

Plan: E DC/05/00564/FUL Abbey Ward (A)

Address: 1 Loxford Road, Barking.

Development: Erection of two 3/4/5 storey blocks to provide 39 flats together with car parking and associated works to 1 Loxford Road, Barking.

Applicant: BDH Management Ltd.

Introduction and Description of Development

The application site contains a 2 storey office style building, factory building and 2 storey property on Loxford Road itself, the site is located to the rear of 56 – 74a Victoria Road; the site operates on a commercial basis through a mixture of uses. This includes the repair and maintenance of vehicles, plant, machinery and tyres as well as functioning as a plant hire depot. The site is bounded by Loxford Road to the west, 2 storey houses in Victoria Road to the north, rear areas and gardens to these premises to the east and Loxford Water to the south.

The application proposes two blocks, one block 4/5 storeys high containing 13 affordable residential units fronting onto Loxford Road and one larger block 3/4 storeys high consisting of 26 private residential units set within the site adjacent to Loxford Water. The affordable residential units comprise 13 units of Social Rented Housing (4 x 1 bedroom 2 person flats, 8 x 2 bedroom 4 person flats and 1 x 1 bedroom 2 person Wheelchair flat). The scheme proposes 28 parking spaces located in an underground car park and two disabled spaces located at ground level.

Background

An established use certificate in 1977 identified the area to the rear of 56 to 68 Victoria Road as a contractors plant hire depot. Hours of use on this site for all uses are restricted from 7am to 5 or 6pm Mon – Fri. The uses are also permitted from 8am to 1pm Saturdays.

Permission was granted in 2001 (DC/01/00468/FUL) for the continuance of use of building(s) for the repair and maintenance of vehicles, plant, machinery and tyres. This related to the site to the rear of 70-74 Victoria Road. Hours are restricted on this part of the site 7.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday and 8am to 1pm on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Public or Bank Holidays.

Consultations

- a) Adjoining Occupiers ; 48 local residents were consulted and 3 site notices erected around the site. 1 letter of support, 2 letters commenting upon the scheme and one petition objecting to the scheme signed by 22 residents in 14 properties were received. Neighbours concerns can be summarised as:

Petition – objected to the proposed height and design of the scheme, felt that the scheme would be highly visible and out of character with the feel of Victoria Road.

One respondee commented that there should be no overlooking to their property and that shared boundaries should be made secure.

One respondee commented that they would like their wall retained and any new wall should be as high.

One letter of support commented that the scheme represented an enhancement to the area bringing it back to a more residential area.

b) Housing Strategy

No objection.

c) Metropolitan Police – Crime Prevention.

No objection.

d) Thames Water

No objection.

e) English Heritage - Archaeology

No objection.

f) Environmental Management Division

No objection.

g) Traffic and Road Safety Division

No objection.

h) Environment Agency

No objection.

UDP Policy

H1	Housing Supply
H3	Changes of Use to Residential
H4	Low cost housing
H6	Housing for People with Disabilities
H13 - H17	New Residential Development Standards
G40	Energy
E2	Change of Use from Employment

Policy Issue – potential policy issue with regards to amenity impact upon adjacent occupiers, loss of employment use.

Analysis

Council Policy as contained in the Unitary Development Plan promotes the construction of high quality residential development that will improve the immediate physical environment, provides a large degree of visual uplift and contributes to the housing aspirations of the community. This development would create 39 new residential units, of which 13 will be affordable. The proposal represents a significant contribution towards the Borough and regional housing targets for both private and affordable housing.

Loss of employment

The proposed site is an area of industrial uses, ranging from vehicle and heavy plant machinery repair to tyre storage and repair. Although the site is not designated as employment land in the UDP the proposal would result in a loss of jobs in this location. Whilst the loss of an employment use is not generally supported by policy E2, in this location it is considered that the provision of new residential units provides greater benefits than the existing site uses, which are of a low intensity and provide few jobs (6 at present). It is considered that this is a site unsuited to industrial usage located as it is adjacent to residential areas, as such the use of this site for housing would tie in with the existing character of the area whilst removing a potential nuisance use. Policy E2 states that the redevelopment of employment generating uses can be granted where unreasonable disturbance is caused to residential properties.

It should be noted that the present user of the site is relocating shortly from this site regardless of whether the site gains planning permission or not. A new industrial occupier could potentially generate more nuisance and noise to the detriment of local residents.

Affordable Housing

The application has been considered against adopted UDP policy H4 and supporting guidance of the Mayors London Plan. UDP policy H4 in conjunction with DETR circular 6/98 (Planning and Affordable Housing) sets out a requirement of 25% affordable housing provision, working to a 25 unit trigger level. Revised and emerging policy in the London Plan is looking to a target of 50% affordable, across London. It is considered that a level of 35% affordable provision is satisfactory on this particular site. The applicant has submitted that the provision of 35% affordable housing (13 social rented units) will be met on site, within the westernmost block. Although 13 units represents only 33% of the proposed units, the proportion based upon habitable floor area represents over 35% of the overall habitable proposed floor area.

Design

The character of the site and its immediate locality is defined by a variety of building heights and massing, intersected by an open culvert carrying Loxford Water. This area is bordered by Victoria Road to the north, which consists of two storey turn of the century terraced dwellings. The heights of the proposed blocks, especially the block on Loxford Road are considered acceptable in this particular location dominated as it is by the large industrial/factory building south of the site and nine storey West House immediately opposite the entrance to the site. It is therefore considered that the proposed site layout achieves appropriate relationships to neighbouring developments. It is not considered that the copying of the two storey terraces on Victoria Road would achieve an appropriate design for this location. This is because the site frontage on Loxford Road would appear incongruous and out of scale when viewed against West House directly opposite and the factory structure to the south of the site.

The proposed design is in a modern and vibrant style. The 4/5 storey block fronting onto Loxford Road will provide a distinctive and high profile feature to the entrance of the site providing interest and a large degree of colour and uplift to what is at present a bare and desolate stretch of road. The design intends to use several coloured renders, metallic and roof finishes as well as coloured brick to parts of the ground floor

Materials will be dealt with by condition, it is anticipated that design will utilise high quality materials with the aim of achieving a modern attractive development.

The proposed scheme involves the demolition of several buildings on site none of which hold any architectural merit. This is therefore considered acceptable. The proposals will result in the loss of one mature and two immature trees on site. These will be partially replaced by the planting of trees on site as part of the soft landscaping proposals.

Amenity

Distances between the two proposed blocks, and existing residential properties adjacent to the site are considered acceptable. The closest residential property will lie 28m away from any part of the proposed blocks. No significant loss of outlook/privacy/light will occur to adjacent residential properties as a result of this proposal.

The scheme incorporates balcony areas and shared amenity areas for ground floor flats. All ground floor units in the main block facing south sit above a green space. All 1/2/3/4 floor units will have balconies giving 4sqm outside space per unit (materials will be determined at condition stage). In addition the exterior shared areas will be extensively planted to provide visual amenity to all proposed residents this is especially true of the northern edge of the site facing towards Victoria Road.

With regard to private amenity space the scheme will not meet the UDP guidelines as to the overall amount of space to be provided. However, the IPG states that "given the proximity to the large open spaces available in the town centre and balancing the compact city objective, a relaxation of the UDP policies H14 and H15 relating to residential amenity space may be considered on merit." In this instance 37 of the 39 proposed dwellings have direct access to private balcony space and this is considered acceptable. It should be noted that adjacent developments feature no predominant type of amenity space provision. The rear walls to no's 56-60 Victoria Road will be retained; details of this treatment will be dealt with by the boundary condition.

Access

The only access to the site will be gained from Loxford Road. The proposed scheme allows for clear vision for vehicles entering and exiting the site as well as allowing safe pedestrian access.

Parking

The proposed scheme contains 30 (including 2 disabled) parking spaces for 39 flats. This accords with adopted parking standards (January 2002) which seek a maximum provision of one space every 1-2 bed flat. The location of the site close to the town centre (it is within a fifteen minute walk of Barking station) helps justify a car parking provision of 77% (0.77 parking spaces per unit) and whose location has a good Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 6A. This is considered acceptable in this location. 39 secure cycle parking spaces are provided in the basement level and 6 secure spaces provided at ground level.

Sustainability/Accessibility

The proposed buildings will have extensive green roof coverage encouraging bio diversity within the locality, this will also reduce surface water run off and provide a greater degree of thermal insulation. The scheme will also achieve 10% renewable energy usage. Details of these elements will be resolved by condition. In addition the scheme proposes a £105k contribution towards environmental improvements to Barking Park.

All dwellings are designed to comply with Lifetime Homes Standards as well as Council internal flat standards. 31 of the dwellings are either located at ground floor level or are accessible by lifts.

Conclusion

The overall development is considered to be an acceptable design for this location. The development facilitates the removal of non conforming uses within a residential location which presently have the potential to result in a loss of amenity to adjoining occupiers.

The proposal will contribute to meeting the Boroughs housing targets both private and affordable, provide a large degree of visual uplift to the locality and provide a contribution towards improving Barking Park.

Recommendation

That, subject to the completion of an agreement under Section S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 in respect of the provision of 13 affordable housing flats, and an contribution of £105,000 towards improvements to Barking Park and £4,200 towards the monitoring costs of implementing the schemes, planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions;

1. F.1 Details of Soft Landscaping
2. F.2 Implementation of Proposed Soft Landscaping
3. F.4 Details of Hard Landscaping
4. The approved development shall make provision for cycle parking in accordance with a scheme that shall have been previously submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.
5. M.4 Hours of Construction Work
6. M.5 Construction Work (Noise)
7. The refuse enclosures indicated on drawing number 12 shall be constructed in accordance with the approved plans and thereafter permanently retained for the use of the occupiers of the premises.
8. P.1 Details of Boundary Treatment
9. Q.1 Details/Samples of Facing Materials
10. T.1 Programme of Excavations – Archaeology
11. U.1 Land Contamination Survey
12. All external circulation areas shall be designed to be accessible to people with disabilities in accordance with details submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.
13. A scheme showing the provisions to be made for external lighting shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to occupation of the building and shall be retained unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

14. Details of the proposed 'green living roof' together with a maintenance schedule shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The living roof shall be constructed prior to the first occupation of the building in accordance with the approved details and thereafter maintained in accordance with the approved maintenance schedule.
15. No works in relation to the proposed development shall commence on site pursuant to the planning permission hereby granted until details of a renewable energy generation system for the proposed development which provides at least 10% of the predicted energy requirements have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority and suitably installed and operational to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority prior to the occupation of the accommodation.
16. All houses and flats are to be built to lifetime home standards in accordance with the specifications set out by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
17. Surface water source control measures shall be carried out in accordance with details which shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
18. No development approved by this permission shall be commenced until details of the existing and proposed finished floor levels have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.
19. 1.6 Completion of Parking Areas
20. R.2 Disabled Driver and Passenger Bays