

Town Planning Statement



Site at:
61 The Avenue
Beckenham
Bromley, BR3
5EE

Prepared in accordance with the RTPI Code of Professional Conduct

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Contents	Page
1.0 Introduction	2
2.0 Site Description	3
3.0 Summary of Key Benefits	8
4.0 The Proposed Development	9
5.0 Planning Policy Framework	14
6.0 Material Planning Considerations	17
7.0 Summary	33

Appendices

Appendix 1- Site Location Plan

Appendix 2- Appeal Decision Notice

1.0 Introduction

Application Summary

1.1 This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of proposals for the demolition of the existing house and erection of 8 new apartments at 61 The Avenue, Beckenham hereafter referred to as 'the site'.

1.2 Full planning permission is sought for:

'The demolition of the existing dwelling and construction of two separate blocks each comprising four new apartments.'

1.3 This submission will detail the proposals and address relevant policy issues as identified in local and national policy guidance. Along with this statement the applicant has also commissioned:

- Architectural Drawings by **Howard: Fairbairn: MHK**
- Design and Access Statement by **Howard: Fairbairn: MHK**
- Topographical Survey by **Howard: Fairbairn: MHK**

2.0 Site Description

Description of Existing Use

- 2.1 The site is currently occupied by a large two-storey detached residential dwelling of modern design when first built but now in a dilapidated state. In addition the site has an outbuilding in its n/w corner nearest its neighbours.

Location

- 2.2 The building is located at the junction of The Avenue and Downs Hill. The site is on a corner plot and has an approximate area of 0.1409 hectares. It is situated in a conservation area which is of a predominantly residential nature consisting of detached houses but with two to four storey blocks of flats nearby.

Relationship to Neighbouring Sites

- 2.3 The Avenue leads into Beckenham Town Centre which lies west to the proposed site which is roughly a 15 minute walk. The application site is located within the administrative area of London borough of Bromley (LB Bromley).

Access

- 2.4 The site has a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of 1b. However this is an arbitrary measure and it is considered that the site is located in a sustainable location. The PTAL assessment can be a poor yardstick given the site has generally good access to public transport links. The site is located opposite to a bus stop with 354 bus route linking the area to Bromley North and Penge Town Centres via Beckenham. Furthermore, Bromley Road is within a 5 minute walk and provides two bus services. The 367 runs from West Croydon to Bromley via Shirley and the 227 bus route runs from Bromley North to Crystal Palace via Penge.
- 2.5 In addition the site is within walking distance to Ravensbourne, Beckenham Junction and Shortlands Railways Stations.

- 2.6 Ravensbourne is the closest train station and is only a 5 minute walk to the north of the site. It provides services to London Blackfriars and London St. Pancras (2 trains per hour) and Sevenoaks (2 trains per hour).
- 2.7 Shortlands train station is approximately 12 minute walk to the east and provides services to London Victoria (4 trains per hour), Kentish Town (2 trains per hour), Orpington (4 trains per hour) and Sevenoaks (2 trains per hour) via Ravensbourne.
- 2.8 Beckenham Junction is the terminus of the line for both a railway service and a tram service and is a 15 minute walk to the west of the site.
- 2.9 The tram service provides a frequent service to Wimbledon, Elmers End, Croydon and New Addington.
- 2.10 The rail services include journeys to London Victoria (4 trains per hour), Orpington (4 trains per hour) and London Bridge (2 trains per hour).
- 2.11 Currently the site is accessed directly off The Avenue between the intersections with Downs Hill and West Oak.

Site Designations

- 2.12 The site, indicated in blue, is located at the south-west of the Downs Hill Conservation Area (CA). Notably the opposite side of the street (south) is not within the CA and housing on the immediate west is of little architectural or historic interest yet appear within the boundary of the CA as they may well have formed garden land originally to the older housing on Downs Hill.



Planning History

- 2.13 In 1981 application (reference number 81/01123) for erection of two detached houses was permitted on appeal, however was never implemented.
- 2.14 In 1982 application (reference number 82/01136) for erection of four terraced dwellings was refused.
- 2.15 On 11 September 1997 permission (reference number 97/02028/FUL) was granted for a single storey front and side extensions.
- 2.16 On 30 July 1999 permission (reference number 99/01706/FULL1) was granted for a single storey front and rear two storey side extension.
- 2.17 There have been further similar development applications within Downs Hill Conservation area and nearby:
- On 19 November 1984 application (reference number 84/01830/FUL) for demolition of existing dwelling and erection of detached block comprising of 12 x 2 bed and 3 x 1 bed self-contained flats, 19 garages, and 2 car parking spaces was permitted;
 - On 15 May 1989 outline application (reference number 89/00806/OUT) for three storey block comprising 9 x 1 bed flats and 13 car parking spaces was refused;
 - On 30 September 2008 application (reference number 08/02678/FULL1) for erection of a part two/three storey block comprising 1 one bedroom and 4 two bedroom flats with associated vehicular access and 5 car parking spaces fronting Foxgrove Road was refused, but later allowed on appeal.
- 2.18 This planning application 14/03502/FULL was refused at planning committee on the 7th November 2014 for the following reasons:
- 1) The proposals, by reason of the size, height, bulk and massing of the buildings, would result in an overdevelopment of the site, which

would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Downs Hill Conservation Area, thereby contrary to policies BE1, BE11 and H7 of the Unitary Development Plan and London Plan Policy 3.9.

- 2) The proposed rear balconies would result in overlooking of neighbouring properties which would be detrimental to residential amenity and contrary to Policy BE1 of the Unitary Development Plan.

2.19 An appeal was lodged but this was also dismissed but as with all Inspectors letters all the material consideration are discussed and key issues are outlined below.

Appeal APP/G5180/W/14/3001656

2.20 The Inspectors report did not object to the principle of development stating that:

‘the building is described by the Council as having no particular merit, and it does not object to its demolition. I do not disagree with that conclusion.’

2.21 It was considered by the Inspector that the proposal respects the character of the area by taking on the form of two detached dwellings. However, the depth of two storey development would be greater than both neighbouring properties, even taking account of the approved single storey extension at no. 67. Whilst the eaves height of Block A would be lower than no. 59A, its maximum height would be significantly greater than that property. The eaves and maximum height of Block B would also be substantially higher than no. 67. That height and depth of development, and the deep roof accommodating a second floor, would give each block a substantial bulk and scale. The amended plans explained within the Design and Access Statement now plot the original dwelling footprint in relation to the proposed the new footprint is smaller and the height of building proposed lower to reflect the views of the Planning Inspector.

2.22 Furthermore the Inspector was not convinced by the 3 driveways and hardstanding areas for 12 spaces. It was suggested that this would result in a more intensely-used and urban character, which would contrast markedly with the Conservation Area's established character of single detached dwellings, and its semi-rural appearance.

2.23 Furthermore it is each block's substantial massing so close to neighbouring development, together with the introduction of large areas of parking, driveways and other facilities towards the front of this prominent plot that would harm the street scene, and make the proposal significantly at odds with other development in the Conservation Area.

2.24 Two separate access points are now proposed marked with two red arrows on the proposed site plan. A hedge is also shown to portray the image of a 'two plot' site layout considered to respect the CA character. This has the added advantage of significant greening of the frontage addressing the concerns at appeal.



2.25 The inspector concluded that the proposals failed that desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of Conservation Areas that the scheme would fail those tests. However the significantly amended scheme in contrast responds well to these criticisms and embraces a Mock Tudor style of housing with a layout portraying an 'image' of two large houses as opposed to flats.

3.0 Summary of Key Benefits

3.1 This application offers several key benefits and advantages:

- The development has been designed to present a 'two block' development to maintain the street scene and give the appearance of two separate dwellings to remain sensitive to the corner plot and the wider conservation area.
- The scheme will otherwise provide a contemporary residential development, through the provision of 8 x 2 bedroom apartments, and would increase the number of small units in the area contributing towards LB Bromley's housing targets;
- The development has responded to and accommodated the comments made by the local planning authority a pre-application stage as well as the reasons for the dismissed planning appeal (**ref: APP/G5180/W/14/3001656**) . Whilst such pre-application dialogue is always on a 'without prejudice' basis clearly it is intended to create greater certainty for applicants and the former pre-application process resulted in a very clear planning officer recommendation to grant consent.
- Provision of flats in a sustainable and accessible location on a site that is under developed
- The development will bring a derelict site, which in its current state increasingly detracts from the Downs Road Conservation Area, back into use adding to the amenity of the area with a high quality design appropriate to its setting within the conservation area.

4.0 The Proposed Development

Description of Proposed Use and Building

- 4.1 The Design & Access Statement accompanying the application provides greater detail on the characteristics of the buildings, the design concept, architectural style and landscaping. However, a general description of the development is found below.
- 4.2 Other options were explored to retain the current detached dwelling or provide other single dwelling houses on the plot however these were deemed unviable due to the state of the current property and the layout of the plot being on a corner site.
- 4.3 The development will provide an architectural statement that reflects the mix of Beckenham's traditional and contemporary buildings and responds well to the character assessment of the wider CA.
- 4.4 The accommodation will provide 8 x 2 bedroom apartments split over 2 floors with accommodation also provided within the roof.
- 4.5 Parking for the site comprises of two separate modest parking courts with considerable landscaping between them. The primary parking area utilises the existing access along The Avenue as well as creating a new access point. An additional access will be provided near the junction with Downs Hill at the North corner of the site, creating the secondary car parking area. This is of course a broadly similar layout that you might expect with two houses and not untypical in the wider neighbourhood.
- 4.6 A total of 8 parking spaces will be provided on site including one disabled parking bay. The parking arrangements have been designed in accordance with the London Borough of Bromley's parking standards as indicated within the pre-application stage.

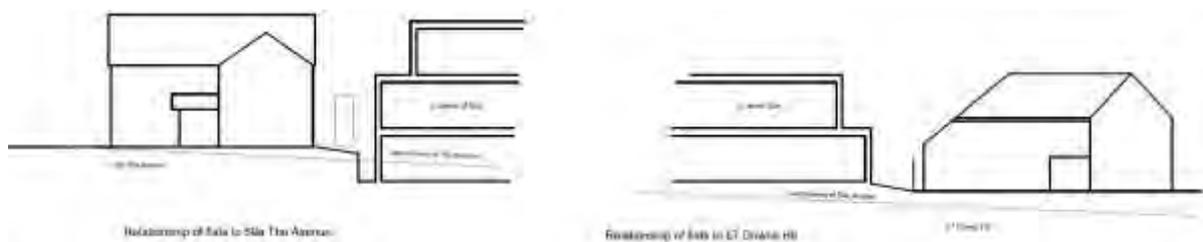
5.0 Pre-Application Meeting

- 5.1 A pre-application submission was made in late 2013 for the possible redevelopment of the site at 61 The Avenue and a subsequent meeting was held between Peter Wilson Local Planning Officer, Ron Terry Howard; Fairbairn; MHK and Ian Coomber, Stiles Harold Williams.
- 5.2 The proposals submitted at this stage were of an indicative nature and an early draft for discussion and negotiation surrounding the principle of the development.
- 5.3 The indicative proposals suggested a two/three storey building providing a mixture of one to two bedroom flats and 9 parking spaces to the front of the site.
- 5.4 During the meeting the history of site was discussed given the site had been the subject of two planning applications for new housing developments in the 1980's (81/01123 and 82/01136).
- 5.5 The application for two dwellings was allowed at appeal however this planning permission was never implemented it was also pointed out that due amount of time that has now lapsed the policy involved in making this decision now holds very little weight if any.
- 5.6 This subsequently led to the area being designated as a conservation area. This designation through policy was an attempt to maintain the distinct neo-Tudor features of the area.
- 5.7 Although it has been some time since this designation it was noted that development of a similar nature has been previously resisted by the Council in the near vicinity of the site in question and the site now falls within the Downs Hill Conservation Area.
- 5.8 It was suggested that the principle of 9 car parking spaces with a ratio of 1:1 would be acceptable in principle.

- 5.9 It was a request that a survey of the condition of the unmade road be submitted to the council as part of the planning application however after the consultation was undertaken it was apparent that there were dispute regarding what should happen with regards to the condition of the road and therefore this may be an issue that can be discussed during the application process.
- 5.10 The presence of the trees on the site was discussed and it was identified than none of these are subject to any tree preservation orders however they are protected by virtue of the conservation area designation. It was recommended that the application was accompanied by a BS5837 survey and an arboriculture implications assessment which has been submitted as part of this application.
- 5.11 The Planning Officer highlighted that the existing dwelling on the site does not hold any architectural merit and makes a neutral contribution to the conservation area which is typified by its cohesive Neo-Tudor vernacular. `
- 5.12 It was considered that the proposals did accord with the character of the conservation area that being a large detached dwelling set within well-proportioned plots and that demolition would not be resisted. The current proposal represents a suitable replacement of this building in to a high standard of design respecting the sites setting.
- 5.13 The Planning Officer in commenting on the original scheme proposed, suggested that this would be too bulky within the Conservation Area.
- 5.14 The image below depicts the sketch that was initially submitted within the pre-application request feedback suggested that although this design would be resisted the idea of having two separate 'blocks' respecting the prevailing urban grain would be supported by the LPA.



5.15 It was also recommended that consideration be given to the impact of the bulk and scale of any design upon the street scene and the adjoining properties at 59a and 67. Indicative elevations can be seen below. These were submitted as part of the pre-application meeting.



5.16 It was recommended that due the introduction of development to the west of the site that the idea of having a third floor be reconsidered.

6.0 Statement of Community Involvement

- 6.1 As a result of the pre-application meeting and the discussions surrounding the local community and their response to potential developments in the area, engagement with the local community was considered necessary and in line with good practice. Consultation Matters undertook the public consultation and the full report of this has been submitted as part of the planning application.
- 6.2 The aim of the consultation was to engage with the local residents of The Avenue and Downs Hill in order to identify and resolve any concerns at an early stage and answer these to satisfy the local residents.
- 6.3 Letters were posted approximately 80 households in West Oak, The Avenue and Downs Bridge informing residents about the proposals including plans and diagrams.
- 6.4 There were a range of different queries in the form of emails and phone calls. There was a mixed response and we have addressed these concerns within good design and form.
- 6.5 The objections raised at this consultation were incorporated into the proposals that were dismissed at appeal. It is fair to conclude that the proposed scheme will not raise as many objections due to the schemes reduction in sale and massing as well as its movement away from the boundary and sensitivity to the conservation area through careful design.

7.0 Planning Policy Framework

7.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states any determination should be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

7.2 The local planning authority is London Borough of Bromley and the Development Plan comprises:

- The London Plan (adopted July 2011); and
- LB Bromley Unitary Development Plan (adopted UDP).

7.3 The proposals have been considered within the context of National, Regional, and Local planning policy, and the key policies are summarised below.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

7.4 The NPPF sets out the Governments' planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

7.5 Paragraph 7 sets out the dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental and the need for the planning system to perform a number of roles including a social role – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community's needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being.

7.6 Paragraph 9 aims to improve the quality of the built and natural environment replacing poor design with quality design and widening the choice of homes.

7.7 Paragraph 35 suggests that plans should exploit the opportunities of sustainable modes of transport and give high quality public transport modes to people.

- 7.8 Paragraph 49 promotes that all housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
- 7.9 Paragraph 56 suggests good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.
- 7.10 Paragraph 61 highlights that planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.
- 7.11 Paragraph 137 emphasizes that Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas to enhance or better reveal their significance and such proposals that preserve those elements of the setting should be treated favourably.

REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY

- 7.12 The relevant regional plan is The London Plan (2011). This plan provides strategic planning policies to guide development within the London Boroughs. The relevant London Plan policies are:
- Policy 3.3 – Increasing housing supply
 - Policy 3.4 – Optimising housing potential
 - Policy 3.5 – Quality and Design of Housing Development
 - Policy 5.2 – Minimising carbon dioxide emissions
 - Policy 5.3 – Sustainable design and construction
 - Policy 7.4 – Local Character
 - Policy 7.8 – Heritage Assets and Archaeology

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

7.13 The current local planning policy is the Bromley Unitary Development Plan Saved Policies. LB Bromley is currently preparing a Local Plan in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the guidance within the NPPF. Consultation on the Council's Local Plan Draft Policies and Designations document has concluded in March 2014. At this stage, this document has limited weight and as such the UDP Saved Policies remain the primary local policies against which development proposals should be considered.

7.14 The relevant policies of the UDP are:

- Policy BE1 – Design of New Development
- Policy BE11 – Conservation Areas
- Policy BE12 – Demolition in Conservation Areas
- Policy BE14 – Trees in Conservation Areas
- Policy H1 – Housing Supply
- Policy H7 – Housing Density and Design
- Policy H9 – Side Space
- Policy NE7 – Development and Trees
- Policy T3 – Parking
- Policy T18 – Road Safety
- Supplementary Planning Guidance 1: General Design Principles
- Supplementary Planning Guidance 2: Residential Design Guide
- Supplementary Planning Guidance: Downs Hill Conservation Area

- Material Planning Considerations

This section reviews National, Regional and Local Planning Policies that are most relevant to the proposal, and addresses how the proposed development complies with these policies.

National Planning Policy

Achieving sustainable development

7.15 Paragraph 9 of the NPPF sets out:

Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life, including (but not limited to):

- *making it easier for jobs to be created in cities, towns and villages;*
- *moving from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains for nature;*
- *replacing poor design with better design;*
- *improving the conditions in which people live, work, travel and take leisure; and*
- *widening the choice of high quality homes.*

7.16 The proposed development represents good design and the proposals will positively improve the built, natural and historic environment. Landscaping will be retained within in the site especially on the site boundary maintaining the green frontage to the site responding to the 'rustic setting' which local residents attach significant weight to.

7.17 The architectural features of the development have been designed in a way to incorporate and maintain the building lines on both The Avenue and Downs

Road. The two separate blocks represent and aim to give the impression of two separate detached dwellings, one of the design features requested within the pre-application meeting with Peter Wilson. This is further advanced in the revised proposal with a lower built form, moved further from the boundary and with a less deep side elevation.

7.18 Paragraph 35 is concerned with promoting sustainable travel:

Plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people. Therefore, developments should be located and designed where practical to;

- *accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and supplies;*
- *give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities;*
- *create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians, avoiding street clutter and where appropriate establishing home zones;*
- *incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles; and*
- *consider the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport.*

7.19 It has previously been demonstrated that the site lies within an accessible location in close proximity of extensive public transport links despite a relatively low PTAL rating of 1b. See paragraphs 2.4 to 2.11 for more details. Sustainable travel is promoted through the provision of cycle storage areas within the site.

7.20 Paragraph 49 is concerned with delivering a wide choice of high quality homes and states:

Housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. Relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date if the

local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

7.21 The development aims to respond to the current market through replacing a single detached dwelling with 8 new 2 bedroom apartments satisfying both the local demand and the delivery of housing by the London Borough of Bromley.

7.22 The NPPF requires new developments to be of good design, paragraph 56 sets out:

The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

7.23 The new blocks have been designed carefully to maintain the building lines of both Downs Road. The design of the buildings have incorporated pitched roofs a feature of the neo-Tudor dwellings.

7.24 The apartment blocks are to be built using traditional materials such as; facing brick render; reconstituted stone window sill and head detailing and feature brick banding. Glass balustrades and recessed balconies with coloured spandrel panels will provide the opportunity to create a more contemporary design within a traditional design. Plain tiles have been opted for the roof and finials have been incorporated to the gables to add interest, together with scalloped lead flashing and hip irons.

7.25 To prevent overlooking the windows in the flank walls to each of the two blocks have been kept to a minimum and are typically secondary windows which can be fitted with obscured glass to prevent overlooking.

7.26 Paragraph 61 continues to discuss design:

Although visual appearance and the architecture of individual buildings are very important factors, securing high quality and

inclusive design goes beyond aesthetic considerations. Therefore, planning policies and decisions should address the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment.

- 7.27 Beckenham is an area of reasonably high quality architecture consisting of both traditional and contemporary styles. This development will provide an architectural statement that reflects this and adds to the high quality stock of housing.

REGIONAL PLANNING POLICY

- 7.28 With regards the increase of housing supply within London policy 3.3 of the London Plan is applicable. This proposal aims to contribute 9 dwellings towards the Mayors annual housing target of 32,210 homes in London and Bromley's minimum target of 5,000 per year.
- 7.29 Policy 3.4 of The London Plan sets out density ranges that new development is expected to meet. The density matrix states that in suburban locations with PTAL ratings such as the application site, density should be in the range of 50 – 75 units per hectare (u/ha). The density of the site is 57 u/ha which is within the specified range and compliant with policy. A higher density scheme, whilst it would meet with the London Plan, would not be considered appropriate within the CA setting of the site.
- 7.30 Policy 3.5 Quality and Design of Housing standards requires that residential developments are built to the highest standards both internally and externally. The design of this development has derived from comments made by the case officer at the pre-application stage, local supplementary planning guidance and the London plan Housing Standards. A narrative of the design proposals can be found within the Design and Access Statement, the earlier proposal received support from the planning officer but was refused by Planning Committee then dismissed at appeal.

7.31 The proposed dwellings have been designed to take account of this history but also of the London Plan residential design standards. The London Plan 2011 and the Housing SPG set out minimum floor space standards for residential developments. The following are the most recent standards are taken from the London Plan Housing SPG which was published in November 2012.

Occupancy (persons)	No. of Beds	GIA (m2)
4p	2	70

7.32 All the proposed units would exceed the minimum floor space standards set out in the table above. In addition all the dwellings would have access to private outdoor amenity space.

7.33 The proposed scheme has been developed with sustainability standards integral to the design as described. It is considered that the proposal would comply with the provisions and targets set out in Policy 5.2 and Policy 5.3 of the London Plan, providing a development of a high environmental standard.

7.34 Local character and Heritage Assets are referred to within policies 7.4 and 7.8. Due to the location of the site within the Downs Road Conservation area. The Design and Access Statement should be referred to with regards to how the proposals sympathise, maintain and enhance the conservation area. The proposals submitted are considered appropriate to the sites context adhering to issues found at the pre-application stage and community consultation.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Policy H1 Housing

Making provision for at least 11,450 additional dwellings over the plan period will be facilitated by:

- *Whether the site comprises previously developed land;*
- *The location of the site in relation to employment, day to day facilities and services and accessibility by modes of transport other than the car;*
- *The capacity of existing or potential infrastructure to accommodate additional dwellings;*
- *Physical and environmental constraints on development of the site;*
- *The need to retain the existing land use on the site.*

7.35 Policy 3.3 of The London Plan 2011 seeks to increase housing supply. Table 3.1 sets out that a minimum provision of 5,000 new homes should be provided within Bromley over the ten year plan period (2011-2021), this amounts to an annual housing target of 500. H1 seeks to provide 11,450 net additional dwellings within the Borough over the plan period (1997-2016). This proposal aims to provide 8 additional homes which in turn would contribute to meeting the council's housing targets. The development would utilise previously developed land in a sustainable location.

7.36 The location of the site is in close proximity to Beckenham Town Centre which consists of a range of local amenities and employment opportunities. Transport links also provide this with the train services to London and also the tram service to Croydon and Wimbledon town centres.

7.37 The physical constraints on the site have been overcome by the design. The design is in keeping with the surrounding properties while also being able to provide 8 car parking spaces through two new access points whilst also retaining the existing access on The Avenue.

- 7.38 The existing land use, C3 residential dwelling, is retained on the site through the proposed development.

Policy H2 Affordable Housing

In order to meet the needs of the Borough, affordable housing will be sought on all housing sites capable of providing 10 dwellings or more, or housing sites of 0.4ha or larger, irrespective of the number of dwellings. On all sites at or above this threshold negotiations will take place to determine the number of affordable dwellings to be provided. In negotiating the amount of affordable housing on each site, the Council will seek 35% provision, with 70% social-rented housing and 30% intermediate provision, unless it can be demonstrated that a lower level should be sought or that the 70:30 split would not create mixed and balanced communities.

The affordability of different elements of the scheme should not immediately be apparent from the siting, design and layout.

The affordable housing should be made available for transfer or occupation before a certain proportion (to be determined through negotiations between the Council and developer) of the market housing is occupied.

- 7.39 The proposed development consists of 8 units of residential dwelling and therefore does not include the provision of any affordable housing.

Policy H7 Housing Density and Design

Applications for new housing developments will be expected to meet all of the following criteria:

- The site layout, buildings and space about buildings are designed to a high quality and recognise as well as complement the qualities of the surrounding areas;*
- Adequate private or communal amenity spaces are provided to serve the needs of the particular occupants;*

- *Off street parking is provided at levels no more than set out in the Table at Appendix II. These are maximum parking standards. A higher provision will be acceptable only where it can be demonstrated that complying with the maximum standards would not be in the interest of the safety of highway users, or where additional parking is required to meet the needs of particular users, such as those with disabilities;*
- *The layout is designed to give priority to pedestrians and cyclists over the movement and parking of vehicles; and security and crime prevention measures are included in the design and layout of buildings and public areas.*

7.40 The proposed development has been designed to provide high quality, spacious residential accommodation. The site compliments the surrounding area through its sensitive architecture and in particular the evolution of the scheme to become two separate blocks results in a scale appropriate to its setting retaining the building lines on both Downs Road and The Avenue.

7.41 Private communal space is provided to the rear of the property for the resident's enjoyment. In addition some of the units have been provided with a balcony.

7.42 On street parking is not required and parking provision has been made available to the residents on site. There are 8 car parking spaces in total. Although this does not meet the councils parking standard spaces due to the unmade nature of the road.

7.43 Secure cycle storage is also provided on site and this new access also improves on site access for potential cyclists.

Policy H9 Side Space

When considering applications for new residential development, including extensions, the Council will normally require the following;

(i) for a proposal of two or more storeys in height, a minimum 1 metre space from the side boundary of the site should be retained for the full height and length of the flank wall of the building; or

(ii) where higher standards of separation already exist within residential areas, proposals will be expected to provide a more generous side space. This will be the case on some corner properties.

7.44 A generous amount of side space has been given to the surrounding site boundary, in particular the flank elevations facing number 59a The Avenue. The block facing towards the North of site retains a similar location to the existing dwelling but as the site plan shows, the new block provides a slightly greater amount of side space than the existing building.

7.45 Within the original pre-application report a 2metre side space was requested and we have adhered to this request within the proposals and this has been widened further since the appeal was dismissed.

Policy BE1 Design Of New Development

All development proposals, including extensions to existing buildings, will be expected to be of a high standard of design and layout. To those ends, proposals will be expected to meet all of the following criteria:

- Development should be imaginative and attractive to look at, should complement the scale, form, layout and materials of adjacent buildings and areas;*
- Development should not detract from the existing street scene and/or landscape and should respect important views, skylines, landmarks or landscape features;*

- *Space about buildings should provide opportunities to create attractive settings with hard or soft landscaping;*
- *The development should respect the amenity of occupiers of neighboring buildings and those of future occupants and ensure their environments are not harmed by noise and disturbance or by inadequate daylight, sunlight or privacy or by overshadowing;*
- *The development should include measures that achieve sustainable design and construction methods including, where appropriate, energy generated by on-site renewable development;*
- *Suitable access should be provided for people with impaired mobility. Where necessary and relevant to the development, contributions may be sought to improve accessibility around the development;*
- *Security and crime prevention measures should be included in the design and layout of building and public areas; and*
- *Applications should be accompanied by a written statement setting out design principles and illustrative material showing relationship of the development to the wider context.*

7.46 The design of the development has been carefully considered to present a property that is sensitive to the Downs Hill Conservation area. Traditional materials have been used while the bulk and the mass of the property are in keeping with adjacent properties and sites. Further details of these can be found within the Design and Access Statement.

7.47 The proposed development will retain much of the soft landscaping currently on the periphery of the site and in particular the trees fronting onto The Avenue. A landscape plan has been drafted and submitted as well as a topographical and arboricultural assessment and its implementation can be secured by a planning condition.

- 7.48 The hardscaping will consist of traditional materials that are sensitive to the conservation area.
- 7.49 Modern construction methods and materials will be used to ensure that the property encompasses an element of sustainability. Measures such as triple glazing and wall insulation will be used to maximise the energy efficiency of the property.
- 7.50 The design of the scheme has regard to the security guidelines promoted by Secured by Design.
- 7.51 Public and semi-public and private spaces are clearly defined within the site plan. The orientation of the building allows for clear overlooking of the communal garden, to the rear and the car parking areas, to the front of the building, ensuring a high level of natural surveillance of these areas. The scheme also provides secure refuse and cycle stores.

POLICY BE11 Conservation Areas

In order to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas, a proposal for new development, for engineering works, alteration or extension to a building, or for change of use of land or buildings within a conservation area will be expected to:

- (i) respect or complement the layout, scale, form and materials of existing buildings and spaces;*
- (ii) respect and incorporate in the design existing landscape or other features that contribute to the character, appearance or historic value of the area; and*
- (iii) ensure that the level of activity, traffic, parking services or noise generated by the proposal will not detract from the character or appearance of the area.*

In its current form the existing dwelling on the site does not contribute to the conservation area. Using the SPG;

POLICY BE12 (DEMOLITION IN CONSERVATION AREAS)

A proposal for a development scheme that will involve the total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area that makes a positive contribution to its character or appearance will not be permitted unless the following can be demonstrated:

- (i) there is clear and convincing evidence that reasonable efforts have been made to continue the present use or to find a viable use for the building and these efforts have failed and it is demonstrated that preservation of the building as part of the scheme or in some form of charitable or community ownership is not possible or suitable, or*
- (ii) the costs of repairs or maintenance of the building cannot be justified against its importance or the value derived from its retention, provided that the building has not been deliberately neglected, or*
- (iii) there will be substantial planning benefits for the community from redevelopment which would decisively outweigh loss from the resulting demolition.*

Acceptable and detailed plans for a replacement scheme will be required, even if it will involve total or substantial demolition of an unlisted building in a conservation area that makes little or no contribution to the character or appearance of that area.

A condition will be imposed on a planning permission granted, to ensure that demolition shall not take place until a contract for the carrying out of the development works has been made

- 7.52 Attempts to reinstate the dwelling and carry out repairs has not proved viable hence redevelopment to a high standard is the only way to protect the character of the conservation area.
- 7.53 The replacement of the dwellings with the two blocks has been a result of engagement with the local residents at the pre-application stage. Due to the site being situated on a corner plot the two separate blocks have been designed to maintain both building lines to the north and west of the site.
- 7.54 The proposed development is in the form of two buildings to give the impression of two dwellings within the street scene. The roof design, which incorporates habitable rooms is hipped with dormers. Both buildings are finished with appropriate materials and include design features typical of the conservation area including tiled pitched roofs, bay features, dormers, porches, timber framing with render and brickwork.
- 7.55 The proposals seek to positively address concerns stated in the appeal decision of the previously submitted scheme for this site. Areas of hard standing for parking has been reduced to 8 cars and directly relate to the two detached buildings. Two entrances are proposed to open some views into the site from the highway and respect the conservation areas established character of a semi-rural appearance.
- 7.56 The inspector raised issues with regards to the bulk and scale of the buildings of the dismissed scheme. The proposals also seek to positively respond to these concerns. The roof heights have therefore been lowered substantially to be more sympathetic to the neighboring properties.
- 7.57 The property at present is in a dilapidated state and due to the unviability of putting it into its former state and harming the conservation area. The proposals put before the council aim to provide 8 new high quality dwellings enhancing the street scene whilst also remaining sensitive to the conservation area.

- 7.58 Design proposals have been based upon SPG 1; General Design Principles, SPG 2: Residential Design Guide and SPG; Downs Hill Conservation Area, taking into account and implementing particular features, with regards to the Conservation Area, into the proposals.

Policy T18 Road Safety

In determining planning applications, the Council will consider as appropriate the potential impact on road safety and will seek to ensure road safety is not adversely affected.

- 7.59 As previously mentioned RGP Transport consultant were asked to comment on the site and it was apparent that they saw no immediate issue with the parking proposals as well as the new and existing cross over access.
- 7.60 Due to the unmade nature of the road it is considered that cars will generally move at a slow speed.
- 7.61 It was also recommended within the correspondence with RGP that trimming the vegetation along the site frontage, greater levels of visibility will be attainable for drivers exiting the site, providing a safer environment for vehicles and pedestrians.

POLICY T3 Parking

Parking provision at higher levels will be acceptable only where it can be demonstrated that the parking is required to meet the needs of disabled users or where lesser provision will lead to unsafe highway conditions, and it can be shown that the applicant has taken other measures to minimise the need for parking.

- 7.62 The total amount of car parking spaces proposed on site is 8. This works out at a ratio of 1:1. This parking arrangement has been design in a result of the inspectors comments on the previous layout and the 3 driveways and hardstanding areas for 12 spaces has now been reduced to 2 driveways and 8 car parking spaces.

- 7.63 It was suggested that this would result in a more intensely-used and urban character, which would contrast markedly with the Conservation Area's established character of single detached dwellings, and its semi-rural appearance. The proposals seek to have two entrances. The removal of the parking spaces and hardstanding soften the landscape and it is considered that this should provide a resolution to the Inspectors Comments.

POLICY NE7 Development and Trees

Proposals for new development will be required to take particular account of existing trees on the site and on adjoining land, which in the interests of visual amenity and/or wildlife habitat, are considered desirable to be retained. Tree preservation orders will be used to protect trees of environmental importance and visual amenity. When trees have to be felled, the Council will seek suitable replanting.

- 7.64 Trees will be retained on the edge of the site fronting The Avenue. Due to the positive pre-application response from the council regarding development on the site it is hoped that even with the restrictions due to the site designation as a conservation area, the loss of trees will not be resisted by the council.
- 7.65 An arboricultural survey have been completed to highlight the trees that will be retained and lost as a result of the proposals. A landscaping plan has also been submitted providing an indication of the soft landscaping of the proposed scheme.

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Downs Road Conservation Area

The Council will expect all proposals for new development to conform to the character of the area, especially in regard to scale and height of construction, location within a plot and the design and materials used. It is hoped that all improvement works will take into account the character of the buildings and alter them as little as possible.

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- 7.66 The design proposals have taken into account the guidance laid out within the SPG and the proposals aim to redevelop a building and site that is currently in disrepair.
- 7.67 The design proposals have remained sensitive to the conservation area through the use of traditional design of the buildings as well as the use of two block design to give the impression of two separate dwellings whilst maintain the building lines due to the sites corner plot location.
- 7.68 Clearly the Inspectors report highlighted that the appeal was dismissed based on the building design and its lack of sensitivity to the conservation area. Since this dismissal the scheme has been significantly improved, it is lower, the footprint is reduced and the proportion of landscaping along the frontage further retained and augmented including a hedgerow between each block to maintain an appearance of two large houses.

8.0 Summary

- 8.1 The proposal has been considered against national, regional and local planning policies and has been found to be compliant by maximising the potential of the site through sensitive and high quality design.
- 8.2 The provision of housing would contribute towards meeting borough housing demand. The London Plan (2011) Policy 3.3 seeks to increase housing supply within the London Boroughs. Bromley has a target of an additional 11,450 additional dwellings between 1997 and 2016. This proposal would provide 8 extra residential units thus contributing to meeting the regional and local housing targets.
- 8.3 The height, scale and massing of the proposals have been carefully considered to be respectful to the surrounding townscape and protect the Downs Road Conservation Area.
- 8.4 The proposal is worthy of support from the local planning authority for the following reasons:
- A pre-application meeting was held to discuss the proposed development of the site and the comments made within the report have been taken on board to produce the proposals set out within this planning application to meet the requirements of Bromley Council.
 - A previous public consultation consultant was instructed to engage with the local community and work with them towards a positive outcome for the planning application. These comments have been used in the evolution of the proposed scheme.
 - The design of this proposal is considered to compliment the character of the Downs Road conservation area and continues the same pattern of architectural character and building lines taking into account the comments made by the planning inspector on the dismissed appeal.

- A sustainable development that is in close proximity of Beckenham & Bromley town centres which provides an array of local amenities and employment opportunities;
- An extremely accessible site due to the closeness of Ravensbourne and Beckenham Junction Station to the site providing links to London.
- A development which provides 8 high quality dwellings which meets the housing demand of the local area.

8.5 The proposal meets the requirements of the policy set out at both Local and National level while also contributing to the housing supply of the London Borough of Bromley. We hope that the proposed development will enhance the local area and satisfy the needs of Bromley.

APPENDIX 1

SITE LOCATION PLAN

61 The Avenue, Beckenham, Bromley, BR3 5EE

Site Location Plan



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This map is produced by Stiles Harold Williams
using Promap

APPENDIX 2

APPEAL DECISION NOTICE

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 April 2015

by Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 11 May 2015

Appeal Ref: APP/G5180/W/14/3000821

11 Park Avenue, Farnborough, Orpington, Kent BR6 8LJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs T Pratt against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Bromley.
 - The application Ref DC/14/01334/FULL1, dated 8 April 2014, was refused by notice dated 2 July 2014.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing 6-bedroom house including integral garage and swimming pool; erection of new 5-bed family home with integral garage and swimming pool.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. At the site visit, I viewed the site from 9 Park Avenue with the consent of the occupier of this adjacent property and did so accompanied by both main parties.

Main issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the local area and on the living conditions of the occupiers of 9 Park Avenue with particular regard to outlook and visual impact.

Reasons

4. The site lies within the Farnborough Park Conservation Area (CA), which is predominantly residential in character, wherein large dwellings vary in size, age and design and generally occupy generous plots with mature landscaped gardens. Part of Park Avenue is tree-lined and most buildings along this road are set back from the road behind gardens often with open frontages. Taken together, these features give the CA its spacious and verdant qualities, which positively contribute to its character and appearance.
 5. I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA, as required by section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
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6. The appeal dwelling is predominantly 2-storey with accommodation also set into the roof space and a swimming pool enclosed within a long single storey rear projection. The main house has a relatively wide front elevation towards the road, compared to its modest depth into the plot. Both front and rear elevations have projecting 2-storey bay features and gables. The front walls are finished with half-timber and render, and the roof is pitched and tiled.
7. Although No 11 is not formally identified by the Council as being of merit, its overall design and form is in my opinion interesting and attractive. It fits well with its surroundings in terms of size and style and stands comfortably in the local street scene to which it belongs. From the evidence before me, No 11 is a surviving example of the type of building that was constructed in the initial stages of the development of Farnborough Park. While various external alterations and additions have been carried out to the property, its original form appears to remain largely intact and the style of architecture is discernable. As such, it can be readily appreciated in the context of the historical development of the CA, like some other properties along Park Avenue. That the CA contains an eclectic mix of buildings with some new sizeable additions does not in my view dilute the value of those properties that date from the early phases of development in Farnborough Park and largely retain their original character.
8. For these reasons, I consider that the overall contribution made by the appeal dwelling to the significance of the CA is positive. Therefore, I am unable to share the opinion of The Heritage Advisory, **which supports the appellant's case**, that the overall contribution of the existing building to the CA is neutral.
9. Even so, while the overall aim of national and local planning policy is to conserve heritage assets such as conservation areas, this is not at all costs. The loss of the existing house would harm the CA, but if a replacement of sufficient high quality is introduced, an even greater contribution might be possible. The important objective is to manage the process of change to the CA in a way that preserves, and where appropriate enhances its significance.
10. From what I saw, the overall character of the CA is capable of absorbing a variety of dwellings in terms of style, size and materials. I observed several instances in the local area where well-designed new development, including replacement dwellings, has blended successfully with well-established housing and older architectural styles. The Supplementary Planning Guidance for the Farnborough Park Conservation Area (SPG) also notes that where a building is not identified by the Council as a positive contributor to the CA, as is the case here, there is no obstacle in principle to its replacement. That is subject to achieving a satisfactory design and provided the development would sit well within the established landscape framework. Similarly, Policy BE12 of the London Borough of Bromley Unitary Development Plan (UDP) sets out the circumstances in which a proposal to demolish an unlisted building that adds to the character and appearance of a conservation area will be permitted.
11. The proposal is to replace the existing dwelling with a mainly 2-storey house with accommodation also in the roof space served by front and rear dormers and roof lights. It would include an integral garage and a rear single storey projection would accommodate a swimming pool. The new addition would be only slightly taller and wider than its existing counterpart although it would occupy a much larger footprint with substantial flank elevations extending much

deeper into the site. Like the existing house, the proposal would extend across almost the full width of the plot with a hipped roof that would slope away from the neighbouring properties on either side. With **tall walls close to the site's** side boundaries, and a large gable feature on one side of the central façade and a hipped feature on the other, the replacement house would appear far larger and bulkier than the current house, which has a cat-slide roof to one side. As a result, the replacement would be more prominent in the local street scene. A more substantial and longer flank wall slightly closer to and parallel with the **site's boundary** with No 9 would also diminish the perceived gap between the replacement and this adjacent house than the current arrangement.

12. In combination, these factors would alter the balance of space around the house to the extent that the replacement would appear from the road to be overly large for the plot and cramped in terms of layout. This arrangement would be out of keeping with the generally more spacious pattern of development along Park Avenue even though in some cases buildings are located close together with modest gaps between them. Therefore, the proposal would not achieve the high quality design and layout sought by UDP Policies BE1 and H7 and paragraph 17 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
13. Drawing these points together, I consider that the existing dwelling adds to the character of the CA. Its loss is not justified in this instance because the new replacement would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of CA, to which I attach considerable importance and weight. Although the harm to the CA would be less than substantial in this case, I am not persuaded that the public benefits of the new development, primarily through the support given to the local economy would outweigh this harm.
14. Therefore, I conclude on this issue that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the local area. Accordingly, it conflicts with UDP Policies BE1, BE11, BE12 and H7. It is also at odds with the **Council's SPG and the Framework**. These policies and guidance broadly aim to ensure that development responds to local character, adds to the overall qualities of an area and safeguards heritage assets.

Living conditions

15. As the rear elevation of the replacement dwelling would project noticeably beyond that of No 9, the external patio and part of the back garden of this adjacent property would be partly enclosed by the new flank wall. The proposal would be evident from these vantage points and through some of the rear windows of No 9, albeit at an oblique angle.
16. Nevertheless, there is established vegetation along this boundary that would partly screen and visually soften the new built form when seen from the rear of No 9. Furthermore, the new sidewall would be set back from the common boundary between these properties. From what I saw, the main direction of outlook from the rear of this neighbouring property across the spacious long garden would not be adversely affected by the appeal scheme.
17. On balance, I consider that the presence of the new development would not be so imposing as to be overbearing nor would it unacceptably dominate outlook. Hence, the living conditions of the occupiers of No 9 would not be materially

reduced by the appeal scheme. Therefore, I find no material conflict with UDP Policy BE1 insofar as it seeks to safeguard residential amenity.

18. My favourable finding on this matter does not outweigh the harm that I have identified in relation to the first main issue.

Other matters

19. The replacement dwelling would better suit the appellant's family needs and improve their living conditions. I saw that some ground floor rooms within the existing dwelling are modest in size and depth, which would limit their usefulness. Even so, there is nothing before me to indicate that the shortcomings of the accommodation within the existing property could only be overcome through redevelopment, as proposed.

20. A number of planning decisions have been drawn to my attention. In my experience, it is rare that direct parallels can be drawn between one site and another given that local circumstances often vary. In this instance there are, it seems to me, significant differences in terms of location, proposals and characteristics between the sites quoted and the appeal scheme such that preclude any meaningful comparisons between them.

21. Interested parties raise several additional objections to the proposal including the accuracy of the plans insofar as the shared boundary between Nos 9 and 11 is concerned, light and trees. These are important matters and I have taken into account all of the evidence before me. However, given my findings on the first main issue these are not matters on which my decision has turned.

Conclusion

22. Overall, for the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR