



**MEETING NOTE REGARDING PROPOSED ROCHFORD HOUSING ASSOCIATION  
DEVELOPMENT SITES IN RAYLEIGH**

**-STRATFORD HOUSE, HOCKLEY ROAD  
-THE CHESTNUTS, 125A-D, HIGH ROAD, RAYLEIGH  
-SPRINGFIELD COURT BOSTON AVENUE**

**Date/Time:** 8<sup>th</sup> December 2009

**Venue:** Rochford District Council Offices, Rochford

**In Attendance:** Judith Adams, Team Leader Development (JA)  
Control (South) Rochford District Council  
Katie Rodgers, Planning Officer, Rochford District Council (KR)  
Robert Davis, Planning Officer, Rochford District Council (RD)  
Steve Neville, Strategic Housing Manager, (SN)  
Rochford District Council  
Susan Waldock, Urban Designer, Essex County Council (SW)  
Robin Carpenter, Senior Historic Buildings Advisor, (RC)  
Essex County Council  
Anne Clayton, Essex County Council Highways (AC)  
Maria Pack, Essex County Council Highways (MP)  
Sarah Brind, Rochford Housing Association (SB)  
(Part of Sanctuary Group)  
Andrew Fisher, MEPK Architects (AF)  
Paul Winkworth, LDA Architects (PW)  
James Brown- Iceni Projects (JB)

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**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The meeting was convened to discuss proposed planning application proposals on three schemes, all of which are within Rayleigh:
- Stratford House, Hockley Road
  - Springfield Court, Boston Avenue
  - The Chestnuts, High Road
- 1.2 The schemes were discussed in turn and this note provides a summary of the key comments, actions and discussion.

## **2.0 Stratford House, Hockley Road**

### General

- 2.1 JA confirmed that RDC have no concerns regarding the principle of developing the site and the loss of the existing building is deemed acceptable. This position was ratified by RC.
- 2.2 SN confirmed that the proposed redevelopment scheme would provide a more preferable type and mix of units than the existing accommodation and was welcomed. In the context that Rochford District Council (RDC) did not deliver any affordable units last year SN advised that the provision of new affordable units on the site would be strongly welcomed.
- 2.3 JA acknowledged that the current proposals involve the loss of a TPO tree on the site frontage. James Choat, the Council's arboricultural officer was unable to attend the meeting, however, JA advised that his comments would be sought and passed on.

### Design

- 2.4 The following comments were raised with regard to design:
- It was confirmed that from a design perspective the general layout is acceptable. RC advised that more detail of the proposed articulation of the corner facade would be needed in order to demonstrate that the proposed massing is acceptable.
  - SW advised that the levels from Hockley Road drop down significantly and this should be reflected in the drawings.
  - The back to front separation distances within the inner courtyard should be assessed and where possible achieve the Essex Design standard of 25 metres.
  - The front to back span of the houses on Swayne Court should if possible be reduced.
  - Dormer windows should be a minor incidence in the roof space and those currently shown on the Hockley Road frontage would be better re-sited to the rear.
  - Where individual units are proposed these should be clearly designed as such in order to avoid monotonous facades.
  - Windows to be reconsidered generally - vernacular/traditional style/proportions rather than 'modernist'
  - Efforts should be made to break up the roofscape on individual properties and provide more articulation. RC advised that the introduction of chimneys would be welcomed and would help to break up the roofscape.
  - Consideration should be given to the local vernacular in particular the listed buildings (24-26 Hockley Road) which are situated on the opposite side of Swayne Court. Specifically the new development must not dominate or detract from setting of listed building at no. 24 Hockley Road.
  - It was agreed that the open green frontage should be maintained and thought should be given to preserving the setting of the milestone which is a scheduled ancient monument.
  - More detail is required of fenestration and balconies. RC advised that individual cantilevered balconies would not be representative of the local vernacular, however, if incorporated within protrusions in the facade and with elements extending down to the ground level as currently illustrated in part on the 3D visuals these could potentially work.
  - RC accepted that the corner building should represent a landmark feature and the use of weatherboarding could be utilised to create a structure typical of barns or mills in the locality.

- RC advised that large plinths should be wherever possible avoided and overhanging elements were not characteristic.
- JA requested that garden sizes are confirmed on the updated plans and that consideration is given to improving the communal garden area provided for the flats. Private gardens for houses should wherever possible adopt the design standard of: up to 2 Bed properties - 50sqm, for 3 Bed and bigger - 100sqm. It was recognised, however, that there is a degree of flexibility to take account of space constraints in central areas.

#### Parking

- 2.5 AC confirmed that she has no issues regarding the proposed access to the site or in relation to traffic impact.
- 2.6 AC/JA advised that Rochford District Council have now adopted Essex County Council's parking standards, September 2009 and that this document will be a relevant consideration.
- 2.7 On the basis of this document AC advised that the Council would be seeking the provision of 33 car parking spaces (29 allocated and 4 visitor). JA did, however, confirm that there was scope to relax this standard in appropriate circumstances.
- 2.8 JB advised that the current use of the site is for 28 units, however, only 6 spaces are provided which represents a ratio of 0.25 spaces per unit and that this should be a relevant consideration in assessing the proposals. It was agreed that the courtyard area would be re-examined in relation to parking, however, as this is a town centre site space is limited. Furthermore, RHA are seeking to deliver as many affordable units on the site as possible given that there is a recognised acute demand for affordable housing and the site represents one of only a handful of sites in RHA's ownership.
- 2.9 AC also advised that the new guidance sets out preferred bay sizes for car parking spaces which should be incorporated if possible.

#### Application Requirements

- 2.10 JA advised that the following information will be required as part of the application submission:
- Design and Access Statement;
  - Planning Statement;
  - Tree Impact Statement;
  - Materials;
  - Conservation Area Application.

#### The Way forward

- 2.11 It was agreed that revised drawings would be circulated to JA, RC and SW for further design comments. *(It is hoped that these will be finalised before Christmas).*
- 2.12 In the meantime JA will forward on any comments from the tree officer regarding the proposals. JA also undertook to discuss with Essex County Council Education whether there would be a need for education contributions. SB advised that typically contributions would not be required for affordable schemes.

### **3.0 Springfield Court**

#### General

- 3.1 KR confirmed that at present the site was considered to represent amenity land and as such in evaluating proposals for development the Council would assess:
- Any consultation evidence with existing local residents
  - The value of the existing amenity space and how well the space is used.
- 3.2 SB advised that she had undertaken a consultation with residents to discuss proposals for the site and there had been no objections to the current proposals.
- 3.3 JB advised that the site was currently utilised as a footpath route linking London Road and Springfield Court and this link would be maintained as part of any development.

#### Parking

- 3.4 KR confirmed that under the terms of the new parking guidance this development would need to provide 11 spaces, plus any offset from creating the new access. AC advised, however, that she was happy that the proposals for 11 car park spaces as currently shown represented adequate provision and she had no wider concerns regarding access or manoeuvring. It was advised that consideration should be given to the new preferred dimensions for car park spaces and there would be a need to provide 3 disability spaces. AC advised that there would be merit in marking out car park spaces on the existing parking area.

#### Amenity Space

- 3.5 PW confirmed that the amenity space had been calculated excluding unusable areas to the rear and the level provided is in excess of standards. In addition balconies have been provided to directly serve upper storeys. KR confirmed that she was happy with the level of provision.

#### Design

- 3.6 KR/SW advised that consideration should be given to the relationship with the cycle store/refuse area with, if possible these brought within the immediate curtilage of the flats and with access from the front garden area. SB confirmed that the proposals would as a matter of course be subject to secure by design assessment.
- 3.7 KR advised that layout/elevation drawings of the refuse/cycle store should be included as part of the formal submission.
- 3.8 SW requested that greater attention be given to boundary and landscape treatment. In particular she requested that consideration be given to ways of softening fencing and introducing some landscaping into the parking area. SW also asked for consideration to be given to surface treatment of the parking area.
- 3.9 Opinion was divided on the merits of creating a shared surface for vehicles and pedestrians, however, AC stated that she would prefer to see a separate footpath. It was agreed that this issue would be given further consideration as part of undertaking revisions to the scheme. It was agreed that the introduction of a rumble strip at the new site access would be a beneficial feature to ensure that vehicles are naturally slowed on entering the parking area.
- 3.10 PW confirmed that the material palette will comprise a mix of brick and render, with a zinc clad roof. This was considered by SW to be acceptable.
- 3.11 SW confirmed that in general she was happy with the design approach, however, requested that consideration be given to improving the appearance of central core on

the front and rear elevations. It was considered that this could be achieved either through the introduction of additional glazing or a change in render colour.

#### Application Requirements

- 3.12 KR confirmed that the following would be required:
- Design and Access Statement
  - Planning Statement
  - Landscape details
  - Details of materials
- 3.13 KR confirmed that there is a possibility that a tree impact survey would be required, although this would be confirmed with the Council's tree officer. KR confirmed that there would not be a need for an ecology survey or any other technical assessments.

#### **4.0 The Chestnuts**

- 4.1 RD/SW confirmed that they had reviewed the revised plans and were satisfied that the current proposals have taken full account of the comments raised at the previous meeting on the 4<sup>th</sup> August 2009.
- 4.2 RD advised that at an officer level, on the basis of the current scheme he would be prepared to recommend the application for approval on design grounds.
- 4.3 RD advised that members may well, however, take a different view particularly in relation to the scale and the inclusion of a flat roof design.
- 4.4 JB advised that in preparing revised proposals it had been confirmed that although part of the existing site was marked out for car parking, a larger area of verge was outside of RHA's control than previously assumed. As such parking could still be incorporated on the site, although the arrangement would remain as existing. RH and SW accepted this position.

#### Design

- 4.5 JB advised that the size of the plot restricts the form of development. RD and SW agreed that previous schemes have demonstrated that a traditional style building/roofscape cannot be accommodated on the site without significantly increasing the overall massing. In this regard it was agreed that a contemporary flat roof approach was the best design solution for the site.
- 4.6 SW requested that further consideration be given to boundary treatments, in particular softening the appearance of fencing. It was agreed that this could be achieved by positioning hedging in front of the fence line where possible.
- 4.7 SW advised that as part of the final submission there would be merit in including a 3D view from the roundabout which showed the relationship with the adjoining pub/hotel. RD also advised that wider context drawings should be included as well as a street scene drawing to show the change in levels and comparable ridge height with the opposite building on Brook Road.
- 4.8 AC confirmed that the level of parking provision for the site was acceptable, however, she requested that consideration was given to widening the access and demonstrating that all parking spaces could be easily accessed.



[iceni projects]

## **THE CHESTNUTS, 125A-D, HIGH ROAD, RAYLEIGH MEETING NOTE**

**Date/Time** 4<sup>th</sup> August 2009

**Venue** Essex County Council Offices, Chelmsford, Essex.

**In Attendance** Susan Waldock, Urban Designer, Essex County Council (SW)  
Robert Davis, Planning Officer, Rochford District Council (RD)  
Sarah Brind, Sanctuary Housing (SB)  
Peter Jaggard, Rees Pryer Architects (PJ)  
James Brown- Iceni Projects (JB)

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### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The meeting was convened to discuss potential design changes to the proposed scheme for redeveloping 'The Chestnuts', 125A-125D, High Road, Rayleigh in order to address previous comments raised by the Council.
- 1.2 JB advised that Iceni Projects have been brought into the project team to co-ordinate a revised submission following withdrawal of the original scheme in July.
- 1.3 Prior to the meeting PJ had circulated revised sketch elevation and layout plans dated August 09 which formed the basis of discussions.
- 1.4 SB provided a brief summary regarding the background to the proposals. She advised that the site represented a rare opportunity within Rochford as the site is owned outright by Sanctuary Housing and can be brought forward for new affordable housing units. Sanctuary have an obligation with Rochford Housing to deliver 50 new affordable units per annum. Over the last 3 years it has not been possible to deliver any units and so it is essential that any opportunities are maximised to address the shortfall.

### **2.0 Context of Previous Submission**

- 2.1 RD confirmed that during the course of the previous application he had been relayed comments from members which expressed concern regarding the scale and design of the proposals. In particular it was indicated that members would prefer a smaller scale of development which followed a more traditional design and which properly addressed the site frontage.
- 2.2 SW and RD confirmed that from an officer perspective they are of the opinion that either a contemporary or traditional design would be acceptable, however, the scale of development should not exceed a maximum of 3 storeys.
- 2.3 RD also confirmed that only a single letter of objection had been received from a local resident who lives on the opposite side of the High Road. RD did not consider that any of the issues raised would in themselves represent a substantive reason for refusal.

### **3.0 Parking**

- 3.1 In relation to parking, RD confirmed that there are differences between the parking standards approved by Rochford and Essex County Council. Rochford currently apply a maximum standard of 1 space per dwelling for areas with good access to public transport. The previous proposals on the site, however, proposed parking in line with the Essex standard (i.e. 1 space per 1 bed and 2 spaces per 2 bed-Total 10 spaces).
- 3.2 After a detailed discussion it was agreed that a reduction in car parking to between 6 and 8 spaces could in principle be negotiated with Rochford Council and it was agreed that the parking layout would be revisited as part of the process of considering revisions to the scheme.

#### **4.0 Amenity Space**

- 4.1 It was accepted that the level of amenity space provided is adequate, however RD/SW advised that it would be beneficial to provide more details of who will have access to the area, how it is intended to be enclosed as well as broad proposals for landscaping. The introduction of balconies was also welcomed.

#### **5.0 Design**

- 5.1 Regarding the treatment of external spaces SW raised a number of comments and suggestions as to how the space could be better utilised. Overall SW was supportive of a reduction in car parking spaces as this would reduce hardstanding, however, it was accepted that due to the constraints of the site and the policy conflict with Essex County Council a reduction in spaces would not necessarily be possible.
- 5.2 SW advised that if a reduction in spaces could not be achieved it would be beneficial at least to provide screening to the two spaces immediately adjoining the proposed building to the west of the parking area. SW also requested that (provided agreement could be reached with County Highways) the entrance should be maintained at its existing width. It was also collectively agreed that the use of grasscrete could help to soften the impact of car parking spaces.
- 5.3 PJ confirmed that it is intended to remove the existing fencing on the corner of Brook Road and High Road and the development will present an open frontage on this corner. It was agreed, however that the south western corner will be enclosed by hedging.
- 5.4 SW requested that the cycle parking and bin store area should be reconfigured in order to reduce the area of surrounding hard standing.
- 5.5 In terms of the overall layout and massing of the building SW advised that the relationship between and orientation of the two interconnected blocks should be reconsidered particularly at the rear entrance point. The central entrance core should also be redesigned to provide a stronger more balanced design to provide a clearer entry point and more balanced link between the two wings.
- 5.6 PJ advised that the orientation and layout were to a large extent dictated by the exclusion zones from trees and the extent of the site ownership.
- 5.7 Through discussions it was agreed that PJ would develop two alternative concepts, the first focused around a circular core or turret feature and the second option suggested by SW which would be based on a linear staggered arrangement which SW advised could potentially extend over car parking on the eastern edge.
- 5.8 Regarding elevational treatment, it was noted that a move to a more traditional uniform roof form would be beneficial. SW considered that the current elevation was 'too busy' and that there would be merit in considering larger and more uniform areas of glazing on the northern frontage.

**6.0     Application Requirements**

- 6.1     RD advised that the application should include; colour elevations and layout plans, indicative landscape details, 3D Visualisation of the site and a street scene showing the context of the site with the existing flatted complex on the opposite side of Brook Road
- 6.2     JB confirmed that it is intended to submit a more detailed package of information with the revised submission, including coloured elevation and indicative details of materials. This was welcomed by both SW and RD.

**7.0     The Way forward**

- 7.1     It was agreed that PJ would produce two revised options for further consideration and discussion with the Councils.
- 7.2     RD confirmed that once a revised scheme is submitted if officers are minded to approve then as a matter of course the scheme would need to be submitted to the Committee for consideration,

JB Icen 5/8/09

# R Rochford Housing

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Mr R Davis  
Planning Department  
Rochford District Council  
South Street  
Rochford  
SS4 1BW

19 May 2009

Dear Mr Davis,

## Statement in support of planning Application – The Chestnuts, 1-4 High Road, Rayleigh

I have been asked to supply a statement of support for the planning application for the redevelopment of The Chestnuts to incorporate six flats. The proposal has previously been discussed with our Senior Development Officer Sarah Brind and Linda Swinnerton of Rochford District Council.

You'll know that the Association was created in 2007 to take ownership of the Council's housing stock and deliver a range of key promises to tenants. A significant promise made to tenants prior to the stock transfer was to deliver at 50 affordable homes a year within the district.

The Association's vision is to deliver it's key promises in partnership with current and future residents and to provide flexible continuously improving services which offer good value for money. As the principal RSL in the District, our main activity is the provision and management of affordable subsidised rented homes to those on low or modest incomes and in housing need.

### The Site

RHA is the owner of the site which includes four vacant self contained 1 bedroomed flats that have remained empty for a number of years. And, it is a location specifically referred to within the transfer agreement to redevelop for the provision of affordable housing in the area.

The Chestnuts is in a condition where is not usable and requires attention. It has remained vacant for many years. As we seek to provide affordable housing, redeveloping the site to provide good quality properties is an obvious solution.

When completed it is our intention to retain ownership of the new properties and to let them on assured tenancies to people on the local housing register which would then be directly managed by the Association.

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Rochford Housing Association Limited, an exempt charity  
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Industrial and Provident Society No. 30108R

Rochford Housing Association Limited is a subsidiary of Sanctuary Housing Association, an exempt charity

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**R** Rochford  
Housing

Yours sincerely



**Simon Clark**  
**Managing Director**  
**Rochford Housing Association**

Copy to: Sarah Brind - Senior Development Officer  
Peter Jaggard - Rees Pryer Architects LLP