

3.	REGISTERED NUMBER:	5/2009/2586/FULL
	APPLICANT:	Mr John McGowan
	PROPOSAL:	Conversion of existing two storey rear extension to form one, one bedroom dwelling; erection of single storey rear and four storey side and rear extension with basement to provide extension to existing public house at basement and ground floor level; four, one bedroom flats and one studio apartment above; and other alterations to provide new entrance to existing first floor flat, first floor amenity area and refurbishment of existing public house including alterations to basement (resubmission following withdrawal of 5/09/1904)
	SITE:	172 London Road St Albans AL1 1PQ
	DATE OF APPLICATION:	12/01/2010
	HISTORIC BUILDING GRADE:	Locally Listed
	CONSERVATION AREA:	No. 11 St. Albans
	DISTRICT PLAN REVIEW:	Urban Area

<u>RECOMMENDATION</u> REFUSE

Background

The Great Northern is a Locally Listed, mid to late 19th Century inn which is on the 1880 Ordnance Survey. The inn is two storey, mock half-timbered with rendered infill above red brick and with a slate roof. The application site slopes down from London Road to the residential gardens of Alma Cut to the south of the site. The site is located on the corner of Alma Cut and London Road, the main route to the city centre from the east, within the St Albans Conservation Area. The current character of London Road is of a great mixture of buildings representing many building periods from the early nineteenth century onwards, and representing different building types and uses. They are also of varying scales, forms and heights. To the west of the site lies the Odeon building (also Locally Listed), which dates from 1931.

The Proposal

Permission is sought for:

- Conversion of existing two storey rear extension to form one, one-bedroom dwelling,
- Erection of single storey rear and four storey side and rear extension with basement to provide extension to existing public house at basement and ground floor level and four, one-bedroom flats and one studio apartment above;
- Other alterations to provide new entrance to existing first floor flat, first floor amenity area and refurbishment of existing public house including alterations to basement.

This application differs from the previously submitted scheme by including a row of tree tub planting, 1.8m from the rear boundary adjacent Alma Cut, and one tub on the communal decking.

East of England Plan 2008:

ENV7: Quality in the Built Environment

St. Albans District Local Plan Review 1994:

Policy 2	Settlement Strategy
Policy 4	New Housing Development in Towns
Policy 34	Highways Considerations in Development Control
Policy 39	Parking Standards, General Requirements
Policy 40	Residential Development Parking Standards
Policy 69	General Design and Layout
Policy 70	Design and Layout of New Housing
Policy 74	Landscaping and Tree Protection
Policy 85	Development in Conservation Areas
Policy 87	Locally Listed Buildings
Policy 90	Shopfronts and Advertisements in Conservation Areas and on Listed Buildings

Relevant Planning History

5/09/1904 Conversion of existing two storey rear extension to form one, one-bedroom dwelling, erection of single storey rear and four storey side and rear extension with basement to provide extension to existing public house at basement and ground floor level and four, one-bedroom flats and one studio apartment above; and other alterations to provide new entrance to existing first floor flat, first floor amenity area and refurbishment of existing public house including alterations to basement – Withdrawn 30/11/09

Reason for Call-In for Determination by Committee

The application was called to committee by Cllr. Gaygusuz on 13th January 2010 if officers were minded to recommend refusal, for the following reasons:

Proposed development is likely to bring some life to London Road as the ground floor's allocated for commercial use, and the proposed flats will also contribute towards much needed housing in the district towards the needed target of 7500 residential units. The proposal does not represent an overdevelopment of the site.

The application was called to committee by Cllr. Frearson on 25th January 2010 if officers were minded to recommend approval, for the following reasons:

In view of the prominence of this site in the St Albans Conservation Area, the application should be decided by committee in the event of officers wish to approve, in order to ascertain that the previous concerns about impact on adjoining properties, impact on the locally listed building, the size, mass and bulk of the proposals, and the lack of landscaping on the London Road frontage has been addressed.

Representations

Advertisement

The proposal was advertised as a Section 73 Advert on 27/01/2010. A site notice was displayed.

Adjoining Occupiers

Nos. 99-111, 111, 113 (Basement, basement office, second floor office), 115, 115a, 117, 117 Basement, 166, 174 London Road, 11 Hordle Gardens, 200 St Michaels Street and 2, 10, 10A, 12 and 14 Alma Cut were notified 26/01/10.

A letter of support has been received from No. 11 Hordle Gardens. No other representations received at the time of writing this report. Any additional representations received will be reported verbally at the committee meeting.

Consultations

Highways

No comments received at the time of writing this report. Any representations received will be reported verbally at the committee meeting.

Archaeology

No comments received at the time of writing this report. Any representations received will be reported verbally at the committee meeting.

Thames Water

Have no objection with regard to sewage infrastructure.

Culture & Community Development

Outlined below are the level of planning obligations that Culture & Community Development (CCD) would seek to mitigate for the proposed development. If you require the full evidential justification for these obligations please let me know and I can produce this.

The Council will base its calculations for the net increase in on-site population on the following occupancy rates, which are taken from the latest available information development by Hertfordshire County Council:

Dwelling Size	Occupancy
Dwellings with 1 bedroom/Studio	1.5
Dwellings with 2 bedrooms	1.7
Dwellings with 3 bedrooms	2.3
Dwellings with 4 bedrooms	3.0
Dwellings with 5 or more bedrooms	4.0

Using the occupancy levels outlined above, the net increase in on-site population for the proposed development will be:

Dwelling Size	No. of Units	Household Size (People per unit)	Occupancy
1 Bed/Studio	6	1.5	9
2 Bed	0	1.7	0
3 Bed	0	2.3	0
4 Bed	0	3.0	0
5+ Bed	0	4.0	0
Total	6	-	9

The following table provides a summary of the planning obligations that the Council consider it appropriate to request because of the need generated by the proposed development:

Type of Provision	Local Standard Cost (or where applicable the Contribution)	Contribution Per Person	Total Contribution
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Provision for Children	0.2 ha per 1000 population or 2,000 square metres per 1000 population	£140 per square metre ¹	£280	N/A for 1 Beds
Provision for Teenagers	0.2 ha per 1000 population or 2,000 square metres per 1000 population	£140 per square metre ¹	£280	N/A for 1 Beds
Premier Parks	0.42 ha per 1000 population or 4,200 square metres per 1000 population	£7 per square metre ²	£29.40	£265
Local Parks	0.82 ha per 1000 population or 8,200 square metres per 1000 population	£7 per square metre ²	£57.40	£517
Play Pitches	1.35 ha per 1000 population or 13,500 square metres per 1000 population	£18.52 per square metre ³	£250	£2,250
Sports Halls	51.23 m ² per 1000 population	£4,325 per square metre ⁴	£221.57	£1,994
Swimming Pools	10.51 m ² per 1000 population	£11,009 per square metre ⁵	£115.70	£1,041
Other Sport and Leisure Facilities	Not Applicable	£1,000 ⁶	N/A	£1,000

¹ This figure is an estimate based on past developments

² This figure is based on best practice

³ This figure is based on best practice

⁴ This figure is based on costings from the Sport England Facility Calculator

⁵ This figure is based on costings from the Sport England Facility Calculator

⁶ This figure is an estimate to be explored with the developer and is based on deficiencies identified in the St Albans District Sport and Recreation Facilities Strategy

Discussion

The main issues for consideration are the design and layout of the proposed development and its impact on: the character and appearance of the street scene, the general locality and the Conservation Area; amenity; impact on neighbouring properties; landscaping and parking.

Principle of Development

Policies 2 and 4 preamble and (ii) state that within St Albans there will be a presumption in favour of housing development where housing is consistent with the relevant policies of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994. The principle of dwellings on this site is therefore acceptable subject to compliance with other relevant policies in the development plan.

The principle of an extension to the existing public house would be acceptable, subject to compliance with other relevant policies in the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994. The site is not located within a Shopping Frontage.

Design

This is a sensitive site in the St Albans Conservation Area located on London Road, the main route to the city centre from the east. The site is located at a prominent corner location. The proposed extension would be attached at ground floor level to the adjacent The Great Northern PH, therefore any extension should relate to this building. The Great Northern PH is a two storey Locally Listed building, with a distinctive appearance and use of materials.

The proposed scheme would not be well integrated with the existing public house and would be out of keeping in terms of size, bulk, scale, design and materials. The proposed building would not be considered to be in keeping with, or integrate into, the existing London Road street scene. The current character of London Road is of a mixed appearance but generally consists of small scale, two or two and a half storey buildings with commercial uses at ground floor level, and residential above. Although the Odeon is building of larger scale and taller. The existing two storey public house is of a similar scale to these properties. Alma Cut to the rear of the site is at a lower level than London Road and consists of smaller scale two storey terraced residential properties. The proposed four storey building would be out of scale in both the London Road and Alma Cut street scenes. Its form would also be out of keeping with the prevailing character and appearance of the locality and this part of the conservation area. The Great Northern PH and other buildings/terraces in the vicinity of the site (including the Odeon) have a horizontal emphasis, whereas the proposed four storey element would have a column-like, vertical emphasis, which would contrast sharply with the prevailing form of other buildings in the area.

Policy 85 of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994 states that the roofscape should be appropriate to the locality and the streetscene. It is considered that the proposed flat roofed element of the development, together with the steeply sloping sides and dormer windows, would not be appropriate to the locality, as its character, appearance and materials are markedly different from those in the area. Although the adjacent Odeon building has elements of flat roof and is of a much larger scale than other properties in London Road, the Odeon is an individual building and can not be considered to be indicative of other properties in the street scene or the Conservation Area. The flat-roofed petrol station opposite the site pre-dates the Conservation Area designation in 1981, and pre-dates the current District Local Plan. The proposed chimney on the proposed element would also be a disjointed element that would have an industrial appearance due to its scale that would be out of keeping on this modern building.

The excessive glazing at ground floor level in this location would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the existing building and the Conservation Area. The plate glass would be very modern in appearance and its size would be out of scale with the adjacent public house and the streetscene. This design would also not be reflective of the proposed use, which is an extension of the existing public house. Given that the proposed extension would be attached to The Great Northern, the shopfront should continue from this building and should therefore be of appropriate design and materials to be in keeping. Paragraph 4.7 of the Council's "Shopfronts and Advertisements Guide" states that 'Materials should be chosen to conform with the historic character of the area, and with the building above or, where suitable, to each side. Painted timber is the most prevalent shopfront material of historic streets and should form the basis of most designs'.

The proposed materials would not be appropriate given the location of the site. Policy 85 requires traditional materials that are compatible with those in the vicinity. The proposed timber cladding and roof materials would be markedly different from those in the area. The proposed timber entrance door in the front elevation would have an industrial appearance which would not be appropriate in the streetscene.

The proposed upper floor windows would not relate well to the appearance of The Great Northern PH in terms of design and window to wall ratio. The banded windows at first and second floor levels would not be in keeping with the compact windows of the public house. The scale of the roof level windows being larger than those below, together with the design of the side panel, would have a detrimental impact on the proposed building in the streetscene.

For the reasons set out above, the proposed development would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the adjacent Locally Listed building, the streetscene and the Conservation Area. The proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the St Albans Conservation Area contrary to the provisions of Policy 85 (Development in Conservation Areas) of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994.

Impact on neighbouring properties

The proposed four storey extension would be located a minimum of 4m from the rear boundary, which is adjacent to the rear gardens of the residential properties in Alma Cut. Due to its height, bulk and proximity to the rear boundary, the proposed extension would have an overbearing impact on the occupiers of the properties in Alma Cut to the detriment of their amenity. Although the Odeon building does have a significant visual impact on neighbours' amenities, the gap between that building and the Great Northern PH provides some relief, which the proposed 4-storey building would infill.

Although there would be some loss of sunlight to the rear gardens in Alma Cut, the proposed extension would be located to the east of the gardens and any loss of sunlight would be at the start of the day. The proposed extension would close an existing gap between the Odeon and The Great Northern, but sufficient daylight would be considered to still reach the rear of the properties in Alma Cut. The proposed 4-storey building would cause some overshadowing of the nearest rear gardens in Alma Cut, this would only occur during the early part of the day and would not result in a harmful impact.

Although the main windows to the dwellings in the extension would not face the properties in Alma Cut, the proposed first and second floor bedroom side windows would be located 11m from the boundary but would face the rear of the site. These could be conditioned to be obscure glazed, however the occupants of Alma Cut would still suffer the perception of being overlooked, due to the glazing at first and second floor level, particularly given the higher level of the proposed development in comparison to Alma Cut. The proposed side window at first, second and third floor level serving units 2 and 5 would be located 4.5m from the rear boundary. Although these windows would not directly face the rear windows of properties in Alma Cut, there would still be a significant loss of privacy, and overlooking caused, to the occupiers of these properties, again given that the development is at a higher level due to the slope of Alma Cut, and that the windows would be at first, second and third floor level.

The proposed communal decking area would also be considered to cause a loss of privacy to the properties in Alma Cut due to the height of the development, and the proposed 1.5m fence and tree tub planting would not provide sufficient screening, particularly as the tubs are not a permanent feature and could be removed.

No additional side windows are proposed in the existing public house as part of the conversion and refurbishment, and there would be no loss of privacy to the two units proposed in the existing public house from the adjacent proposed extension. The proposed balconies would not be considered to cause a loss of privacy to the occupiers of any adjoining properties. These balconies would look onto London Road and onto the existing public house, which does not have any facing side windows.

For the reasons set out above, the proposed development would result in the loss of amenity to occupiers of existing adjacent properties to the detriment of their visual and residential amenity, and as such would be contrary to Policies 69 (General Design and Layout) and 70 (Design and Layout of New Housing) of the St. Albans District Local Plan Review 1994.

Car Parking Provision and Access

There is no parking provision proposed as part of this application. As the buildings occupy a city centre location with good access to St Albans City Station and bus routes, and with regard to current Government guidance in PPG13 Transport, the lack of parking provision could not be justified as a reason for refusal. There would be no conflict with Policies 34 (Highways Considerations in Development Control), 39 (Parking Standards, General Requirements) or 40 (Residential Development Parking Standards) of the St. Albans District Local Plan Review 1994.

Landscaping

The application proposes a row of tree tub planting, 1.8m from the rear boundary adjacent Alma Cut, and one tub on the communal decking. No other soft landscaping is proposed. The existing public house has a grassed area to the rear of the site. A patio has been constructed adjacent to the existing building, which involved the removal of two trees located towards the front of the site.

The trees would have made a positive impact in the streetscene and it is important to retain such landscaping in a streetscene such as London Road that does not have many landscaped areas. Any development on this site should therefore incorporate soft landscaping to preserve and enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The proposal would also not comply with Policy 74 which requests that detailed landscaping schemes should be submitted as part of a full planning application.

Amenity Space

Policy 70 of the St. Albans District Local Plan Review 1994 would require 95 sq. m of useable amenity space to be provided for the four one-bedroom flats and the studio apartment. A further 40 sq. m would be required for the one-bedroom dwelling. Private balconies measuring 12 sq. m are to be provided for units 3, 4 and 6, and a communal decking area is to be provided at first floor level. The communal decking area would measure 40 sq. m but would seem from the plans to only have access to Unit 2. Although the total amenity space provision would be 76 sq.m, Units 1 and 5 have no access to any amenity space. This would not be adequate and the proposal would fail to provide sufficient amenity space to meet the needs of the future occupants of the proposed dwelling, contrary to Policy 70 (ix) of the St. Albans District Local Plan Review 1994. This is also indicative of an overdevelopment of this site.

Conclusion

By reason of its size, height, bulk, scale, design, proximity to the boundary, lack of amenity space and materials the proposed development is considered to be an overdevelopment of the site that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the adjacent Locally Listed public house, the street scene, the general locality and this part of the Conservation Area.

The development proposed would adversely affect the visual and residential amenities of the occupiers of the properties in Alma Cut by reason of its height, bulk, scale, decking area and proximity to the boundary. The proposal would not therefore achieve an adequately high standard of environment.

The proposal would be contrary to Policies 69 (General Design and Layout), 70 (Design and Layout of New Housing) and 85 (Development in Conservation Areas) of the St. Albans District Local Plan Review 1994.

Recommendation - REFUSE

Reasons:

1. By reason of its size, height, bulk, scale, design, proximity to the boundary, lack of amenity space and landscaping, and materials the proposed development is considered to be an overdevelopment of the site that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the adjacent Locally Listed public house, the street scene, the general locality and this part of the Conservation Area. The proposal is contrary to Policies 69 (General Design and Layout), 70 (Design and Layout of New Housing), 74 (Landscaping and Tree Protection), 85 (Development in Conservation Areas), 87 (Locally Listed Buildings) of the St. Albans District Local Plan Review 1994

2. The development proposed would adversely affect the visual and residential amenities of the occupiers of the properties in Alma Cut by reason of its height, bulk, scale, decking area and proximity to the boundary. The proposal would not therefore achieve an adequately high standard of environment and would be contrary to the provisions of Policies 69 (General Design and Layout) and 70 (Design and Layout of New Housing) of the St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994.

Informatives:

1. This determination was based on the following drawing numbers: Design and Access Statement and Drawing Nos. 01A, 02B, 03C, 04D, 05D, 06D, 10 received 24/12/09.

Drawing Nos: Design and access statement, Site plan, 1371 02B, 01A, 03C, 04D, 06D, 05D

O.S. Grid Reference: 515238.14 206766.53

Decision Notice Code: R1

<http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-applications/planning-applications-search.aspx>

Report Written : 05/02/10
Bibliography

Officer : J Woof

Section 65 Parties

