

4.1 – SE/13/00081/REM Date expired 25 April 2013

PROPOSAL: Reserved matters (Access, Appearance, Landscaping, Layout and Scale) pursuant to condition 2 of SE/11/02471/OUT - Proposed demolition of the former police station and erection of up to approximately 52 residential units.

LOCATION: Former Sevenoaks Police Station, Morewood Close, Sevenoaks KENT TN13 2HX

WARD(S): Sevenoaks Kippington

ITEM FOR DECISION

Councillors Eyre and Hunter have referred the application to Development Control Committee for reasons relating to design and density.

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:-

1) The southernmost portion of the turning head to the rear of Block B shall be hatched with "keep clear" markings or other similar measures, in accordance with a scheme that shall be submitted to and approved writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the first occupation of Block B or Block D. The approved details shall be maintained as such thereafter.

To ensure suitable provision for the turning of refuse vehicles, in accordance with policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan.

2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 5827 01C, 10C, 11C, 12C, 13A, 14B, 15B, 16B, 17D, 18, 20D, Bir.4175_01 and Bir.4175_02

For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Informatives

1) The refuse bins that are depicted on the approved plans appear to be 1,100L wheeled bins, and if so each refuse storage area has the required no. of bins. The 1,100L bins must be of the drop-front variety as outlined in the Sevenoaks District Council guidance to developers. Further, the bins should be allocated as follows:

a. Refuse Block A: 3 bins for general waste (black sacks) & 3 bins for recyclable waste (clear sacks and large cardboard)

b. Refuse Block B: 2 bins for general waste (black sacks) & 2 bins for recyclable waste (clear sacks and large cardboard)

c. Refuse Block C: 2 bins for general waste (black sacks) & 2 bins for recyclable waste (clear sacks and large cardboard)

d. Refuse Block D: 1 bin for general waste (black sacks) & 1 bin for recyclable waste

(clear sacks and large cardboard)

- 2) The surfacing materials for the access and roadways hereby approved and as shown on the plans, shall be constructed to accommodate the weight of a 26 tonne refuse collection vehicle.
- 3) You are advised that the drainage details required as part of condition 12 of the outline planning permission remain outstanding and will need to be subject to a separate details submission.

Description of Proposal

- 1 This application seeks the approval of reserved matters for redevelopment of the police station site, pursuant to the outline planning permission granted under SE/11/02471. This permission secured development for “the erection of up to approximately 52 residential units”.
- 2 The reserved matters submitted are for the layout, scale and appearance of the buildings, the means of access and landscaping of the site, and in summary the details submitted are as follows –
 - The application proposes 55 apartments in total, consisting of 6 x 3 bed units, 39 x 2 bed units and 10 x 1 bed units. Of these, 22 units would be affordable.
 - 66 car parking spaces would be provided, at a ratio of 1 space per residential unit and 11 visitor spaces.
 - The development would consist of 4 residential blocks. The blocks have been designed in a similar style, utilising contrasting red and grey/blue bricks, timber cladding, grey casement windows, and flat grey membrane roofs which overhang the elevations of each building.
 - Block A would be four storeys in height with a recessed top floor. The western side of the building would taper to two storeys in height. This building would contain 21 apartments in total. The building would measure approximately 43m in length, 14m in width, and 11.6 metres in height.
 - Block B would be located towards the western boundary of the site, to the north of block A. It would be 3 storeys in height and would contain 15 units, all of which would be affordable. The building would measure approximately 29 metres in length, 15 metres in width and 8.8 metres in height.
 - Block C would be sited adjacent to Morewood Close, and would be 3 storeys in height. It would contain 12 units in total. The building would measure approximately 31 metres in length, 13 metres in depth and 8.8 metres in height.
 - Block D would be sited to the rear of the existing Magistrates Court and would contain 7 flats arranged over two floors, all of which would be affordable units. The building would measure approximately 20 metres in length, 14.5 metres in width and 7 metres in height.

- The buildings would be evenly distributed around the site and separated by hard and soft landscaping. A single vehicle access point would be provided from Morewood Close, between proposed Block C and the Magistrates Court. A further emergency access point would be located between blocks A and C.
- The development would retain a number of trees within the site which are protected by a Tree Preservation Order. Further soft landscaping would be provided on site in addition to this.

Description of Site

- 3 The application site relates to buildings and land formerly in use as Sevenoaks police station. The station has been closed for some time and services relocated, including a new station elsewhere in Sevenoaks. The site is 0.86 hectares in size to the south and west of the existing Magistrates court which is to remain on site.
- 4 The site is located within the built confines of Sevenoaks and within close walking distance of the train station. It occupies an important position at the “entrance” to the town when approaching from London Road. The site is surrounded by residential development to the south and west, by an open area of land and the railway embankment to the north, and by the fire station and houses to the east. Land levels in the area vary to the extent that houses to the west of the site on Uplands Close are at a much higher level than the police site.
- 5 Land within the site slopes gently from west to east and from south to north. The eastern part of the site falls within a flood zone. A band of trees are located to the front and side of the site and are protected by a Tree Preservation Order, as are various individual and groups of trees adjacent to the magistrates court building.
- 6 A public footpath is sited to the west of the site and leads under the railway embankment to Robyns Way.
- 7 The former police building is a rather unattractive 3-4 storey flat roofed building of around 1950s origin which faces the road. The building drops to single storey to the rear and leads on to the Magistrates Court which is a part single, part two storey flat roofed building of similar age and design to the police station. The rear of the Magistrates Court is used for parking and it is separated from the police site by an iron railed fence.
- 8 The remainder of the application site is generally laid to grass, although some hard surfaced areas for car parking remain.

Constraints

- 9 The application site is within the built confines of Sevenoaks. A number of trees (including individual and group designations) protected by Tree Preservation Order no.1 of 2005 are located around the site. The eastern edge of the site is located within an identified flood zone.

Policies

Sevenoaks District Local Plan

- 10 Policies – EN1, NR10, T8, T10, VP1, EP8, ST10

Sevenoaks Core Strategy

- 11 Policies – L01, L02, SP1, SP2, SP3, SP5, SP7, SP8, SP9, SP10

Other

- 12 Sevenoaks Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2011
- 13 Kent Design Guide (Adopted as Sevenoaks Supplementary Planning Document in 2007)
- 14 The National Planning Policy Framework

Planning History

- 15 SE/11/02471 - Proposed demolition of the former police station and erection of up to approximately 52 residential units - Approved
- 16 SE/09/00650 – Outline application for demolition of the existing police station and erection of 52 residential units and approximately 1,228sqm of office floor space – Approved.
- 17 SE/07/00686 - Demolition of existing police station and erection of 59 residential units and approximately 1340sqm of office floor space – Refused. Dismissed on appeal

Consultations

Sevenoaks Town Council

- 18 Recommends refusal on the following grounds:

“1. Overdevelopment of the site:

There is a proposed density of 62.6 dwellings per hectare compared to the recommended level of 40.0 dwellings per hectare set out in the Core Strategy.

Outline permission was granted for 52 dwellings on the site, this application seeks to increase this to 55 (reduced from 58 dwellings during the pre-application stage, at the advice of planning officers)

2. Design

Pg 7 of the Design statements states "The design of the scheme and proposed materials strongly reflects the desire of the designers and planning department to create a contemporary aesthetic, and move away from the more traditional style and materials used within the immediate area". This means the proposal conflicts with the Residential Character Area Assessment.

The developer intends to use red brick, brown shiplap boarding, and the result will be similar to the criticized railway and bicycle scheme.

Informative: Sevenoaks Town Council notes that this is a substantial application which should be referred to Development Control for public debate. Sevenoaks Town Council would also request that no demolition work be carried out until the

developer is in a position to commence construction and complete within a reasonable timescale“.

SDC Tree Officer

- 19 “I have no issue with this proposed development. I am equally comfortable with the tree protection details and the hard and soft landscaping scheme as proposed”.

Environment Agency

- 20 “This application relates to a condition that was not requested by us, we therefore have no comments to make with regards to the discharge of condition 2.”

SDC Environmental Health Officer

- 21 “I have no adverse comments or observations, in respect of this submission”.

SDC Planning Policy team

- 22 “Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this planning application. The Planning Policy team previously commented on application SE/11/02471, which granted permission for approximately 52 residential units on the site. The Planning Policy team does not wish to comment on these detailed matters”.

SDC Refuse team

- 23 “We have assessed four areas of concern with the development, outlined as follows:

1. Site access road surfaces: When fully laden, our refuse collection vehicles (RCVs) have a gross weight of 26 tonnes. The road surface over which they travel must therefore be suitable for such a vehicle to traverse the site without causing any damage to the road surface. In particular, we are concerned that the access road area at refuse block C, adjacent to the disabled parking bays, appears to be raised and to be constructed of brick or a similar block. Any such structure, and other traffic-calming measures (e.g., sleeping policemen), must be suitable for regular use by heavy vehicles.

2. Turning head parking restrictions: The southernmost portion of the turning head area must be hatched with 'Keep Clear,' or a similar measure, to prevent vehicles from parking within it. RCVs will need to use the southernmost area to manoeuvre in order to reverse to the bin-store area in Block D, and then to exit the site at the completion of the collection sequence.

3. Location of the 4 refuse bin store areas: As long as our RCVs can access the bin store areas readily and safely as outlined in nos. 1 and 2 above, the locations are satisfactory as proposed.

4. The refuse bins that are depicted appear to be 1,100L wheeled bins, and if so each refuse storage area has the required no. of bins. The 1,100L bins must be of the drop-front variety as outlined in our guidance to developers. RCVs do not have the mechanisms needed to lift bins to empty; drop-fronted bins allow or crews to manually remove refuse and recycling sacks from bins. Further, the bins should be allocated as follows:

- a. Refuse Block A: 3 bins for general waste (black sacks) & 3 bins for recyclable waste (clear sacks and large cardboard)
- b. Refuse Block B: 2 bins for general waste (black sacks) & 2 bins for recyclable waste (clear sacks and large cardboard)
- c. Refuse Block C: 2 bins for general waste (black sacks) & 2 bins for recyclable waste (clear sacks and large cardboard)
- d. Refuse Block D: 1 bin for general waste (black sacks) & 1 bin for recyclable waste (clear sacks and large cardboard)

If vehicle access and bin deployment needs are as outlined above, SDC - Environmental and Operational Services have no objection to the development.”

West Kent Public Rights of Way team

- 24 “Public Rights of Way Footpath SU12 runs along the western boundary of the property. I do not anticipate that it will be directly affected by the development. I enclose a copy of the Public Rights of Way network map showing the line of this path for your information.

I would repeat my request of 3rd November 2011 that a Section 106 agreement should be made to include money to upgrade the surface of the public footpath SU12 between Robyn's Way and London Road.

I am also concerned that the changes in ground level should not result in surface water or flood water draining onto the public footpath. I would also ask that no further trees or shrubs are planted along the footpath boundary on the western edge of the site thus leaving the possibility of natural surveillance of the footpath from the buildings. The footpath is already quite densely shaded by trees to its western side from Uplands Close and the height of the block D will also overshadow any natural light and any further planting would exacerbate this.

It should also be noted that gates are not allowed, under Section 153 of the Highways Act 1980, to open outwards onto a public highway and therefore any gate at the end of the walkway out to the public footpath must open inwards, onto the site.

KCC Ecology

- 25 An ecological scoping survey and a reptile survey was carried out as part of the outline planning application. The reptile survey identified that there were low numbers of reptiles around the boundary of the site.

The landscape plans submitted with the planning application shows that there will be a grassy area around the boundary of the site. The landscape plan details that this area will be seeded with grass and mown regularly. We recommend that this area is sown with wild flower seed and at least half of this area is enhanced and managed to benefit reptiles. Details of the proposed management must be submitted for comment as a condition of the application.

Please be aware that any clearance of vegetation within this site, must be carried out following the precautionary mitigation detailed in the Reptile Report (Reptile

UK Power Networks

26 "No objections".

Thames Water

27 "The reserved matters application does not affect Thames Water and as such we have no observations to make".

South East water

28 No comments made

Representations

29 1 letter received

- The public footpath should not be adversely affected in any way
- Could the developer, in conjunction with the council, improve the path and lighting on it?

Group Manager Planning Services Appraisal

30 This application follows the grant of outline planning permission for the site, where the principle of a residential development has been accepted. The reserved matters application submitted seeks approval for the detailed design of the scheme, incorporating the layout, scale and appearance of the buildings, the means of access to the site, and landscaping of the site. The main issues for consideration are as follows

- Whether the reserved matters submission follows the terms of the Outline planning permission
- Whether the detailed design of the scheme is acceptable in terms of appearance, scale and layout
- Whether the access and parking arrangements are satisfactory.
- Provision for affordable housing
- Any other matters raised

Whether the reserved matters accord with the terms of the Outline Permission

31 The outline planning permission granted under SE/11/02471 is described as "the erection of up to approximately 52 residential units." This reserved matters application proposes to erect 55 residential units in total. Given the description of the development approved under the Outline Scheme, I consider that this gives sufficient flexibility to allow either slightly more or slightly less than 52 residential units as part of the reserved matters submission. In numerical terms, I am

satisfied that the 55 units proposed would fall under the terms of “approximately 52 residential units”.

32 The outline planning permission reserved all matters relating to the layout, scale and appearance of the buildings, access and landscaping for future consideration. However as part of the outline scheme, a series of illustrative plans and scale parameters were submitted and Condition 2 of the outline permission requires the scale of the development submitted under the reserved matters application to be “no greater than the height width and length parameters stated in the application”. In addition, condition 2 requires any building fronting London Road “not to exceed 11.2 metres in height when measured from a ground level of 82.6m above Ordnance Datum”.

33 The reserved matters submission shows the height of Block A, which would front London Road, at a maximum height of 93.8m above Ordnance Datum – and this accords with the height restriction in condition 2 of the Outline permission, as set out above.

34 In terms of the general scale parameters, the approximate length, width and height of each building as set out in the outline permission were as follows.

Block A – Approximately 46m length, 15m width, 3.5 storeys (including a recessed fourth storey) with upper height limit of 12m

Block B – Approximately 44m length, 13m (staggered) width, 3 storeys with upper height limit of 9m.

Block C – Approximately 36m length, 11m width, 3 storeys with upper height limit of 9m

Block D – Approximately 22m length, 14m width, 3 storeys with upper height limit of 9m.

35 The detailed drawings submitted under the reserved matters are for buildings of the following sizes.

Block A - 43m in length, 14m in width, and 11.6 metres in height over 4 storeys, including a recessed fourth storey. This excludes the part three, part two storey element to the north of the building, which projects at an angle and as such cannot be easily measured as part of the total length and width parameters set out in the outline permission.

Block B – 29m length, 15m width, 8.8m height over three storeys.

Block C – 31m length, 13m width, 8.8m height over three storeys

Block D – 20m length, 14m width, 7m height over two storeys.

36 As can be seen by comparing the above dimensions, the detailed drawings submitted with the reserved matters would comply with the approximate scale parameters set out in the outline scheme. Whilst not directly contravening the outline scale parameters, the design of Block A includes a part three, part two storey element, which increases the overall size of this building, and this will be considered in further detail below.

- 37 Overall I am satisfied that the submitted details would comply with the terms of the outline approval, and as such can be properly considered as the reserved matters to this approval.

The layout, scale and appearance of the proposal and impact upon the surrounding area

- 38 The scheme provides a four storey building fronting London Road and three storey buildings elsewhere on the site, in accordance with the terms of the outline planning permission. The frontage building (Block A) was shown at outline stage as an oval shaped building with glazed and cladded elevations. The details now show a building of more conventional and regular elevations, finished in two contrasting brick colours and timber cladding, with the recessed top floor finished in grey render. The same material finishes would be used for other buildings on the site.
- 39 The part three, part two storey element on the west elevation of Block A would increase the overall footprint and size of this block in comparison to the outline scheme. However due to the siting of this part of the building, at an angle to the remainder of Block A, it does not contravene the overall approximate length and width parameters set out in the outline permission. At the same time, the length of Blocks B, C and D would be smaller than the approximate parameters set at outline stage, albeit that the width of Block C is 2 metres wider than these parameters. Overall, the extent of built form covering the site would be very similar to the illustrations submitted with the outline scheme. The limit in height of the additional wing to Block A at two storeys would minimise the effect of Block A on the setting and outlook of Block B, and would also help maintain a break between the massing of these buildings at 3 and 4 storeys respectively.
- 40 Block B as now proposed would be condensed in size from a staggered building of 44m length to a rectangular footprint of 29 metres in length. As a result, the massing of the east and west facing elevations of this building have been significantly reduced in comparison to the outline scheme, and this also helps offset the increased size of Block A as set out above.
- 41 Block C was illustrated at outline stage as a three storey building containing 6 townhouses. This has been revised for the reserved matters to consist of a three storey building containing 12 apartments. As a result the building would be smaller in length but slightly wider. I consider that the adaption of this block to flats would provide a number of benefits. It would provide a greater number of smaller residential units within the scheme, in compliance with Policy SP5 of the Core Strategy. It would also allow the building to benefit from a more open, landscaped and unified setting on its frontage with Morewood Close – whereas the townhouses illustrated at outline stage would have been divided from one another by fencing and other boundary treatments, and contained separate access points along the road thus minimising the provision of soft landscaping on this boundary. The revisions to this block also illustrates how the number of units proposed for the site can be increased (in this instance to 55 units) without necessarily resulting in a greater extent of built form on site.
- 42 Block D would be smaller in size and height than shown at outline stage, and the building has been sited to make provision for amenity space to the side and rear. Whilst the location of this block is relatively isolated from the other blocks, and includes windows facing towards the magistrates court, these were not matters considered to be unacceptable by the appeal inspector in consideration of the

first application for development of this site under SE/07/00686. The design of this block takes account of possible flooding issues on this part of the site, and the internal floor area of the flats would be raised, with a “dry route” walkway shown. This is to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency, who provided detailed comments on this proposal at outline stage.

- 43 The remaining space on site would be given over to hard and soft landscaping, and includes the retention of a large number of trees subject to a TPO. The layout and relationship of the development with surrounding trees is to the satisfaction of the Council’s tree officer.
- 44 When the first application for development of this site was under consideration, the appeal inspector commented that the site was physically separated from surrounding residential areas and that, as a result, a scheme need not reflect the surrounding character of residential development. The reserved matters would provide a unified and distinctive design for the site which I consider would complement and enhance the mixed character of the area. I consider this would be compliant with policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan, and Policies SP1, SP5 and SP7 of the Sevenoaks Core Strategy.
- 45 The siting of the blocks would be in very similar positions to the illustrative drawings submitted at outline stage, and these blocks would be well separated from surrounding residential properties. The closest dwellings on Uplands Close would be in the region of 30 metres from any of the buildings, and Uplands Close is significantly elevated above the application site, with a high degree of intervening landscaping. Those properties on Morewood Close would be in excess of 50 metres from any block. As such I do not consider the detailed scheme would cause any undue loss of light, privacy or outlook to surrounding residential properties. This would accord with Policy EN1(3) of the local plan.

Parking and Highways Safety

- 46 The scheme for 55 residential units is closely matched to the outline proposal for “up to approximately 52 units”, and the traffic generated from the site has been established to be acceptable at outline stage. The scheme proposes a single access point via Morewood Close, with a further controlled emergency access onto the same road. This is to the satisfaction of Kent Highways.
- 47 The proposal would make provision for 1 space per residential unit and 11 visitor spaces, which would accord with the Kent Highways Interim Guidance Note on residential parking. The scheme also makes provision for cycle storage within the buildings. This would accord with condition 7 of the Outline permission, and is to the satisfaction of Kent Highways. On this basis, I consider the reserved matters would make adequate provision for access, parking and cycle facilities and would not have unacceptable highways impact, in accordance with policy EN1 of the Local Plan.

Provision for affordable housing

- 48 The Outline Planning permission secured 40% of all units on site as affordable housing. This reserved matters submission shows the provision of 22 units in total, contained within Blocks B and D, and consisting of 15 x 2 bed units and 7 x 1 bed units. The 2 bed flats would be provided as affordable rented units, and the 1 bed flats as intermediate units. This scheme has been agreed with the West

Kent Housing association. The reserved matters would accord with the terms of the S106 agreement secured at outline stage, and with Policy SP3 of the Core Strategy.

Other Matters

- 49 Sevenoaks Town Council has criticised the scheme as it would not match the style of houses in the surrounding area and thus would not conform to the Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment. Members should note that the site is not covered in this document as it is not in an existing residential area, and as such is not in conflict with it. Members should also note the comments referred to above from an earlier appeal decision where an Inspector considered that development of the site need not reflect surrounding residential development.
- 50 The town council has also criticised the density of the development, and cited Policy SP7 of the Core Strategy. It should be noted that the general requirement of this policy to develop within Sevenoaks at a density of 40dph is not a maximum density. It should also be noted that 52 dwellings would achieve a density of 60.4dph, whereas 55 units would result in a density of 64dph, so the difference as a density figure is not significant. More importantly, Members should note that the increased number of units does not result in a greater extent of built form on the site – and as stated above this is partly due to the revisions to Block C to substitute a smaller number of town houses with a greater number of flats. As the scale of development is not greater than approved at outline stage, I do not consider the increase in density to cause any demonstrable harm.
- 51 The comments from the Rights of Way Officer are noted. In approving the outline scheme, this Council did not consider a financial contribution towards the upgrade of the footpath to be reasonable. It cannot now be sought under a reserved matters application. With regard to tree planting on the western boundary, it is noted that the reserved matters seek to retain existing planting on this boundary and as such natural surveillance of the path from the proposed units would not be obscured by new planting.

Conclusion

- 52 The scheme meets the terms of the Outline permission issued under SE/11/02471, and I consider the siting, layout and appearance of the buildings, the means of access and landscaping of the site to be acceptable and in accordance with development plan policies. I would therefore recommend that the reserved matters be approved.

Background Papers

Site and Block plans

Contact Officer(s): Mr A Byrne Extension: 7225

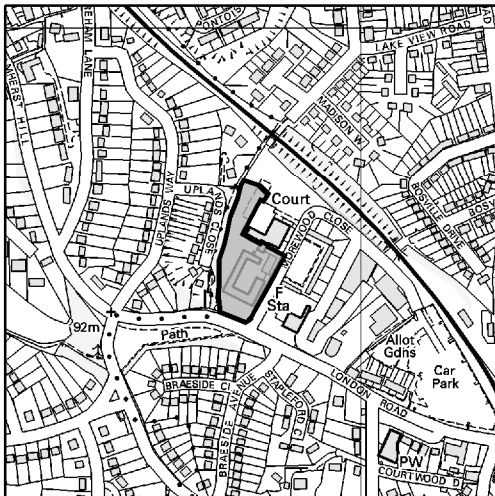
Pav Ramewal
Chief Executive Designate

Link to application details:

<http://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=MGLVMEBK8V000>

Link to associated documents:

<http://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=MGLVMEBK8V000>



Site Plan

Scale 1:1,500

Date 03/04/2013



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Sevenoaks District Council, 100019428, 2013.

Block Plan

