

Registration Date:	30-Mar-2015	Applic. No:	P/16122/000
Officer:	Mr Smyth	Ward:	Central
		Applic type:	Major
		13 week	29th June 2015
		date:	

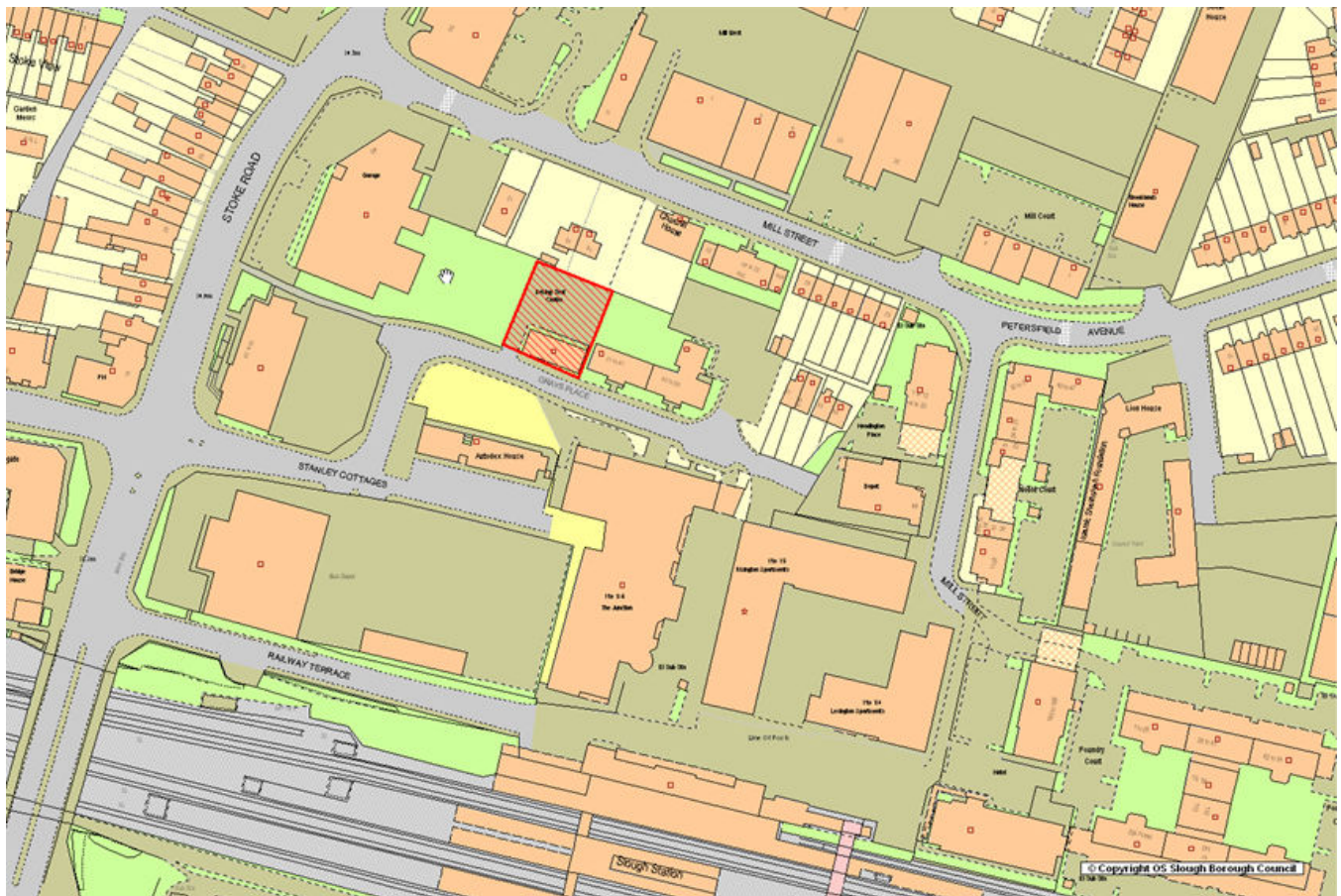
Applicant: Ms. Shazia Shah, Adil Property Investments Ltd

Agent: Mr. Eshan UL-Haq, ArchiGrace 50, Two Mile Drive, Slough, SL1 5UH

Location: Driving Standards Agency, Driving Test Centre, Grays Place, Slough, SL2 5AF

Proposal: Construction of 3.5 storey high building to provide 14no. flats (including accommodation in the roofspace) plus landlords office and basement to provide storage and facilities for residents, on site parking for 10no cars and 14 bicycles plus refuse store.

Recommendation: Delegated to Planning Manager



1.0 **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 Delegate the planning application to the Planning Manager for the consideration of outstanding consultations, any minor design changes, finalising conditions and final determination.
- 1.2 Having considered the relevant Policies below, the development is considered not to have an adverse affect on the sustainability and the environment for the reasons set out.

PART A: BACKGROUND

2.0 **Proposal**

- 2.1 The application proposes construction of 3.5 storey high building to provide 14no. flats (including accommodation in the roofspace) plus landlords office and basement to provide storage and facilities for residents, on site parking for 10 no cars and 14 bicycles plus refuse store.
- 2.2 The building measures 8.2m to eaves (12m to ridge, as amended) X 16m deep narrowing to 12.25m at the eastern end X 22m wide narrowing to 19m at the northern end.
- 2.3 At basement level, there are additional residents ancillary facilities together with storage lockers for each of the proposed flats and separate plant area. The basement has both stairs and lift access.
- 2.4 Ground floor comprises 2 no. offices, one measuring 49.06 sq m the other measures 65.58 sq m. The offices sit either side of the gated entrance, providing both vehicular and pedestrian access to the rear parking court and main entrance door, which located on the west side of the building. There is a separate pedestrian footpath to the side of the building providing direct access to the main entrance.
- 2.5 The first and second floors each have 5 no flats comprising 3 no. X 2 bedroom flats and 2 no. X 1 bedroom flats. The third floor within the roof space contains 4 no. flats comprising 1 no X 2 bedroom flat and 3 X 1 bedroom flats. The stairs to the roof space accommodation are provided via a dormer projection within the north west elevation.
- 2.6 The gated vehicle access provides vehicular access undercroft of the building to a rear parking court containing 10 no. car parking spaces. The rear main wall of the building is sited 9 metres from the boundary with the existing houses at 16 and 18 Mill Street to the north. An illustrative plan has been submitted to show that the site comprising 16 & 18 Mill Street is capable of being developed whilst maintaining a similar distance from its boundary to the south with an overall separation distance between the buildings of 18 metres.

3.0 **Application Site**

- 3.1 This site is situated to the north of Grays Place and is currently occupied by a single storey portakabin building with associated car park and is being used as a driving test centre. The site is currently leased and it is understood that the current lease will fall due in August 2015.
- 3.2 The site is within an area of mixed uses comprising commercial and residential properties. Adjoining the site to the west is a disused commercial car sales site, to the south is a 4 storied scheme, to the north are 2 no. dilapidated residential properties and to the east is a

block of three storey flats. The site lies within an area which is experiencing gradual change and regeneration. The immediate area has heights of 2 or 3 stories although the buildings are taller around the railway station which is further to the south, but step down to the above mentioned heights in this location.

- 3.3 The site is located within the Slough Town Centre Area but is not located within the Commercial Core

4.0 **Site History**

- 4.1 There is no relevant planning history for this site. However, pre application planning advice was sought and the guidance given has for the most part been taken on board as part of the planning submission, however, further changes have been negotiated during the assessment of this application.

5.0 **Neighbour Notification**

- 5.1 Neighbours Consulted: The Occupier, 31 – 59 (odds), Grays Place, Slough
- Cullen Burns Associates Ltd, Automotive House
Grays Place, Slough
- Roman House, Grays Place, Slough
- The Occupier, Flats 1 - 133, The Junction, Grays Place, Slough
- The Occupier, 20-28 Mill Street, Slough
SL2 5DH
- The Occupier, 18, Mill Street, Slough, SL2 5DH
- The Occupier, 16, Mill Street, Slough, SL2 5DH
- The Occupier, Thames Pathology Services, 12, Mill Street, Slough, SL2 5DH
- Press Notice Placed in Local Press and On Site
- NO COMMENTS RECEIVED

6.0 **Consultation**

- 6.1 Transport & Highways

Any comments received will be reported on the Amendment Sheet

- 6.2 Land Contamination

Any comments received will be reported on the Amendment Sheet

- 6.3 Drainage

Given the proposals for a fully excavated basement, the development would require attenuation in the form of above ground storage, to ensure an acceptable soakage. Details of surface water drainage can be covered by planning condition.

PART B: PLANNING APPRAISAL

7.0 Policy Background

7.1 This application is assessed against the following national and local planning policies:

- National Planning Policy Framework & Planning Practice Guidance
- Core Policies, 1, 4, 7 8 and 12 of the Slough Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2006 – 2026) Development Plan Document December 2012
- Policies H14, EN1, EN3, EN5, and T2 of the Adopted local Plan for Slough

7.2 The application is assessed in accordance with the following:

- Principle of Development
- Design and Street Impact
- Impact on Neighbouring Occupiers/Uses
- Land and Groundwater Contamination
- Transport, Access, Servicing and Parking
- Drainage and Flood Risk
- Quality of Housing
- Landscaping & Amenity Space

8.0 Principle of Development

8.1 At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be seen as a “golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking”. In respect of decision taking this means inter alia approving development proposals that accord with the development plan without delay.

Twelve core planning principles are identified which both should underpin plan making and decision taking. A number of these core principles are relevant to the current proposals being:-

- Always seek to secure a quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings
- Support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk, the reuse of existing resources and the encouragement for using renewable resources
- Encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has previously been developed, provided that it is not of high environmental value
- Actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of Public Transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development to locations which are or can be made sustainable.

At paragraph 49 in respect of delivering a wide choice of high quality homes it states that housing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

8.2 Core Policy 1 sets out the overall spatial strategy for Slough requiring all developments to take place within the built up area, predominately on previously developed land. The policy seeks to ensure high density housing is located in the appropriate parts of Slough Town Centre with the scale and density of development elsewhere being related to the sites current or proposed accessibility, character and surroundings.

Core Policy 4 again emphasises that high density housing should be located in the Town

Centre area and that outside the Town Centre the development will be predominately family housing at a density related to the character of the area. In particular, in suburban residential areas, there will only be limited infilling consisting of family houses which are designed to enhance the distinctive suburban character and identity of the area. The site is not identified as a development site within the Slough Local Development Framework Site Allocation Document DPD.

- 8.3 Being located within the Town Centre Area, the provision of flats complies with Core Policies 1 and 4 of the LDF Core Strategy.
- 9.0 Design and Street Scene Impact
- 9.1 The National Planning Policy Guidance, in its overarching Core Planning principles state that planning should: *Proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs.....always seek to ensure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildingshousing applications should be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development.....good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people.*
- 9.2 Core Policy 8 states that all development in the borough shall be sustainable, of a high quality design, improve the quality of the environment and address the impact of climate change. With respect to achieving high quality design all development will be:
- a) be of a high quality design that is practical, attractive, safe, accessible and adaptable
 - b) respect its location and surroundings
 - c) be in accordance with the Spatial Strategy in terms of its height, scale, massing and architectural style
- 9.3 Policy EN1 of the adopted Local Plan requires that development proposals reflect a high standard of design and must be compatible with and/or improve their surroundings in terms of: scale, height, massing, bulk, layout, siting, building form and design, architectural style, materials, access points and servicing, visual impact, relationship to nearby properties, relationship to mature trees, and relationship to water courses.
- 9.4 The application site is located within an area which is undergoing change and regeneration, as evidenced by other flatted developments which have taken place or are taking place on sites north of Slough Railway Station. The site cries out for comprehensive redevelopment as part of a wider area which includes properties adjoining the site to the south and fronting onto Mill Street. However, given the complexities of ownership in the area, it is unlikely that development agreements could be secured in the immediate future.
- 9.5 The site has a frontage to Grays Place which is a short cul de sac, comprising a mix of residential and commercial development. On the opposite side of Grays Place there is a 3 storey commercial building. To the east of that building is a four storey flatted development with ground floor car parking undercroft of the building. This scales up to an adjacent 6/7 storey flatted scheme, to its west. Adjoining the site to the east there is a three storey flatted scheme. Beyond that are a number of two storey houses. To the west of the site is a vacant building which formerly operated as a car show room.

9.6 Whilst the proposed development is marginally higher than the existing three storey flats to the east, it is considered that the development fits in well with other recent developments in Grays Place which have been built to heights of between 5 – 7 floors equivalent.

9.7 The building is designed to be traditional in its appearance using a mix of stone dressing and brick. Proposals for vehicle access under the building has been used a means of accessing a rear/undercroft car park replicating residential developments opposite. The building has a hipped and pitched roof reflecting the flats adjacent to the east.

9.8 No objections are raised on grounds of design or street scene impact.

10.0 **Impact on Neighbouring Occupiers/Uses**

10.1 As stated above, in the National Planning Policy Statement Twelve core planning principles are identified which both should underpin plan making and decision taking. A number of these core principles are relevant to the current proposals and include that planning should:

- *Always seek to secure a quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.*

Core Policy 8 of the Slough Local Development Framework Core Strategy states that all development in the borough shall be sustainable, of a high quality design, improve the quality of the environment and address the impact of climate change. With respect to achieving high quality design all development will:

a) respect its location and surroundings.

Policy EN1 requires that development proposals reflect a high standard of design and must be compatible with and/or improve their surroundings in terms of.....*relationship to nearby properties*.....

10.2 The development has been designed with a side /rear stagger to avoid breaching any line of sight from the rear of neighbouring flats at 31 – 41 Grays Place. The development will result in some loss of sunlight for the neighbouring flats during the late afternoon and evening periods, although this would not be so significant as to warrant a refusal of planning permission. There will some impact when viewed from the communal rear gardens belonging to those flats, although being communal rather than private amenity space, this is not considered to be a significant issue.

10.3 At ground floor level flank wall windows are proposed for the offices, although these are secondary windows provided for light and can be conditioned to be obscurely glazed and fixed shut or high level opening only. At first and second floor levels, in the eastern elevation there are windows serving a kitchen and in the western elevation there are flank wall windows serving a kitchen and stairwell. Conditions will be imposed requiring these windows to be obscurely glazed and either fixed shut or high level opening only. At third floor level within the roofspace there are no windows proposed within either side roof plane.

10.4 To the rear of the site are a pair of semi detached houses (nos 16 & 18 Mill Street), both of which are in a poor state of repair. No 18 Mill Street is being used for a commercial car wash. No 16 is still understood to be occupied. Both sites are ripe for redevelopment. So as not to prejudice redevelopment of the neighbouring site, through sterilisation by direct overlooking, the applicants have provided illustrative plans showing how the site could be redeveloped following redevelopment of the application site. A notional window to window distance of 18 metres can be achieved between the development currently under

consideration and a potential redevelopment on this neighbouring site. This approach assumes a minimum distance of 9 metres set off from the rear boundaries of each respective site. It further assumes redevelopment of both sites to provide flatted development which does not require the provision of private amenity space. A condition will be imposed requiring that no part of the building (above ground floor) be permitted within 9 metres when measured from the rear boundary of the site.

- 10.5 Subject to the imposition of appropriate conditions no objections are raised on grounds of impact.

11.0 **Land & Groundwater Contamination**

- 11.1 Core Policy 8 of the Core Policy 8 of the Slough Local Development Framework Core Strategy states development shall not:

b) Cause contamination or a deterioration in land soil or water quality.

- 11.2 Further guidance will be provided via the Amendment Sheet.

12.0 **Transport, Access, Servicing and Parking**

- 12.1 Core Policy 7 of the Slough Development Framework Core Strategy states that: *All new development should reinforce the principles of the transport strategy.....and should improve road safety.....*

Policy T2 of the Adopted Local Plan for Slough states that: residential development will be required to provide a level of parking appropriate to its location and which will overcome road safety problems, protect the amenities of adjoining residents and not result in an adverse visual impact upon the environment.....

- 12.2 Preliminary verbal comments have been provided by the transport and highway engineers. This will be reported more fully on the Amendment Sheet.

Car Parking

As the site is located within the town centre but outside of the commercial core there would be an expectation that some on site car parking would be provided. In general terms car parking at a ratio of 1 space per flat has been accepted on sites even outside of the town centre area.

As part of this application 10 no. car parking spaces are proposed which equates to 0.7 spaces per dwelling. This is considered acceptable given the site's location which is highly sustainable within easy walking distance of both the bus and rail stations and the town centre which its range of shops and services.

Provision is made for secure cycle parking on site sufficient to accommodate 14 no. bicycles, albeit the storage area may need to be marginally increased in size to ensure adequate access to all of the cycle stands.

Future occupiers are to be restricted from taking up residents parking permits and this will be covered by planning condition.

Refuse

Provision is made for a separate access to the refuse store from Grays Place. The drag distance is @ 12 metres which marginally exceeds the guideline of 10 metres although this would not be sufficient grounds to warrant a refusal of planning permission.

Access

Pedestrian and vehicular access is proposed from Grays Place. The vehicular access is gated. The gates are set back 4.5m from the highway which is less than the normal requirement of 6 metres. However, the highway engineers do not propose to object in this instance. The existing access will need to be reinstated to footway and this would be covered as part of a minor highway works agreement.

- 12.3 No objections are raised on grounds of access or parking subject to minor design changes to the cycle store and conditions restricting future occupiers from taking up parking permits.

13.0 **Drainage and Flood Risk**

- 13.1 In the Technical Guidance to the NPPF, the guidance sets out the following:

As set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding should be avoided by directing development away from areas at highest risk, but where development is necessary, making it safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere. For these purposes:

“areas at risk of flooding” means land within Flood Zones 2 and 3; or land within Flood Zone 1 which has critical drainage problems and which has been notified to the local planning authority by the Environment Agency;

“flood risk” means risk from all sources of flooding - including from rivers and the sea, directly from rainfall on the ground surface and rising groundwater, overwhelmed sewers and drainage systems, and from reservoirs, canals and lakes and other artificial sources

- 13.2 Core Policy 8 of the Core Policy 8 of the Slough Local Development Framework Core Strategy states:

a) Development will only be permitted where it is safe and it can be demonstrated that there is minimal risk of flooding to the property and it will not impede the flow of floodwaters, increase the risk of flooding elsewhere or reduce the capacity of a flood plain; and

b) Development must manage surface water arising from the site in a sustainable manner which will also reduce the risk of flooding and improve water quality.

- 13.3 The site is not located within either flood zones 2 or 3, nor is it located within an identified critical flood risk area within flood zone 1. In terms of managing surface water disposal, this will necessitate on site mitigation/storage to achieve an run off rate of 5 litres per second. Planning conditions will be imposed requiring details of drainage to be submitted for approval.

14.0 **Quality of Housing**

- 14.1 The National Planning Policy Framework requires that local planning authorities ensure the provision of a wide range of good quality homes.

- 14.2 As a guide to internal room sizes the Council relies on its planning guidelines for flat conversions.

Unit	Lounge/Kitchen en 1 bed(20.43 sq m)	Bedroom Bed 1 (11.14 sq m) Bed 2 (6.5 sq m)	Complies Y	Complies N

	2 bed(22.29 sq m)			
1 (2 bed)	24.7	11.58 7.39	Y Y	
2 (1 bed)	23.16	11.46	Y	
3 (2 bed)	26.42	13.94 11.27	Y Y	
4 (2 bed)	23.12	11.60 6.93	Y Y	
5 (1 bed)	29.52	13.01	Y	
6 (2 bed)	24.7	11.58 7.39	Y Y	
7 (1 bed)	23.16	11.46	Y	
8 (2 bed)	26.42	13.94 11.27	Y Y	
9 (2 bed)	23.12	11.60 6.93	Y Y	
10 (1 bed)	29.52	13.01	Y	
11 (1 bed)	25.09	13.72	Y	
12 (1 bed)	25.27	12.11	Y	
13 (2 bed)	23.12	11.60 6.93	Y Y	
14 (1 bed)	31.97	13.01	Y	

It is apparent from the above table that all room sizes comply with the Council's guidance.

14.3 It is accepted that all habitable rooms have an acceptable aspect and would benefit from good daylight. The south facing flats would benefit from direct sunlight. In addition there are no room stacking issues with for the most part like rooms being above like rooms. However, any noise transmission issues can be resolved at the building regulations stage.

14.4 No objections are raised on grounds of housing quality.

15.0 **Landscaping and Amenity Space**

15.1 Policy H14 of the adopted local plan recognises that the demand for gardens within flatted schemes is less strong than for individual family houses. The ground floor is for the most part occupied by surface car parking, with little real opportunity to provide soft landscaping. Balconies are provided for all south facing ground and first floor flats. The remaining flats have Juliette balconies. Given the site's town centre location this level of provision is considered to be acceptable and as such no objections are raised.

16.0 **S106 Contributions**

16.1 As the scheme falls below the 15 no. dwelling threshold, there are no requirements for

affordable housing, education or amenity space contributions.

PART C: RECOMMENDATION

17.0 Recommendation

Delegate the planning application to the Planning Manager for the consideration of outstanding consultations, any minor design changes, finalising conditions and final determination

18.0 Conditions

18.1 The following summary of conditions is proposed:

- Time
- Approved drawings
- Samples of Materials
- Surface Materials
- Landscape & Boundary Treatment
- Minimum Car Parking
- Details of Bin Store & Secure Cycle Parking
- Pedestrian Visibility
- Waste Minimisation Plan
- Construction Management Plan
- Drainage Strategy
- Minimum Distance to Rear Boundary
- Obscure Glazing & High Level Opening Flank Wall Windows.
- Details of Residents Amenities to be Provided in Basement
- Land Contamination Study
- Hours of Construction
- Hours of Deliveries
- Minimum Distance of Gates from Highway
- Reinstate Redundant Crossovers.
- Details of Access
- External Lighting
- Restriction on Residents Parking Permits
- Electric Car Charging Points