MINOR DEVELOPMENT PLANNING APPLICATION REPORT REF. NO. F/14/74007

DESCRIPTION/ ADDRESS	Change of use of office to 2no. 3 bed dwellings and 1no. 4 bed dwelling 101 - 103 Desborough Road Eastleigh SO50 5NT

SITE VISIT DATE	11.3.14
ARE PLANS ACCURATE?	Yes
HAVE ALL NECESSARY NEIGHBOURS BEEN CONSULTED?	Yes

THE SITE AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF APPLICATION	Change of use of office to 2no. 3 bed dwellings and 1no. 4 bed dwelling with associated amenity space and parking.
SITE AREA	387.9sqm / 0.038ha
RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT DENSITY (NET)	78.9 dwellings per hectare
TOPOGRAPHY	Flat level site.
TREES	None
BOUNDARY TREATMENT	The building is hard up against the pavement to the front and side. The rear has a canopied car port. The courtyard area is enclosed by a combination of the building and a 1.8-2m fence and wall.
SITE CHARACTERISTICS	The site contains two separate dwellings both of which have, following extensive extensions been converted to office accommodation. The building now takes up a large proportion of the plot. The previously enclosed front garden areas have been opened up and provide 1/2 parking spaces. To the rear is a service road/backway which serves all the properties in this section of Desborough and Cranbury Road. Off of this backway are 3/4 car parking spaces and a side access leading to a small internal courtyard area.
CHARACTER OF LOCALITY	Residential area close to the town centre with a strong character. Predominantly Victorian/Edwardian terraced housing in a regular grid format with shallow set back properties addressing the street with enclosed front courtyards.

RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION	DECISION
Z/12222/005/00	Erection of two storey office with car parking at rear	Permitted Jan 2001
Z/12222/04	Demolition of existing buildings and erection of 2 storey office	Permitted Nov 1989

REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

SOURCE	SUMMARY OF CONTENT
None	

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

CONSULTEE	SUMMARY OF RESPONSE
Head of Transportation and Engineering	Objection - lack of bin / cycle store provision. PARKING: It is noted that parking spaces are provided on-site for the 3 dwellings, however, Legal and Parking Services have confirmed that the existing development is entitled to 4 CPZ permits, and that these are transferable to the new development. As such, there is no objection to the development proposal on parking grounds, though I would state the following parking should be provided by condition: Unit no. 1 - 3-bed house = 2 allocated parking spaces to the rear Unit no. 2 - 3-bed house = 2 allocated parking spaces to the rear Unit no. 3 - 4-bed house = On-street permits to be issued. Unfortunately, as units 1 and 2 will not be eligible for CPZ permits, they will onwards not be entitled to CPZ visitor permits. This message needs to be clearly relayed to the developer and onwards the future occupiers to avoid confussion. There are however nearby 2 hour limited waiting bays, and town centre car parks for longer stays, as well as the opportunity for visitors to arrive by sustainable transport (bus and train) within an easy walking distance. BIN/CYCLE STORE: There is no provision of either cycle storage which goes against the EBC Parking Standards, or somewhere for bins (a minimum of six for the site) to be stored, and as such an objection is made to the proposal. In regard to the bin store, without a provision for this, the bins are likely to be left on the pavement causing a pedestrian obstruction that is not welcomed. Bar bin collection day, bins should be contained within a development site. FRONT OF SITE: At present, parkin occurs on the frontage of the site which is not welcomed. Bollards have been put in place to discourage this, but have been ignored, and as a result there are vehicle reversing manouvres made onto the highway directly onto a busy crossroads. If the application is to be approved, then it is requested that this is on condition that the front perimetre wall is re-instated and retained in the future to remove the temptation for this potentially dangerous parking to continue. In regard to transport DC's, none are required, as the existing office use generates more multimodal trips than the proposed residential units. As such there will be a net reduction.
Head of Housing and Environmental Health	No objection. Amenity protection conditions (no burning, hours of work, dust) recommended.
Head of Housing Services	No objection but needs additional parking.

POLICY CONTEXT

DESIGNATION APPLICABLE TO SITE
Within Built-up Area Boundary Within Established Residential Area

DEVELOPMENT PLAN SAVED POLICIES, EMERGING LOCAL PLAN POLICIES AND SPD'S

Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (2001-2011):

- 28.ES (Waste Collection/Recycling),
- 34.ES (Sustainable Development)
- 59.BE (Development Criteria)
- 72.H (Density)
- 100.T (Minimise Travelling)
- 101.T (Infrastructure Contributions)
- 104.T (Parking)
- 147.OS (Public Open Space)
- 191.IN (Social Infrastructure)

Pre submission Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029:

- DM1 (Development Criteria)
- DM2 (Sustainable Development)
- DM23 (Transport)
- DM24 (Parking/Cycle Facilities)
- DM25 (Residential Development)
- DM29 (Internal Space Standards)
- DM32 (Public Open Space)
- DM35 (Community Infrastructure)
- DM37 (CIL/S106)

Supplementary Planning Guidance: Quality Places
Supplementary Planning Document: Planning Obligations
Supplementary Planning Document: Environmentally Sustainable Development
Supplementary Planning Document Residential Parking Standards
Supplementary Planning Document: Character Area Appraisal- Eastleigh

CHARACTER APPRAISAL AREA

Eastleigh Character Area – ELAC 15

SPECIAL POLICY AREA

Not within a Special Policy Area

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE

National Planning Policy Framework highlights that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people" (para 56) and goes on to state that decisions should aim to ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development (para 58).

POLICY COMMENTARY

The above policies and guidance combine to form the criteria against which this application will be assessed with particular regard to residential amenity, highway matters, street scene and character of the area

COMMENT ON CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Noted and addressed below.

COMMENT ON REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

N/A

PLANNING OBLIGATION/CONSIDERATIONS

In accordance with the provisions of Circular 05/05 saved policies 101.T, 147.OS and 191.IN of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review 2001-2011 and supplementary planning document. Planning obligation contributions are sought to offset the impact of the development on local infrastructure. For this development contributions are sought towards Community Infrastructure, Sustainable Transport and Public Open Space. The applicant has not indicated how this requirement would be overcome had a resolution to permit been made.

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Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:-

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Principle: The application site lies within the urban edge and within an established residential area where saved policy 72.H and emerging policy DM25 accepts the principle of creating new dwellings and will accept high density development in areas well served by public transport, services, and facilities. The density of this proposal is 78.9 dwellings per hectare which is considered a high density development. Policies 72.H and DM25 direct that high density development should only be permitted where a high standard of residential amenity is reasonably provided and protected. The site is also within an established residential area where the principle of development is generally considered acceptable subject to the details and impacts of the proposal being considered acceptable, as set out below.

Saved Policy 59.BE of the Local Plan and emerging Policy DM1 of the Pre-submission Eastleigh Borough Local Plan both require development to take full and proper account of the context of the site including the character and appearance of the locality and be appropriate in mass, scale, materials, layout, design and siting. It also requires a high standard of landscape design, have a satisfactory means of access and layout for vehicles, cyclist and pedestrians, make provision for refuse and cycle storage and avoid unduly impacting on neighbouring uses through overlooking, loss of light, and loss of outlook, noise and fumes.

Layout/Design: The proposal requires the conversion of two existing properties back to residential use. This in itself would not generally have been a problem however as part of the conversion to office accommodation a substantial extension was constructed over what would have been amenity

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space (garden). It is proposed that the main section of the extension be converted to a third residential property. It is acknowledged that the proposed dwellings exceed the internal space standard recommended by emerging policy DM.29 and that generally the internal arrangements are well proportioned. Only minor alterations are proposed to doors and windows and these do not impact negatively on the amenities of neighbouring properties however they do directly overlook the proposed amenity spaces which is also significantly lacking (see amenity space below). The layout of what is currently a courtyard into 3 separate areas of amenity space is unacceptable. No bin or bike storage has been provided or is inappropriate in its siting (see highway and refuse below). Parking is just about acceptable but only by virtue of the fact that the existing office squeezes 4 spaces to the rear when really there is only space for 3 (see highway below). Overall, whilst the principle of housing in this location is acceptable and that the internal layout is acceptable the other factors namely the lack of adequate bin/cycle storage and the lack of high quality amenity space indicate that the conversion of the building back to residential in the form of family housing is unacceptable, represents an overdevelopment of the site give rise to a cramped and poor quality living environment detrimental to the amenity of their future occupiers.

Impacts on Character/Appearance of the Street Scene: The proposal utilizes the existing office building and whist there will be some minor elevational alterations to allow the conversion these are not considered to have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the street scene. The nature of the building will however change. The site falls with area ELAC 15 of the Eastleigh Character Area Appraisals SPD. This document highlights that the area has a strong character due to the regular grid layout of properties with rows of 1930's housing separated by generous gardens and backways/alleyways. This layout adds to the perception of space and thus the area has a quite open appearance with only low level secondary structures within the rear gardens. The prominent almost corner position of the proposed 3rd dwelling is far from ideal being at the entrance to the rear alleyway from Blenheim Road. Such residential properties have long been resisted by the local authority as they are at odds with the prevailing character and appearance of the street scene and surrounding area contrary to saved policy 59.BE and emerging Policy DM1.

Residential Amenity: To assist with assessing the impact of a development on neighbouring properties and to support Policy 59.BE and emerging policy DM1 Supplementary Planning Guidance: Quality Places has been produced and gives detailed guidance on over looking, loss of light, amenity space for new dwellings.

The Quality Places guidance also provides advice on the level of private amenity space required for new residential properties. This requires development to provide private amenity space equivalent to 60% of the floor space of the dwelling, the proposal fails to comply with the resultant garden space is significantly below this;
Unit 1 = 22sqm amenity space, 92sqm floor space = 24% provision (required 55sqm)
Unit 2 = 14sqm amenity space, 118sqm floor space = 12% provision (required 71sqm)
Unit 3 = 30.11sqm amenity space, 134sqm floor space = 22% provision (required 80sqm).
Whilst it is acknowledged that this is a town centre location where reduce provision may be considered, the provision is significantly below that that would be required by policy. Further more what is provided is directly overlooked by first floor windows of the other proposed properties therefore the space allows for no privacy. Policies 72.H and DM25 direct that high density development should only be permitted where a high standard of residential amenity is reasonably provided and protected. It is not considered that a high standard of residential amenity has been provided and that what has been provided represents an unacceptably poor level of amenity for the future occupiers. The lack of ability to provide adequate or appropriate private amenity space supports the view that the site is cramped, congested, and represents an over development of the plot.

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It is acknowledged that there are areas of public open space within and around Eastleigh Town Centre which provides large areas of public open space and play facilities however given the type of housing proposed, family housing, the provision of private amenity space to allow normal domestic activities such as sitting out and drying of washing are considered essential requirements and provided the basis for the quality places requirement for 60% garden to floor space for dwellings.

Landscaping: The proposals does not involve any landscaping however had the application been considered acceptable the construction of or re-instatement of the front boundary wall to mirror that of other residential properties within the street would have been investigated further. This would have also prevented parking on the frontage which currently takes place and causes significant highway concerns (see below).

Highway Matters: The existing vehicular access arrangements will be utilised for the proposed conversion and are considered acceptable.

Saved Policy 100.T and emerging policy DM23 expects development to be sited close to, or well served by, public transport, cycling and walking. The site is within the urban edge, minutes of a regular bus service, cycle routes and is accessible by foot. This site is located close to Eastleigh Town Centre and is therefore considered to be highly accessible.

The existing office has 3 parking spaces to the rear of the site (4 are squeezed in), two illegally on the frontage and 4 parking permits for parking within the Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ). Saved Policy 104.T and emerging policy DM24 states permission will only be granted for development that provides adequate off-highway parking provision and our Parking Standards SPD supports this. In line with the EBC Parking Standards, the proposals requires 2 spaces per 3 bed property and 3 spaces per 4 bed property, 7 in total. The proposal includes the provision of 4 on site parking spaces utilising the existing rear parking area. The spaces are below standard and are too close to the flank wall however as they are currently used it would be unreasonsable to find this unacceptable. In addition Transportation and Engineering have confirmed that the 4 CPZ permits currently issued to the office use could be transferred to the resdiential properties and therefore had the application been considered acceptable in all other respects an appropriately worded condition could have been applied to secure the required the parking provision, albeit with no visitor parking, would would rely on limited parking bays within and round the town centre.

The courtyard area is currently used for the storage of bicycles. Saved and emerging policies along with the parking standards SPD also requires the provsion of appropriate and sufficent cycle storage, a minimum of 2 per property. No details have been provided for where cycle storage will be provided. This cycle storage needs to be safe and secure and its is usually desirable for this to be provided within the private rear garden however the site is so constrained and is already so cramped and congested that there is limited opportunities to provide the required cycle storage. The courtyard is to be converted to amenity space and this is already unacceptable in size (see above) that it is therefore not desirable for this to be reduced even further. It is also not considered acceptable to provide this on the frontage of the site (see street scene above) or at the rear of the parking areas (which is already limited in its maneuvering space). Overall the applicant has failed to demonstrate how this requirement could be met and therefore fails to comply with policy requirements.

Refuse Collection: Saved Policy 28.ES, emerging policy DM1, and the Quality Places SPD requires adequate provision of waste disposal/bins to be provided. The Quality Places SPD requires a minimum of 2 bins per property, 6 in total to be provided on site. The plans do not

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indicate the bin storage area however the application form suggests that bins will be stored in the rear of the undercroft/car parking area. This is not considered an acceptable proposition as the car parking spaces are already below standards and are already in close proximity to the backway/rear access road. The storage of the bins to the rear of the undercroft will result in cars parking further back on the plot. This has the potential to obstruct access to the backway and may further limit manoeuvrings space in and out of already small spaces close to a wall. It is not considered possible for all properties to have their bin storage within their amenity space as this would further erode what is already an undersized garden area and it is not desirable for storage to be provided on the frontage due to the visual impacts it would have on the street. Overall, the failure to demonstrate that appropriate bin storage can be provided is contrary to policy and further compounds and highlights the constrained, cramped and congested nature of the site.

Sustainability: In accordance with emerging Policy DM2 conversion of existing buildings to dwellings are not required to meet the requirements of our Environmentally Sustainable Development SPD.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Also of relevance is the Revised Draft Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029. While not yet adopted it does carry weight by virtue of being intended as the current local plan's replacement. With regards to this application, the new policies essentially echo those of the current plan and are not considered to affect the recommendation put forward.

CONCLUSIONS

In view of the above this application is considered to conflict with the requirements of saved and emerging policies and is therefore recommended for refusal.