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1 FEB 2010

PLANNING

**Design and Access Statement**

Woodlawn Garage  
644 Hanworth Road  
Hounslow  
Middlesex  
TW4 5NP

Residential and Retail  
Redevelopment  
with ancillary parking

January 2010.

10 / 0245 / FULL

- Building Surveying
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## **Site and Surroundings**

The application site is located on the eastern side of Hanworth Road, Hounslow, and amounts to 0.15 hectares in area. The site has a frontage of approximately 19.2 metres, with an overall depth of 76 metres, and lies in an established shopping parade.

To the south lies a ribbon of two storey development comprising shop or business units on the ground floor with, in the main, residential accommodation over at first floor level. These units occupy the frontage of sites that are similar in length to the application site. The remaining areas of these properties are set aside as garden land or hard surfaced yards associated with the frontage units. In the main these areas of land are underused, and in some cases are overgrown, and contain outbuildings of various sizes.

To the north-west lies a group of 3 terraced two storey units, all of which are in commercial use at ground floor level, with residential accommodation over. These buildings generally have extensions or outbuildings of substantial size. To the north-east lie a pair of detached dwellings that front onto an adjoining highway, the rear gardens of these properties immediately adjoin the rearmost section of the northern boundary of the application site.

To the east lie the rear gardens of further residential property, including the access road to, and the rear gardens of, a recently constructed block of flats. To the west of the site, on the opposite side of Hanworth Road lies a cemetery.

## **Current Use and Buildings.**

The site is currently in use for a multiplicity of purposes that are all connected with the motor trade.

The use of the site frontage was historically for the sale of petrol, hence the presence of two vehicular accesses at the north western and south western extremities of the site. This use has long since ceased and the front forecourt is now in use for vehicle parking and the intermittent display of motor vehicles for sale.

There are a number of single storey buildings on the site with a net area of 479 sq metres, (523sq metres gross). These can be described as being divided into three distinct sections.

Firstly the buildings that occupy the site frontage are used in connection with the sale of cars. The front group of buildings are

used for the display of cars, with two small offices and a car valet workshop immediately to the rear of the showroom, and an area for the storage of car parts and cleaning materials adjacent to the southern boundary. Toilet accommodation is provided in the front south western corner of the building.

The second group of buildings act as a link building between the two adjoining groups of buildings and are generally lower in height. This narrow group of buildings occupy part of the southern boundary of the site. These buildings comprise an area used for the storage of cars prior to sale, a toilet block and a small office used in connection with the adjoining workshop.

The third building is the highest and most visually dominant of the buildings on site and located in the rearmost section of the site. This is in use as a workshop. The workshop area is in turn divided into three separate areas; the main workshop used for the servicing and repairs of cars, an enclosed spray booth and an MOT Testing bay.

There is a large concrete covered yard area adjacent to the central building group. This is used for MOT customer parking, employee parking and cars awaiting repair. The majority of cars are parked adjacent to the wall that forms the northern boundary of the site, and this area is accessed by a narrow roadway that runs along the northern boundary.

The existing buildings are of some age and require considerable overhaul and maintenance. They are thermally inefficient and could not be successfully altered or improved to be able to be used for any purpose other than car display or as workshops. Use for manufacturing would require substantial improvement in the standard of services to the buildings and the structure. Further the buildings would not be capable of being used for modern offices given their general shape, mode of construction and lack of natural lighting. In the latter case it would be difficult to improve this situation due to the location of many external walls directly onto the boundaries of the site. The future of the site is therefore limited in terms of possible alternative uses, with little scope for significant refurbishment, and thus redevelopment is considered to be appropriate.

### **The Current Application.**

The application proposes the demolition of the existing buildings on the site and the redevelopment of the site by way of a mixed scheme of commercial and residential uses. This would be by way of two separate buildings, one to be located on the site frontage

and the other to be located at the rear of the site. These buildings would be separated by an open central area to be used for vehicle parking and turning, together with defined areas for the collection and storage of refuse. The parking area would be served by a singular access road that would run parallel to the southern boundary, utilising the existing point of access onto Hanworth Road in the south western corner of the site.

The building proposed to the front of the site would ostensibly be one that is two storeys in height, with accommodation within the roof space. The building would be set on a building line similar to the line of properties that adjoin to the north and south of the application. The building would be of a similar height to those that adjoin; this is ably demonstrated by examination of the street scene elevation accompanying the application. In terms of the proposed overall width, the proposed building would be of similar proportions to that of the semi-detached and terraced properties that are currently positioned within this shopping parade.

The building internally at ground floor would have an open plan layout with direct frontage onto Hanworth Road, together with ancillary accommodation at the rear, including a disabled toilet and a kitchen. This layout would permit the retail space to be used either as one unit or two smaller shop units. The ground floor would be serviced from the rear yard wherein an area is shown to be allocated for the parking and turning of vehicles connected with this use.

The first and second floors of the building would be used for residential purposes with separate access to these areas being to the first floor by way of a centrally located staircase at the rear. Two bed sitting room units and a one bedroom flat would be provided on the first floor with a two bedroom flat to be located within the roof space. Each unit would be provided with a car parking space within the central courtyard.

The frontage building would be designed so as to provide a building that would contribute and enhance the appearance of the street scene. The front elevation would be provided with a two storey projecting gable section, with two single storey bays on either side of the gable, each to be provided with small mono pitched roof.

The front elevation would be finished with facing brickwork, together with a brick band string course at first floor window cill level. Stone window cills and lintols would be provided as additional detailing. Traditional window frames would be provided with cill heights similar to that present on adjoining buildings. The main roof would be of similar pitch to those already present in the



existing parade and would be clay tile covered. The flank elevations would be of more simple design, utilising the same brick and brick string detail. The rear elevation would be of more intricate design with a centrally located projecting gable detail, of smaller proportions than that on the front elevation. Standard style windows would be provided in a uniform manner.

The second building to be located at the rear of the site would be of similar brick faced construction, with a hipped roof design finished with plain clay tiles. The building would have a roughly west to east orientation with windows facing to the front (overlooking the central parking area) and the rear (overlooking the new rear garden area)

Accommodation would be provided on three floors, the ground and first floor areas each containing 2x two bedroom flats with a further two bedroom flat being provided within the roof space. The block whilst providing accommodation on three floors would appear as a two storey building. Pedestrian access to the building would be centrally located on the front elevation, served by a pathway leading off of the car parking area.

The building would be set some 3.6 metres off of the northern boundary, and 1.5 metres off of the southern boundary. The rear garden to be provided would be of 162 sq metres area, with a minimum depth of 9.2 metres. It is proposed that the boundaries be landscaped with semi-standard trees, particularly the northern and eastern boundaries.

The car parking area would be provided with 10 car spaces to be utilised by the occupants of the 9 flats to be provided within the scheme, with an additional space for visitors parking. Further parking and turning space are to be provided for the proposed retail unit, immediately to the rear of the shop area. It is proposed that the site be enclosed on all boundaries by a 2 metre high close boarded fence; although to the rear of the detached dwellings on the northern boundary the existing brick wall will be retained following repair.

### **Analysis of the Proposal**

In terms of the use of the site, the site is currently in use for commercial purposes, there is no residential element present. The buildings are of some age and are incapable of being utilised for any contemporary industrial or office use, even with some modification and improvement. The site has been marketed with a local commercial agent for some 2 years without any interest being shown in the property other than by motor traders or those carrying out car repairs. The site, whilst currently used for these

purposes, is not used to its fullest potential. Any future occupier of the premises would no doubt use the site to a more significant degree which would increase the intensity of the use, thus in turn increasing both the number of vehicle movements and the noise/activity generated from the existing buildings. This in the applicants view would be of concern given the general proximity of residential property, particularly that which is located to the north.

The alternative uses of the site have been considered against the background of the contribution that any future development might make to the street scene and the area as a whole, the benefits to residential amenity, and the impact on the issue of employment.

The existing buildings are of poor quality and make no positive contribution to the street scene, despite the fact that the buildings have formed part of the landscape for many years. If the site is to be redeveloped then such should provide a group of buildings of quality, and further it is considered that any new buildings should be of similar scale to those currently prevalent within the area.

It is considered that the buildings as designed would enhance the appearance of this site by using modern materials and utilising a contemporary design. The building would inevitably change the appearance of this site within the ribbon of development of which it forms part; however it is considered that such a change would be a positive one.

A further important consideration to the development of this site is the position of buildings relative to the site boundaries, the impact of buildings on the adjoining properties and the space around the buildings.

At present buildings occupy almost the entire length of the southern boundary and their height and appearance form a dominant feature when viewed from the gardens of adjoining properties. This is also true of the impact when viewed from the rear of the site, where the main workshop building dominates that boundary. Whilst the northern flanks of the existing buildings are set further off of the boundary the area in between buildings and the boundary are laid to hard standing. Thus there is significant parking adjacent to the majority of the northern boundary, some by way of commercial vehicles. There is therefore an impact as a result of this use of land, both in terms of noise and visual appearance.

The proposed buildings would be set off of the boundaries as earlier described. However this creates a feeling of space around the buildings and reduces the impact that those buildings might

have in all areas. Further whilst the central area might continue to be used for parking the area would be set out such that car parking would take place in close proximity to sensitive boundaries, rather than commercial parking. The parking would be laid out in such a manner to ensure that only 10 cars can be parked, whereas at present double this number can be provided in an ad hoc arrangement. The parking would also be set off of the boundary with a landscaping strip of 2.5 metres width provided between the car spaces and the boundary enclosure. These are in planning terms material considerations.

It will also be noted from the proposed site layout that the proposed access road runs along the southern boundary of the site, this is a deliberate consideration in that it would allow access to the so far undeveloped land to the rear of those properties that adjoin to the south. Overtures have been made to the owners of the adjoining properties regarding inclusion within this scheme however no positive feedback has been received that would allow a more comprehensive development to take place. However importantly, the proposed scheme would not prejudice the development of adjoining land.

The issue of employment has been considered against the background of the employment policies EMP 4 and CP 19 adopted by the Local Authority. It is recognised that this is a site that is in commercial use and therefore there is a current level of employment. However the level of employment is low when compared against the existing floor area. This is in the main as a result of the form of uses on the site.

The buildings to the front of the site are all used in connection with car sales, with showroom and car storage areas, an associated workshop with offices. This gives rise to low levels of employment. Further given the location of the site and the lack of facilities the site would never be used by a main car franchise, thus the main use would be for second hand car sales. This requires greater areas of car display, thus using greater areas of the site with little growth in employment. The existing showroom would be incapable of being used for any other purpose without considerable alteration.

The rear buildings, whilst possessing workshops, are also set out for MOT testing which consumes a significant area when one takes into account equipment and an office, together with a paint spray booth. This again takes up a considerable area of space. The area of workshop is therefore greatly reduced and capable of allowing only two cars to be accommodated on ramps. Thus the overall level of employment is not as high as one would expect given the overall area.



Considerable research has been undertaken in order to determine the form of any commercial development to be embodied within the scheme. Advice has been sought from a number of commercial agents and the general basis of that advice that this is a secondary shopping area wherein demand for retail units is not strong, irrespective of the current market conditions. This is emphasised by the fact that when retail units within this parade, and that within Powder Mill Lane, become vacant the length of time that the respective unit stays vacant is considerable. The period of vacancy has lengthened considerably, which illustrates the change in shopping patterns, the isolated nature of the site and the dominance of the large retailers.

The parade is used mainly by local residents, and the one missing feature within the local shopping provision is a supermarket style outlet of reasonable scale. Thus advice received is that such should be provided at ground floor level, with a view to subdivision should a larger unit not be occupied.

Further consideration has been given to the provision of alternative forms of employment on this site, particularly small office units. However a common theme is that this is not an area where small office units would be viable due to the isolated nature of the site, in terms of the facilities that both employees and employers seek in considering occupation of premises. The advice that we have received is that there is a glut of small office suites in more central locations such as Hounslow, Whitton, Feltham, Hampton and Twickenham, all of which have more expansive shopping provision, better access to railway stations and more accessible by other forms of transport. In conclusion it has been determined that the inclusion of offices would result in an uneconomic form of development and, if included within the scheme, would be likely to remain vacant for long periods with a high turnover of tenants.

It has therefore been considered that as an alternative to offices, to supplement the ground floor retail unit, residential accommodation should be provided, such to comprise a variety of unit sizes, ranging from bed-sitting units to 2 bedroom units. Thus the proposal is to provide 9 small units of accommodation in an area where there is a known and unsatisfied need. These units would be within the range that could be considered to be affordable, in close proximity to local shops, schools and some transport facilities. This would also reflect the proximity of the site to an established residential area and the resultant improvement in residential amenity of those residents that adjoin the site.

### **Highway Considerations**



The site is located on the Hanworth Road which is a busy classified road leading from Hounslow to the north east and Hanworth and Feltham to the south west. At peak hours it is a heavily trafficked road with high levels of on street parking adjacent to the nearby parade of shops.

The site is currently in use for car showrooms, workshops, paint spraying and as an MOT testing station. The site has two vehicular access points on to Hanworth Road, with a singular access road leading along the northern part of the site to the rear car parking area, workshop and MOT testing area.

The showroom use generates car parking on the site frontage with up to 4 cars being parked on this area at any one time. On average there are 12 car movements per day associated with the car sales use. However because this area is not used as intensively as it could be, the number of traffic movements would be considerably larger with a greater number of cars displayed for sale. Furthermore such increased display would be at the expense of existing off street parking provision.

The MOT station generates constant vehicular traffic for 6 days per week, excluding Sundays and Bank Holidays. On average there are 10 car movements throughout the day associated with the MOT station.

The general workshop and car spray/body repair elements of the use generate up to 15 car movements per day, when one includes material and car parts deliveries. In addition there are car movements associated with employees, and commercial vehicle movements associated with low loaders delivering damaged cars to be repaired and re-sprayed, and car deliveries associated with the sales business. Up to 6 cars are delivered at any one time, and due to the size of the transporter, these vehicles are often unloaded from the road, given the lack of access for a vehicle of this size to the main body of the site.

In summary there are up to 50 car/small van movements to the site on an average working day, excluding commercial vehicles and transporters.

The proposed uses would be very much low key by comparison. The shop unit would in the main be used by Local residents, although undoubtedly there would be some passing trade, it is not anticipated therefore that there would be a great deal in the way of car movements. There would be deliveries of goods and produce however such would be by smaller vehicles, rather than the larger HGV vehicles used to deliver to the larger supermarkets.

Deliveries would take place at the rear using the access road provided on the southern boundary. Thus there would be no on street parking associated with deliveries, such as occurs with the adjoining shopping parade and that which occurs with the delivery of cars to the application site. There would be no need for parking on the forecourt area in front of the new building, a regular occurrence on the forecourt of the shops within the parade to the south, and to a lesser degree to the north.

The level of traffic movements associated with the residential use is also considered to be insignificant when one considers the type of smaller unit to be created, particularly the bed sitting room units and the one bedroom flat wherein there is likely to be a lower incidence of car ownership. The site is considered to be in an area of reasonable accessibility, wherein many residents would not be dependent upon car usage, with a bus stop almost directly opposite the application site.

In summary therefore the scheme would result in considerably less car and vehicle movements than that which currently occurs, moreover significantly less than would be the case should the car sales element of the use is undertaken more intensively. In addition there are two vehicular access points onto the main road at present, between which there is significant on street parking with resultant reduction in sight lines. The proposed scheme would result in only one access being retained and this being modified to provide a more contemporary arrangement at the junction with the highway, with better radius and a more defined crossover. These factors would lead one to the conclusion that there would be an improvement in highway terms.

### **Contamination**

Planning Policy Statement 23 outlines the need to undertake an assessment of the possible impact of contamination upon the proposed site uses particularly where previous commercial uses have existed and where residential development is now proposed. This is against the background of the fact that other Government Circular advice fully supports the principle of residential development on "Brownfield sites". The current application site falls within this category.

The site has always been used as a garage, with a petrol station on the site frontage. Examination of historical maps indicates no other uses of the site, and no evidence of any nearby uses that would have resulted in contamination.

The use of the site as a petrol filling station ceased in the mid 1990's at which time Esso Petroleum, the suppliers of petroleum

products to the site, commissioned a survey to assess the potential contamination of the site. This is appended to this statement as Appendix A. The Assessment carried out by Quest Environmental Services indicated that there was no contamination of the site as a consequence of previous uses. Given the absence of petroleum sales from the site for many years it is unlikely that any pollution/contamination in connection with petroleum products would have occurred in the intervening years.

The site has been used for car repairs and car spraying and given the presence of these uses there is always the possibility of some contamination. However the applicant has been the owner and operator of this site for many years, during which time all operations in connection with the motor trade have been carried out in accord with legislation that has required the safeguarding of adjoining property, the use of filters within the paint spray area and the collection of all oils with subsequent disposal in an approved manner. Thus there is no reason to believe that there would be any significant pollution as a result of this long term use.

The presence of contamination on any site cannot be ruled out, but the presence of buildings and concrete hard standings over the entire site makes a detailed investigation at this stage extremely difficult if not impossible. The matter should therefore be the subject of a condition requiring a full intrusive investigation following demolition of the existing buildings and breaking up of the hard areas. This would enable bore holes to be augured/drilled with samples taken of the underlying soils, together with screen samples being taken of the surface of the site. Both areas of investigation would allow a determination to be made of what contamination might be present and then to determine the best method of remediation to deal with the substances that may be found.

### **Sustainability**

It is recognised that the form of construction will need to be sustainable, with the commercial element needing to comply with the BREEAM standards and the residential elements requiring compliance with Code 3 level for Sustainable Homes.

The initial sketch design of the buildings is such that there will be compliance. With the potential changes in the level of required standards anticipated to come into force in 2010, it is possible that there may be a requirement for compliance to achieve Code 4 for Sustainable Homes.

The detailed design of the buildings in the context of BREEAM and the Code for Sustainable Homes has not yet been undertaken,

however upon receipt of planning permission the applicant would anticipate that there would be conditions imposed on any Planning Permission requiring compliance with the latest standards then in force. At that stage accredited BREEAM Assessors would be asked to prepare the necessary reports and tests against the background of the planning permission obtained.

It is however the Applicants intention that the development as a whole be sustainable and would seek to achieve the 20% reduction in carbon emissions that is required by those policies retained in the London Plan. Attached to this statement as Appendix B is the preliminary energy efficiency report prepared in relation to this proposal.