

Registration Date:	20 th May 2016	Applic. No:	P/00731/027
Officer:	Mr. Albertini	Ward:	Central
		Applic type:	Major
		13 week date:	19 th August 2016

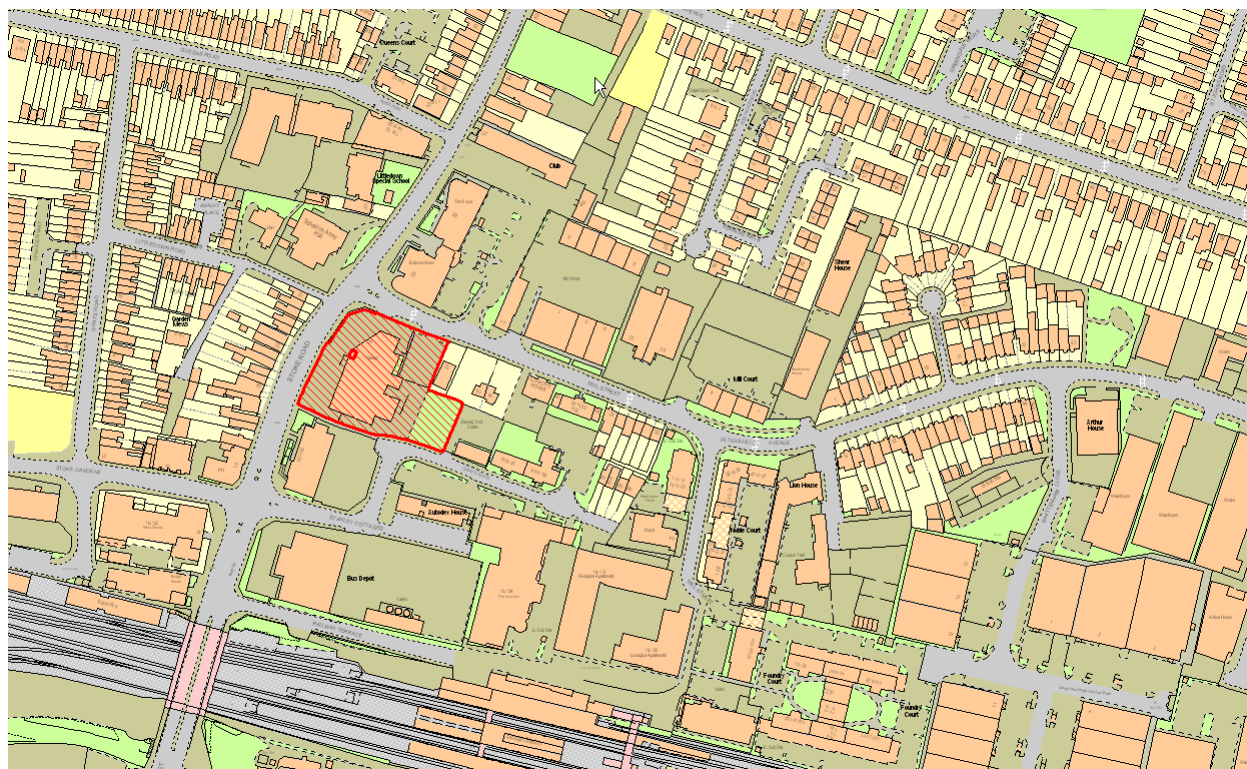
Applicant: Mr. Ronald Lask, Howsen Ltd

Agent: Sabine Meilwes, Preston Bennett Hamptons, 37/41 Church Road, Stanmore, HA7 4AA

Location: 26-40 Stoke Road, Slough, Berkshire, SL2 5AJ

Proposal: Demolition of garage building and redevelopment to provide 100 apartments with associated car parking and amenity space.

Recommendation: Delegate to Planning Manager for approval



1.0 **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATION**

Delegate to Planning Manager for approval

PART A: BACKGROUND

2.0 **Proposal**

- 2.1 Two buildings are proposed. The larger one L wrapped around Stoke Road and Mill Street rising to 7 storeys. The smaller building is 5 storeys and sits at the rear of the site facing Grays Place. The top floor is within a hipped roof with dormer windows. The main building steps down 3 storeys at its east side on Mill Street and the top two floors of the building are set back from the main elevation. Due to the drop in levels at the rear of the site the ground floor sits above the ground level by half a storey.
- 2.2 Accommodation comprises 72 two bedroom and 28 one bedroom apartments. 8 are accessible units. The smaller building contains 15 of the above mentioned apartments.
- 2.3 At the submission stage no affordable housing was offered but as part of negotiations on viability the applicant has now offered 15 social rent homes in the smaller building. This is 15 % of the total homes.
- 2.4 70 parking spaces are proposed partly in a basement (31) and partly at ground level with some under the smaller building. Space for 82 bikes is included with a room within the main building next to the main entrance or a store under the smaller. A delivery bay is also included.
- 2.5 Access will be from Grays Place with an exit on to Mill Street where the existing site access is. The access will be gated but provision will be made for pedestrian and cycle access through the site.
- 2.6 The main building has a main entrance on Stoke Road. It is set back from the footway 3 to 7 metres with railings and landscaping on the frontage. As the site falls away to the rear the ground floor sits above the adjacent footway and footpath.
- 2.7 Landscaping is shown within the site, on all frontages and on the east boundary with tree planting in selected places. Three trees of poor quality on the Mill Street frontage will be removed.
- 2.8 There is some communal amenity at the rear of the building. Most ground floor apartments will have their own amenity space. Balconies, either cantilevered or inset, or terraces are provided for most apartments.
- 2.9 Elevational treatment will be contemporary in style using primarily brick with limited amounts of timber cladding and render. Main windows will be deep. Facades are broken up with insets, protruding or inset balconies and, on some elevations, fins and louvres. For the first to fourth floors louvres are proposed; horizontal on the west, Stoke Road elevation and vertical for the north, Mill St. elevation. The louvres

are intended to add interest and also help protect privacy. The shade of brick will vary with the ground floor being a darker shade. Red is intended to feature as a brick colour although a 'multi' type brick is proposed which has various colours. The brick will be non traditional long and shallow in terms of shape. Bronze colour railings and louvres are proposed.

2.10 To support the application the following have been submitted Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement, Transport Assessment, Ground Investigation, Tree report, Flood Risk assessment, day/sun light assessment plus a viability study.

3.0 **Application Site**

3.1 This L shaped site is about 300 m from Slough Station. The existing generally two storey building was used by car dealer but is now vacant. The site falls about 1.6 metres from Stoke Road to the rear of the site.

3.2 Opposite are two or two and half storey homes with commercial uses on the ground floor of some buildings. Opposite to the north is an office building with 4 quite tall storeys and a higher corner entrance tower. To the south is a footpath with 4/5 storey office beyond. On Mill Street to the east is two storey office and on the Grays Place frontage the former driving test centre single storey building sits to the east.

3.3 Two trees overhang the east boundary and there are 3 poor quality trees on the Mill St boundary.

4.0 **Site History**

4.1 Change of use from showroom to gym. Approved Aug 15 (not implemented). Various minor applications or extensions related to showroom use 2011 and before.

5.0 **Neighbour Notification**

5.1 Stoke Road 25 – 51 odd 18-24, 50, Salvation Army
Mill St 11, 12,16,18
Grays Place 31-41 odd; Driving Test Centre.; Autodex House

5.2 No responses received.

6.0 **Consultation**

6.1 **Traffic /Highways**

There will be some increase in traffic compared to the former use of the site. This can be mitigated by a financial contribution towards the Stoke Road/Mill Street junction improvement (toucan crossing) and encouraging non car modes of travel through a travel plan and allowing cycle and pedestrian access through the rear of the site. In addition land to be dedicated for highway widening (Stoke Road); residents to be restricted from parking permits; minor off site works re access.

Some minor layout changes requested.

6.2 Environmental Quality

Full comments to follow. Standard conditions re soil contamination to be applied.

6.3 Thames Water

No objection but request condition regarding foul drainage.

PART B: PLANNING APPRAISAL

7.0 **Policy Background**

7.1 The site falls within an existing business area and the town centre area on the Proposals Map 2010. It is also part of a Selected Key Location that provides for relaxation of the Core Strategy policy of protecting existing business land. Relaxation is permitted if the proposal is for residential development, is comprehensively planned and rationalises the pedestrian network.

7.2 The proposal can be considered to comply with the above policy. The site is big enough to provide a residential development without significant compromises and it does not prevent adjoining sites being redeveloped in a sensible, comprehensive, way in the future. It also provides a pedestrian/cycle link through the site regarding rationalisation of the network.

7.3 In terms of affordable housing the proposal currently does not comply with adopted policy of 40% affordable housing. It is accepted that due to viability considerations this policy requirement can be relaxed. The proposed 15 % social rent affordable housing is acceptable in principle.

8.0 **Transport and Access**

8.1 Use of the existing access on Mill Street and a new access on Grays Place is acceptable. The through link allows refuse vehicles to access the site without reversing.

8.2 The extra travel demand compared to the previous use justifies improvements to the Stoke Road/Mill street junction and a travel plan to encourage non-car modes of travel.

8.3 The applicant has agreed the principle of the Council's request for allowing pedestrian and cycle access. This is part of a proposal to create a safer and more attractive route than Stoke Road for accessing the station and town centre from the north in particular the proposed canal basin redevelopment scheme. This route would use the service road off Mill Street (and nearly opposite the site) that will in the future connect to St. Pauls Avenue. To the south the station can be accessed off Grays Place via a path through The Junction development at Railway Terrace.

- 8.4 Car parking is provided at a ratio of 0.7 spaces per home. This is acceptable as the site is near the railway station and retail area of the town centre. As the site is within the town centre area of the Local Plan there is scope to be flexible on parking. However parking on site is important to prevent further parking pressure on nearby streets.
- 8.5 Cycle parking is acceptable. The main store, within the building, is a particularly welcome feature as this is more secure than have a controlled entry door on the outside of the building. Some cycle lockers are provided in addition to stands which is also a welcome feature that allows greater security or flexibility over what is stored for example push chairs.
- 8.6 Part of the Stoke Road and Mill Street frontage is affected by a road widening line. The building is set back well behind this line and if implemented there will still be a buffer planting area between ground floor flats and the footway. Securing future dedication of the land is to be a planning obligation.

9.0 **Design and Layout Matters**

- 9.1 The height of the main building proposed will be much greater than the existing building but will be similar to those to the north and south. Furthermore further up Stoke Road, on the same side of the road, schemes have been approved or been applied for that are significantly higher than the existing two storey buildings. Consequently the principle of redevelopment of the east side of Stoke Road with large buildings is becoming established. The recent Northgate House replacement on the west side of Stoke Road, near to the railway bridge, is 7 storeys high.
- 9.2 The overall height of the building at 20.5 metres will be higher than adjacent buildings of 16.5 to the south and 15/16.5 m to the north. However along the Stoke Road frontage the height is less than 15m. The set-back of the building from the highway and set-back of the top two floors helps limit the effect on the appearance of Stoke Road in terms of town scape.
- 9.3 Amenity space is reasonable for an urban apartment building. The rear courtyard has landscape areas or trees amongst the parking area. The frontages all have a landscaping strip and some ground floor flats have their own amenity space outside their patio doors. Balconies or terraces for many flats contribute to the amenity provision. Bowyer open space is the nearest space for play which is 500 metres to the north of St. Pauls Ave.
- 9.4 In terms of community safety the rear car park will have barrier or gate such that vehicle entry can be controlled. However pedestrian access through the site is wanted by the Council as a wider community benefit for the neighbourhood. As this allows members of the public into the site the two main parking areas will have their own gates to increase security. The exterior parking and the access way through the site is well overlooked by windows in the development as is the rear entry door.
- 9.5 The existing path to the south is a short cut from Stoke Rd to Grays Place. This is relatively safe as it is a short. Straight link with good visibility and will be overlooked

by propose homes. However to protect the adjacent ground floor homes boundary railings are proposed.

- 9.6 In terms of appearance the main elevations building will be quite distinctive because of the fins and louvres proposed and the non traditional brick shape. Discussions continue regarding extent of louvres and balancing this with light to rooms and view out from rooms.
- 9.7 Overall the proposal is acceptable and complies with Local Plan EN 1 Design EN3 Landscaping Core Strategy 2006-2026 policy 8 Sustainability and the environment; policy 9 Natural and Built environment. Policy 12 community safety.

10.0 Residential Amenity

- 10.1 The only residential property affected is opposite on the west side of Stoke Road. The separation distance of 26 to 28 metres is adequate to protect privacy. Because of the height the outlook from the homes affected will change significantly but in a location on the edge of a town centre and where redevelopment is being promoted and is happening this is considered acceptable.
- 10.2 However it is still important to ensure existing homes have adequate day and sun light. The Council's consultant specialist has concluded that the conclusion of the applicants light study is reasonable. Some homes will notice a reduction in day light and receive less than the recommended amount of day light. The nationally accepted guideline is published by BRE 2011 but it is not a not a statutory standard. The BRE guidelines state that a limited number of variations from the individual standards are acceptable particularly in urban environments.
- 10.3 The 5 storey building at the rear has a more domestic scale suitable for Grays Place which has some residential property in it but not next to it. It has no impact on the living conditions of existing residents nearby. To the west planning permission has been granted for 14 flats (on the former driving test centre) and this will not be adversely affected by the proposal.
- 10.4 The northern elevation will be 17 metres from the existing office building opposite on Mill Street. This is quite close in terms of overlooking but this building to building distance is not unusual in streets near town centres.
- 10.5 Some of the windows within the new development at low level are unlikely to receive the recommended levels of day light but will receive acceptable sun light. Some rooms within the courtyard may experience relatively poor winter sun due to the southern wing of the building shading windows. As indicated above so deviation from the recommended standards is acceptable.
- 10.6 Discussions continue with regard to the louvres and any affect on light levels to some of the proposed rooms.

11.0 Section 106 Planning Obligation Matters

- Affordable Housing - 15 % social rent (based on mix proposed).

- A financial contribution for transport mitigation (contribution towards Stoke Road/Mill St junction improvement; travel plan monitoring).
- Travel Plan including TRICS surveys for Travel Plan monitoring.
- Car Parking Space allocation/management system (incl electric car bays)
This may be covered by condition only.
- Residents excluded from being eligible for existing or any future on-street resident parking permit scheme.
- Sign Sec. 278 Highway Agreement for works within the Highway
- Secure public right of way through rear of site for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Secure dedication free of charge of highway widening land.
- Financial contribution towards education facilities and local recreation facilities.
- Provision for a development viability review mechanism if a substantial start on construction is not made by a set date. The review would take account of costs and values to establish if a greater Section 106 package could be afforded closer to the Council's policy requirements. Inclusion of this provision is subject to the outcome of negotiations on the Sec 106 package.

PART C: RECOMMENDATION

Recommendation

Delegate to Planning Manager for approval subject to completion of a satisfactory Section 106 planning obligation agreement; resolution of outstanding matters referred to in the report, addition or alteration of planning conditions.

PART D: LIST OF CONDITIONS.

Full details to be on meeting amendment sheet

1. Time Limit
2. Drawings Approved
3. Materials
4. Bin Stores – provide
5. Cycle Store details
6. Boundary Treatment
7. Landscaping
8. Tree Protection
9. Surface Water Drainage
10. Floor levels re flood risk

11. Lighting
12. Noise attenuation (West elevation)
13. Soil Contamination
14. Foul Drainage
15. Access
16. Visibility Splays
17. Off Site Highway Works (if needed)
18. Internal access turning and parking
19. Car Park management scheme
20. Electric Vehicle Charging Points
21. Sustainable Development
22. Construction Management Scheme