was considered that an outline application was in appropriate as the level of detail provided was not sufficient to assess the impact of the development on the setting of the adjacent listed buildings.
- 3.3 The current proposals involve substantial demolition and rebuilding incorporating part of the existing open courtyard area to provide a new office building comprising ground and three upper floors. The existing facade on the King's Bench Street elevation would be retained or rebuilt and the entrance bricked up and recessed. In addition the flank wall abutting the boundary with the listed Almhouses cottages would be retained as existing and the infill at first floor level finished in brickwork to match the existing wall. The main entrance to the site would be retained on the Glasshill frontage.
- 3.4 The 2nd floor level elevations would be set back some 4m from the flank wall adjacent to the listed buildings and to the same degree along the King's Bench Street frontage. It would comprise a double glazed unit on the King's Bench Street elevation, with timber and translucent glazing panels on the Glasshill Street elevation and on the flank wall facing the listed buildings. The 3rd floor level would be positioned hard against the railway viaduct, set back some 9.4m from the King's Bench Street frontage and 11.6m from the boundary wall to the listed buildings. This floor would be wholly glazed. Access to the floors above would be by way of a central staircase situated within the envelope of the building and adjacent to a covered lightwell over the remaining courtyard area.
- 3.5 The proposed scheme has been revised during consideration to overcome issues of visual appearance within surrounding area and impact on the setting of the listed buildings. As a consequence of on site discussion with planning officers, a fourth floor level has been deleted and the proposed two upper floors set back further from the King's Bench Street frontage and the listed Almhouses, resulting in lightweight and less obtrusive upper floor structures.

4. FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.1 Main Issues

The main issues in this case are the principle of the proposed development; the scale and design of the development and its visual impact on the surrounding area and adjacent listed building; whether the extensions would cause significant loss of sun/daylight, outlook and privacy to adjoining residential occupiers; and traffic implications.

4.2 Planning Policy

Southwark Unitary Development Plan (1995):

(Within Employment Area and Archaeological Priority Zone)

Policy B.2.1 'Employment Areas and Sites': complies - proposal is appropriate within designated employment area

Policy B.2.3 'Class B1 Business Proposals': complies - activity generated by additional office space can be accommodated within area

Policy E.2.2 'Heights of Buildings': complies - fits within mixed character of surrounding area

Policy E.2.3: 'Aesthetic Control': complies - design considered acceptable in terms bulk, height and massing.

Policy E.3.1 'Protection of Amenity': complies - additional floors have been set back and would not be likely to affect the adjacent residential flats in terms of overshadowing & relevant windows obscured to avoid loss of privacy to nearby occupiers.

Policy E.4.6 'Proposals Affecting Listed Buildings': complies - proposal would not detract from setting of adjacent listed buildings

Policy T.1.2 'Location of New Development in Relation to Transport Network': cycle storage provision & development located within controlled parking zone and in close proximity to public transport

Supplementary Planning Guidance1 'Design and Layout of Development': complies

Draft Deposit Unitary Development Plan, November 2002

(Within Bankside and Borough Action Area & Outside Preferred Office Location)

Policy 1.2 'Action Plan Areas': complies - proposal would create further employment opportunities without compromising the quality of life of local residents

Policy 1.5 'Mixed Use Developments': complies - increase in Class B1 floor space

Policy 3.2 'Protection of Amenity': complies

Policy 3.6 'Heritage Conservation': complies

Policy 3.14 'Quality in Design': complies

Policy 3.15 'Urban Design': complies

Policy 5.5 'Density': intensification of use would still be compatible with other existing uses.

Policy 5.6 'Parking': complies

Bankside and Borough Action Area SPG: complies

Preferred Industrial and Office Locations & Mixed Use Developments SPG: complies

Design SPG: approach considered appropriate

Car Parking & Cycling: discourages travel by car

Heritage Conservation SPG: complies

Sustainability SPG: encourages sustainable means of travel.

4.3 Consultations

Site Notice: 15/08/2002

Press Notice: 22/08/2002

Consultees:

1-18 Merrow House [consec], Rushworth Street, 1-18 Ripley House [consec] Rushworth Street, 33-38 [consec] Rushworth St, 1-7 Kings Bench Street, 23-35 Glasshill Street [odd], 1-5 [consec] Almhouses, King Bench Street.

Conservation/Urban Design Officer; Traffic Group

Replies from:

Response to original proposal

20-24 King's Bench Street (Southwark Metals Ltd): Support proposals

20 King's Bench Street (Wholecrown Ltd): Support proposals - design is sympathetic to surrounding area and would not raise any new noise or traffic issues as site is in designated industrial area.

1 Merrow House: Concern about impact on listed building, loss of light, loss of privacy, pollution during construction and parking.

12 Merrow House: Object on grounds of adverse impact on listed buildings

1 St Georges Cottages, Glasshill Street: Proposal is inappropriate given location close to listed buildings. The resulting five storey building would dwarf Almhouses and as such the development would be contrary to Council policy relating to listed buildings. Infill development to provide stairwell adjacent to listed buildings is unacceptable and would block light to adjacent properties. Suggests that windows facing Almhouses should be opaque.

5 St Georges Cottages, Glasshill Street: Whilst not objecting to principle of further office extension, the proposals are inappropriate given location close to the listed buildings. The development is two storeys higher than the original proposal and would dwarf Almhouses. The development is asymmetrical and proposal would destroy all remaining exterior and interior vestiges of the historic site of the Rowland Hill Almhouses.

Conservation Officer/Urban Design Officer: Building appears out of scale with adjacent Almhouses. Advises that a single storey attic with the second attic set back so as not to impact on the setting of the Almhouses, may be acceptable. Current proposal would adversely affect setting of the listed buildings.

Archaeology Officer: Proposal does not raise any archaeology issues. The development is on site likely to have been disturbed during construction of existing buildings.

Response to consultations of 16/09/2002 following amendments

1-7 King's Bench Street & 33-38 Rushworth Street (Oak Green Estates): Support proposal and see them as part of regeneration of the area. The proposed design is considered acceptable and in particular the additional floors fronting Glasshill Street would help to screen properties in King's Bench Street. Suggest that scheme should fund new street lighting, landscaping and measures to improve security such as CCTV. Disruption during construction must be kept to a minimum.

1 Merrow Houses : raise similar objections as in original proposal

St Georges Almhouses residents committee: the proposals have not addressed reasons for refusal of previous outline application relating to impact on listed buildings. Wall adjacent to Almhouses forms part of their listed status and proposed changes to it should be refused. The height of the development is excessive and would dwarf Almhouses and proposed glazing would cause unacceptable light pollution. Windows overlooking the Almhouses would lead to loss of privacy. Increased office occupancy would lead to additional traffic problems. Site should be developed more sensitively in keeping with other nearby redevelopments and with reference to the historic character of the local built environment.

Conservation/Urban Design Officer: Revised drawings address concerns relating to the height, bulk and massing of the proposed development. The massing has been adjusted to reduce impact on listed Almhouses. Whilst still looks large in relation to Almhouses, it sits comfortably within the wider streetscape. A slightly large building would offset the dominant impact of the railway viaduct and is an appropriate response. The proposed contemporary design picks up on the semi-industrial character of many of the buildings in the area. The design approach is simply detailed and robust and the architects have a track record of delivering well detailed architecture. Recommends conditions to ensure a quality development.

Traffic Group: No objection on highway or traffic grounds.

4.4 **Planning Considerations**

Principle of proposed development

- 4.4.1 The application site lies within a designated employment area in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) . The proposal to extend the existing light industrial/office floor space is therefore considered acceptable in principle. Whilst the site lies outside Preferred Industrial and Office Locations and Town Centre as designated in the Draft Deposit UDP, it forms part of the Bankside and The Borough Action Areas and is in an area of mixed use. As such the proposal is consistent with draft policy and guidance relating to mixed use areas, which have a presumption against loss of floor space in Class B use and encourages an increase.

Design, Scale and impact on visual amenity

- 4.4.2 The new building would be no higher than that of the 3 storey Merrow House and Chadwich House and the office building at 1-7 King's Bench Street. It is acknowledged that the adjacent Grade II listed Almhouses buildings immediately to the north are of domestic scale, however it is considered that the scale of the resulting building in terms of its massing and bulk would sit comfortably within the mixed character and scale of buildings in the wider streetscape. The massing of the upper floors has been adjusted to reduce the impact resulting building on the listed Almhouses. A slightly larger building on the site would represent an appropriate transition between the railway viaduct, which currently dominates near and distant views within the area, and the nearby buildings. Compared to the scale of the proposed development at site to the southeast, this proposal would be less obtrusive within the streetscene and only visible at oblique angles with Kings Bench Street.
- 4.4.3 The proposed design is contemporary in nature and picks up on the semi-industrial character of many of the buildings in the area. This is not decorative or small scale like the Almhouses but simply detailed and robust. The upper levels relate successfully with the fenestration and elevational treatment of the lower floors. The resulting lightweight structure continues the form of roof level extensions evident elsewhere in the area. The proposal development would not be likely to harm the setting of the listed Almhouses or the visual amenities of the surrounding area. Whilst the architects have a track record of delivering well detailed and contemporary architecture, conditions are attached to ensure that quality work is carried through to the finished development.

Impact on residential amenity

- 4.4.4 A number of objections concerned loss of light to adjacent flats. The proposal has been revised to address these concerns. The fourth floor level has been omitted, the 3rd floor set some 11.6m from the King's Bench Street frontage and the 2nd floor positioned some 4m from the frontage of the building. As such the development would not be likely to affect the residential amenity of the flats opposite by reason of overshadowing. Given the distance between the proposed development and nearby residential properties and the use of the development for office purposes, the proposal does not raise significant overlooking and privacy concerns. Obscure glazing is proposed to elevations that might otherwise cause overlooking.
- 4.4.5 Other neighbours have raised concern over light pollution from the glazed elements. The building would be used during office hours and any light diffusing from the building during night time would not be likely to detract from the amenities of nearby residents to justify a refusal of planning permission. With regards to dust, noise and other nuisance consequent upon construction works the applicant would be advised of the Council's Code of Construction which is intended to control the level of disruption during construction.

Traffic & Parking issues

- 4.4.6 The absence of any car parking provision is considered acceptable given the location of the site

within a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) and in reasonable proximity to good public transport. Any parking issues arising as a result of additional office floor space would be controllable by other legal rules. Cycle storage has been provided to encourage more sustainable means of travel.

5. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Upper floors would not be accessible to people with mobility difficulties.

6. LOCAL AGENDA 21 [Sustainable Development] IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The proposal would provide additional office space in a location with good public transport accessibility, and would not engender polluting and unsustainable means of travel.

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