

PLANNING STATEMENT

**98 WESTBURY LANE
BUCKHURST HILL
IG9 5PW**

Full Planning Application for the demolition of existing buildings
and erection of mixed use building to contain an office
(Use Class E(g)) and 2no. one bedroom apartments

Lee Evans Partnership Ref: P3911

December 2020



Full Planning Application

at

99 Westbury Lane, Buckhurst Hill, IG9 5PW

<i>Client</i>	<i>Blueleaf Consultants Ltd</i>
<i>Determining Authority</i>	<i>Epping Forest District Council</i>
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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Lee Evans Partnership LLP has been commissioned by Blueleaf Consultants Ltd to prepare and submit a Full Planning Application for the demolition of existing buildings at **98 Westbury Lane, Buckhurst Hill**, and the erection of a new mixed use building to contain office floorspace (Use Class E(g)) and 2no. one bedroom apartments.
- 1.2 The site currently consists of a number of structures, directly accessed off Westbury Lane, that were last in use as an accountant's office. The proposed development would consist of the erection of a 1.5-storey form replacement building with office space at ground floor and the 2no. apartments above at first-floor level.
- 1.3 In accordance with National Planning Practice Guidance, this statement is provided in conjunction with the formal application and will discuss the site context, planning policy considerations and how issues specific to the site have been addressed.
- 1.4 Section 2 of this Statement provides a description of the site and its surroundings.
- 1.5 Section 3 provides details of the proposed development and the background behind the application.
- 1.6 Section 4 considers the planning policy framework and identifies the relevant national and local planning policy considerations and guidance in relation to the proposed development.
- 1.7 Section 5 addresses the relevant planning issues and material considerations in the context of the identified policy provisions and assesses how the development accords with the Development Plan.
- 1.8 Section 6 comprises the Summary and Conclusions and discussion of the planning balance.

- 1.9 The application should be read, in addition to this Planning Statement, in accordance with the following drawings and other supporting documents:

Drawings

- 08658-A-L-(00)-X-0101 – Site Location Plan
- 08658-A-L-(00)-X-0102 – Existing Block Plan
- 08658-A-L-(00)-X-0103 – Existing North and South Elevations
- 08658-A-L-(00)-X-0104 – Existing West and East Elevations
- 08658-A-L-(00)-X-0111 – Proposed Site Layout Plan
- 08658-A-L-(00)-X-0112 – Proposed Building Plans
- 08658-A-L-(00)-X-0113 – Proposed North and South Elevations
- 08658-A-L-(00)-X-0114 – Proposed West and East Elevations

Supporting Documents

- Transport Technical Note (*Stantec – December 2020*)
- Design and Access Statement (*Lee Evans Partnership – December 2020*)

2. THE APPLICATION SITE

2.1 Strategic Location

2.1.1 Buckhurst Hill is a town located in the south-west corner of Epping Forest District. It is also part of the London Metropolitan Area and the Greater London Urban Area, and lies directly adjacent to the northern boundary of the London Borough of Redbridge. The main part of the Epping Forest runs along the north-west boundary of Buckhurst Hill.

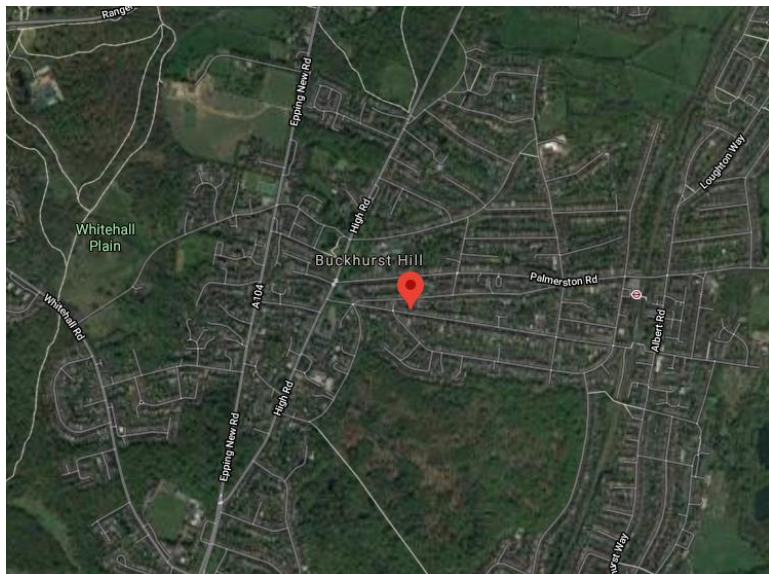


Fig.1 - Google Maps extract (Application Site marked red)

2.1.2 Buckhurst Hill is identified as a “Large Village” within the Council’s Settlement Hierarchy (the second tier within the hierarchy) and as a “Small District Centre”. The **Epping Forest District Local Plan Submission Version December 2017** sets out a vision for Buckhurst Hill as specified below:

“Buckhurst Hill will maintain its unique identity and separation from Loughton. It will provide services and amenities to meet the needs of its

community, while seeking to boost connectivity between the station, Queens Road and the wider settlement.

The Village will provide varied employment including professional services employment as part of a successful and prosperous high street. New opportunities for wider employment uses will be maximised.

A focus on improving sustainable transport connections will seek to maximise the good public transport accessibility”.

2.2 Accessibility and Sustainability

2.2.1 The site is located within the centre of Buckhurst Hill, approximately 450 metres to the west of the primary shopping area in Queens Road. Within the primary shopping area there are a wide ranges of facilities including a supermarket, chemists, a post office, hairdressers and beauty salons.

2.2.2 Within the Queens Road primary area, and indeed further across Buckhurst Hill, there are a number of other amenities available including restaurants and hot-food takeaways, coffee shops, a wide range of retail (including convenience stores) as well as a number of financial and professional services.

2.2.3 Directly to the south of the application site itself is a secondary centre which contains facilities including a library, post office, convenience store, restaurants and takeaways, various health and beauty provisions and a pre-school. Immediately to the north of the site, directly opposite, is Braeside Junior School

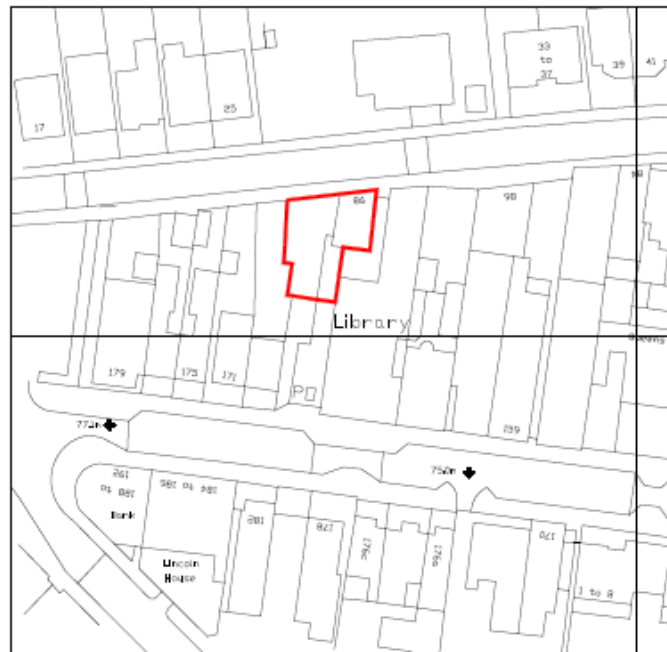
2.2.4 In addition to benefitting from a wide range of local services and facilities, there are also good public transport links, predominantly Buckhurst Hill Underground Station, which is served by the Central line. This station is approximately 750 metres to the north-east of the application site and within walking distance.

2.2.5 There are also a number of bus services on High Road and Palmerston Road which are within walking distance (less than 5 minutes) of the site

and which provide regular services to Loughton (one of the District's major towns), as well as further afield to Walthamstow and Ilford.

2.3 The Site and Surrounding Context

2.3.1 The application site is approximately 0.0187 hectares in size (187 square metres) and currently contains a number of structures, which, as previously referenced were last in permanent use an accountant's office. To the side of the existing buildings is a concrete surfaced area which was used as parking for circa six vehicles, with direct access off Westbury Lane.



2.5 Site Photographs



Fig.3 – View of site from Westbury Lane



Fig.5 – View looking west along Westbury Lane



Fig.4 – View from within site to rear of 169 Queens Road



Fig.6 – View to north-west of Westbury Lane



Fig.7 – Existing building within the site



Fig.9 – Existing building fronting Westbury Lane



Fig.8 – Existing building within the site



Fig.10 – View from the east along Westbury Lane towards site



Fig.11 – Existing building (internal)



Fig.12 = Existing building (internal)



Fig.13 – View from existing first floor office of site opposite



Fig.14 – View of buildings to rear fronting Queens Road

3. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The development proposals involve the demolition of the existing buildings at 98 Westbury Lane (last in permanent use as an accountant's office) and the erection of a new mixed use building to provide office floorspace (Use Class E(g)) at ground floor and 2no. one bedroom apartments at first floor level.

3.2 Amount of Development

3.2.1 The amount of development proposed is comprised of the following:

- 75.2sqm of office space on the ground floor;



Fig.15 – Proposed Ground Floor Plan

- 1no. x 50.8sqm 1-bedroom apartment at first-floor (98A);
- 1no. x 58.2sqm 1-bedroom apartment at first-floor (98B).



Fig.16 – Proposed First Floor Plan

3.3 Layout, Design and Scale

- 3.3.1 The design approach to the development has evolved following the exploration of the mass and form of existing buildings on both the existing site and its immediate context. This has led to the building proposed, which is based on a 1.5-storey form with 3no. projecting gables facing onto Westbury Lane.
- 3.3.2 At the rear of the site, the proposed building will have a single-storey element where it adjoins the rear of properties in Queens Road (including the shop/post office and the Parish Council/library) in order

to ensure that sufficient separation, and reduced bulk and mass, is achieved between the new development and its neighbours.

- 3.3.3 In order to add visual interest to the building, in addition to maximising natural light, three large windows are proposed at first-floor which will serve both apartments. Further extensive glazing is also proposed at ground-floor through the provision of a full height window to serve the new office, as well as secondary windows and access to apartment 98B, which will also create an active frontage along Westbury Lane.



Fig.17 – Proposed Front (Westbury Lane) Elevation

- 3.3.4 So as to add depth to the principal elevation of the proposed building, the gables have been projected over at first-floor level, which will also create a threshold for entering into the office and the entrance for apartment 98B.



Fig.18 – Proposed Side/(West) Elevation

- 3.3.5 Also at ground-floor is an undercroft which will provide parking for the commercial unit, as well as the access into apartment into 98A. It is envisaged that for security purposes a tube and link roller shutter would be provided across the undercroft. This would have a separate secured pedestrian access to allow the residents of that apartment entry outside of the office hours.



Fig.19 – Roller Shutter Example

- 3.3.6 In terms of the appearance of the proposed building, a crisp and contemporary palette of materials is envisaged, including:

- Yellow corum brick for majority of elevations;
- Grey brick at ground floor to north elevation;
- Dark grey aluminium windows and rainwater goods;
- Standing seam zinc roofs;
- Grey fibre cement cladding to flat roof elements.

- 3.3.7 Each of the first-floor apartments will benefit from a multi-functional kitchen/living/dining space, a bathroom and a bedroom as well as storage areas. The ground floor office will provide 4no. office rooms

within (including one open plan) as well as a small kitchen and toilet facilities.

- 3.3.8 The layout of the development will also ensure that access will be retained to the rear of the Parish Council/library building, as is the existing arrangement on the site.



Fig.19 – Proposed Site Layout

3.4 Access and Parking

- 3.4.1 Vehicular access to the site would be similar to the existing arrangement, taken directly off Westbury Lane. It is proposed that 1no. parking space would be provided to serve the office unit and that the 2no. residential apartments would not have access to any parking and therefore be car-free.
- 3.4.2 At the rear of the site a cycle store for both the apartments and the office will be provided, as well as access to a communal bin storage area. The size of the bin store has been arrived at in order to allow for the separation and storage of general waste and recyclables.

4. PLANNING POLICY

4.1 Policy Framework

4.1.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

4.1.2 The Development Plan comprises the following documents of relevance (a combined policies document was also published in February 2008):

- **Epping Forest District Local Plan (January 1998);**
- **Local Plan Alterations (July 2006).**

4.1.3 Epping Forest District Council is also in the process of adopting a new Local Plan and the **Epping Forest District Local Plan Submission Version December 2017** was submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in public on the 21st September 2018.

4.1.4 Following a number of hearing sessions, the Inspector issued her Interim Findings on the 6th August 2019. On the 27th January 2020 the Council wrote to the Inspector to update her with details of timings of the work leading up to Main Modifications (MM's). The Inspector provided a further update on the 2nd October 2020 confirming that the MM's will be subject to consultation in due course.

4.1.5 The policies within the new Local Plan are therefore a material consideration in determining this application with the weight to be given to them dependent on their consistency with the National Planning Policy Framework.

4.1.6 A number of other planning policies are material to the proposals, including those within the NPPF and local supplementary planning documents.

4.1.7 Buckhurst Hill Parish Council is currently preparing a draft Neighbourhood Plan following approval of the Buckhurst Hill Neighbourhood Area by Epping Forest District Council in December 2014. At the time of writing a draft Neighbourhood Plan has not yet been prepared.

4.1.8 Epping Forest District Council has not yet adopted a CIL Charging Schedule.

4.2 Combined Policies - Local Plan and Alterations (February 2008)

4.2.1 The following are considered to be policies of relevance taken from the Combined Policies – Local Plan and Alterations (February 2008) in relation to the development proposals:

- **CP1** (*Achieving Sustainable Development Objectives*)
- **CP2** (*Protecting the Quality of the Built Environment*)
- **CP3** (*New Development*)
- **CP4** (*Energy Conservation*)
- **CP5** (*Sustainable Building*)
- **CP6** (*Achieving Sustainable Urban Development Patterns*)
- **CP7** (*Urban Form and Quality*)
- **CP8** (*Sustainable Economic Development*)
- **CP9** (*Sustainable Transport*)
- **NC1** (*SPAs, SACs and SSSIs*)
- **H2A** (*Previously Developed Land*)
- **H3A** (*Housing Density*)
- **H4A** (*Dwelling Mix*)
- **E4A** (*Protection of Employment Sites*)
- **E4B** (*Alternative Uses for Employment Sites*)
- **E12** (*Small Scale Business/Working From Home*)
- **U3B** (*Sustainable Drainage Systems*)
- **DBE1** (*Design of New Buildings*)
- **DBE2** (*Effect on Neighbouring Properties*)
- **DBE3** (*Design in Urban Areas*)
- **DBE6** (*Car Parking in New Development*)

- **DBE8** (*Private Amenity Space*)
- **DBE9** (*Loss of Amenity*)
- **LL11** (*Landscaping Schemes*)
- **ST1** (*Location of Development*)
- **ST2** (*Accessibility of Development*)
- **ST4** (*Road Safety*)
- **ST6** (*Vehicle Parking*)

4.3 Epping Forest District Local Plan Submission Version December 2017

4.3.1 The following are considered to be policies of relevance taken from the Epping Forest District Local Plan Submission Version (December 2017) in relation to the development proposals:

- **SP1** (*Presumption in favour of sustainable development*)
- **SP2** (*Spatial Development Strategy 2011-2033*)
- **SP3** (*Place Shaping*)
- **H1** (*Housing Mix and Accommodation Types*)
- **E1** (*Employment Sites*)
- **T1** (*Sustainable Transport Choices*)
- **DM2** (*Epping Forest SAC and the Lee Valley SPA*)
- **DM9** (*High Quality Design*)
- **DM10** (*Housing Design and Quality*)
- **DM11** (*Waste Recycling Facilities in New Development*)
- **DM15** (*Managing and Reducing Flood Risk*)
- **DM16** (*Sustainable Drainage Systems*)
- **DM18** (*On Site Management and Reuse of Waste Water and Water Supply*)
- **DM19** (*Sustainable Water Use*)
- **DM21** (*Local Environmental Impacts, Pollution and Land Contamination*)
- **DM22** (*Air Quality*)
- **P5** (*Buckhurst Hill*)

4.4 Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Position Statement

4.4.1 On the 30th April 2020, Epping Forest District Council published a position statement to provide information about the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (EFSAC). This statement that Council is not able to issue planning permission for new development that may adversely affect the integrity of the EFSAC having regard to the reasons for its designation and the conservation objectives that apply to it. This is expanded upon in further detail in this Planning Statement.

4.5 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) February 2019

4.5.1 The NPPF requires applications to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. **Paragraph 2** advises that the NPPF is a material consideration in planning decisions.

4.5.2 Section 2 considers the meaning and role of sustainable development and how planning can help to achieve it. **Paragraph 7** outlines that the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as “*meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*”.

4.5.3 **Paragraph 8** advises that achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three, interdependent overarching economic, social and environmental objectives.

4.5.4 **Paragraph 10** outlines that at the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

4.5.5 **Paragraph 11** confirms that this presumption in favour means that for decision-taking, development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan should be approved without delay; or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless:

- i. the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or
 - ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.
- 4.5.6 **Paragraph 38** provides guidance in relation to ‘decision-making’ and outlines that local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way and should also look to work pro-actively with applicants and seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 4.5.7 **Paragraphs 47** reiterates the requirement in planning law for applications for planning permission to be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.5.8 **Paragraph 48** clarifies that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to the stage of preparation of the plan; the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies; and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies to the NPPF.
- 4.5.9 **Paragraph 59** requires that in order to support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.
- 4.5.10 **Paragraph 67** requires that planning policies should identify a sufficient supply and mix of sites, taking into account their availability, suitability and likely economic viability and identify a supply of specific, deliverable sites for years one to five of the plan period and specific, developable sites or broad locations for growth, for years six to ten and, where possible, for years eleven to fifteen of the plan.
- 4.5.11 **Paragraph 68** of the NPPF 2018 outlines the important contribution to meeting housing requirements of an area that small and medium sized sites can make.
- 4.5.12 **Paragraph 73** requires strategic policies to include a trajectory illustrating the expected rate of housing delivery over the plan period. Local planning authorities should identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years’ worth of housing. A 20% buffer should be added where there has been significant under delivery of housing over the previous three years, in order to improve the prospect of achieving the planned supply.
- 4.5.13 **Paragraph 75** states that where the Housing Delivery Test indicates that delivery has fallen below 95% of the housing requirement over the previous three years, the authority should prepare an action plan in line with national planning guidance to assess the causes of under-delivery and identify actions to increase delivery in future years.
- 4.5.14 **Paragraph 80** outlines that planning decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development.
- 4.5.15 **Paragraph 91** sets out that planning policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promote social interaction; are safe and accessible; and enable and support healthy lifestyles.
- 4.5.16 **Paragraph 102** requires transport issues to be considered from the earliest stages of development proposals.
- 4.5.17 **Paragraphs 105 and 106** refer to car parking and advising that maximum parking standards for residential development should only be set where there is a clear and compelling justification that they are necessary for managing the local road network or for optimising the density of

development in city and town centres and other locations well served by public transport.

- 4.5.18 **Paragraph 108** sets out that in assessing specific applications for development it should be ensured that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be – or have been – taken up, given the type of development and its location; safe and suitable access to the site can be achieved for all users; and any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be cost effectively mitigated to an acceptable degree.
- 4.5.19 **Paragraph 117** states that Planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objectively assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible of previously-developed or ‘brownfield’ land.
- 4.5.20 **Paragraph 118** advises that planning decisions should, amongst other matters, give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs; and promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively.
- 4.5.21 **Paragraph 122** outlines that decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land and **Paragraph 123** confirms that where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, ensuring that developments make optimal uses of the potential of each site.
- 4.5.22 **Paragraphs 123** outlines that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.
- 4.5.23 **Paragraph 127** relates to the need for good design and outlines a number of criteria that developments should adhere to in order for planning permission to be granted.
- 4.5.24 **Paragraph 130** advises that where the design of a development accords with clear expectations in plan policies, design should not be used by the decision maker as a valid reason to object to the development.
- 4.5.25 **Paragraph 150** requires new development to be planned for in ways that can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design. Any local requirements for sustainability of buildings should reflect the Government policy for national technical standards.
- 4.5.26 **Paragraph 170** advises that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other matters, preventing new or existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability.
- 4.5.27 **Paragraph 175** sets out that when determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply a number of principles including where development on land outside of a Site of Special Scientific Interest is likely to have an adverse effect on it, it should not be permitted.
- 4.5.28 **Paragraph 176** states that Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation should be given the same protection as habitats sites.
- 4.5.29 **Paragraph 177** outlines that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.
- 4.5.30 **Paragraphs 178 & 180** requires decisions to ensure development considers ground contamination and is appropriate for its location

taking account of impact on health, living conditions and the natural environment including mitigation of noise, and the impacts of light pollution.

5. PLANNING MERITS

5.1 Background

5.1.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the demolition of existing buildings and the erection of a new mixed use building to contain office floorspace (Use Class E(g)) and 2no. one bedroom apartments.

5.1.2 Having regard to the relevant planning policy provisions outlined in Section 4, the following key issues are considered as relevant material considerations in the assessment of the scheme:

- 5.2 – Principle of the Development
- 5.3 – Design, Character and Appearance
- 5.4 – Residential Amenity
- 5.5 – Transport, Access and Parking
- 5.6 – Ecology & Air Quality

5.2 Principle of Development

5.2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that all planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF and National Planning Practice Guidance reinforces this requirement.

5.2.2 The relevant development documents for Epping Forest District Council consist of the Epping Forest District Local Plan (January 1998) and Local Plan Alterations (July 2006) which were subsequently re-published in

February 2008 as the Combined Policies – Local Plan and Alterations (hereafter referred to as the “adopted Local Plan”).

5.2.3 The Council is also in the process of adopting a new Local Plan and policies within the Epping Forest District Local Plan Submission Version December 2017 (hereafter referred to as the “emerging Local Plan”) are also relevant to the assessment of the development proposals, with their weight dependent on their consistency with the NPPF.

5.2.4 The NPPF sets out that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. As such, the planning system has three overarching objectives; an economic objective, a social objective and an environmental objective. At the heart of the Framework, is a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

5.2.5 Policies CP1 & CP6 of the adopted Local Plan outline how sustainable development objectives can be met through the provision of sufficient types and amounts of housing accommodation and the location of local employment and commercial activities where these reduce need to travel and reduce reliance on the private car. A specific emphasis is placed upon the requirement to maximise the use of spare capacity in terms of land and buildings and giving preference to development in urban areas.

5.2.6 Policy SP1 of the emerging Local Plan reflects the NPPF presumption in favour of sustainable development and establishes that the Council will take a positive approach to the consideration of development proposals, with those according with the development plan approved.

5.2.7 Policy CP7 of the adopted Local Plan sets out a primary objective to make the fullest use of existing urban areas for new development and for existing areas to be used in the most efficient way to accommodate new development including through the recycling or re-use of urban sites. Policy CP8 emphasises the need for economic, commercial and housing development to facilitate economic regeneration and result in balanced and sustainable economic housing growth in urban areas.

- 5.2.8 Policy SP2 of the emerging Local Plan specifies a requirement of the delivery of 11,400 new homes for the period of 2011-2033, with a sequential approach being taken which includes sites located on previously developed land within settlements. This policy also states that new homes within defined settlement boundaries where they comply with other plan policies and also promotes new small-scale employment opportunities within mixed-use developments.
- 5.2.9 Policy H2A of the adopted Local Plan specifies that the re-use of previously developed land will be encouraged when considering residential and mixed use development schemes, with a least 70% of all new housing on previously developed sites.
- 5.2.10 Policy SP3 requires development proposals to reflect and demonstrate that place shaping principles have been adhered to and to ensure the best and most efficient use of land, that a greater density of development will be expected at places with good public transport accessibility.
- 5.2.11 Policy CP3 of the adopted Local Plan outlines the need for new development to be accessible by sustainable means of transport and be consistent with the principles of sustainability. Policy CP9 establishes a need for schemes to promote and provide for sustainable means of transport, especially to key community facilities particularly by public transport, cycling and walking.
- 5.2.12 Policy T1 of the emerging Local Plan reflects the objectives of Policy CP3 and reaffirms the need for the development proposals to minimise the need to travel, promote opportunities for sustainable transport modes and improve accessibility to services.
- 5.2.13 Policies E4A and E4B of the adopted Local Plan relate to the protection, and alternatives uses of, sites that are currently, or were last in use for employment and states that housing on redundant employment land will be regarded favourably subject to criteria. This is reflected by Policy E1 of the emerging Local Plan.
- 5.2.14 Policy P5 sets out the vision for Buckhurst Hill as a settlement to provide services and amenities to meet the needs of its community, provide varied employment and a focus on improving sustainable transport connections.
- 5.2.15 The development proposed comprises the erection of a replacement office building and 2no. new units of C3 Use Class residential accommodation. The site is located within the heart of the settlement of Buckhurst Hill (identified as a “Large Village” in the Council’s Settlement Hierarchy) and is in an area of established residential character, in extremely close proximity to a wide range of local services and facilities to the south and east in Queens Road. As a result, it is considered to be in a highly sustainable location.
- 5.2.16 In terms of the replacement employment provision, the site was last in permanent use as an accountant’s office, and since the company operating it vacated the premises, it remained empty for at least one year, until the applicant purchased the site prior to the submission of this application and temporarily leased it out for storage. The existing buildings on the site provide a contrived and awkward layout which is not deemed suitable for modern office requirements. The current state of the property is poor and requires a complete upgrade, particularly with regards to building efficiency and longevity.
- 5.2.17 The existing arrangement on the site provides an area of approximately 97 square metres (sqm) of employment floorspace. The proposed replacement office would provide circa 75.2sqm in its place. Whilst there would be a reduction in the total amount of floorspace provided, the proposed layout, and quality of accommodation that would be provided by the development, would significantly upgrade and enhance the existing offering on site by providing modern office facilities with separate meeting rooms and an open plan layout arranged in a rational and functional way. In addition, the replacement building would be constructed using modern sustainable construction techniques, incorporating high levels of insulation as well as water efficiency measures.
- 5.2.18 Further to this, given the fact that the premises had been vacant for at least a year before the applicant’s purchase of the site in September 2020, it is clear that there was no ongoing demand for the office

floorspace in its current form. The applicant intends to relocate their existing business to the site, bringing about much-needed economic investment and regeneration into this part of Buckhurst Hill, through a sensitive, modern re-development, which will only benefit the local economy and serve to further support existing services and facilities within the immediate locality.

- 5.2.19 The emerging Local Plan also sets out a requirement for 11,400 new homes for the period 2011-2033, which equates to approximately 518 dwellings per annum throughout the emerging Local Plan period. The Council's Housing Implementation Strategy (Update 2019) confirms that the Council is seeking to deliver 13,103 dwellings for the period, which equates to a 15% buffer beyond the housing target of 11,400.
- 5.2.20 Since the start of the Plan period (2011/12) the Council has consistently under-delivered in terms of the number of new homes completed, averaging only 265 dwellings per annum throughout the period to 2017/18. The Council, as of 2019, confirmed that it was only able to demonstrate the equivalent of a 4.2 year supply of housing in calculating its five-year supply position.
- 5.2.21 Epping District Council has also performed poorly against the Government's Housing Delivery Test 2019 (February 2020) for the last three years 2016-19, only delivering approximately 50% of the total number of homes required for that particular period of 2,266. As a result of this, in accordance with NPPF Paragraph 73, the Council must identify and update annually a supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide a minimum of five years' worth of housing against their housing requirement, and must include a 20% buffer as a result of significant under delivery of housing over the previous three years.
- 5.2.22 On the basis that the existing five-year supply is falling short of the required targets, this additional buffer only serves to further exacerbate the acute need for new housing delivery in the District. This makes sites in the urban area which make the best and most efficient use of previously developed land, such as the application site, even more important to come forward to contribute positively to this unmet housing need.

- 5.2.23 In considering why the Council's housing supply has deteriorated, this is put down mainly to the delayed submission of the emerging Local Plan to the Secretary of State, and the implications of the temporary moratorium on granting planning permission for development likely to have a significant effect on the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (SAC), pending the adoption of a mitigation strategy approved by Natural England.
- 5.2.24 Whilst matters in relation to any impact of the development upon the Epping Forest are dealt with elsewhere in this Statement, it is considered that notwithstanding this, the nature of the proposals would clearly comply with the objectives of the NPPF and the requirements for planning decisions to give substantial weight to using suitable brownfield land within existing settlements and to promote the effective use of land to meet the need for homes.
- 5.2.25 With regards to the principle of additional housing development, both the adopted and emerging Local Plans place a strong emphasis on this being located within sustainable urban areas such as this one at Buckhurst Hill, so as to avoid placing additional pressures on other less suitable sites, such as those within the Green Belt and wider countryside. Further, through the proposed site layout, the development will make the best and most efficient use of land on a previously developed site, maximising its potential to provide much-needed housing.
- 5.2.26 The site condition has also unfortunately been deteriorating since the previous occupants moved out, and the current applicant, having purchased the site, now wishes to relocate their own existing business to the site. The existing buildings are considered to be at the end of their economic and functional life and are not considered suitable or cost effective for refurbishment or retention as part of the scheme. The proposals therefore provide a significant opportunity to enhance the overall appearance of the site and this part of Westbury Lane.
- 5.2.27 It is submitted that in light of the above, that the development proposals are acceptable as a matter of principle, supported by both national and local planning policy, and that there are no material considerations that

would outweigh the policy support for the development of the application site which would warrant planning permission being withheld.

5.3 Design, Character and Appearance

- 5.3.1 The NPPF is clear that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and that it can create better places in which to live and work. The emphasis upon good design is subsequently reflected in the both the adopted and emerging Local Plans. The application is accompanied by a Design and Access Statement which demonstrates the design evolution and how the proposals have subsequently taken shape.
- 5.3.2 Policy CP2 of the adopted Local Plan sets out a requirement for the quality of the built environment to be maintained, conserved and improved and the setting, character and townscape of the urban environment safeguarded and improved. Policy CP3 outlines a need for the character and environment of the locality to be respected.
- 5.3.3 Policy CP7 of the adopted Local Plan reaffirms the Council's key objectives for the fullest use of existing urban areas for new development and through the re-use of urban sites for alternative land uses with higher densities where compatible with the character of the area.
- 5.3.4 Policy DBE1 of the emerging Local Plan states that new buildings should respect their setting in terms of scale, proportion, siting, massing, height, orientation, roof-line and detailing. They should also be of a size and position such that they adopt a significance in the street scene appropriate to their use and function. External materials should be sympathetic in colour and texture to the vernacular range of materials.
- 5.3.5 Policy DBE3 of the emerging Local Plan requires that new development will be required to ensure that all spaces between and around buildings are deliberately created to be functional, attractive and safe for their intended users. Spaces of individual identity and character should be

provided and satisfactorily enclosed. In addition, informal supervision of spaces around buildings by their occupiers is encouraged and front elevations should face outwards onto public spaces and contain the main entrances.

- 5.3.6 Policy DM9 of the emerging Local Plan outlines that all new development must achieve a high specification of design and contribute to the distinctive character and amenity of the local area. The Council will require all development proposals to be design-led and in particular relate positively to their context and make a positive contribution to a place. Part D refers to a need to have regard to building heights and the form, scale and massing prevailing around the site.
- 5.3.7 As already outlined, this planning application proposes the redevelopment of a currently vacant site, containing buildings that have come to the end of their economic and functional life. The design of the development has been progressed to ensure that the replacement buildings make the most efficient use of land and provide a significant enhancement to the overall appearance of Westbury Lane.
- 5.3.8 In terms of the mix and density of development, the units will comprise 2no. 1-bedroom apartments which will be suitable for a mixture of single person households or couples with no dependents. Given the proximity of the site to the centre of Buckhurst Hill, the various services and facilities in Queens Road, the local bus services and the proximity to the train station, it is considered that this is a wholly suitable location for this type of residential accommodation.

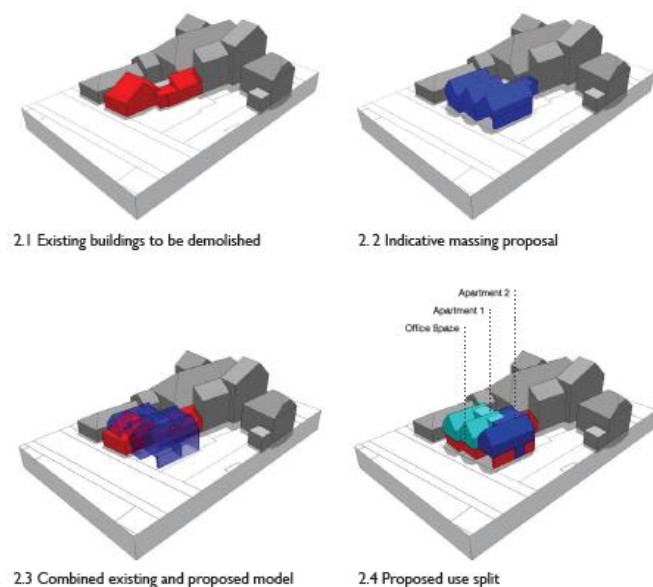


Fig.20 – Massing Exercise

- 5.3.9 In order to make the best and most efficient use of the site, a design-led approach to the development has taken place, taking careful consideration of the form, scale, mass and appearance of surrounding buildings in order to ensure that the new building will appear sympathetic to the prevailing character of the area.
- 5.3.10 The result of this approach is that the density of the development achieved is circa 50 dwellings per hectare, which is in accordance with Policy H3A of the adopted Local Plan, and is considered to be wholly appropriate in an urban location such as this.
- 5.3.11 The layout of the development has been informed positively by existing site constraints. The new building will front directly onto Westbury Lane and will reflect the siting of the existing building and its neighbour by being positioned off the back edge of the pavement. The new building will also infill the existing parking area and will serve to strengthen the frontage in this part of the street scene as a result. Access to the rear of the Parish Council/Library building will also be retained.



Fig.21 – Proposed Westbury Lane street scene

- 5.3.12 Further, the positioning of the entrance into the commercial unit and apartment 98B at the front of the building will create an active frontage which the current building currently lacks. This active frontage, in combination with the projection and large windows at first floor will add visual interest into this part of the street scene and enhance its appearance.
- 5.3.13 The siting of the proposed building, and its transition from 1/1.5-storey elements within the site, has also been arrived at following careful consideration of its relationship with neighbouring buildings so as not to impact unacceptably on the amenity of existing occupants. Residential amenity is discussed in more detail further into this Planning Statement.
- 5.3.14 The scale of the development was arrived at following consideration of the existing 1/1.5-storey form of existing structures, the two-storey form of the properties fronting Queen Road (with their steep sloping roofs) and the orientation of the site in relation to the position of the nearest residential properties in Queens Road (No.169).

5.3.15 The result of this is that the building would provide two floors of accommodation based on a 1.5-storey form with a low eaves height in order to ensure that its bulk and scale is kept to a minimum. When viewed in relation to the comparable buildings on Queens Road to the rear, the proposed building would not only be sited at a lower level, but it would also appear as subservient in size and scale by virtue of its design, height and 1.5-storey form.

5.3.16 Whilst the new building would undoubtedly be larger than the existing structures on site, there are a number of two-storey properties visible in Westbury Lane and the proposed development would be wholly sympathetic to this prevailing scale and form of existing buildings.

5.3.17 At the front of the site, the proposed building would have 3no. pitched roof gables. The existing 1.5-storey element of the existing structures currently has a gabled roof and there are a variety of roof forms in evidence in Queens Road and Westbury Lane including pitched, gabled and hipped roofs. As a result, the development would be consistent with the design approach of existing buildings.

5.3.18 Towards the rear of the site, the design of the roof form changes so that a flat roof sits beneath a dummy pitched roof to both sides. In addition to reducing overall height, this allows the residential accommodation to be maximised at first floor level, as well as the ability to introduce large skylights to maximise the light levels for the future occupants. These flat roof elements would not be readily visible from the road and provide a sensitive design approach to ensuring that the most efficient use of the site can be realised.

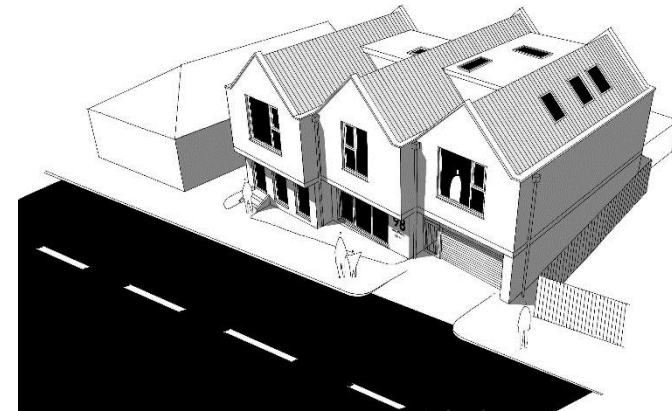


Fig.22 – Proposed Elevated View

5.3.19 As already referenced, a palette of contemporary materials will be used across the building, including a yellow brick for the majority of the elevations and a grey brick at ground floor to the Westbury Lane elevation. This use of brick is well established in the surrounding area and is considered to be a wholly appropriate treatment for the elevations.

5.3.20 Elsewhere on the building, features such as dark grey aluminium windows and a standing seam zinc roof are proposed which will provide a reference to the character of buildings in commercial uses in evidence elsewhere in Westbury Lane whilst giving a clean, crisp and attractive finish.

5.3.21 The accommodation has been designed to ensure that it provides a good standard of living for future residents by providing apartments that comply with the nationally described space standards. Whilst external amenity space is not directly provided for the apartments, the site is within walking distance of outdoor green space, in particular Knighton Woods to the south.

5.3.22 The development would be provided with shared refuse storage and covered, secure cycle storage areas to the rear of the site which will provide space for at least one cycle space per unit. Bins will be provided

in line with the current Building Regulations and will provide separate space for refuse and recycling.

5.3.23 1no. parking space would be provided on the site as part of the development to serve the commercial unit. No parking spaces will be provided to serve the apartments. The parking space will be provided with an electric vehicle charging point which will enhance the sustainability credentials of the development.

5.3.24 The design of the development has been arrived at to make the best and most efficient use of the land available, at an appropriate density, whilst still responding sympathetically to the existing built environment in terms of the size, form and amount of development proposed.

5.3.25 Overall, the scheme has evolved so as to ensure that it will result in a high quality and inclusive design, providing an attractive new development that will respond positively to the character and appearance of the surrounding area in terms of amount, layout, mix, form, scale, massing and use of materials. The proposal therefore accords with relevant local and national planning policies that seek to secure a high standard of design for all new development.

5.4 Residential Amenity

5.4.1 Policy CP3 of the adopted Local Plan specifies a need for new development to respect the character and environment of the locality. Policy DBE2 refers to the fact that new development that has a detrimental effect upon existing neighbouring or surrounding properties in amenity or functional terms will not be permitted.

5.4.2 Policy DBE9 of the adopted Local Plan requires that new development does not result in an excessive loss of amenity from neighbouring residents including from visual impact; overlooking; loss of daylight/sunlight and noise, smell or other disturbance. Policy E12 gives support for small scale business provided it will not have a significant effect on the amenities of any nearby property.

5.4.3 The approach to the layout, size and scale of the proposed development has been carefully considered by the project architects in order to respond to the immediate context of the site and importantly, the nearest neighbouring properties.

5.4.4 The nearest neighbouring residential property is No.169 Queens Road, the long garden of which directly adjoins the western site boundary, with the dwelling itself located further to the south-west. Whilst outlook would be altered from this property and the rear gardens of neighbours beyond, consideration has been given so as to ensure there would be no harm to the amenity of existing occupants.

5.4.5 The new building will be offset to the north and north-east of the immediate rear private gardens of Queens Road properties, and by virtue of the distance between these amenity areas and the side and rear elevations of the new building, in combination with its orientation, there would be no unacceptable reduction in natural daylight or sunlight, nor would appear overbearing.

5.4.6 No windows are proposed in the side (west) elevation of the building with rooflights proposed at high level in the pitched roof. As a result of this, there would be no direct overlooking of the rear of neighbouring properties in Queens Road and privacy would not be unacceptably compromised.

5.4.7 Directly at rear of the property, there is living accommodation within the first-floor of the post office building fronting Queens Road. The development has been designed so as to ensure that it transitions down to single-storey form, reducing bulk where it adjoins this property, maintaining a good degree of separation.

5.4.8 It appears that the first-floor window at the back of the post office building is boarded up and it is assumed that this serves a bathroom. Notwithstanding this, the orientation of the proposed development, in combination with the degree of separation to the bulk of the main building, will ensure no reduction in daylight or sunlight.

- 5.4.9 Two windows are proposed at the rear of the building at first floor, one serving a bedroom and the other a bathroom. It is envisaged that in order to prevent any overlooking of the rear of properties in Queens Road that these would be obscure glazed. The window serving the bedroom would be supplemented by a large skylight which will allow occupants to have outlook.
- 5.4.10 With regards to the introduction of a new building onto the Westbury Lane frontage, and windows associated with first-floor living accommodation being provided on the frontage, there would be no direct overlooking of any residential properties on the north side of the road. The development will increase natural surveillance of Westbury Lane which will provide a positive amenity benefit for existing residents.
- 5.4.11 As will be set out in subsequent sections, the proposed mixed-use development will also reduce vehicular traffic from the levels that would potentially have been experienced as a result of the operations of the previous office. Similarly, the levels of pedestrian activity around the site would not result in any unacceptable noise and disturbance to the rear of neighbouring buildings.
- 5.4.12 In considering the requirement to provide a good standard of living for future occupants, the room, and overall unit sizes for all of the accommodation have been designed to adhere to the *Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard* (March 2015) to ensure that they will be of an appropriate size and have sufficient usable space to ensure comfortable living conditions.
- 5.4.13 Overall, the above demonstrates that the proposed development can be accommodated so as to be compatible with neighbouring buildings, so as not to result in any unacceptable loss of amenity for existing residents and to ensure that the future occupants enjoy a good standard of amenity. The proposal therefore complies with relevant local and national policies in this regard.

5.5 Transport, Access and Parking

- 5.5.1 The general policy emphasis within the NPPF in relation to transport issues is to ensure that in assessing specific applications for development, it should be ensured that appropriate opportunities to promote sustainable transport modes can be, or have been, taken up given the type of development and its location and for suitable access to the site to be achieved for all users. Any significant impact from development upon the transport network on highway safety should also be mitigated.
- 5.5.2 Policies CP1, CP6 and CP9 of the adopted Local Plan emphasise a need to achieve sustainable development through promoting and providing for sustainable means of transport, especially to key community facilities and by reducing the need to travel and reliance on the use of the private car.
- 5.5.3 Policies ST1 and ST2 of the adopted Local Plan encourage new development in urban locations where it is highly accessible to public transport, services and employment opportunities. Policies DBE6, ST4 and STT6 refer to car parking in new development and to ensuring that there would be no excessive adverse effects from traffic generation or the environment.
- 5.5.4 Policy T1 of the emerging Local Plan specifies that development should minimise the need to travel and promote opportunities for sustainable transport modes and improve accessibility to services. Parking provision should be appropriate and mitigate impact upon on-street parking within the locality. Importantly, it specifies that reduced car parking, including car free development in sustainable locations, will be supported.
- 5.5.5 Transport, access and parking considerations have formed an integral part of the development proposals, taking into account the requirements of national and local planning policies regarding the provision of transport infrastructure as well as the provision of cycle storage and parking spaces.

- 5.5.6 The development has also fully considered the promotion of safe and sustainable travel and for new development to be located in sustainable locations where services and public transport can be accessed.
- 5.5.7 In support of the application, a Transport Technical Note (December 2020) has been prepared by Stantec UK. This technical note provides an analysis of the potential traffic generation difference between the existing and proposed uses on the site.
- 5.5.8 In order to compare the predicted trip generation associated with the proposed commercial aspect of the development (a 75sqm office), with the last use as an accountant's office (97sqm) a TRICS analysis has been carried out. This confirms that there would 9no. vehicle movements per day associated with the proposed use, as opposed to 12no. associated with the previous use.
- 5.5.9 The previous use of the site had approximately 6no. vehicle parking spaces available, whereas the proposed development will incorporate 1no. parking space on site, which will also include an electric charging point. This level of parking provision is considered to be an appropriate response to the development of the site, given the relatively few staff numbers that will be likely to work at the premises and also, critically, to enhance the overall appearance of the site, which will no longer be given over to an extensive swathe of hard surfacing for parking.
- 5.5.10 The site is located in a highly sustainable location, and a higher amount of on-site parking would only serve to encourage more private car use, whereby within 2 minutes' walk are a number of bus stops, with Buckhurst Hill Underground Station a less than 10-minute walk from the site.
- 5.5.11 In terms of the residential aspect of the development, no car parking provision is proposed within the site, and therefore it would be car-free, as supported by emerging Local Plan policy, in highly sustainable locations. In this instance there are a range of public transport choices available, as well as a significant range of local amenities all within a 10-minute walk, including the primary shopping area on Queens Road.

- 5.5.12 In light of the good accessibility to local transport options, amenities and employment opportunities, a predominantly car-free scheme is considered to be a wholly appropriated design approach consistent with both national and local planning policies.
- 5.5.13 In order to ensure that cars are not brought into the local area, future occupants of either the commercial unit or the residential units would be strongly discouraged from this and the applicant is willing to consider appropriate measures including restrictions on accessibility to parking permits, if deemed necessary, or the implementation of a bespoke Travel Plan. It should also be noted that members of staff will likely car share when travelling to the site to work in the commercial unit to further reduce car dependency.
- 5.5.14 In addition to the provision of a parking space, the development will incorporate the provision of safe, secured storage and parking for cycles for both the residential and commercial units in order to encourage and promote cycling as a viable transport option.
- 5.5.15 Given the above, it is considered that there would be no unacceptable impact arising from the development upon highway safety (with there being a reduction in vehicle movements from the previous use) which would mean planning permission should be refused on highway grounds. Further, the promotion of sustainable transport measures through the implementation of a predominantly car-free scheme is consistent with policy objectives and should be encouraged.

5.6 Ecology & Air Quality

- 5.6.1 Policy NC1 of the adopted Local Plan states that the Council will refuse planning permission for any development which could directly or indirectly destroy or adversely affect a Site of Special Scientific Interest. The Council will comply with international obligations for those SSSIs designated as Special Protection Areas or Special Areas of Conservation.

- 5.6.2 Policy DM2 of the emerging Local Plan refers to a need for development proposals to assist in the conservation and enhancement of the biodiversity, character, appearance and landscape setting of the Epping Forest SAC. Part B states that all new residential development likely to have a significant effect, either alone or in combination with other development, will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures are put in place to avoid or mitigate any potential adverse effects. Part C states that all detailed planning applications for new homes in Buckhurst Hill will be required to make a financial contribution to access management and monitoring or visitors to the Epping Forest SAC.
- 5.6.3 Policy DM22 of the emerging Local Plan refers to the aspiration of the Council to seek to ensure that the District is protected from the impacts of air pollution. Potential air pollution risks need to be considered in relation to environmental receptors, including the Epping Forest SAC, in order to ensure it is not adversely affected by development.
- 5.6.4 On the 30th April 2020, Epping Forest District Council published a position statement to provide information about the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (EFSAC). This statement sets out that the Council is not able to issue planning permission for new development that may adversely affect the integrity of the EFSAC having regard to the reasons for its designation and the conservation objectives that apply to it.
- 5.6.5 The position statement confirms that the main issue that the Council is trying to resolve relates to the effect any new development could have arising from the potential for it to increase the amount of traffic using roads in close proximity to the EFSAC, which can be affected by air pollution from vehicles. Where a proposed development would result in a net increase in Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) on roads within 200m of the EFSAC, then the Council's current position is that it should not, based on current advice from Natural England, grant planning permission unless it is able to ensure mitigation measures are in place which can be relied upon to avoid adverse effects to the SAC.
- 5.6.6 Currently there is no agreed approach as to how the effect of air pollution needs to be mitigated where development proposals anywhere in the District would result in an increase in AADT on roads within 200m of the EFSAC. However, the Council and other partner organisations continue to work together to devise an air quality mitigation strategy ("AQMS") that is acceptable to Natural England, taking account of the Local Plan Inspector's advice.
- 5.6.7 In the absence of an approved AQMS, where individual development proposals have been supported by evidence which clearly demonstrates that there would be no net increase in AADT Natural England has confirmed that the Council is in a position to grant planning permission (subject to the acceptability of all other relevant planning considerations). The Council has now determined a small number of planning applications in line with this advice.
- 5.6.8 In this case, the application is supported by a Transport Technical Note which demonstrates that the proposed development would decrease the amount of traffic that would be generated from it when compared to its previous use as a result in the decrease of commercial floorspace.
- 5.6.9 Further, there would be no parking provision available for either of the proposed residential apartments and therefore vehicles would not be into the area by future occupants. As indicated, the applicant is willing to consider appropriate measures, if deemed necessary, to further control/restrict vehicles from accessing the development.
- 5.6.9 On this basis, whilst the site is in proximity of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation (EFSAC), the information provided with the application, demonstrates that there would be no net increase in AADT on roads within 200m of the EFSAC and therefore no worsening of air pollution that would adversely affect sensitive environmental receptors and therefore the integrity of the EFSAC. This is by virtue of the reduction in the size of the commercial unit (and subsequent reduction in trip generation) and the proposed car-free aspect of the residential development.

5.6.10 Based on the Council's previous determination of applications which have demonstrated that there would be no net increase in AADT, it should be concluded that there would be no likely significant effect upon the EFSAC as a result of this development either on its own, or in combination with other projects, and therefore planning permission should not be withheld on this basis.

5.7 Other Issues

5.7.1 Policy U3B of the adopted Local Plan refers to the need for developments to attenuate surface water run-off. This is reflected in the emerging Local Plan which requires development to manage surface water run-off and for the sensitive incorporation of SuDS systems into new development where appropriate.

5.7.2 In its current state, the site currently discharges surface water run-off into public surface water sewers outside of the site via a number of manholes. It is proposed that the new development would also drain surface water through the same mechanism. The rate of surface water run-off would be no greater than the existing site, which in its current form is completely covered in hard surfaces.

5.7.3 Policy DM21 of the emerging Local Plan requires that the residual local environmental impact of all development proposals after mitigation should not lead to unacceptable impacts on the health, safety, wellbeing and amenity of existing and new users of occupiers of the development site.

5.7.4 As part of the construction of the proposed development appropriate safeguarding measures would be put in place through the Building Regulations regime, so as to ensure that the development would be safe for its lifetime for future users, and if any contaminants are found within the ground, that they are suitably mitigated.

5.8 Planning Obligations

5.8.1 As already outlined, the applicant is prepared to consider appropriate restrictions upon the occupants of the development from being able to access parking permits for surrounding streets and public car parks, either through reasonable planning conditions or through a Section 106 Legal Agreement.

5.8.2 Further, the applicant would also be prepared to consider reasonable financial contributions (understood to currently be £352 per dwelling) towards access management and monitoring or visitors to the Epping Forest SAC. Any future requests for specific planning obligations or development contributions that would potentially be necessary to make the development acceptable. Any future requests will need to be justified in order to ensure that they meet the statutory tests as set out by Regulation 122 of the CIL Regulations 2019.

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 This application seeks Full Planning Permission for the demolition of existing buildings and the erection of a new mixed use building to contain office floorspace (Use Class E(g)) and 2no. one bedroom apartments.
- 6.2 The site is located in the highly sustainable location of Buckhurst Hill, a “Large Village” settlement as identified by the Council’s Settlement Hierarchy. The site is in extremely close proximity to a wide range of services and facilities, including a primary shopping area in Queens Road, and a London Underground station.
- 6.3 The proposed development would regenerate a long-time vacant site, which is considered no longer suitable for modern office requirements, replacing it with a high-quality, mixed use building which will provide functional, and fit for purpose office space at ground floor, with new residential accommodation above.
- 6.4 The proposed new residential accommodation will make a positive contribution to the Council’s acute housing need. The regeneration of the site will comply with the objectives of national and local planning policies which require planning decisions to give substantial weight to using suitable brownfield land within existing settlements and to promote the effective use of land to meet the need for homes.
- 6.5 The design of the new building has been carefully considered by the applicant and the project architects, taking into account the form, scale, mass and appearance of surrounding buildings in order to ensure that it will appear sympathetic to the character of the area and significantly enhance the appearance of the existing site.
- 6.6 The development will ensure that a good standard of living would be provided for the proposed occupants and that there would be no adverse impact upon the residential amenity of neighbouring properties as a result of careful positioning of windows and the layout of the new building.
- 6.7 The proposed development would generate less vehicle movements per day than the previous commercial use and would have no adverse impact upon highway safety as a result. The scheme would be predominantly car-free in order to take advantage of its sustainable location, with good access to public transport and local amenities.
- 6.8 By virtue of the development reducing the amount of vehicle movements to and from the site, it is considered that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation as a result of any worsening of air quality levels on surrounding roads.
- 6.9 In conclusion, it has been demonstrated that the proposed development would comply with local and national planning policy and it is therefore respectfully requested that planning permission be granted for this highly sustainable development at the earliest opportunity.