

Item No.	Classification	Decision Level	Date
4	OPEN	Planning Committee	7/12/2004
From Interim Development & Building Control Manager		Title of Report DEVELOPMENT CONTROL	
Proposal (03-CO-0133) Demolition of existing building and erection of a new part single and part two-storey building comprising of a nursery and community facility.		Address Site of Albrighton Centre, 37 Albrighton Road SE22 Ward South Camberwell	

PURPOSE

1. To consider the above application which is for planning committee consideration due to the application being council own and objections having been received.

RECOMMENDATION

2. Grant planning permission

BACKGROUND

3. The application site comprises a 1980's single storey community centre building situated on the Dog Kennel Hill East Dulwich Estate. It is located on Albrighton Road adjacent to Whaddon, Melbreak, Ledbury, Wheatland, Whitney, and Wilton Houses. The site separates the eastern and western branches of Albrighton Road, which are currently linked by a pedestrian walkway. The existing Albrighton Centre appears to be in a poor state of repair, and according to a supporting document provided by the applicants, the accommodation that it provides is too inflexible for current requirements, and is therefore under-used.
4. The centre is not located in a Conservation Area, nor is it a listed building.
5. A planning application (02-CO-2125) was previously submitted for the refurbishment of the existing Albrighton Centre, to provide accommodation for the Estate Dulwich Estate Community Nursery and a Health Clinic, both currently located at the base of Whaddon House. This application was refused at a meeting of the Camberwell Community Council in July 2003 for two reasons:
 - the development would result in the loss of a community facility for the area
 - the development would result in additional traffic generation and car parking and consequently be detrimental to the amenities of local residents.
6. The current application seeks permission to demolish the existing Albrighton Centre, and reconstruct a part single, part two storey building for use as a combined nursery and community facility. The building will have a footprint similar to that of existing building, whilst also extending further to the east. The surrounding land is characterised by a slope that runs approximately from north to south, and as such approximately half the height of the rear elevation will be nestled within the rear slope. At the front of the centre, there will be a large external play area, encircled by fencing

approximately 3m high. The centre will benefit from 2 car parking spaces adjacent to the southern entrance, which are envisaged to be used by nursery staff that live off the East Dulwich Estate.

7. The proposed community nursery is to occupy the western half the facility, and is intended to accommodate 60 places for children with an age range of 0 to 5 years. It includes separate areas for sleeping, nappy changing, kitchens, WC's, and a staff room. The ground floor is intended to be used by 0-2, and 2-3 year old's, whilst the first floor is intended for 3-5 year old's.
8. The community facility is designed in such a way to allow for a number of different uses. There are two main spaces: firstly on the ground floor, a large hall (72.6m²) with associated kitchen facilities. The use of removable partition walls adjacent to the central hallway can increase the overall space of this hall to 101 sq m, accommodating a maximum of 70 persons. On the first floor, two additional meeting rooms are proposed, which also have access to the first floor balcony area.
9. The proposal is part of an estate-wide regeneration masterplan that includes refurbishment of existing blocks, demolition and construction of new private and social housing and environmental improvements, in accordance with the decision of Council's Strategic Committee in January 2000. A planning application is currently being considered for Regeneration masterplan involving demolition of Badminton & Branham Houses and erection of 5/6 storey block of 67 residential units with commercial units on ground floor; demolition of Wilton and Walcot Houses and erection of 8/9 storey block with parking at lower ground floor and 133 residential units; demolition of 1-11 Pytchley Rd and erection of 3/4 story block of 18 flats; erection of 3/4 storey block (Gatebeck Site) to provide 19 units; erection of 3/4 storey building (Southdown Site) to provide 36 units.

FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION

Main Issues

10. The main issues in this case are the principle of the proposed development; the design scale and massing of the new building; impact on residential amenity; and parking.

Planning Policy

11. Southwark Unitary Development Plan 1995 [UDP]:
 - E.2.3 Aesthetic Control - complies
 - E.2.4 Access and Facilities for People with Disabilities - complies
 - E.3.1 Protection of Amenity - complies
 - C.1.2 Day Nurseries and Crèches in Residential Areas - compliant to the conditions regarding sound insulation and Green Travel Plan,
 - C.1.3 Retention of Community Facilities and Public Buildings - complies
 - C.2.2 Health, Social and Educational Facilities - complies
 - C.7.1 Accessibility - complies
 - C.7.2 Safety and Security - complies
 - T.1.3 Design of Development and Conformity with Council Standards and Controls - complies
 - Supplementary Planning Guidance - complies with guidance

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

 - 2.1 Enhancement of Community Facilities - complies
 - 2.2 Provision of new Community Facilities - compliant to the conditions regarding Green Travel Plan

3.2 Protection of Amenity - complies
3.11 Quality in Design - complies
3.13 Urban Design - complies
3.14 Designing Out Crime - complies
5.2 Transport Impacts - complies
Clean and Green SPG - complies

12. Consultations

Site Notice: 2/6/04 Press Notice: NA

Consultees:

1-22 Tidworth House, 1-35 Walcot House, 1-58 Wheatland House, 1-24 Whitney House, 1-39 Wilton House, 1-35 Whaddon House, 1-54 Melbreak House, 1-58 Lebbury House, 1-38 Petworth House, 1-38 Riseholme House, 1-26 Stagshaw House, 1-39 Gelding House, 1-24 Fernie House, 1-22 Ivybridge House, 1-31 Inwood House, 1-24 Eridge House, 1-16 Cowdary House, 1-43 Gatcombe House, 1-24 Goldwell House, 1-86 Felbridge House, 1-16 Bramham House, 1-11 Badminton House, EAST DULWICH ESTATE, DOG KENNEL HILL, SE22
Crime Prevention and Design Advisor (Steve Mumford)
Pollution Control, Noise
Traffic Group
Conservation Officer
Early Years and After School and Play Services

13. Replies from:

Crime Prevention and Design Advisor (Steve Mumford): Care is needed to specify high security materials for doors/windows, given the history of the current building. Would also be grateful if my details were included in an informative. Requests that an informative is added included that provides details of Crime Prevention and Design Advisor.

Conservation and Design Officer (Chiltern): No objections in principle. No conservation issues are raised. The design concept seems acceptable: the rear elevation (elevation C) is rather bland and poorly articulated. Also, the front elevation uses a large amount of materials, which may come across as overly complicated. If the range of materials could be simplified, the application would be stronger. These points are minor, and the general principal is acceptable.

Pollution Control, Noise: C45 (soil survey) planning condition required. In the design report it states that the roof terrace area can be used for older children playing area during nursery area operating hours. In the past Environmental Health have had many complaints of noise nuisance from the use as a community hall. Therefore in the view of the location of the proposed development to adjacent properties, noise mitigations needs to be introduced into the design.

Traffic Group, Chiltern: No objections to the proposal. The cycle storage must be provided as shown on the revised plan [P08 Rev B] and refuse storage conditions must be included on any permission. A Green travel plan for the nursery will be required, the details of which are outlined in the recommendation.

Southwark Education: complies with national standards for daycare enforced by OFSTED.

14. External

10 Petworth House (Mrs Cecilia Greenwell): Supports application

26 Stagshaw House (Mr Stanley Lyons): Objects - feels the proposal represents the

Council's desperation to demolish a structurally sound property. 17 Whaddon House (R. Hernandez): No comment

15 Wheatland House (D. Knight): Supports application

20 Whitney House (Miss Ngoie Kaodi): No comment

14 Wilton House, Albrighton Road (Mr Steve Hedger): Objects – considers that the proposal represents a reduction in community facility, and the consequent reduction in youth provision will lead to crime, disorder, and anti-social behaviour. The Centre will also create additional traffic problems in the area.

The East Dulwich Society (Mr Kenneth Hoole): Objects – considers that an inadequate consultation process has been undertaken.

East Dulwich Estate Tenants & Residents Association (Mr Steve Hedger): Objects – considers that the proposal will provide a sub-standard community facility. Also considers that inadequate background research has been undertaken with regard to the design and makeup of the nursery. Further considers that the development will create additional traffic pressures in the area.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Land use considerations

15. The previously refused scheme on this site, proposed to completely replace the community facilities provided by the site with a mixed use nursery/health clinic. The Camberwell Community Council considered this unacceptable, and did not consider that the development would provide a community facility at least equally as beneficial as the existing Albrighton Centre. In response, the current application retains a significant area available for use as a community facility, both on the ground and first floors, in addition to the nursery.
16. The existing Albrighton Centre has a floor area of approximately 391m², compared to the proposed floor area of 671m² inside the new facility. The proposed floorarea is generally split 50/50 between the two uses. As described in the background information submitted by the applicant, the building has been designed in such a way that the interior 'curtain' walls can be retracted to enlarge the area available for community use. It is considered that the resulting development would produce an adequately sized, and user-friendly community facility, which will represent an improvement from the existing Albrighton Centre.

Aesthetic Control

17. It is noted and agreed with the comments of the Conservation and Design Officer, that the proposed replacement building is of an acceptable aesthetic quality, despite a slightly over complicated design. The current Albrighton Centre displays very little architectural merit, and as such its demolition its loss is not a significant issue.
18. The area surrounding the application site is characterised by large 5-6 storey council estate blocks, and as such the creation of a part one, part two storey building is not out of character in terms of form and massing. It is also noted, as described in the background to this report, that the rear elevation will be obscured below ground level. As such, the effective height of the building as viewed from the north will appear less imposing. Overall, it is considered that the new building would represent a new landmark, punctuating the monolithic appearance of the surrounding blocks of flats.

Secure by Design

19. As described in the design statement submitted by the applicants, the primary starting point for the development is safety and security. This has been achieved by various

external and internal arrangements. The council's Crime Prevention and Design Advisor (Steve Mumford), raised no objection to the design, and the arrangements are considered acceptable.

Impact on residential amenity

20. The proposed external play area in the new development would transfer and intensify child play activity at ground and first floor closer to some of the flats in Ledbury and Melbreak Houses. This may lead to some loss of residential amenity during the time when the nursery is open. It is considered however that any such noise disturbance would not be so significant enough to justify a refusal of planning permission on that ground alone.
21. It is noted that the Environmental Health section seek the inclusion of a condition limiting the use of the roof terrace to during nursery opening hours, and no time afterwards, in order to protect the amenities of the adjacent residents from noise nuisance. It is considered however that this condition is too restrictive, and would undermine the quality of the community facility provided by the development. A similar condition limiting the use of the external areas until 10pm is considered more appropriate. Furthermore, it is considered that a condition be included that requires the submission of sound insulation measures, prior to the commencement of work.
22. The new community nursery would meet Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) "Guidance to the National Standards" for play space (m²) per child, and would increase three fold the number places for children, and would provide a good work environment for the staff. The proposal would provide an independent and purpose design building, which would overcome existing conflicts between residential uses on the upper floors of Whaddon House and the nursery and health clinic on the ground floor. On balance the proposed development would be less disruptive to residential amenity in this new location.

Parking provision

23. It is noted that at the current time, 70% of the children who currently use the nursery in Whaddon House are available to residents of the Estate or adjacent surrounding roads, with the remaining 30% are referred places from Social Services. It is therefore likely that most carer's' will walk to the nursery, minimising the creation of additional traffic in Albrighton Road and the surrounding streets. Furthermore, the Traffic Group raises no objection to the proposed development; however advise that any approval should be the subject of a Green Travel Plan. If such plan is implemented it would ensure that staff are encouraged to travel by means other than car. A condition requiring this provision is recommended.

Overall

24. It is considered that the proposed demolition of the existing Albrighton Centre, and construction of an enlarged replacement building, combining a community facility and nursery facilities is acceptable. The form and scale of the building will remain within the character of the surrounding properties, and the different uses should harm not the amenities enjoyed by the residents of the surrounding area, and the East Dulwich Estate as a whole. It is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the conditions as attached.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

25. The centre is wholly accessible to people with mobility difficulties; it would be likely to improve the life chances for both nursery age children and their parents/carer's.

LOCAL AGENDA 21 [Sustainable Development] IMPLICATIONS

26. The proposal would create a more effective and beneficial community building compared to the existing Albrighton Centre, the centre is unlikely to engender unsustainable means of travel as it services a localised catchment area.

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