

## Report of the Corporate Director of Planning & Community Services

**Address** 140-142 GREEN LANE NORTHWOOD

**Development:** Three storey building to form 1 one-bedroom, 1 three-bedroom and 7 two-bedroom flats with associated parking and basement, involving demolition of existing dwellings.

**LBH Ref Nos:** 66055/APP/2009/1129

**Drawing Nos:** 4650/PL/01  
SL/3/08  
4650/PL/04 Rev A  
4650/PL/06  
4650/PL/02  
4650/PL/05 Rev A  
Design and Access Statement  
4650/PL/03

**Date Plans Received:** 27/05/2009 **Date(s) of Amendment(s):**

**Date Application Valid:** 03/06/2009

### 1. SUMMARY

Planning permission is sought for the erection of a part three, part 2 storey building to provide 7, two bedroom, 1 three bedroom and 1 one bedroom flats, with basement parking, a gym and associated landscaping (involving the demolition of a pair of semi detached properties fronting onto Green Lane, Northwood).

It is considered that the block, given its scale, siting and site coverage would constitute an over-development of the site, resulting in an unduly intrusive, visually prominent and incongruous form of development, which would fail to respect the established character of the area, including the adjoining Old Northwood and nearby Gate Hill Farm Estate Areas of Special Local Character.

The proposal does not make provision for the long-term retention and/or the planting and long term retention of trees in scale with the proposed building along Church Road Furthermore, the proposal would also impact upon the amenity of adjoining residential properties, in terms of loss of privacy and over dominance.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION

**REFUSAL for the following reasons:**

#### 1 NON2 Non Standard reason for refusal

The proposed development, by reason of its overall scale, site coverage, design, layout and scale, represents an over-development of the site that would result in a cramped, unduly intrusive, visually prominent and inappropriate form of development, out of keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies BE13 and BE19 of the adopted Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan Saved Policies September 2007 and the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document HDAS: Residential Layouts.

**2 NON2 Non Standard reason for refusal**

The proposal, by virtue of its siting and design would result in an unacceptable loss of residential amenity to adjoining residents, by reason of loss of outlook and privacy, contrary to Policies BE21 and BE24 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan Saved Policies (September 2007) and the Council's adopted Supplementary Planning Document HDAS: Residential Layouts.

**3 NON2 Non Standard reason for refusal**

The scheme fails to make provision for the long-term retention and/or the planting and long term retention of trees in scale with the proposed building along Church Road to the detriment of the visual amenity of the area contrary policy BE38 of the Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan saved Policies (September 2007).

**INFORMATIVES**

**1**

You are advised that although no education contribution has been requested (on the basis of current educational requirements), this position may be subject to review in the future. Any subsequent application will be assessed on the basis of educational needs at the time of determination.

**2 I52 Compulsory Informative (1)**

The decision to REFUSE planning permission has been taken having regard to all relevant planning legislation, regulations, guidance, circulars and Council policies, including The Human Rights Act (1998) (HRA 1998) which makes it unlawful for the Council to act incompatibly with Convention rights, specifically Article 6 (right to a fair hearing); Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life); Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property) and Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination).

**3 I53 Compulsory Informative (2)**

The decision to REFUSE planning permission has been taken having regard to the policies and proposals in the Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan Saved Policies (September 2007) set out below, including Supplementary Planning Guidance, and to all relevant material considerations, including the London Plan (February 2008) and national guidance.

BE5	New development within areas of special local character
BE13	New development must harmonise with the existing street scene.
BE19	New development must improve or complement the character of the area.
BE20	Daylight and sunlight considerations.
BE21	Siting, bulk and proximity of new buildings/extensions.
BE22	Residential extensions/buildings of two or more storeys.
BE23	Requires the provision of adequate amenity space.
BE24	Requires new development to ensure adequate levels of privacy to neighbours.
BE38	Retention of topographical and landscape features and provision of new planting and landscaping in development proposals.
OE1	Protection of the character and amenities of surrounding properties

	and the local area
OE5	Siting of noise-sensitive developments
AM2	Development proposals - assessment of traffic generation, impact on congestion and public transport availability and capacity
AM7	Consideration of traffic generated by proposed developments.
AM14	New development and car parking standards.
AM15	Provision of reserved parking spaces for disabled persons
H4	Mix of housing units
H5	Dwellings suitable for large families
HDAS	Residential Layouts
	Accessible Hillingdon

### 3. CONSIDERATIONS

#### 3.1 Site and Locality

The application site is located at the junction of Green Lane and Church Road, at the crossroads with Gate Hill Road. The site is located immediately adjacent to the Old Northwood Area of Special Local Character, and opposite the Gatehill Farm Estate Area of Special Local Character.

A pair of semi-detached late Edwardian dwelling houses, set in mature gardens, currently occupies the site, which is partly screened by vegetation along the church Road and Green Lane frontages. The site level drops considerably to the rear. A hard surfaced parking area with vehicular access from Church Road is located at the bottom of the rear garden of 142 Green Lane.

To the north, the surrounding area is characterised by mainly late Victorian and Edwardian two storey detached houses, interspersed with some later infill development, many of which are very attractive with good detailing and individual design. The houses vary in size, but tend to be well spaced and set within spacious gardens. To the south the area is more tightly developed and includes two storey 1930s semis, and smaller scale Victorian properties.

#### 3.2 Proposed Scheme

Planning permission is sought for the replacement of the existing pair of semi-detached houses with a part three, part 2 storey 'L' shaped building, providing 9 flats with basement parking. The accommodation would comprise of 1 x three bedroom, 7 x two bedroom and 1 x one bedroom apartments.

The main entrance would be from Church Road at the centre of the block, leading to a central circulation core, with the lifts and staircases located at the rear of the building. All the flats are designed with individual balconies.

The proposed building would have a frontage of some 20 metres to Green Lane, set back between 6.5 and 8 metres and a frontage of 33 metres to Church Road, set back between 2.5 and 4.5 metres from the road. The ridge height of the proposed roof decreases in steps along the Church Road, with the southern section at 2 storeys. The materials would comprise facing brickwork and timber cladding, with a clay tile roof.

A pedestrian access and a separate vehicular access ramp to the basement car park are proposed, both off Church Road. The basement would provide for 18 parking spaces (including 2 disabled parking bays), individual storage areas for each flat, 10 secure cycle storage spaces and a 75 sq. m gym, with changing and shower facilities. (Note: The proposed gym would be for the occupiers of the proposed flats only).

Amenity space is provided at the rear of the block, with refuse storage located in the southwest corner of the site. It is proposed to remove six ash trees to allow for the new entrance, with nine other trees removed at the rear of the site to make way for the development.

### **3.3 Relevant Planning History**

#### **Comment on Relevant Planning History**

None.

### **4. Planning Policies and Standards**

None.

#### **UDP / LDF Designation and London Plan**

The following UDP Policies are considered relevant to the application:-

Part 1 Policies:

Part 2 Policies:

BE5	New development within areas of special local character
BE13	New development must harmonise with the existing street scene.
BE19	New development must improve or complement the character of the area.
BE20	Daylight and sunlight considerations.
BE21	Siting, bulk and proximity of new buildings/extensions.
BE22	Residential extensions/buildings of two or more storeys.
BE23	Requires the provision of adequate amenity space.
BE24	Requires new development to ensure adequate levels of privacy to neighbours.
BE38	Retention of topographical and landscape features and provision of new planting and landscaping in development proposals.
OE1	Protection of the character and amenities of surrounding properties and the local area
OE5	Siting of noise-sensitive developments
AM2	Development proposals - assessment of traffic generation, impact on congestion and public transport availability and capacity
AM7	Consideration of traffic generated by proposed developments.
AM14	New development and car parking standards.
AM15	Provision of reserved parking spaces for disabled persons
H4	Mix of housing units
H5	Dwellings suitable for large families

## **5. Advertisement and Site Notice**

**5.1** Advertisement Expiry Date:- Not applicable

**5.2** Site Notice Expiry Date:- Not applicable

## **6. Consultations**

### **External Consultees**

13 letters of objection have been received objecting on the following grounds:

1. Loss of privacy;
2. Loss of daylight;
3. The building would be an eye sore;
4. The proposed building is too large;
5. The design of the building is not in keeping with the area;
6. The design of the building is more like an office block than residential accommodation;
7. Tandem parking system probably will not work;
8. Inadequate parking;
9. Traffic congestion;

In addition, a petition bearing 36 signatures has been received, objecting to the proposal on the following grounds:

1. The proposed entrance is only 16 metres away from the junction of Green Lane and Church Road, which is a frequent accident spot;
2. Church Road is a busy bus route and main route from Watford Road down to the Rickmansworth Road. The road is not wide, having originally been made as a lane and considerable congestion will ensue;
3. There is an allocation of 18 underground car parking spaces, but if the owners of the flats have more than one car, there is no space for visitors. Street parking will lead to similar (congestion) problems.

### **Internal Consultees**

URBAN DESIGN OFFICER

The application site is prominently situated at the Eastern end of Green Lane, at the junction of Green Lane, Gate Hill Road and Church Road, in a highly exposed corner position by the roundabout. The area is located immediately adjacent to the Old Northwood Area of Special Local Character, and opposite the Gatehill Farm Estate Area of Special Local Character.

The existing properties on the site are a pair of semi-detached late Edwardian dwelling houses, set in mature gardens, and partly screened by vegetation. The site level drops considerably to the rear.

The residential area is characterised by larger detached properties to the north, many of which are very attractive with good detailing and individual design, and slightly more modest residential dwellings to the south, including some 1930's developments, and smaller scale Victorian family homes.

The existing pebble-dashed/red brick two storey semis on the site are typical examples of a building style of their times, however are not protected. Although there are no principal objections to the regeneration of the site, given the visually exposed site location and the immediate proximity of two Areas of Special Local Character (ASLC), any proposed development scheme would be required to respect the character, scale, height and bulk of the protected built context, in line with national and local planning policies (PPS1, PPS3, London Plan, UDP Policy BE13).

The application scheme proposes an intensification of the existing density, including an enlargement of the existing footprint, resulting in a scheme which is considered to create an unbalanced relationship between the proposed building, its landscape setting, the street scene and the general character and appearance of the neighbourhood. The proposal brings a considerably higher and bulkier building forward, closer to the Church Road street scene, which will cause a drastic and permanent change to the character, scale, bulk and height of built development, typical for the area.

The visual impact in Church Road is considered to be especially detrimental, causing an unacceptable change of height, scale and character given by the three storey high, continuous 35m long block like development which, given its pure scale, unbroken roofline, unarticulated front facade and a lack of front entrances does not have any kinship with the established, protected immediate built setting. The lack of active frontages along two architecturally prominent Northwood streets, exacerbated by the monolithic front facade, without any depth or interesting detailing, raises serious concerns, and is considered unacceptable. The recessed large scale balconies along the frontage contribute to the dull and flat appearance. Nor does the building express any typical proportions, built elements or features typical of the area.

In summary, from an urban design point of view the proposed development is considered to be unacceptable in its current form and needs to be re-designed with respect to scale, bulk and general architectural character, as well as proportions between built areas and open space. The site would preferably be re-created as a series of different built elements to achieve a more acceptable scale and bulk, and a stronger degree of individuality.

## CONSERVATION OFFICER

### BACKGROUND:

The site includes an attractive pair of late Edwardian semi-detached houses and their mature gardens. It is prominently located at the junction of Church Road and Green Lane, and slopes down to the south and east.

The site lies opposite the Gatehill Farm Estate Area of Special Local Character and adjacent to the Old Northwood Area of Special Local Character. To the north the surrounding area is characterised by mainly late Victorian and Edwardian two storey detached houses, interspersed with some later infill development. The houses vary in size, but tend to be well spaced and set within spacious gardens. To the south the area is more tightly developed and includes two storey 1930s semis, and smaller scale Victorian properties.

### COMMENTS:

The applicant proposes the replacement of the existing pair of semi-detached houses with a three storey building providing 9 flats with basement parking.

The proposed building would have a very large footprint in comparison with the surrounding properties. As such it would fill a substantial proportion of the site, not a characteristic feature of the area; the inclusion of underground parking and a ramp would also be an alien and rather urban feature in this location.

The proposed structure would have a very wide frontage onto Church Road, and a large bulk, made

more prominent by the change in levels, when viewed from the south. This, made more obvious by the lack of screening on the southern boundary of the site, would have a negative impact on views into and out of the Area of Special Local Character. The bulk of the building would also be very prominent in views from the junction of Church Road and Green Lane.

Both street elevations appear to have been 'dug' into the slope in order to reduce their overall height in comparison with the neighbouring properties. That part of the building on the corner of Green Lane and Church Road, would be very close to the road and at 3 storeys, would be overly prominent and detrimental to the street scene, particularly given the lack of tree screening on this corner.

The Green Lane frontage would be not much wider than the existing houses, however, it would appear as an incongruous addition to the street. This is as a result of a number of issues. These include its lack of elevational articulation- despite the detailing shown on the drawings, which seeks to 'break up' the elevation (this is actually applied materials of different types), the elevation would in reality be fairly flat, save for one set back and the in-set balconies to the west. The positioning of step in the elevation would not reflect the proportions of the adjacent buildings and would result in the building having a very strong horizontal emphasis, at odds with the architecture of the adjacent buildings. This would be compounded by the large crown roof, which would appear shallow and again, would not reflect the architecture of the surrounding buildings. The compressed storey heights, in comparison with the adjacent buildings, would also contribute to this characteristic. This elevation would also have no entrance and therefore, not link into, or contribute to the street activity on this frontage. The Church Road elevation would suffer from similar shortcomings and the entrance as proposed would fail to make any sort of statement in terms of a focus for the building, or the wider streetscape of the road.

The scheme includes the use of solar panels and photo-voltaics. There are no details showing the location of these.

**CONCLUSION: Unacceptable.**

#### TREE/LANDSCAPE OFFICER

There is a belt of trees on the road frontage of the site, and several trees in the gardens and parking area at the rear of the houses. With the exception of the two purple-leaved plum trees on Green Lane, and possibly the pollarded ash-leaved maple, the Ash and Sycamore trees on the frontage are self-seeded and malformed, and/or have been topped. The ornamental plums are quit conspicuous, but are verging on over-maturity.

The trees on and close to the site are not protected and, whilst they form a large-scale landscape feature, they do not merit the protection of a tree preservation order, because of their poor condition and form, or limited life expectancy.

The application includes a tree survey plan, but does not include a tree survey (and report) based on the recommendations of BS 5837:2005, and a layout plan, which shows the retention of many of the trees close to the roads. However, the application does not include information to show that the proposed retention/removal of trees is based on a qualitative assessment of them, a an assessment of the feasibility of removing the existing buildings and building near to the trees.

Nevertheless, this scheme should be focussed on the planting of new trees on the road frontage, as part of a comprehensive landscaping scheme for the redevelopment of the site, rather than the retention of some of the existing trees, and it is therefore vital that sufficient space is reserved for the planting and growth of the trees and that the internal layout of the building does not cause potential conflicts, so that new trees can be established and retained for the long-term. Such trees should be in scale with the building.

The proposed layout reserves sufficient space (a 6.5-8.5m-wide strip) for two or 3 medium size trees on the Green Lane frontage, but insufficient space (a 2-5m-wide strip) along most of the Church Road frontage, particularly close to the road junction, for trees of that size.

The scheme is unacceptable, because it does not make provision for the long-term retention and/or the planting and long term retention of trees in scale with the proposed building along Church Road, and does not therefore comply with saved policy BE38 of the UDP.

## EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

This application is in Northwood, so we will not request an S106 contribution for Education. However, please note that this situation is under review and it is possible we will start requesting contributions for Northwood in the near future.

## HIGHWAY ENGINEER

There is an over provision of parking. Maximum permissible under Hillingdon standards for flats, at 1.5 spaces per unit, is 14 spaces.

Tandem parking in communal parking areas is not acceptable. Parking space 12 would be obstructed by doors to the cycle storage and lift areas. There is a need to come up with measures to overcome visibility issues relating to the use of parking spaces 1 and 7.

The width of the access ramp to the car park must be a minimum of 4.1. It scales off at 4.0 m. At the exit on to Church Road they need to demonstrate that the 2.4x2.4 pedestrian visibility splays can be achieved.

## **7. MAIN PLANNING ISSUES**

### **7.01 The principle of the development**

The site is located within the Developed Area as identified on the Proposals Map of the Unitary Development Plan. As such, there is no objection in principle to its redevelopment for residential purposes.

### **7.02 Density of the proposed development**

Density guidelines are provided by the London Plan. These guidelines take into account public transport accessibility, the character of the area and type of housing proposed. Sites with a suburban character, with a Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) score of 2-3 is between 3.8-4.6 habitable rooms per unit, have an indicative density range of 150 - 250 habitable rooms per hectare (hr/ha), or 35-65 units per hectare (u/ha).

This application has 41 habitable rooms and would therefore provide a residential density for the development of 59 units/hectare (u/ha) and 269 habitable rooms/hectare (hr/ha). The development therefore slightly exceeds the London Plan density guidance for habitable rooms per hectare, but is within the range for units per hectare. Given site specific issues, including, the impact on the character of the area and impact on neighbouring properties and the amenities of future residents, which are dealt with elsewhere in the report, the proposed density is not considered appropriate.

### **7.03 Impact on archaeology/CAs/LBs or Areas of Special Character**

The issues relating to the impact on the Old Northwood and Gate Hill Farm Estate areas of Special Local Character have been addressed in Section 7.07.



#### **7.04 Airport safeguarding**

There are no air traffic safety issues associated with this application.

#### **7.05 Impact on the green belt**

The site does not lie within or close to the Metropolitan Green Belt. There are therefore no Green belt issues associated with this application.

#### **7.06 Environmental Impact**

There are no ground contamination issues associated with this application.

#### **7.07 Impact on the character & appearance of the area**

Policies BE13 and BE19 seek to ensure that new development complements or improves the character and amenity of the area. Policy BE38 seeks the retention of topographical and landscape features, and provision of new planting and landscaping in developments proposals.

The existing pebble-dashed/red brick two storey semis on the site are typical examples of a building style of their times, but are not protected. Although there are no principal objections to the re-generation of the site for residential purposes, given the visually exposed site location and immediate proximity of two Areas of Special Local Character (ASLC), any proposed development scheme would be required to respect the character, scale, height and bulk of the protected built context in line with national and local planning policies (PPS1, PPS3, London Plan, and UDP Policy BE13).

The proposed structure would have a very wide frontage onto Church Road and a large bulk, made more prominent by the change in levels, when viewed from the south. This, made more obvious by the lack of screening on the southern boundary of the site, would have a negative impact on views into and out of the Area of Special Local Character. The bulk of the building would also be very prominent in views from the junction of Church Road and Green Lane.

The Conservation Officer considers that the proposal would result in a three storey building in close proximity to Church Road, which would have an overbearing effect on the street scene, causing a detrimental effect on the ALSC area, creating an alien built form and harming the existing architectural quality of the area.

Similarly, the Urban design Officer considers that the visual impact in Church Road is especially harming, causing an unacceptable change of height, scale and character given by the three storey high, continuous 35m long development, which with its pure scale, unbroken roofline, unarticulated front facade and a lack of front entrances, does not have any kinship with the established, protected immediate built setting. The lack of active frontages along two architecturally prominent Northwood streets, exacerbated by the monolithic front facade, without any depth or interesting detailing, is considered unacceptable. The recessed large scale balconies along the frontage contribute to the dull and flat appearance. Nor does the building express any typical proportions, built elements, or features typical of the built form in the area.

Both street elevations appear to have been dug into the slope in order to reduce their overall height in comparison with the neighbouring properties. Nevertheless, the Conservation Officer considers that the part of the building on the corner of Green Lane and Church Road would be very close to the road and at 3 storeys, would be overly

prominent and detrimental to the street scene, particularly given the lack of tree screening on this corner.

In terms of the Green Lane frontage, this would be not much wider than the existing houses. However, it is considered that the proposed building would appear as an incongruous addition to the street, given the lack of elevational articulation, the strong horizontal emphasis, at odds with the architecture of the adjacent buildings, the large crown roof, which would appear shallow, and the compressed storey heights, in comparison with the adjacent buildings. In addition, this elevation would also have no entrance and therefore, not link into, or contribute to the street activity on this frontage. The Conservation Officer considers that the Church Road elevation would suffer from similar shortcomings and the entrance as proposed would fail to make any sort of statement in terms of a focus for the building, or the wider streetscape of the road.

In terms of layout, the application scheme proposes an intensification of the existing built form, including an enlargement of the existing footprint, resulting in a scheme which the Urban Design Officer considers to create an unbalanced relationship between the proposed building, its landscape setting, the street scene and the general character and appearance of the neighbourhood.

The Conservation Officer also considers that the proposed building would have a very large footprint in comparison with the surrounding properties. As such, it would fill a substantial proportion of the site, not a characteristic feature of the area. Similarly, the inclusion of underground parking and a ramp would also be an alien and rather urban feature in this location.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal, given its scale, siting and site coverage would constitute an over-development of the site, resulting in an unduly intrusive, visually prominent and incongruous form of development, which would fail to respect the established character of the area, including the adjoining Areas of special character, contrary to Policy 4B.3 of the London Plan, Policies BE13 and BE19 of the Unitary Development Plan Saved Policies (September 2007) and relevant design guidance.

#### **7.08 Impact on neighbours**

In relation to outlook, Policy BE21 requires new residential developments to be designed to protect the outlook of adjoining residents. The design guide Residential Layouts advises that for two or more storey buildings, adequate distance should be maintained to avoid over dominance. A minimum distance of 15m is required, although this distance will be dependent on the extent and bulk of the buildings. In this case, the building steps down from three to 2 storeys on the southern end elevation and the two storey element would be approximately 16 metres away from the side boundary with 21 Church Road. It is not therefore considered that the building would result in an over dominant form of development which would detract from the amenities of that property.

However, in terms of the relationship with residential development to the west, a distance of approximately only 10 metres (reducing to 6 metres at the stairwell) is maintained between the 3 storey element and the side boundary with 137 Green Lane. This three storey element varies in height between 9-10 metres above ground level. Having regard to the combined length and height of the proposed building and its position relative to the common boundary, it is considered that the new building would be an overbearing and imposing feature that would unacceptably detract from the outlook and amenities of existing residents. In these circumstances, the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers

would be unacceptably harmed, contrary to Policy BE21 of the UDP.

Policy BE24 states that the design of new buildings should protect the privacy of occupiers and their neighbours.

The first floor bedroom window of the type D apartment would be only 16.5 metres from the private amenity area of 21 Church Road. Similarly the rear balconies of the first and second floor type A units would be only 3 metres from the private amenity area of 137 Green Lane. It is considered that there be the potential to overlook the rear gardens of these adjoining properties, resulting in a loss of privacy to adjoining occupiers, contrary to policy BE24 of the UDP Saved Policies (September 2007).

It is not considered that there would be a material loss of day or sunlight to neighbouring properties, as the proposed building would be orientated or sited a sufficient distance away from adjoining properties.

#### **7.09 Living conditions for future occupiers**

All of the units benefit from individual private amenity spaces totalling 181.5 sq. m, in the form of private balconies or terraces, ranging from 4.2 to 43.5 sq. metres. In addition, two areas of shared amenity space totalling 312 sq. m, comprising a 138 sq.m courtyard adjacent to block B, at lower ground floor level and a 174 sq. m. terrace on Block A, at first floor level are proposed. The total amenity space provision for the scheme amounts to 493.5 sq m. which equates to an average of 35 sq.m /unit. The amenity space provided therefore exceeds the 30 sq.m standard for three bedroom flats given in The Hillingdon Design and Accessibility Statement (HDAS) Residential Layouts and is considered acceptable.

#### **7.10 Traffic impact, car/cycle parking, pedestrian safety**

Policies AM2, AM7, AM14 and AM15 are concerned with traffic generation, road capacity, on-site parking and access to public transport.

The application proposes a total of 18 parking spaces, 6 of these in tandem, and includes 2 spaces for people with a disability. The Council's standards allow for a maximum provision of 1.5 spaces per flat, a total of 14 spaces in this case. The site has a PTAL rating of 2 and the Council's Highways Engineer has raised an objection to the overprovision of car parking, which does not comply with the Council's standards. In addition, the Highway Engineer has stated that tandem parking in communal parking areas is not acceptable.

With regard to the standard of the parking provided, the Highway Engineer considers that parking space 12 would be obstructed by doors to the cycle storage and lift areas, while there is a need to overcome visibility issues relating to the use of parking spaces 1 and 7.

Notwithstanding the overprovision of parking shown on the submitted plans, given the Highway Engineer's comments above, 9 of the spaces are considered to be substandard. However, had the application been acceptable in other respects, the issue of the parking layout could have been addressed by the imposition of a suitably worded condition. It is therefore not considered that the inadequacy of the parking layout is a sustainable reason to refuse the application in this case.

It is considered that the additional traffic generated by a net increase of 7 residential units could be adequately accommodated on the adjoining highway network. However, in terms of access arrangements, the width of the access ramp to the car park at 4 metres is

sub standard as it should be a minimum of 4.1 metres, to allow for 2 way traffic. The road could be widened to 4.1 metres, without harming other aspects of the scheme. In addition, it will be necessary to demonstrate that the 2.4 x 2.4 pedestrian visibility splays onto Church road can be achieved. It is considered that through appropriate landscaping and boundary treatments, visibility requirements could also be met.

Overall, there are not considered to be any reasons to refuse the application with respect to highway safety.

#### **7.11 Urban design, access and security**

Policy H4 states that, wherever practicable, new residential developments should have a mix of housing units of different sizes, including units of one or two bedrooms. Policy H5 states that the Council will encourage the provision of dwellings suitable for large families. The proposal would result in the loss of two family homes. However, it is considered that its replacement with 9 units (1 x 1 bedroom, 7 x 2 bedroom and 1 x 3 bedroom flats) satisfactorily offsets this loss, as it would provide a greater number of units and will contribute towards meeting the housing need in the Borough. It is considered that the scheme provides an acceptable mix of units in accordance with the Council's policies.

#### **7.12 Disabled access**

HDAS was adopted on the 20th December 2005 and requires all new residential units to be built to lifetime home standards and 10% of units designed to wheelchair accessible standards. Further guidance is also provided on floor space standards for new residential development to ensure sound environmental conditions are provided on site. As a guide, the recommended minimum standard for 2 bedroom flats is 63 sq. m and 77 sq. m for 3 bedroom flats. Where balconies are provided, the floor space of the balconies can be deducted from these standards, up to a maximum of 5 sq. metres. Additional floor space would be required for the wheelchair units.

The floor plans indicate that the development generally achieves HDAS recommended floor space standards for the units and that Lifetime Home Standards could be met for these flats in terms of size.

Although details have not been provided, one of the units could be designed to full wheelchair accessible standards. Had the scheme been acceptable in other respects, a condition could have been recommended requiring the submission of internal layout details, to ensure compliance.

#### **7.13 Provision of affordable & special needs housing**

The development is for less than 10 units and therefore does not trigger a requirement for affordable housing.

#### **7.14 Trees, Landscaping and Ecology**

Policy BE38 of the Unitary Development Plan Saved Policies states, amongst other things, that development proposals will be expected to retain and utilise topographical and landscape features of merit.

There is a belt of trees on the road frontage of the site and several trees in the gardens and parking area at the rear of the houses. With the exception of the two purple-leafed plum trees on Green Lane, and possibly the pollarded ash-leafed maple, the Ash and Sycamore trees on the frontage are self-seeded and malformed, and/or have been topped. The

ornamental plums are quite conspicuous, but are verging on over-maturity.

The trees on and close to the site are not protected and, whilst they form a large-scale landscape feature, the Tree and Landscape Officer does not consider that they merit the protection of a tree preservation order, because of their poor condition and form or limited life expectancy.

The tree officer notes that the application does not include information to show that the proposed retention/removal of trees is based on a qualitative assessment of them, and an assessment of the feasibility of removing the existing buildings and building near to the trees.

Given the above considerations, it has not been demonstrated that it would be feasible or indeed desirable to retain the existing tree belt along the road frontages. Rather, the Tree/Landscaping Officer considers that this scheme should be focussed on the planting of new trees on the road frontage, as part of a comprehensive landscaping scheme. It is therefore vital that sufficient space is reserved for the planting and growth of the trees and that the internal layout of the building does not cause potential conflicts, so that new trees can be established and retained for the long-term. It is vital that such trees should be in scale with the building.

The proposed layout reserves sufficient space (a 6.5-8.5m-wide strip) for two or three medium sized trees on the Green Lane frontage, but insufficient space (only a 2-5 metre wide strip) along most of the Church Road frontage, particularly close to the road junction, for trees of that size.

The scheme is unacceptable, because it does not make provision for the long-term retention and/or the planting and long term retention of trees in scale with the proposed building along Church Road, and does not therefore comply with saved policy BE38 of the UDP.

#### **7.15 Sustainable waste management**

Although the plans indicate bin provision, the number of bins is not indicated. The required ratio is 1100 litre refuse and recycling bins on a ratio of 1:10 + 1 per waste stream as a minimum, with no rounding down. The design of the bin chambers appears to be adequate, although it is not clear how these would be accessed. In the event of an approval, details of the bin storage facilities could be carried through as a condition of consent.

#### **7.16 Renewable energy / Sustainability**

Had the scheme been acceptable in other respects a condition requiring an initial design stage assessment by an accredited assessor for the Code for Sustainable Homes and an accompanying interim certificate stating that each dwelling has been designed to achieve level 3 of the Code would have been attached.

#### **7.17 Flooding or Drainage Issues**

There are no specific flooding or drainage issues associated with this application. Had the scheme been acceptable in other respects, a condition could have been imposed requiring sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDS) measures.

#### **7.18 Noise or Air Quality Issues**

There are no air quality or noise issues associated with this proposal.

### **7.19 Comments on Public Consultations**

The planning issues raised are dealt with in the main body of the report.

### **7.20 Planning Obligations**

Policy R17 of the Hillingdon UDP saved policies September 2007 is concerned with securing planning obligations to supplement the provision of affordable housing, recreational open space, community, social and educational facilities. This policy is supported by more specific Supplementary Planning Guidance. As the application is being recommended for refusal, no negotiations have been entered into with the developer in respect of any contributions.

In terms of education contributions connected to this proposal, following an assessment by Education Services, there is no requirement for an S106 contribution for education. However, Education Services advise that this situation is under review and it is possible that they will start requesting contributions for Northwood in the near future.

### **7.21 Expediency of enforcement action**

None.

### **7.22 Other Issues**

None.

## **8. Observations of the Borough Solicitor**

When making their decision, Members must have regard to all relevant planning legislation, regulations, guidance, circulars and Council policies. This will enable them to make an informed decision in respect of an application.

In addition Members should note that the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA 1998) makes it unlawful for the Council to act incompatibly with Convention rights. Decisions by the Committee must take account of the HRA 1998. Therefore, Members need to be aware of the fact that the HRA 1998 makes the European Convention on Human Rights (the Convention) directly applicable to the actions of public bodies in England and Wales. The specific parts of the Convention relevant to planning matters are Article 6 (right to a fair hearing); Article 8 (right to respect for private and family life); Article 1 of the First Protocol (protection of property) and Article 14 (prohibition of discrimination).

Article 6 deals with procedural fairness. If normal committee procedures are followed, it is unlikely that this article will be breached.

Article 1 of the First Protocol and Article 8 are not absolute rights and infringements of these rights protected under these are allowed in certain defined circumstances, for example where required by law. However any infringement must be proportionate, which means it must achieve a fair balance between the public interest and the private interest infringed and must not go beyond what is needed to achieve its objective.

Article 14 states that the rights under the Convention shall be secured without discrimination on grounds of 'sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status'.

## **9. Observations of the Director of Finance**

As there are no S106 or enforcement issues involved, the recommendations have no financial implications for the Planning Committee or the Council. The officer recommendations are based upon planning considerations only and therefore, if agreed by the Planning Committee, they should reduce the risk of a successful challenge being made at a later stage. Hence, adopting the recommendations will reduce the possibility of unbudgeted calls upon the Council's financial resources, and the associated financial risk to the Council.

## **10. CONCLUSION**

It is considered that the proposed block, due to its height, siting, width and bulk, would be a prominent and visually intrusive building, dominating its surroundings and would be a visually imposing and dominant feature in the street scene. In addition, the design of the block lacks detailing and articulation that would provide visual interest.

The layout of the proposed building, combined with its height would represent an uncharacteristic and intense form of urban development in this suburban setting. It would appear cramped and visually intrusive and would not respect the character or spatial standards of the surrounding area, including the Old Northwood and the Gate Hill Farm Estate Areas of Special Local Character.

In addition, the scheme would fail to make provision for the long-term retention and/or the planting of trees of a size commensurate with the scale of the proposed building along Church Road frontage, to the detriment of the visual amenity of the area.

The proposal, by virtue of its siting and design would also result in an unacceptable loss of residential amenity to adjoining residents, by reason of loss of privacy and outlook.

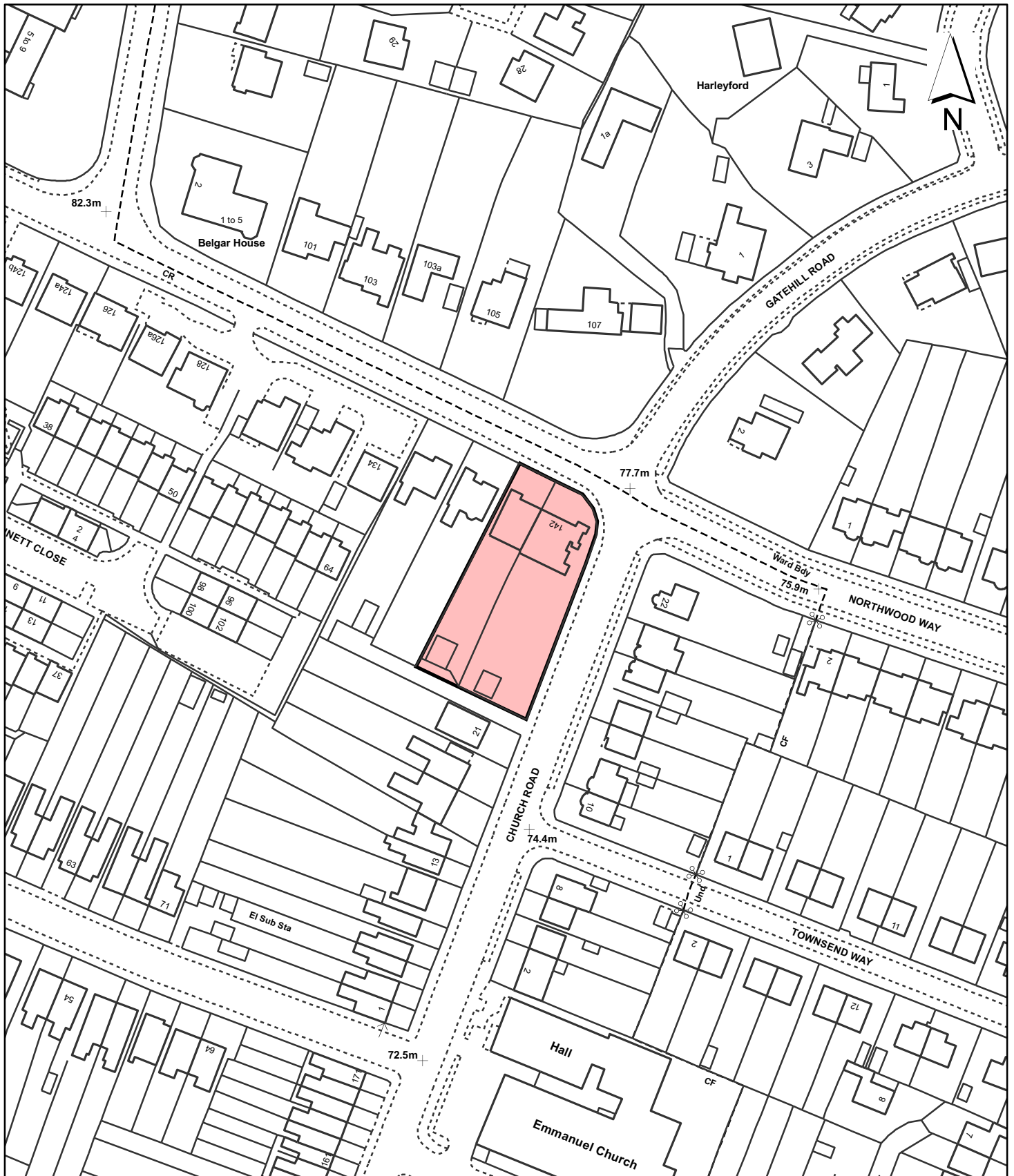
It is therefore recommended that planning permission be refused for these reasons.

## **11. Reference Documents**


- (a) Planning Policy Statement 1 (Delivering Sustainable Development)
- (b) Planning Policy Statement 3 (Housing)
- (c) Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 (Transport)
- (d) Planning Policy Guidance Note 24 (Planning and Noise)
- (e) The London Plan
- (f) Hillingdon Unitary Development Plan Saved Policies September 2007
- (g) Hillingdon Design and Accessibility Statement Residential Layouts
- (h) Hillingdon Design and Accessibility Statement Accessible Hillingdon

**Contact Officer:** Karl Dafe

**Telephone No:** 01895 250230



**Notes**

 Site boundary

For identification purposes only.

This copy has been made by or with the authority of the Head of Committee Services pursuant to section 47 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (the Act). Unless the Act provides a relevant exception to copyright.

© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. London Borough of Hillingdon 100019283 2008

Site Address	
<b>140 - 142 Green Lane Northwood</b>	
Planning Application Ref:	Scale
<b>66055/APP/2009/1129</b>	<b>1:1,250</b>
Planning Committee	Date
<b>North</b>	<b>August 2009</b>

**LONDON BOROUGH  
OF HILLINGDON**

**Planning &  
Community Services**

Civic Centre, Uxbridge, Middx. UB8 1UW  
Telephone No.: Uxbridge 250111

