



PART 5: Development Presentations

Item 5.1

1. DETAILS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

Ref: 17/02637/PRE
 Location: Land to the East of Grosvenor Road, South Norwood
 Ward: South Norwood
 Description: Presentation of a pre-application scheme for the erection of two five storey buildings (Blocks A and B) and a seventeen storey building (block C) to provide approximately 100 residential units with associated landscaping and public realm improvements; re-provision of pay and display parking
 Drawing Nos: N/A
 Applicant: Alison Brennan – Brick by Brick Croydon Ltd
 Agent: Adam Conchie – Carter Jonas
 Case Officer: Richard Freeman

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	Percentage
TOTAL FLATS	61	38	3	
AFFORDABLE RENT	14	11	1	25%
INTERMEDIATE	12	3	2	17%
PRIVATE FLATS	35	24	0	58%
COMMUNITY USE	60m ²			

Number of car parking spaces	Number of cycle parking spaces
58	

2. PROCEDURAL NOTE

2.1 This report is in an experimental format to provide a more focussed approach to pre application presentation to and engagement with Planning Committee. It should be noted that this report is a snapshot in the ongoing development of a scheme and considerations may have moved on by the presentation to Members. The report covers the following points:

- a. Executive summary of key issues with scheme
- b. Site briefing
- c. Summary of matters for consideration
- d. Officers' preliminary conclusions
- e. Specific feedback requested from Members

2.2 Officers would be grateful for feedback from the Planning Committee on the success of the format.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES WITH SCHEME

- 3.1 The scheme proposes a mixed use, residential led development comprising three buildings as set out above. Buildings A&B are proposed as affordable housing and flank the site. Building C is proposed as affordable housing (shared ownership) in the lower levels, with private sale units above. The scheme currently makes provision for landscaping and public realm improvements to the area between the High Street and the railway line.
- 3.2 The scheme has developed through a series of pre-application meetings and was reviewed by the Place Review Panel in November 2016 (at a very early stage) and is scheduled to be reviewed by Place Review Panel on the 18th December 2017 (the afternoon of this Planning Committee). A verbal update will be available from officers – outlining the views expressed by the Place Review Panel. The applicant intends to submit the proposal shortly after the presentation to Planning Committee and is keen to consider further comments prior to submission.
- 3.3 Officers consider that the scheme is developing in a positive fashion. There are a number of key issues which officers are keen to draw to Members attention and to generate debate:

Principle of the development

- 3.4 The site at the moment is an area of landscaping between two existing tower blocks and areas of car parking and ancillary residential areas. A footpath runs parallel with the railway line on the eastern edge of the site.
- 3.5 The site currently has some clear issues with the quality of the maintenance of the area, the space being ill-defined as to whether it is public or private, a lack of connectivity with some routes being fenced off, a lack of safety to the Network Rail path and anti-social behaviour issues associated with the bus stop. The areas of parking and hard amenity space are also poorly defined and haphazard. The area is also part of the District Centre and conservation area does not positively add to how the place operates.
- 3.6 The site therefore presents an opportunity to provide a much improved public realm, a considered layout with public routes responding to desire lines and safety and security to the Network Rail path, whilst also providing significant levels of accommodation and affordable housing.

Provision of Affordable Housing

- 3.7 The scheme currently shows provision of 42% of units as being affordable, with those units being broken down with a policy compliant 60:40 affordable rent/shared ownership split.
- 3.8 The scheme therefore provides high levels of affordable housing including affordable rent accommodation. Officers are testing the viability of the scheme but are comfortable with the proposed affordable housing provision.

Massing and Heritage Impact.

- 3.9 The scheme is located within the South Norwood Conservation Area, the special character of which mostly relates to the historic Victorian high street. The existing tall buildings on the site are identified as detracting from that character.
- 3.10 Significant testing and townscape analysis has been undertaken to assess the way in which the building would sit within the conservation area context.
- 3.11 Officers have identified some negative impacts on conservation area character, which is a recognised heritage asset. Other scheme proposals have been tested and have been discounted for a variety of reasons – mainly relating to impact on existing residential properties. Where schemes have been amended to remove or reduce harm, less than substantial harm can be acceptable, if there is a package of public benefits which outweigh that harm.
- 3.12 The public realm benefits and improving the way in which the area functions is seen as a critical part of this package of benefits and must be delivered. Work is ongoing to refine these proposals.

Community use

- 3.13 Part of the ground floor of the taller building is proposed as a community use. It is very important that this space is usable and has a long-term function. Officers have requested that the applicant connects this space better to the surrounding public realm and locate plant and storage areas in less prominent areas of the tower. The applicant also needs to further clarify how this space would be operated and maintained. This work is still ongoing.

Housing Mix

- 3.14 Emerging policy, to which weight can currently be given and which would be fully adopted at the point at which a subsequent application is determined, shows that 40% of units should be designed for families.
- 3.15 Due to the form of development and the viability of the scheme, officers consider it is reasonable to provide a lower amount of family units. The scheme currently proposes 15% which officers consider should be raised to at least 20%.

Impact on Adjoining Occupiers

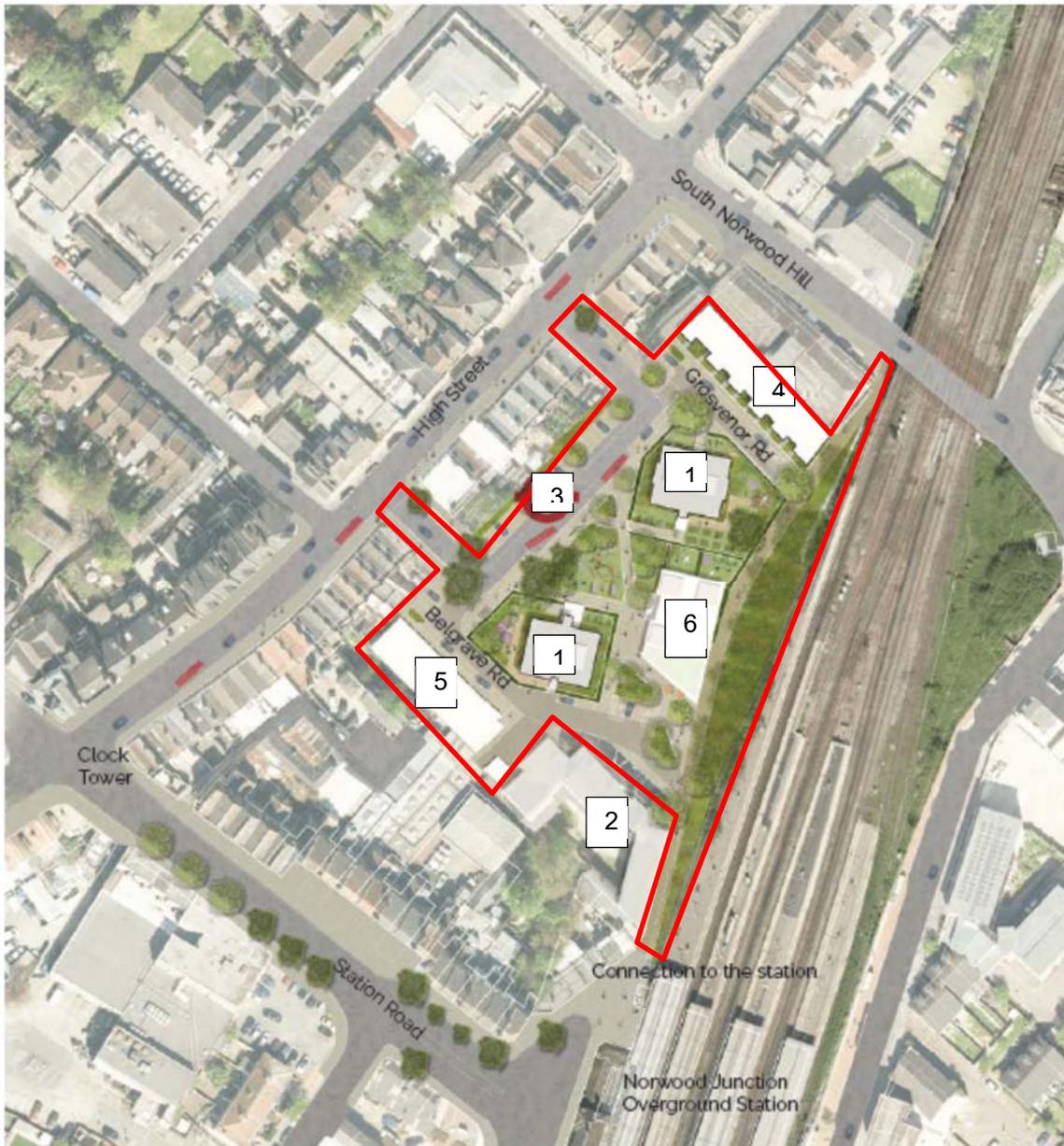
- 3.16 The proposal would have an impact on some adjoining occupiers. The existence of some basement residential properties to the rear of the High Street has recently come to light; Block B would have an impact on them. Block C which is the tower element) would be 16-17m from the existing tower to the north and so would have an impact on outlook and light to an extent. Given the configuration of units and location within a District Centre, this is considered likely to be acceptable.

Parking

- 3.17 The proposal would be car-free except for disabled car parking and a car club space. 34 existing pay and display spaces would be reconfigured and re-provided as 29 spaces to support the wider district centre function. 44 existing resident permit parking spaces would be reconfigured and re-provided as 29 existing resident permit parking spaces.
- 3.18 Given the high PTAL a car-free scheme is welcomed. Parking for shoppers, suitably controlled to ensure it is not used for commuter parking, is considered to be important in the operation of the District Centre. Replacement existing residents parking spaces is acceptable where it integrates successfully with the emerging public realm.

4. SITE BRIEFING

- 4.1 The site is formed of the area of Belgrave and Grosvenor Roads, being the loop road they form and the areas to the east of this up to the railway line. This includes the Network Rail path and bank as well as parking areas and drying spaces to the rear of Portland Place and Station Approach, but does not include parking areas associated with 2-48 Belgrave Road.
- 4.2 The wider area forms South Norwood District Centre and Conservation Area. The heart of the district centre is very much the High Street and Portland Road, with Station Approach being an important route. The conservation area is founded upon the Victorian High Street but contains a number of different character areas.
- 4.3 The buildings marked below are as follows:
1. Two existing 11 storey residential towers owned by the Council. They reportedly suffer from anti-social behaviour and break-ins. The area between them is landscaped space which is under-utilised and poorly defined. The scheme proposes to make improvements in the form of entrance lobbies and reconfiguration of amenity space.
 2. 2-48 Belgrave Road, a block of flats of 4 and 5 storeys. The scheme does not include this building.
 3. The bus stop and pay and display parking area, both of which are well used to support the district centre and interchange with Norwood Junction station.
 4. Proposed building A – five storeys. To its north, a scheme is under consideration for a 4-storey scheme of offices and 29 flats (LBC Ref 17/01596/FUL)
 5. Proposed building B – five storeys.
 6. Proposed building C – 17 storeys including community use in ground floor and Network Rail path to the east.



5. SUMMARY OF MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 The main matters for consider in a future submission are:

5.2 Principle of Development

- The majority of the site is under-utilised and poorly maintained amenity space and parking. Consideration needs to be given to the impact on residential amenity from the loss of the amenity areas but there are no policy designations or site constraints which prevent the area from being developed.
- There is a very clear opportunity to improve a fragmented space and make is a well-functioning, well designed and laid out area through the public realm improvements that this scheme would bring.

5.3 Affordable Housing Provision

- The scheme is currently proposing 43% affordable units at a policy compliant split (60:40 affordable rent:shared ownership). A number of different options have been proposed and the viability of the scheme is still being tested.
- The proposed affordable housing would provide a good level of provision, as well as providing a very good proportion of affordable rent units.
- There is still further testing being undertaken and other scheme changes may have an impact on affordable housing provision.

5.4 Housing Mix

- CLP1.1 and CLP2 indicates that housing mix should be linked to public transport accessibility and character of the area, whilst setting an overall requirement of 30% of all new homes to have 3 or more bedrooms. Schemes in this area should provide 40% of units as family homes, which can include 2-bed, 4-person homes where necessary from a viability perspective.
- The scheme currently consists of approximately 15% of units being family homes, almost fully 2-bed, 4-person homes. Officers are discussing this with the applicant. There is a case for the specific form of housing proposed, namely a tower block, providing less than 40% family homes, but officers consider that this should be above 20%.

5.5 Massing – Conservation Area and Townscape

- The South Norwood Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan identifies the existing tall buildings as harmful to the Conservation Area and officers are concerned that the proposal would cause harm to the conservation area.
- The applicant has investigated other site layouts which can be demonstrated to have other impacts which are unlikely to be acceptable, within the constraints of retaining the existing tower blocks. They argue they have therefore shown that the harm to the conservation area is unavoidable.
- Policy allows for less than substantial harm in specific circumstances. Officers do consider that the harm would be less than substantial, but would still be significant. As such, it is necessary to ensure that the public benefits of the scheme outweigh this harm. One of the most significant public benefits is the provision of a high quality public realm with improved routes and an exemplar design solution. The applicant is working to demonstrate that this can be delivered.
- Beyond the impact on the conservation area, the townscape impacts of a tall building need to be carefully considered. The scheme could connect the interchange facilities of the bus stop and the station in public realm terms and mark it with a taller building. Clearly a certain amount of development is necessary to accommodate the costs of the improvements in public realm terms.

5.7 Design and Appearance

- The applicant has undertaken a thorough townscape analysis to document materials, forms, rhythms and architectural details found locally and are seeking to reflect this in the appearance of the proposed buildings.
- Officers consider that the lower buildings do this successfully, especially with the roof forms, but detailed consideration of how they sit against existing and proposed buildings is necessary to finalise their acceptability. There are a number of detailed design developments necessary to refine the elevations, but officers consider they are developing in a positive fashion.
- The ground floor layout of Block C is still under development to ensure that the community space can function adequately and be a positive contribution to the sense of a place. Officers consider that this should be well connected to the heart of the scheme, which is the landscaping, as well as the arrival points from the west and south. This is difficult to accommodate in the proposed ground floor footprint but is being worked on by the applicant team.

5.8 Residential Amenity

- The impact on residential amenity of neighbouring properties needs to be carefully considered given the proximity of the building to other homes.
- Block C will definitely have an impact on the existing two towers, due to the proximity of the buildings. The tower to the north would be 16-17m from the northern elevation of the proposed building which is considered on balance sufficient to ensure privacy. The scheme would also impact on daylight and sunlight to this building given the orientation of the buildings. This is in part due to the very high levels of light which these buildings currently enjoy.
- The scheme proposes to improve the amenity space for both existing tower blocks to provide some defensible planting and definition of space, as well as lobbies to the main entrances to aide their legibility and security.
- Building A has been designed to complement the scheme to the north under consideration, but further details of this are required to reach firm conclusions. Windows however are located in a manner which do not impact significantly on residents of that future block.
- Block B is undergoing further testing with regards to basement units in the rear of properties fronting the High Street in terms of impact on daylight and sunlight. Due to the close proximity of the buildings, there would be significant daylight and sunlight implications. The wider area however is characterised by a tight urban grain and reductions in daylight and sunlight to below guidelines are acceptable where areas are already characterised by such issues, which is often caused by a tight urban gran.
- All proposed homes would meet required internal dimensions and have external private amenity space.

5.9 Trees

- The proposal would result in the loss of one Category A (high quality) tree, three Category B trees and 5 Category C trees. The removal of these trees is unavoidable where they conflict with either highways or building layouts.
- A replacement planting strategy has been put forward by the applicant and is under consideration.

5.10 Highways and Parking

- The existing and proposed parking arrangements are summarised earlier in this report.
- An occupancy survey or stress test has been undertaken to investigate the extent to which these spaces are used. This found that the residential spaces are generally two-thirds to three-quarters full at peak times (weekday nights) and pay and display parking approximately two-thirds full on Saturdays – and a similar amount overnight, suggesting that residential use of pay and display spaces occurs outside of peak times.
- Officers consider that despite the high public transport accessibility, parking for shoppers is important given the current health of the main shopping areas of the District Centre. Residential parking permits is not common in the wider area so whilst re-provision is desirable, it should not result in poorer quality public spaces nor a reduction in the amount of disabled parking, which is currently proposed.
- Cycle parking is proposed at current London Plan levels, which includes some cycle hoops in the public realm. Where these do not give rise to clutter and have good levels of surveillance, this is likely to be acceptable.

5.11 Sustainability

- Policy requires that major developments are designed in accordance with the London Sustainable Design and Construction SPG and achieve, for residential elements, a zero carbon development and that non-residential elements achieve a 35% reduction in carbon and meet BREEAM Excellent.
- The applicant has indicated that these can be met through on-site measures and that carbon-offsetting may be required for the residential elements.
- The site is at risk of surface water flooding which may require measures to be incorporated into the building design and will require the use of SuDS to manage surface water run-off.

6. PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The site is currently poorly defined and maintained and does not contribute as well as it could to the character or function of the area. A scheme provides opportunities for these issues to be resolved and the public realm to be significantly upgraded, as well as providing significant accommodation and affordable housing.
- 6.2 There would be impacts on the Conservation Area which require the harm to be removed where possible and for residual impacts to be less than substantial in the harm they cause. It is particularly important that the package of measures to offset the harm can be delivered.
- 6.3 More work is required on the landscaping and public realm and to demonstrate that the community use can adequately function. The amount of family units also needs to be increased as well as a number of technical studies carried out and their implications for the scheme addressed.

6.4 Officers are confident that these issues can be addressed and the opportunities associated with this scheme fully accommodated

7 Specific Feedback requested from Members

- 1) Principle of the development
- 2) Housing Mix
- 3) Community use
- 4) Massing – Conservation Area and Townscape
- 5) Landscaping and public and private areas
- 6) Design and Appearance
- 7) Residential Amenity
- 8) Highways and Parking

8 SUMMARY OF COMMENTS FROM PLACE REVIEW PANEL

8.1 The scheme is to be presented to Place Review Panel on the same day as Planning Committee; officers will therefore summarise the views of the Place Review Panel to Planning Committee.