

Parish: SUDBURY

Location: Winch and Blatch, 22 and 40 King Street

Proposal: Erection of two-storey rear extensions to No.22 and No.40 King Street; erection of first-floor extension over existing flat roof to 40 King Street; erection of glazed footbridge over passageway to link No. 22 and No. 40 King Street, alterations to accommodate footbridge, erection of brick wall and raised planters/seats and landscaping of the rear yard/car park

Applicant: Winch and Blatch Limited

Case Officer: Graham Chamberlain

Date for Determination: 08/01/10

This application is reported to Development Committee as the site falls within the area covered by Local Plan Policy SD06 - Land around the Bus Station and Borehamgate Precinct, and is therefore of significance to the comprehensive redevelopment/regeneration of this area.

THE SITE

1. Winch and Blatch is the main department store within Sudbury Town Centre. The business occupies three shops fronting Market Hill and King Street. The application relates to the stores at 22 and 40 King Street. The site is strategically located with a pedestrian link bisecting the site linking Hamilton Road with King Street. The pedestrian link is owned by Winch and Blatch.
2. No 22 is a building of medieval origins which has been extensively altered and is Grade II listed. The building presents a Georgian façade. No 40 is more modern in appearance and origins. Numbers 22 and 40 King Street are located within the town centre conservation area.
3. To the rear of Nos. 22 and 40 is a staff car park. This area is unsightly and contributes little to the street scene or to the 'experience' users of the bus station have when visiting Sudbury. The car park is not within the Conservation Area but is within the grounds of the Listed Building (No 22). The car park affects the setting of the Conservation Area and surrounding Listed Buildings.
4. The bus station abuts the south east of the site. This area is allocated as a redevelopment zone under Policy SD06. The bus station is also strategically located in between the leisure centre and main town centre car parks and Market Hill/ King Street. The foot fall through the bus station via the Winch and Blatch site to the town centre is significant.
5. To the south west of the site is the grounds of Lloyds bank, this is a Grade II* Listed Building, which includes the walled garden abutting the south western boundary of the site.
6. The rear of No. 40 (the unlisted building) incorporates a large flat roof addition and a service yard (not within the site plan of this development). The roof scape of both buildings is uncoordinated. There are important views across the site of St Peters Church.
7. The site is also located within an Area of High Archaeological Potential.

THE PROPOSAL

8. The proposal can be split into a number of elements, which are:-
 - Erection of two-storey rear extensions to No.22 and No.40 King Street;
 - Erection of first-floor extension over existing flat roof to 40 King Street;
 - Erection of glazed footbridge over passageway to link No. 22 and No. 40 King Street,
 - Alterations to accommodate footbridge, erection of brick wall and raised planters/seats and landscaping of car park
9. The rationale behind the scheme is to provide a rear entrance to the buildings, improve the aesthetics of the rear of the building and when viewed from the pedestrian link, improve the car park area and provide a covered internal link between the two buildings.
10. The application is supported by a Design and Access Statement and Heritage Statement.

RELEVANT HISTORY

11. B/08/01074/LBC - This application accompanied the planning application now under consideration. It was for the physical works to No 22 including internal alterations, the extensions and the glazed link. The proposals were found to have no harm to the character and significance of the listed building.

NATIONAL GUIDANCE

12. **PPS1** (Delivering Sustainable Development)
13. **PPS5** (Planning for the Historic Environment)

PLANNING POLICIES

14. The Development Plan comprises the East of England Plan, adopted 2008, saved policies in the Suffolk Structure Plan, adopted 2001, and the Babergh Local Plan (Alteration No. 2) adopted 2006. The following policies are relevant to this proposal:

East of England Plan (EEP) 2008

- **ENV7** (Quality in the Built Environment)
- **SS1** (Achieving Sustainable Development)

Babergh Local Plan (Alteration No. 2) 2006

- **CN01** (Maintaining Local Distinctiveness)
- **TP15** (Parking)
- **CN06** (Listed Buildings)
- **CN08** (Conservation Areas)
- **SD06** (Bus Station Area Redevelopment)
- **EM01** (Employment)
- **SP01** (Retail)

The relevant documents can be viewed via the internet. Please see Page 4 for details.

CONSULTATIONS

15. The application was made invalid under the Local Validation List requirements on 8 September 2008 so that a heritage statement, hard and soft landscaping plan and detailed drawings of the glazed link could be prepared. These were submitted on the 13/11/09. A re-consultation exercise was undertaken. Responses to all consultations are listed below.
16. Sudbury Town Council - Approve subject to the preservation of any hidden timbers
17. Local Highway Authority - No objection
18. County Archaeologist - No objection to the application subject to a standard PPG16 condition being attached relating to archaeological investigations.
19. English Heritage – Do not intend to submit any formal comments but have informally indicated that the glazed link is undesirable but when the scheme is taken as a whole there is a clear improvement to the setting of listed buildings and the conservation area.
20. Sudbury Society - Warmly endorse the proposals. The rear elevation will be greatly improved enhancing the bus station area.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Principal of Development

21. The proposal for a retail extension to an existing shop in the town centre is acceptable within the context of Policy SP01 subject to adherence with other relevant policies.

Design and Impact on Character

22. Policy CN01 of the Local Plan requires all new development to be of an appropriate scale, form, design and finish. Policy ENV7 of the EEP states that all new development should be of high quality and based on a robust site appraisal. PPS1 places design towards the centre of the planning system (Paragraph 34) stating that development which fails to improve the quality and character of the area should not be supported.
23. As stated above, the proposal can be broken down into a number of elements; each of these has been assessed below.

Erection of two-storey rear extensions to No. 22 and No. 40 King Street

24. These rear extensions have been designed to provide a rear entrance to the buildings. At the moment the unattractive rear of the buildings is visible in public views. This harms the visual amenity of the area due to the bulky form and visual clutter of the area. The poor design of the rear of the buildings also leads to poor 'legibility' in that there is confusion as people arriving at the bus station are not entirely sure where the footpath between the buildings leads to. The presence of the car park to rear compounds this. By clearly orientating the extensions to face south the extensions will provide legibility to the route through into Kings Street/Market Hill. Therefore the principle, rational and orientation of the extensions is supported.

25. The extensions have been designed to echo the medieval/vernacular origins of No. 22 and many of the surrounding buildings using a conventional gable ended form. The gables are well proportioned with a narrow span. The gables take a cue from the existing rear range which is also pitched. The window placement is well balanced complementing the narrow span. The extensions are well detailed with projecting plinths.
26. The ground floor will clearly read as a shop front, again aiding the legibility of the private route through the site to Kings Street.
27. The design responds positively to its surroundings and it is clear to see that the proposal has been based on an assessment of the buildings context and the wider character of the locality. The simple design approach here using a traditional form will work well in this location and could be a point of reference for the Policy SD06 redevelopment area.

Erection of first-floor extension over existing flat roof to 40 King Street

28. 40 King Street has a very large flat roofed element which gives a very bulky utilitarian appearance to the rear of the building. The side elevation facing the pedestrian route is blank with no windows, doors or articulation. The rear element of this building contrasts with the front which has an active shop front which responds well with the public realm.
29. The proposed alteration will remove the prominence of the flat roofed element of the building, reducing the bulk and massing, by introducing a pitched roof. The extension will introduce some articulation with a jetty, and two windows will be provided at the first floor level bringing natural surveillance and interest into the existing blank wall.
30. The first floor element of the proposal complements the rear extensions ensuring that the different phases of the project will, when complete, result in the buildings having a coherent character overall.

Erection of glazed footbridge over passageway to link No. 22 and No. 40 King Street

31. The glazed link is more of a design challenge. The link will clearly be a modern addition which could be considered out of character with the traditional appearance of the host buildings. It would also interrupt views of the church. However, the link is set back from the front and rear elevations reducing its prominence. This ensures it is a subservient component of the building rather than its most visible feature.
32. The link has also been carefully designed to ensure it is 'light weight', this has been achieved by using large glazing panels from floor to ceiling, minimal sub division and a slim line base and handrail. The link is also relatively small being only 3.5m in width outside the building. It is the opinion of Officers that, on balance, the link will provide an interesting addition to the street scene which will have little impact due to the light weight design. There is sufficient pedestrian clearance as the structure will be 4.5m off the ground.

Erection of brick wall and raised planters/seats and landscaping of car park

33. The hard and soft landscaping to the rear of the site (the existing car park) is pivotal to the entire scheme. Even if the extensions are approved, if the space does not 'read' as a pedestrian route then the extensions would have failed to achieve legibility. If the site retains the appearance of a private car park it will be uninviting and will not contribute to the comprehensive redevelopment of the Policy SD06 area. A quality landscaping scheme is therefore important to the success of the extensions, the visual amenity of the area and the contribution of the site to the wider redevelopment of the area. Following negotiations the applicants have arrived at a proposed scheme which will achieve the above aims.

34. The rationale was to delineate the private car parking from the pedestrian route through the site. This will make it clear to users of the bus stop that they are being invited to use the pedestrian link into Kings Street. The route will complement the extensions. A curved brick wall (red brick with a bond to match the walls either side) is therefore proposed to separate the private car park from the pedestrian route. High quality paving material will run through the site to show the pedestrian route. The material will be York stone paving to match that used in the town centre. The existing vehicle access will be turning into a shared space where pedestrians will have priority. This will be broken up with some low level planting and eight 'street trees' to provide the feel of an avenue. Seating areas will be provided outside of the rear entrances. Again, the design is simple using a straight forward pallet of materials which take their queue from the conservation area. This will enable the site to integrate with the Conservation Area to the north and provide a point of reference for the rest of the Policy SD06 redevelopment area.
35. In summary, the different elements work well in isolation and when viewed as a group the extensions and alterations will be a cohesive improvement of the Winch and Blatch buildings and site. The proposal adheres to Policy CN01 of the Local Plan.

Impact on the Conservation Area

36. Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (c. 9) imposes a duty on Local Planning Authorities to designate as Conservation Areas any 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. The site is within the Sudbury Conservation Area.
37. PPS5 and Section 72 of the Act also require LPA to pay special attention to the preservation or enhancement of a Conservation Area when making planning decisions.
38. It is the opinion of Officers that the entire scheme represents a significant opportunity to improve the sites contribution to the conservation area and its setting.
39. The extensions are of an appropriate scale, form and detailed design, they will harmonise with the sites setting, will use appropriate materials, will create and improve important spaces (which will improve the character of the area) and will integrate natural features to soften the street scene. The proposal therefore adheres to Policy CN06 of the Local Plan as it will enhance the character and quality of the Conservation Area.

Impact on Policy SD06 Redevelopment Area

40. The Local Plan proposes the comprehensive redevelopment of the bus station area. The area is known as the 'Hamilton Road Quarter' of Sudbury. The site is covered by Policy SD06 so it is important to have regard to the impact of the development on the delivery and vision for the whole area. A piecemeal approach to the redevelopment of this area would be likely result in a mediocre outcome, which would be a missed opportunity given the strategic location within the town.
41. The District Council is currently preparing a development brief for the area. This will guide future development ensuring there is a comprehensive approach. The Winch and Blatch scheme pre empts the design brief but the scheme has had regard to the design principles set out in the recent consultation draft - the main design principle being a pedestrian link through the Hamilton Road Quarter linking the leisure centre (Great Eastern Road) and Kings Street.

42. The scheme has been assessed and the conclusion reached that subject to a high quality pedestrian link being provided, the scheme positively contributes to the aims of the emerging Design Brief for the area. The scheme will provide good legibility to the town centre due to the orientation of the buildings and the design of the pedestrian link. Officers had seen the application as an opportunity to secure this pedestrian link as a public right of way in perpetuity through the use of the Section 106 Agreement. Taking such an approach would have secured this walkway as a public route for the future ensuring that it was not temporarily or permanently closed to pedestrians or obstructed by barriers/gates/fencing, which may not need planning permission. However, the applicants have indicated they are unwilling at this time to consider this on reasonable terms to the Council and any further negotiation to make the route public must be left to be dealt with separately under the Hamilton Road Redevelopment Area Project work. As Policy SD06 only requires the creation of a 'safe and attractive pedestrian route' and this scheme encompasses this requirement in layout terms, there is no scope to refuse the application in the absence of public ownership of the route.
43. The design and layout of the scheme will not conflict with the wider aspirations for the area; it could actually act as a catalyst for the redevelopment of the Hamilton Road Quarter by improving the amenity of the area. It could also act as a point of reference for future development. The proposal adheres to the aims of Policy SD06 of the Local Plan.

Impact on Listed Buildings

44. No 22 is a listed building. As stated above, Listed Building Consent (LBC) has already been granted for the works. Officers (including the Historic Buildings Officer) have carefully assessed the impact of the scheme on the building, particularly the glazed link which cuts in at eaves level. The conclusion drawn was that there is no harm to the Listed Building.
45. The applicant's heritage statement indicates that the building retains elements of a 14th Century aisled hall. However, over time many of the timbers have been removed. A full assessment was not possible as many of the walls are covered by shop fittings. The heritage statement was not therefore comprehensive (although very useful and detailed). To this end a recording condition was added to the LBC ensuring that the building is fully recorded once the shop fittings are removed (as there could be historic timbers behind the shop fittings). Although not comprehensive the heritage statement has been very useful in assessing the building and the scheme.
46. The conclusions of the heritage statement, endorsed by the Councils Historic Buildings Officer, are that the works proposed will not have any adverse impact on those parts of the building which are of historic significance.
47. Aesthetically the alterations respect the listed building; conditions have been added regarding the finishes. The proposal safeguards the historic significance of the listed building and therefore adheres to Policy CN06 of the Local Plan and national guidance in PPS5.

Highways and Parking

48. The alterations to the rear parking area will result in the reduction of parking spaces (10 spaces - about half those available). This is necessary to improve the visual amenity of the area as otherwise the site will retain the character of a car park. The town centre location and proximity to public car parks, the bus station and the rail station results in on site parking not being essential to the business in planning terms, in fact a further reduction, or even no on site parking would be acceptable. The loss of on site parking is not a concern and is outweighed by the significant benefits to the amenity of the area.

REASON FOR APPROVAL

49. Subject to the conditions listed below, the proposed development is considered to be a positive addition to the Conservation Area, Local Plan policy SD06 redevelopment area (The Hamilton Road Quarter) and the listed building. The proposal will improve the visual amenity of the area and have no adverse impact on highway safety or environmental amenity; the scheme will also result in the growth of a local firm. The proposal therefore adheres to saved Policies CN01, CN06, CN08, SD06 and EM01 of the Babergh District Local Plan and national guidance in PPS1 and PPS5.

RECOMMENDATION

That planning permission be granted subject to the following conditions:-

- Standard time limit
- As attached to the LBC (architectural details, materials to be submitted)
- Details of lighting
- Details of the brick wall including coping stone
- Removal of PD rights to erect gates
- Details of hard and soft landscaping
- Scheme of archaeological investigation to be approved