

Item No.	Classification	Decision Level	Date
7	OPEN	PLANNING COMMITTEE	27.07.04
From INTERIM DEVELOPMENT & BUILDING CONTROL MANAGER		Title of Report DEVELOPMENT CONTROL	
Proposal (04-AP-0535) Residential redevelopment of existing warehouses & light industrial buildings to provide a total of 68 dwellings by the erection of part 5, part 6 and part 7 storey plus lower ground floor building comprising 64 flats [30 one-bedroom, 33 two-bedroom and 1 three-bedroom] fronting Townsend St. and Congreve St. with 15 car parking spaces at lower ground floor level with vehicular access from Preston Close and a 3 storey terrace of 4 three-bedroom dwelling houses fronting Townsend St. (All dwellings for rent or shared ownership.)		Address 1-3 Congreve Street & 6-11 Townsend Street (land at corner of Congreve St and Townsend St) SE17 Ward East Walworth	

PURPOSE

1. To consider the above major application which is before the Committee due to the number of objections received.

RECOMMENDATION

2. Grant planning permission subject to a legal agreement to secure affordable housing and to change the existing Traffic Order to prevent residents from applying for an on-street parking permit.

FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION

Main Issues

12. The main issues in this case are the principle of development, the scale and design of the proposed development, parking and amenity.

Planning Policy

13. The site is within a Regeneration Area and an Archaeological Priority Zone

Southwark Unitary Development Plan 1995 [UDP]:

R.2.1 'Regeneration Areas' - Complies. It is considered that proposal will improve the environment and provide 100% affordable housing and make better use of the site.

E.1.1 'Safety and Security in the Environment' - Complies

E.2.1 'Layout and Building Design' - Complies

E.2.3 'Aesthetic Control' - Complies.

E.2.4 'Access and Facilities for People with Disabilities' - Complies.
E.2.5 'External Space' - Complies. Proposal includes a mix of quality materials and finishes, landscaping.
E.3.1 'Protection of Amenity' - Complies with BRE guidance.
E.3.4 'Upgrading the Environment' - Complies
E.5.1 'Sites of Archaeological Importance' - Complies
H.1.3 'New Housing' - Complies
H.1.4 'Affordable Housing' - The development is for 100% affordable housing.
H.1.5 'Dwelling Mix of New Housing' - Complies
H.1.6 'Sites Suitable for Houses with Gardens' - Four houses have private gardens.
H.1.7 'Density of New Residential Development' - At 798 hrh exceeds UDP standards
H.1.8 'Standards for New Housing' - Complies
H.1.10 'Provision of Housing to Mobility and Wheelchair Standards' - Two homes are to be developed to wheelchair standards. All homes will be developed to Lifetime homes standards.
B.1.2 'Protection Outside Employment Areas and Sites' - The development will result in the loss of employment space.
T.1.2 'Location of Development in Relation to the Transport Network' - Complies, as within walking distance of bus and overland train routes.
T.6.3 'Parking Space in New Developments' - Complies

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

'Design and Layout of Developments' - Complies
'Standards, Controls and Guidelines for Residential Developments' - Complies apart from a 0.5sqm deficit to nine flats and garden area to houses is less than 50sqm.

The site is within the Urban Zone

The Southwark Plan [Revised Deposit Unitary Development Plan] March 2004

3.2 'Protection of Amenity' - Complies, as the proposal will not result in a material loss of amenity to residents and occupiers (present and future) of the surrounding area or the (present or future) occupiers of the proposed dwelling.
3.10 'Efficient Use of Land' - Complies, especially in relation to the local context.
3.11 'Quality in Design' - Complies, as the development achieves a high quality of architectural and urban design, specific to the site's shape, size, location and development opportunity whilst preserving the character of the local environment.
3.12 'Design Statements' - Complies
3.13 'Urban Design' - Complies, as the contemporary design of the development positively reflects the constraints of the site.
3.19 'Archaeology' - Complies with conditions
4.1 'Density of New Development' - Provides 929 habitable rooms per hectare, exceeding the typical density range for the Urban Zone. This is considered acceptable due to the character of the surrounding area and the overall design of the development.
5.6 'Parking' - Does not comply. However, due to the accessibility of public transport in the area, and the prevention of residents applying for a street parking permit, this is considered acceptable.

Consultations

14. Site Notice: 21.04.04

Press Notice:

Consultees:

Design and Conservation, Traffic Group, Crime Prevention and Design Advisor, Archeology, Environmental Health and Housing.

1-20 Preston House, Preston Close SE1 4NZ, 10-21 Comus Place SE17 1TQ, 1-70 Comus House, Congreve Street SE17 1TG, 1-30 Thornton House SE17 1HY, 82-86 Old Kent Road SE1, 88-94 Old Kent Road SE1, Works to the rear of No. 5 Congreve Street SE1, 5 Congreve Street SE17 1TJ, 5A Congreve Street SE17 1TJ, 1-50 Mardyke House, Crosslet Street SE17 1HH Schoolkeeper's House, Townsend Street SE17 1HJ, Townsend Primary School, Townsend Street SE17 1HJ, 1-30 Charlotte Court, Old Kent Road SE1 4NU

Replies from:

Design and Conservation - No objection in design terms. The proposed scheme is largely as discussed at pre-application meetings. There is a considerable increase from the current built form on the site but it is accepted that the general scale of buildings in the area is larger and in any case, it is an area under transition. Need to tightly condition materials, window and balcony and structural framework details.

Traffic Group - No objection to car-free development. Site is within a controlled parking zone, therefore S106 to secure funding to prevent residents from applying for a parking permit. Cycle provision acceptable. A wall is shown to the entrance of the underground car park. A condition to change a part of this to railings should be attached to any decision. Alterations to Preston Close form part of the S106 Agreement on application No. 03-AP-1952.

Crime Prevention and Design Advisor - Concern over ease of access to building through the refuse meter cupboards. An amended plan has been received overcoming the Crime Prevention and Design Advisor's concerns.

Archeology - Proposal includes a semi-basement car park where foundations will have an adverse impact on any surviving archaeological deposits. Recommend conditions, so that any necessary archaeological investigations can take place and important remains can be protected if necessary.

Environmental Health - Site is within the Council's Air Quality Management Area. The proposals will not significantly add to pollution burden. Requires a condition relating to contaminated land and basement car park ventilation outlets.

Housing - Housing fully supports this affordable housing development, which will receive Social Housing Grant from the Housing Corporation. It will provide a mixture of rental and Shared Ownership accommodation.

Planning Policy - The proposal will have significant benefits in terms of providing a significant amount of additional dwellings in this area.

The issue around the amenity space that is proposed is less than required in the current No. 5 Standards, controls and Guidelines for residential Developments SPG or in the draft Residential Design Standards SPG. However, it is considered that the provision proposed could be appropriate for the development if every flat, as stated in the application, has a balcony or garden together with access to a communal courtyard. This is acceptable

given the number of publicly accessible parks in the area including Surrey Square Park, Salisbury Row Park and Nursery Row Park plus Burgess Park in the near vicinity.

Thames Water - Comments on sewerage and water measures, which can be dealt with by an informative.

28 Thornton House - Object. Townsend Street is experiencing a strong development pressure. There have been no public meetings, nor an opportunity to meet with the applicant. Object to the increase in housing density and the impact of car parking. Impact assessment should be required before application is considered.

34 Mardyke House - Support. 110% support the project is long overdue. Supports a plan that will enhance the beauty, safety and future prospect of the area.

35 Mardyke House - Objection. Increase volume of traffic and also the safety of school children, noise, increase in population and obstruction of views.

12 Preston Close - Objection. Not appropriate for development to be accessed from Preston Close. Will increase noise.

20 Charlotte Court - Comments relating to access, bus services and CCTV surveillance.

2 Charlotte Court - Objection. Increase in noise, nature and scale of development. Would lead to parking problems.

18 Preston Close - Objection. Will leave residents in a circle of traffic and additional noise.

7 Mardyke House - Objection. Additional homes would result in overcrowding in an already overcrowded part of the borough.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

15. The application site lies within a designated regeneration area but not an employment area as defined in the adopted UDP and within the Urban Zone as identified in the Soutwark Plan [Revised Deposit Unitary Development Plan] March 2004.
16. The applicant advises that the premises are vacant as they are piecemeal and proved to be inefficient. The owner has moved to bespoke premises that are suited to more efficient production. Most of the product is exported and there have been increasing difficulties of access for large lorries and containers.
17. The site is outside a preferred industrial location and is currently surrounded by housing and a school. The scheme does not front the Old Kent Road and it would be beneficial to reduce traffic movement in this area due to the surrounding uses, particularly the school. The scheme will be providing 68 residential units in a predominantly residential area all of which will be affordable. This will be beneficial for the borough in helping to meet housing need as identified in the housing capacity study.
18. Of the 68 units to be provided, 2 homes are to be developed to wheelchair standards and all will be developed to Lifetime homes standards. Four of the units have small private gardens, although the amount of garden space provision is less than the 50sqm advised under the Council's Supplementary Guidance. This is due to the constraints of the site and the need to maximise the use of land in this area in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note

3. The Housing Department have confirmed their support for the proposals. The size and standard of the new units are all considered to be acceptable. Provision for refuse storage is also considered to be acceptable.

Density

19. The proposal has a relatively high density level of 798 habitable rooms per hectare (hrh) when calculated using the density calculation in the adopted Unitary Development Plan, rising to 929 hrh when calculated using the formula in the The Southwark Plan [Revised Deposit Unitary Development Plan] March 2004. Both calculations exceed standards in the adopted UDP and exceeds standards in emerging Southwark Plan Urban Zone (in which the site is located) of 300-700 hrh.
20. However, Council policy in general encourages high density schemes in areas of high public transport accessibility such as this, especially when the design of a development is capable of providing additional accommodation. Each of the houses has a private garden; all of the flats have their own balcony or terrace, in addition to the use of the communal landscaped amenity space at first floor level. In addition to the private and communal amenity space provided on the site itself, Surrey Square Park, Salisbury Row Park and Nursery Row Park plus Burgess Park are in the near vicinity.

Parking

21. Vehicular access to the site is via Preston Close to an underground parking area providing 15 car parking spaces (two of these being mobility impaired spaces). Secure cycle storage for 36 bicycles is also provided at basement and ground floor level. Although the Adopted Unitary Plan seeks one space per unit, the emerging policy required in this location is a maximum of 1 space per unit. The current proposal makes provision for 15 spaces.
22. The applicant has submitted a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) report arguing that given the changes in Council and National policy to discourage car use, the proximity to public transport and the general acceptance that car ownership in social housing schemes is lower than in private development, this level of parking should be accepted. Further, to mitigate the potential for traffic congestion in the area, the applicant has agreed to a Section 106 agreement to amend the Traffic Order to prevent any of the residents from applying for a parking permit.
23. The site is accessible to public transport, being within a short distance from a number of frequent bus services. Government policy encourages the creation of more intensively developed new housing in areas of good public transport. This ensures the most efficient use of land with greater accessibility by a variety of means of transport and should reduce the requirements for travel by private car and hence the need for off-street parking.

Design

24. The application site is not located within a conservation area or in the vicinity of any listed buildings. The area is characterised by the 4 storey Thornton House,

4.5 double height storey Townsend School, 6 and 5 storey Comus House and 14 storey Mardyke House and 3 storey dwellings in Preston Close.

25. The scheme has been designed to respect the amenity of adjacent residential properties and to enhance the character and local environment by reflecting the changing heights of surrounding buildings in its overall design. The three storey houses are in keeping with the scale of the adjacent residential properties in Preston Close and has been articulated to sit in line with the existing terrace. The increase in height, from three storeys to seven, rises gradually as the development turns the corner from Townsend Street into Congreve Street resulting is a gentle increase in its scale.
26. The detailed design is also considered acceptable. The facing elevation to Townsend Street represents a mix of white render, red cedar panelling and smooth red facing brick to the houses and the five storey element. The facade to the seven storey element is predominately finished in white render with dark grey metal cladding to the fifth and sixth floors and are utilized in the building as it wraps around into Congreve Street. Brick and render are reintroduced into the five storey element fronting Congreve Street.
27. Despite the comments from local residents that the building is too high and is not in keeping with the area, it is considered that the proposed building is of an acceptable height and represents an acceptable modern design, which satisfactorily fits into this architecturally diverse area.
28. Concern has been raised regarding the impact this proposal will have on the potential redevelopment of adjacent site. Although there has been no design brief for the surrounding area, it is considered that the current application will not prevent the successful redevelopment of the adjacent site should this ever become available.

Amenity

29. By stepping back the elevations at various points, the proposal minimises the potential of overlooking and reduces the impact on the sunlight, daylight and enclosure of adjacent neighbouring buildings. The dwellings in Preston Close are considered to be sufficiently set back not to be affected by the proposal. This is substantiated by an independent daylight/sunlight report.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

30. A lift provides accessibility to all floors. The provision of affordable housing improves housing availability and choice in the area.

LOCAL AGENDA 21 [Sustainable Development] IMPLICATIONS

31. The applicant has submitted a PTAL report demonstrating that the proposals represents an efficient use of brownfield land closely linked to the public transport network resulting in less reliance on private car use. All of the units have been developed to Lifetime homes standards to ensure they are flexible and meet the future needs of residents. Two homes are to be developed to wheelchair standards.

32. The proposal has provided two areas of outside amenity space creating a break in the built form.

LEAD OFFICER	James F Sherry	Interim Development and Building Control Manager [tel. 020 7525 5457]
REPORT AUTHOR	Carolyn Southall	
CASE FILE	TP/2168-70	
Papers held at:	Council Offices, Chiltern, Portland Street SE17 2ES [tel. 020 7525 5402]	