

<b>Item No.</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Classification</b> OPEN	<b>Decision Level</b> Planning Committee	<b>Date</b> 27/07/2004
<b>From</b> Interim Development & Building Control Manager		<b>Title of Report</b> DEVELOPMENT CONTROL	
<b>Proposal</b> (03-AP-1573 & 03-AP-1574)  1) Erection of new two storey office building (Class B1) and single storey garage with workshop together with associated hardstanding, parking boundary walls, security hut and landscaping [Full Application 03-AP-1573].  2) Demolition of all existing temporary (portakabins) and permanent buildings [Conservation Area Consent 03-AP-1574].		<b>Address</b>  113 Grove Park, SE5.  <b>Ward</b> South Camberwell	

## **PURPOSE**

- 1 To consider the above applications which are for Planning Committee consideration because of the number of objections received and the strategic importance to the operations of the Metropolitan Police Authority.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2 [a] Grant Planning Permission  
  
[b] Grant Conservation Area Consent.

## **BACKGROUND**

- 3 The application site has an area of 0.47 hectares and is broadly triangular in shape. It is owned by the Metropolitan Police and used by them for telecommunications and technical support operations that are core operational activities.
- 4 The site is located to the north of the rear gardens of 13 large Edwardian semi-detached dwelling houses at 100-112 Grove Park and is bounded to the west by a 3 storey residential building containing flats. It is also in close proximity to the railway line, the embankment of which provides a physical boundary to the north of the site. To the north-east of the site is the eastern end of the housing development at Grovelands. Access to the site is achieved through a private access way, alongside no.112 Grove Park, with a controlled gate fronting Grove Park. Apart from this site, the rest of Grove Park is residential. The site is within the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area.
- 5 Existing accommodation on the site comprises a mix of 18 permanent and

temporary buildings. The main building on the site is a part single, part two storey rendered structure with a pitch roof. This building is approximately 7.2m. high at its highest point and is situated adjacent to the northern garden boundary of 104-112 Grove Park. An approximately 8.5 metre tied radio mast is currently installed on the roof of the building. A building to the north of the main building is of similar construction to the main building, but is single storey. The building at the eastern end of the site is a single storey timber clad prefabricated building with a pitched roof. This building is situated parallel to the northern boundary of the gardens.

- 6 The remaining buildings on the site are temporary structures most of which are in a poor state of repair. In total, there are eight temporary buildings, some of which have been erected on pillars to respond to the sloping topography of the site. The site has a number of mature trees and a belt of trees and shrubs forms a mature boundary between the site and the block of flats to the west. The existing buildings are set at a lower level to the houses in Grove Park, but at a higher level to those in Grovelands.
- 7 An existing radio reception mast and associated building in the north-west corner of the overall site owned by the Metropolitan Police does not form part of the current application site and is to be retained as it stands.
- 8 Car parking is currently located around the existing buildings and along the driveway. In total there are 26 car parking spaces on site. The site is in use 24 hours a day.
- 9 The site has been the subject of previous planning applications. Planning permission was granted on 03/03/1999 for the construction of 2 portable buildings for office and storage purposes and on 11/01/01 for the construction of 3 portable buildings, again for the purpose of additional accommodation. Planning permission was granted 29/08/2002 for installation of a fire escape, 2 external air-conditioner condenser units and double glazing to 3 existing windows. Prior to these applications, the Metropolitan Police were exempt from requiring planning permission from the Council for buildings and works.
- 10 The application proposes the removal of all of the existing temporary and permanent buildings and structures described above. Conservation Area Consent is required for these demolition works. The replacement accommodation comprises a two-storey office building and a single storey garage and ancillary workshop for the fitting of radio equipment to police vehicles, 26 car parking spaces, new boundary wall to the rear of the Grove Park houses and a security hut at the entrance to the site. The landscaped setting of the site will be retained.
- 11 The 2 storey building will be orientated along a north-south axis and will be situated in the middle of the site. This building measures 15.5m by 44.4m. with an overall height of 8.5m. at its southern end [nearest to the rear of the Grove Park houses] rising to 10.6m. at its northern end. the increase being accounted for by the slope of the ground. The garage/workshop will be situated towards the eastern corner of the site. It measures 16.5m by 18.5m. with an overall height of 6.8m. Twenty-two parking spaces will be located between these two buildings with four visitor parking spaces located to the west of the office

building. The new buildings and parking area will largely be in the position of the existing main built area of the site. The access road will be extended along the rear boundary of the houses in Grove Park and a new 2.7m. high boundary wall will be built here. As a security measure three strands of razor wire will be placed on the applicant's side of the wall but below the top of the wall

- 12 The new office building will be rectangular with a barrel-vaulted roof and is of a contemporary design. The facing materials to be used are silver coated aluminium faced composite panelling with profiled metal roof cladding. Windows will be in the east and west elevations. All associated plant will be contained within the building envelope. The garage/workshop will be faced with dark red bricks with a composite metal roof.
- 13 The proposed 2.7m high boundary wall will be of brick to create a solid boundary with the rear gardens of the Grove Park houses. The security hut will be a dark green glass reinforced plastic structure measuring 3.5m. x 3.5m.. The hut will be partially hidden from view from Grove Park by the existing electricity sub-station that is retained.
- 14 The proposal does not require the felling or lopping of any existing trees on site and additional planting will also be carried out.

## **FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Main Issues**

- 15 The main issues in this case are the design of the proposed buildings and their effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and surrounding properties, the effect on the amenities of nearby residents and traffic generation.

### **Planning Policy**

- 16 Southwark Unitary Development Plan 1995 [UDP]:

Policy E.2.3 - Aesthetic Control: complies, the design of the proposed new building is acceptable.

Policy E.3.1 - Protection of Amenity: complies, the proposal will not affect the amenity of adjoining or surrounding residents.

Policy E.4.2 & E.4.3 - Proposal Affecting Conservation Areas: complies, the proposal will have a positive impact in this conservation area.

- 17 The Southwark Plan [Revised Deposit Unitary Development Plan] March 2004:

Policy 3.11 - Quality in Design: complies.

Policy 3.14 - Urban Design: complies.

Policy 3.2 - Protection of Amenity: complies.

Policy 3.16 - Development in Conservation Areas: complies, the replacement development will preserve and enhance the conservation area.

SPG. No. 18 - Heritage Conservation: complies.

- 18 PPG. 15 - Planning and Historic Environment: complies, commercial occupation within conservation area can contribute to the prosperity of the

local economy and design is not considered to harm character or appearance of the conservation area. Existing buildings do not positively enhance the character and appearance of the conservation area.

## **Consultations**

19 Site Notice: 09/10/2003 Press Notice: 14/10/2003

### Consultees:

The Camberwell Society; 95 - 112 (consec) Grove Park, SE5; Flats 1 - 21 (consec), Adelaide House, 115 Grove Park, SE5.

Re-consultation has been carried in respect of amendments received to the scheme. Those re-consulted include the above plus nos. 32-59 [consec] Grovelands and 59, 60, 61 and 62 Grove Park.

### **Replies from:**

20 Conservation & Design Team: Revised drawings acceptable.

Arboriculturalist: No comments.

Traffic Group & (Waste Management): No formal objections to this proposal. All operations associated with the workshops and garages must be contained within the building so as to not encroach on turning areas within the site. Refuse and cycle storage conditions are required on any permission issued.

The Camberwell Society: Objects on a number of grounds, including the following:

(1) Extreme over-development of the site with a potentially enormous office population;(2) roadway directly behind Grove Park houses numbers 100 - 112 will carry HGV as well as car traffic;(3) inappropriate development for a residential area; (4) buildings are too big with an unsuitable industrial appearance; (5) no information about potential heavy traffic nuisance and (6) no information regarding existing buildings on the site.

61 Grove Park: Objects on grounds of number of parking/servicing of heavy vehicles, expansion of site and use of the site not explained.

62 Grove Park: As above.

95 Grove Park: Think demolition is a good idea, although against increase of potential traffic (especially HGV) and potential noise.

97 Grove Park: Objects on grounds of demolition of single storey building and its replacement with a two storey building. It will be oppressive and unsightly, blocking light and the view. Increased traffic, scale of development and heavier use of the site is not appropriate.

99 Grove Park: Objects on grounds of noise, pollution and damaging the residential area.

102 Grove Park: Objection lodged on grounds of proposed two storey building being an eyesore, visually intrusive and out of character with the Victorian architecture of this immediate area. The reflection of light from the south facing wall of the offices towards the houses to the north will be disturbing to those residents. The density of the development is far too great, and out of keeping with the locality. Objects to the proposed wall, possible subsidence and removal of mature trees.

106 Grove Park: Objects to the proposed building as it seems enormous and will block beautiful view over London. Concerned that the road will be used by HGV to reach their proposed garage and workshop.

107 Grove Park: Objects on grounds of size and scale (over development), proposed service road running to the rear of residents gardens will cause noise and air pollution, especially as it runs to a 'workshop' with potential HGV traffic as well as car park. The car park will be for up to 22 cars - far more than the site currently accommodates. Potential increase in traffic, noise, design and materials proposed and height of proposed wall.

109 Grove Park: Concerned that two storey proposal will obscure view, garages and workshops will mean increased noise and traffic, heavy goods vehicles and height of wall.

110 & 107 Grove Park: Great objections on grounds of proposed large office block, increased parking facilities implies potentially large population, increased traffic and pollution.

111 Grove Park: Objects to height of proposed wall, two storey building will dominate the site, particularly worried of large garage and workshop and issues of noise, pollution, aesthetics and disruption of neighbourhood.

112 Grove Park: Objection on grounds of invasion of privacy and security lighting proposed.

Flat 2, Adelaide House, 115 Grove Park: concern regarding access may be needed through property and effect on families and children in Block at Adelaide House.

40 Grovelands Close: Upset that neighbours in this area (Grovelands Close) have not been considered close enough to warrant being contacted. Unhappy that the proposal is not in keeping with the conservation area.

5 Grove Park: Comments received (25/11/2003) but no records found.

## **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

### The Principle of the Development (Use)

- 21 The site has been used by the Metropolitan Police since 1975 and has been used for operational purposes relating to telecommunications and technical support, since that time. It currently employs 30 persons and this will remain. The redevelopment of the site to continue an established and lawful use is therefore considered acceptable in principle.

### Design and Effect on Conservation Area

- 22 Although there have been numerous objections to this proposal on the grounds of design and impact on the area, it is not considered that the design of the new buildings will have an adverse effect on the setting of both the site itself or its immediate neighbours. The loss of the existing permanent and temporary buildings is considered acceptable as they contribute little to the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area. The general form of the new build is accepted given the location of the site and its configuration running north to south away from the existing houses on Grove Park. The design of the new buildings and materials to be used is simple and low key in appearance and is considered acceptable.
- 23 The overall scale of the proposed new buildings is also considered acceptable within this setting. The buildings are sited so as to enable existing trees and shrubs to be retained. The proposal will have no effect on the streetscene because, apart from the security hut, it will not be visible from the street. It is therefore considered that overall the proposed development will not harm the

character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

#### Effect on the Amenity of Nearby Residents

- 24 It is considered that the proposed development will not have a significant adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residents. The applicant has stated that the activity carried out in the main building is akin to that carried out in offices. The workshop building is to be used for the fitting of radio communication equipment to police vehicles. This is not in itself a noisy activity and is one that will be carried out within the building and not in the open. The activity on site will therefore be very much the same as at present and there is no record of complaints being received about the current use of the site.
- 25 The proposed office building has been orientated with windows in only the east and west elevations to ensure that it does not overlook any of the Grove Park properties or their gardens. The privacy of residents of the flats in Adelaide House is maintained by the screening provided by existing trees on the site boundary. Sealed window units will also minimise any potential noise nuisance. It is not considered that the proposed buildings will result in a loss of daylight or sunlight to adjoining properties or that they will result in overlooking and a loss of privacy.
- 26 The existing main building varies in height from between 5.5m and 7.2m high on the boundary with the gardens of houses in Grove Park. The demolition of this building will open up more views into the site and increase the visibility of the developed site for residents in houses that overlook the site. As the boundary wall will be situated at the northern end of the gardens of these properties, it is not considered that it will cause overshadowing nor will the razor wire be visible to residents. The wall is a necessity for security relating to the operational use of the site and will ensure that a solid boundary is created between the residential properties and the operational site. It is considered that this wall will obscure lower views of the site and help to reduce any noise impact and minimise the impact of lighting, including car headlights, when viewed from properties in Grove Park. It is felt that as well as the boundary wall additional tree planting should take place along this boundary in order to provide a softer appearance to this boundary of the site.
- 27 The development will however mean that there will be a longer vehicular access into the site to reach the parking area and the garage/workshop and this will be along the boundary to the rear of the Grove Park houses. The existing building does provide a shield for these houses to any possible noise disturbance from vehicular activity on the site. The occupiers of these houses could therefore experience some additional traffic noise but it is not considered that the level of activity on the site is such that this alone would justify refusing planning permission.

#### Traffic Generation

- 28 Concerns raised that the development will result in an increase in vehicular traffic, particularly HGVs, are not considered to be well founded on the evidence of the use put forward by the applicants as the use will remain very much as at present.

### Conclusion

- 29 Overall, this proposal has sought to retain an existing use, remove all existing buildings, many of them of temporary construction, on site and their replacement with two well designed buildings. It has also incorporated a number of associated works, which by nature of the operational use established is essential for security measures. These works are not considered to harm the character or appearance of the Camberwell Grove Conservation Area or to result in significant harm to nearby residents. It is therefore considered, on balance, that it would be unreasonable to withhold the planning permission and conservation area consent sought.

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 30 The main building is accessible to those with mobility difficulties with lift access to the first floor and provision of disabled toilet facilities.

### **LOCAL AGENDA 21 [Sustainable Development] IMPLICATIONS**

- 31 The demolition of the existing building, including the removal of the portakabins and the replacement (new building) will enhance and preserve this conservation area. The continued use as B1 offices will encourage employment within the area and support other small businesses/employment via any "trickle down" effect associated with a major employer (Metropolitan Police).

LEAD OFFICER	James F Sherry	Interim Development and Building Control Manager
REPORT AUTHOR	David Williams	[tel. 020 7525 5446]
CASE FILE	TP/2154-113	
Papers held at:	Council Offices, Chiltern, Portland Street SE17 2ES	
	[tel. 020 7525 5402]	