DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

71 BRIDGE STREET, PINNER

THE SITE

The site is in central Pinner and is located at the rear of 71 Bridge Street. It is accessed from Bridge Street by a vehicular way between 71 Bridge Street and the Post Office buildings to the north. To the southwest lies the main line railway and Metropolitan railway tracks.

The site has been vacant for some considerable period of time having been in employment use as a yard for auto maintenance. In its current extremely dilapidated condition the site does not contribute to the vibrant nature of Pinner; it is under utilised and thus offers a high degree of development potential as a brownfield site.

Although the site has a previous employment use it is considered ideal for residential development. The new development will change the experience of this neighbourhood from an industrial back yard into a good residential community space. The unmodulated design wall of the LIDL supermarket will be hidden by the creation of a more interesting residential façade. The neighbourhood will also benefit from a friendly residential amenity space.

There is a strong security rationale to bringing residential use to a central urban location through passive policing particularly in this back land location, which is without population outside the hours of normal business. This aspect agrees with central government advice to Local Authorities over recent years where a more natural mix of uses has been sought for these types of locations.

TRANSPORT LINKS

The site being at the heart of Pinner is well served by public transport with numerous bus routes and within easy walking distance of Pinner Station on the Metropolitan Tube Line and as such, in line with current advice to Local Authorities from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and recent Policy Planning Guidance Notes the site is well suited to a higher density development maximising the site's transportation and infrastructural links with minimal car parking.

THE BRIEF

The brief was to design a low carbon residential development consistent with its highly centralised location in vibrant Pinner. The scheme is to be suitable for occupiers with limited mobility with access achievable to all apartments by wheelchair users.

The scheme is to be designed in the light of the Government's carbon saving targets to minimise energy consumption and optimise renewable energy sources. An environmentally sustainable scheme is to contribute to the GLA's target of a Carbon Neutral Scheme in each London Borough by 2010.

Our client has asked us to maximise the density on the site, but to be respective of height, good design, amenity space and orientation. There should be no neighbourly overlooking. The scheme should be buildable and respect the future development options of adjacent sites.

The scheme is to be principally one and two bedrooms flats.

EVALUATION

To the north Lidl supermarket stands four storeys high with a roof top car park and additional lift cove and plant room. The building is sited on higher ground above the application site.

To the west there is the Metropolitan Line railway with 4 storey flats beyond. The ridge height is slightly above the balustrade level of the Lidl car park roof.

To the south there are service yards and ancillary buildings with no architectural significance. To the east there is a small gap in the otherwise linear fascade of shops with residential units over with pitched roofs.

In terms of key views into the site, there is only a glimpse through the gap on Bridge Street and even this is narrow and restricted.

The site is, therefore, extremely well shielded from Longview, but it would be inappropriate to exceed the height of the adjacent Lidl supermarket building and the flats on the opposite side of the railway line.

By looking at the surrounding area from the rooftop car park it is clear that there are no vantage points from the Conservation Area or important buildings on which this building would have any effect.

The key views of the site are, therefore, from directly from Bridge Street through the gap and from the service road to the south.

It is from these views that the aesthetics of the building have been carefully considered. There are residential properties on the upper floors of the Bridge Street buildings and careful consideration is required to omit overlooking in this direction. It is not considered that other such restrictions apply to the north, west and south views.

In order to obtain a low carbon scheme there are a number of factors that have to be introduced and the design must cater for these. The scheme should, therefore, predominately face south to gain from solar gain and good day lighting. There should be sufficient basement space to incorporate a biomass centralised boiler and fuel store. A flat roof with solar panels for hot water heating combines reduced height with good access for maintenance to the solar collectors.

The building must be designed with extra thick walls to incorporate super insulation.

In the design of the building consideration will be given to the use of locally produced products and recycled materials if possible.

The detailed design will also accommodate life style facilities for low energy living and special consideration will be given to refuse and recycling so that there is an ease of use of such facilities to the occupants.

Access to the site will require refuse vehicles entering and turning on site and, therefore, the building will need to be designed to afford such space.

Green issues will be further reinforced by suitable safe cycle storage that will promote car free living.

PROVISION OF HOUSING, AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND DENSITY

The proposal represents an additional 30 units to the Harrow housing stock, which would make a positive contribution with regards to meeting annual housing targets for the Borough.

This aspect of the development must, therefore, be supported in principle. The allocation of affordable units at between 27.5% to 30% is in accordance with Policy H5 of the Harrow Unitary Development Plan 2004.

The overall density of the proposal is above the maximum requirement of 150 rooms per hectare as stated in Policy H4 of the Harrow Unitary Development Plan. The density proposed of 615hrph is not unusual for London and we do not believe this to be excessive or inappropriate for Pinner and this site bearing in mind its town centre location.

THE DESIGN

To respect the neighbouring properties by way of the height and bulk of the new building, it is limited to 4 storeys above ground level. In order to achieve the desired number of units a semi basement is created utilising the slope of the site to provide additional units, a sunken garden as well as a basement for the biomass boiler and storage.

The building is set a consistent minimum distance from the boundary to allow scaffold access for buildability and maintenance. There is no overlooking to the north or east, which is achieved by an inward looking scheme. This allows the post office site to be developed independently and the sites to the south where they can abut the blank façade of the elevations if necessary.

The courtyard effect enables habitable rooms to generally face south and take advantage of the orientation.

The wings of the development are slightly angled so that there is no overlooking from units within the scheme.

Amenity space is provided by the garden area in the open courtyard and by balconies.

Car parking is not provided other than a disabled space yet a turning head is provided for refuse and delivery vehicles.

Despite being surrounded by ugly buildings the elevations have been carefully considered to provide good contemporary architectural aesthetics and proportions.

Particular importance has been paid to the east elevation as it is viewed from Bridge Street.

It is hoped that glimpses will be seen of a high quality contemporary architectural solution that will significantly improve the area without diminishing any views, openness or scale from the Conservation Area and Bridge Street.

The massing of the building has been further broken up by the use of different colours and materials which will reduce its impact and bulk further and conform to the pattern of architecture in Pinner which is generally small scale with a varied use of materials.

ACCESS

The site is freely accessible to all pedestrians including those with mobility restrictions be they old or young in wheelchair or buggy.

The scheme also proposes a disabled car space in accordance with the central location. The number of vehicle movements should be extremely small; it is a tenet of the overall proposal that the number of vehicular movements will be considerably reduced from the previous commercial use to a residential use (with restricted parking) thus leading to a safer environment generally.

Within the development itself all floor surfaces whether internal or external will be freely negotiable by all potential users with whatever degree of mobility function ensured by level thresholds in accordance with the best of current thinking. There will be no change of level greater than the 15mm as spelled out in the national standards and all habitable areas are accessible via the 8-person passenger lift.

The proposed residential use will actually increase the number of pedestrian movements in and out of the site whilst minimising vehicle movements and this is much more in keeping with the 'High Street' type environment of Bridge Street.

For all the above reasons residential use will lead to a 'good neighbour' situation with considerably enhanced safety factors and assured accessibility in accordance with the best of modern standards.

ACCESSIBLE HOMES

10% of the units have been designed to wheelchair homes standards.

Flat designs comply with lifetime homes standards and wheelchair turning circles are shown on the drawings.

ACOUSTICS

An environmental noise assessment has been carried out in relation to trains and traffic.

"In consideration of the measured noise levels on the site and the established noise category ranging between NEC A/C, in principle there should be no reason for planning permission for the residential development to be refused on noise grounds".

The scheme as designed would have to incorporate appropriate noise mitigation measures to ensure that acceptable internal and external noise levels are achieved.

In this respect the building will be constructed with cavity walls and a dense roof construction.

The majority of flats will face inwards. Flats overlooking the railway will have triple glazed acoustic performance windows. All other windows will have double glazing capable of providing a sound reduction of at least 30dBRW. With windows closed to control the entrainment of train noise passive acoustic wall ventilation will be used to provide fresh air.

The amenity space is provided in the centre of the site, screened from the railway by a solid 'leg' of the building. This will provide a suitably quiet amenity space for the residents and an attractive centrepiece to the scheme.

TRANSPORT

A transport statement has been provided and contains justifications for the provision of parking and turning for disabled vehicles, refuse vehicles and delivery traffic.

SECURED BY DESIGN AND SAFER PLACES

The entrance to the site is at the rear of a shared driveway from Bridge Street. This driveway services the rear of the properties in Bridge Street and the proposal site.

It is proposed that this access driveway and the entrance to the site is protected by security gates operated by security fobs. There will be vehicular and pedestrian access gates with self-closing devices.

The access driveway will be well and uniformly lit and covered by CCTV cameras. It is proposed that the wall between the post office and the access driveway is opened up with security bar visibility points to provide greater natural surveillance between the properties.

The boundary of the site will be provided with at least 2m high security fencing or walls and the areas around the building will be equally secured with gates for maintenance use only.

The security gates will prevent access by individuals or loitering.

All entrances to the buildings will have audio and visual access control systems with electronic lock release, all linked to all the flats.

There will not be a trades persons release button.

All doors and windows will conform to BS7950 and PAS24 as appropriate and there will be anti climbing devices fitted to all balconies, rainwater pipes or details as appropriate.

Meters are centralised in an open area outside the building.

Although in a safe environment protected by security fences and gates, there will be no areas where recesses will be found to encourage hiding places.

On this site security is recognised as an important selling feature for the future of the scheme and as such further involvement with the crime prevention officer will take place to ensure total compliance with Secure by Design principles.

CONCLUSION

We believe that the scheme has been suitably designed to provide an appropriate development in terms of scale and design. Its form will provide suitable living conditions for occupants in accordance with relevant Harrow Unitary Development Plan 2004 policies D4 and D5.

The building has been designed to respect the height of surrounding buildings so that the height and bulk is not excessive.

The orientation of windows has been carefully designed to eliminate overlooking, which will, therefore, provide sufficient privacy to residents of neighbouring properties and the inhabitants of the new flats.

The building has been carefully designed to minimise its impact on the character and appearance of the town centre, the overall street scene and the neighbouring Conservation Area.

The design has considered and meets the key principles of Secure by Design and Safer Places and would be sufficiently protected to eliminate opportunities for crime.

The building has been designed so that its orientation and layout minimises or eliminates noise disturbance of the railway. Where this cannot be achieved by orientation physical measures are introduced to provide a suitable amenity for future residents.

The proposed development provides sufficient provision of affordable housing units in accordance with policy H5 of the Harrow Unitary Development Plan 2204.

Sufficient on site space for turning of commercial and service vehicles is provided so that lengthy reversing manoeuvres currently used will be eliminated.

The development provides a layout where the requirements of lifetime homes standards and wheelchair homes standards are met in line with policy H18 of the Harrow Unitary Development Plan 2004 and the Council's Supplementary Planning Document on Accessible homes.

Under the circumstances we believe the scheme will be a good use of brownfield land, sensitively designed to meet all the planning criteria for the area and as such the scheme should be recommended for approval and consent granted.

Andrew Reed R.I.B.A.