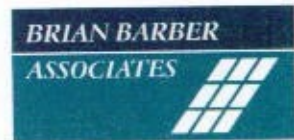


08/0134



Planning, Design and Access Statement

Planning Application by
Valentine Homes (Hornhill) LLP

6 Dwellings with Associated Access, Parking and Garages
Land at 81 and 81A Hornhill Road, Maple Cross, Rickmansworth, WD3 9TG



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application seeks planning permission for 7 dwellings on land currently comprising 81 and 81A Hornhill Road, a semi detached pair of two storey dwellings.
- 1.2 A planning application for the erection of 7 dwellings was refused by the Council in June 2007, and a subsequent appeal dismissed in November 2007. The Inspector considered that the redevelopment of the site was acceptable in principle, but raised specific concerns relating to the appearance of the dwelling on plot 1 and amenity issues in relation to the proposed terrace.
- 1.3 The current application addresses all of the issues raised by the Inspector.

2. THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 2.1 The site comprises an irregular shaped plot on the south side of Hornhill Road which is approximately 0.216 hectares in size.
- 2.2 Numbers 81 and 81A Hornhill Road are a pair of semi-detached properties located at the front of the appeal site. Number 81A has a very extensive garden which wraps round to the rear of 81, 79 and 77 Hornhill Road.



81 and 81A Hornhill Road, Maple Cross



View of looking south west along Hornhill Road towards application site

- 2.3 Originally, 81 Hornhill Road was a detached dwelling but planning permission was granted in 1976 (LPA Ref: 8/499/76) for the erection of an additional house alongside it, to create a pair of semi-detached dwellings. This dwelling is known as 81A Hornhill Road. Planning permission for a single-storey side and rear extension at 81A Hornhill Road was approved in 1987 (LPA Ref: 8/686/87).
- 2.4 Numerous ancillary outbuildings, including a detached bungalow, exist on the site, together with extensive areas of hardstanding.



Existing buildings on the site



Existing buildings on the site

- 2.5 The site lies within the existing urban built-up area of Maple Cross which is an established urban area which provides a number of shops, schools, services and facilities to meet residents' day to day needs. The site falls within the definition of previously developed land as set out by PPS3 (Housing). The site is not covered by a Conservation Area nor are there any Listed Buildings in the locality.
- 2.6 A variety of housing types are located in Hornhill Road, including terraced houses and flats as well as semi-detached properties.

3. THE APPLICATION PROPOSALS

- 3.1 The application is for the redevelopment of the site comprising the demolition of 81 and 81A Hornhill Road and erection of six dwellings, as follows:-
- Plot 1 - A detached 3 bedroom house
 - Plots 2, 3, and 4 - A terrace providing 3 x 3 bed houses
 - Plots 5 and 6 – 2 x 4 bed semi-detached houses
- 3.2 A new access road, running between the proposed Plot 1 and 79 Hornhill Road is proposed and this incorporates a turning head so that vehicles can enter and leave the site in a forward gear.
- 3.3 The current application addresses the comments made by the Inspector in respect of the previous scheme which was dismissed at appeal November 2007. In summary, the following revisions have been made to address the issues raised:-

Plot 1

- 3.4 The design of the house proposed on plot 1 has been substantially revised. The bedroom previously proposed within the roof space has been removed and the property would now have 3 bedrooms instead of a 5 previously proposed. The property now has a roof profile which is in character with neighbouring properties. The roof lights previously proposed on the front elevation have been removed. The window previously proposed at second floor level on the gable end of the dwelling has been removed.

Plots 2, 3 and 4

- 3.5 The proposed terrace has been reduced in size through the loss of 1 x 2 bed house. The terrace is now further from the boundaries of the site, with 13.4 metres been achieved to the site boundary with 79 Hornhill Road (previously 10.4 metres). The distance from the proposed terrace to the proposed house on Plot 1 has been increased to 29 metres when measured from Plot 2 (previously 23.6 metres) and to 27 metres when measured from Plot 4 (previously 23.8 metres).

Landscaping adjacent to 79 Hornhill Road

- 3.6 A considerable landscaping buffer has been provided between the site and the boundary with 79 Hornhill Road. The length of this landscaped strip is now 30 metres (previously 14 metres). It would be planted with semi mature trees which would successfully mitigate the opportunity for overlooking of 79 Hornhill Road, particularly given the much greater 'back to back' distance achieved between properties, referred to above. The driveway is proposed to be paved, and a new 2 metres high double boarded timber fence is proposed on the boundary with 79 Hornhill Road which would mitigate any noise from vehicles using this driveway.

Garden sizes

- 3.7 The sizes of the proposed gardens for plots 1 to 4 have been significantly increased, as follows:

Plot	Refused Scheme (Sq M)	Current Scheme (Sq M)	% increase
1	161	168	+ 4.3%
2	84	110	+ 31%
3	54	87	+ 61%
4	54	96	+ 77%

Table showing garden sizes

- 3.8 It should be note that the planning Inspector considering the previous application made a number of positive comments about that scheme. The Inspector considered that:
- The principle of the redevelopment of the site was acceptable
 - The redevelopment of the site could make a valuable contribution to the local housing supply.
 - The redevelopment of the site could make better use of this brownfield site.
 - A scheme with a lower number of dwellings (i.e. less than 7) with more generous plot sizes could be supported.
 - There would be no harm to character of area through the backland element of the development.

- There would be no overlooking or privacy issues with the pair of houses proposed at the rear of the site (now referred to as plots 5 and 6) and the development of this part of the site was appropriate.
- The access, parking and turning arrangements were acceptable.

4. RESPONSE TO CONTEXT

- 4.1 The site lies within the built-up urban area of Maple Cross and comprises garden land. Numerous ancillary outbuildings existing upon the site, together with extensive areas of hardstanding. The site falls within the definition of previously developed land as set out by PPS3 (Housing).
- 4.2 Development in the immediate locality is characterised by road frontage development located on Hornhill Road, Woodland Road and Denham Way. However, the application site has a particularly large curtilage when compared to adjacent properties. The existing site density equates to only 9 dwellings per hectare, compared to the density of surrounding development of approximately 22 dwellings per hectare. Furthermore it already incorporates a number of buildings and hard surfaced areas which add to its urban character.
- 4.3 Hornhill Road, Woodland Road and Denham Way are largely characterised by post-war 3 x bed semi-detached houses providing largely 3 & 4 bedroom properties. However, to the north of the application site exists flatted development and smaller housing units on Pinchfield and Tichborne. Development further to the north, on Hornhill Road, comprises smaller terraced properties. More recent backland development at Ladywalk to the north comprises terraced, semi-detached and flatted forms of smaller units of accommodation.
- 4.4 The submitted scheme seeks to incorporate a form of development which would be compatible with its surroundings, whilst securing the effectively use of a 'brownfield site'. In particular, the scheme would provide a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced properties, providing a mix of larger family size housing, together with smaller units.
- 4.5 The dwellings would be restricted to 2-storey height only with second floor accommodation being entirely contained within the roof space. The height of the proposed dwellings would be entirely consistent and compatible with that of surrounding development.



Flats directly opposite site at 34-44 Pinchfield Road.



Terraced properties on Hornhill Road



Higher density development at Ladywalk

5. PLANNING

Principle of Development

- 5.1 Given that the site lies within the existing built-up urban area and falls within the PPS3 definition of previously developed land, it is considered that the very broad principle of residential development on the site is acceptable.
- 5.2 The Inspector who considered the appeal in November 2007 considered that the principle of the redevelopment of the site was acceptable and that the redevelopment of the site could make a valuable contribution to the local housing supply. The Inspector also considered that the redevelopment of the site could make better use of this brownfield site. The Inspector did not consider that the development would adversely affect the character and appearance the area, which contains a variety of property types.
- 5.3 We therefore consider that the principle of the development is acceptable.

6. DESIGN

Use

- 6.1 As set out above the site lies within the existing built-up urban area of Maple Cross and is currently in residential use in connection with 81 and 81a Hornhill Road. The site is also surrounded by residential dwellings and gardens and as such residential development on the land is considered to be entirely appropriate and consistent with Local Plan policies.

Amount

- 6.2 The planning application proposes 6 dwellings, providing a mix of dwelling type and size. The proposed development equates to a density of 27.5 dwellings per hectare. This is marginally below the minimum density advocated by PPS3 of 30 dwellings per hectare. By way of comparison, adjoining development on Hornhill Road has a density of approximately 22 dwellings per hectare whilst Ladywalk to the north has a density of approximately 43 dwellings per hectare. The proposed density achieves a reasonable balance between the need to secure the effective use of land and respecting the existing density of the surrounding locality. The density of the proposed scheme is therefore considered to be appropriate.
- 6.3 It should be noted that due to the relatively tight road frontage arrangement of properties on all of these surrounding roads, the proposed dwellings would not be readily visible from Hornhill Road. As such we do not consider that there is any adverse impact upon the character or appearance of the surrounding residential area.

Layout

- 6.4 In layout terms the site has been designed to make the effective use of land, whilst securing an acceptable level of residential amenities for existing and proposed occupiers.

- 6.5 As previously indicated, the proposal has been designed to provide a mix of dwelling type and size in accordance with the Local Plan and also PPS3 (Housing) requirements to provide a balance mix of housing type and size. Therefore, whilst the surrounding development comprises of family size housing, the introduction of a number of smaller units would not be prejudicial to the character of the area but would make a substantial contribution towards achieving a variety of house type and size in the locality. The proposed housing mix is also comparable to that provided at Ladywalk to the north.
- 6.6 Each dwelling would be provided with a larger rear garden which is considered sufficient to provide adequate amenity space for future residents. The sizes of the proposed gardens in respect of Plots for plots 1 to 4 have been significantly increased, compared with the previous scheme which was dismissed at appeal, to maximise the distance between properties and provide more amenity space for future residents.
- 6.7 The proposed scheme achieves 'back to back' distances in excess of 28 metres, apart from the distance between Plot 4 and Plot 1 which is slightly less at 27 metres. It should be noted that the Inspector considering the previous appeal scheme considered that the Council's Design Guidelines, which seek an indicative distance of 28 metres, should be applied flexibly.
- 4.11 The site layout allows for natural surveillance of parking areas in accordance with Secure by Design principles. We therefore consider the layout to be acceptable.

Scale

- 4.12 The dwellings have been designed with an appropriate scale, taking into account the size and proportions of adjacent existing dwellings. In particular the dwellings have a traditional two-storey height and building form, which is considered to be acceptable in this location.

Landscaping

- 4.13 The site incorporates a number of trees around its boundary. In order to provide screening for the development, it is proposed to retain the majority of trees on the site boundary. In particular the extensive row of Conifers around Plots 5 and 6 are to be retained and these will provide valuable screening for privacy to existing and proposed residents.

A considerable landscaping buffer has been provided between the site and the boundary with 79 Hornhill Road. The length of this landscaped strip is now 30 metres (previously 14 metres in respect of the appeal scheme). The landscaped strip would be planted with semi mature trees which would successfully mitigate the opportunity for overlooking of 79 Hornhill Road, particularly given the much greater 'back to back' distance achieved between properties.

The driveway is proposed to be paved, and a new 2 metres high double boarded timber fence is proposed on the boundary with 79 Hornhill Road to mitigate any noise from vehicles.

Appearance

- 4.15 Bearing in mind the surrounding context of the site, it is proposed that the dwellings would have a traditional character and appearance incorporating two-storey height dwellings using traditional brick and tile materials. It is considered that the proposed design and appearance of the dwellings would be acceptable in this particular location.

Sustainability

- 4.16 An increasing emphasis upon sustainable homes, together with a shift in public opinion, has led to the planning application incorporating a number of sustainability measures. The plans show that solar panels would be provided for each of the proposed houses.
- 4.17 It is also the applicant's intention to use Ground Source Heat Pumps in the construction of the properties. This will provide heating and cooling for the properties reducing the energy requirements of the dwellings and CO₂ emissions. The heat pumps will be accompanied by an efficient exhaust air recovery system.
- 4.18 Recycling of grey water to serve a proportion of the water needs for the dwellings is also proposed, together with measures to reduce water consumption within the house.

5. ACCESS AND EXCLUSIVITY

- 5.1 The proposed access arrangements off Hornhill Road will provide adequate visibility for persons using the proposed new access road. The plans also show that visibility splays of 2.4 x 90 metres in either direction can be provided.

The Inspector considering the previous scheme raised no objections to the number of parking spaces proposed or the access or turning arrangements.

- 5.2 The access road will be constructed to meet Hertfordshire County Council Highways Standards and has a width of 4.8 metres, enabling vehicles entering and exiting the site to pass. The proposed turning head enables vehicles to easily manoeuvre within the site and allows for service vehicles.
- 5.4 The site lies within an existing urban area, providing alternative shops, services and facilities. In addition Maple Cross is served by bus routes to Rickmansworth and Denham. Future residents of the site will, therefore, be able to use alternative means of transport and reduce the reliance upon the private motor vehicle.
- 5.5 Disabled access would be provided to all properties in accordance with Part M of the Building Regulations.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The current application addresses the comments made by the Inspector in respect of the previous scheme which was dismissed at appeal November 2007. In summary:
- Design changes have been made to the house proposed on Plot 1 and the number of bedrooms reduced.
 - The proposed terrace on plots 2, 3 and 4 has been reduced in size through the loss of 1 x 3 bed house.

- Greater back to back distances have been provided to secure a more acceptable relationship with adjoining properties.
- A considerable landscaping buffer has been provided between the site and the boundary with 79 Hornhill Road.
- The driveway is proposed to be paved
- A new 2m high double boarded timber fence is proposed on the boundary with 79 Hornhill Road to mitigate noise.
- The sizes of the proposed gardens for plots 1 to 4 have been significantly increased.

- 6.2 The planning Inspector considering the previous application supported the principle of the redevelopment of the site, which he considered could make a valuable contribution to the local housing supply. He also considered better use could be made of this brownfield site through redevelopment and that a scheme with a lower number of dwellings (i.e. less than 7) with more generous plot sizes could be supported. The current scheme proposes a lower density and more generous plot sizes.
- 6.3 The proposed development has also been carefully designed to take into account the need to provide a balanced mix of housing type and size, providing adequate car parking to meet future occupier's needs. In accordance with current policy, sustainability measures have also been included in the design of the dwellings including solar thermal technology, ground source heat pumps and water recycling.
- 6.4 It is concluded that the site makes a valuable and ingenious use of this extensive site without harming interests of acknowledged importance.