

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY
REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE**

RPC SUB-GROUP – STATUTORY CONSULTATIONS

Date: 2 April 2008

Subject: Planning application consultation ref A/08/023

Site Address:	No's 142 – 156 High Street, No's 3, 5, 5a and 7 Fairfield Avenue, Sunblest House and Ash House, Fairfield Avenue and No's 1 and 15 London Road, Staines.
Proposal:	Outline application for demolition of existing buildings, apart from No.1 London Road, and redevelopment to provide a mix of Class B1 offices, Class C3 residential and ancillary ground floor retail, restaurant and leisure uses within classes A1/A3 and D2 with associated servicing, access, underground parking and landscaping to include the formation of a publicly accessible piazza.
Local Planning Authority:	Spelthorne Borough Council
Applicant:	Clerical Medical Investment Group
Date consultation issued:	19 March 2008

Report of: **Sustainable Development Advisor**

Recommendation:

On the basis of the information provided, it is considered that the proposed development would not materially conflict with or prejudice the implementation of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG9 and Alterations) or the draft South East Plan (March 2006).

- The Borough Council should use appropriately worded conditions and/or legal agreements to secure:
 - The necessary transport infrastructure to support the development and promote alternatives to the car and an agreed travel plan in accordance with Policies T1, T10 and T13 of RPG9 (as altered) and Policies T1, T5 and T8 of the draft South East Plan and to satisfy Policy CC5 and LF5 of the draft South East Plan.
 - An appropriate level of car and cycle parking to comply with Policy T12 of RPG9 (as altered) and Policy T7 of the draft South East Plan.
 - A high quality of design and urban improvement in accordance with Policy Q2 of RPG9 and Policies CC12 and BE1 of the draft South East Plan.

- The incorporation of water and energy efficiency measures and the promotion of renewable energy and sustainable construction in accordance with Policies INF2 and INF4 of RPG9 (as altered) and Policies CC2, CC3, CC4, NRM1, EN1, EN2, W2, M1 and SH14 of the draft South East Plan;
- Mitigation measures in relation to flood risk, noise and air quality and impacts on groundwater and archaeological remains and measures to enhance the biodiversity assets of the site in accordance with Policies E1, E2, E7, INF1 and INF2 of RPG9 and Policies NRM1, NRM3, NRM4, NRM7, NRM8 and BE7 of the draft South East Plan;

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to assess the proposed development against the Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG9 plus Alterations) and the draft South East Plan (March 2006) and set out the recommended consultation response to the above application for consideration and agreement.

2. Site Description and Background

- 2.1 The application site is located in the centre of Staines and is encompassed by London Road to the South and the crescent shaped Fairfield Avenue to the north, east and west. It is surrounded by a mixture of land uses, with predominantly residential areas and an area of public open space known as Birch Green beyond Fairfield Avenue and commercial, retail and public (a police station) buildings beyond London Road. Land to the east of the site (Phase I) has had consent granted for offices, hotel and retail development.
- 2.2 The site is approximately 1.3 hectares and is currently occupied by two large scale office buildings, two smaller domestically scaled office buildings, a multi-storey car park and a two storey terrace containing retail and residential uses. The site is in the floodplain of the River Thames.
- 2.3 A site location plan is attached at Appendix I to this report.

3. Details of the proposal

3.1 The application seeks outline planning permission for:

- Demolition of the existing buildings apart from No.1 London Road, which is to be retained for office use.
- Offices - 27,500 sq m
- Residential - 73 flats (6,000 sq m)
- 2,700 sq m ground floor retail space and leisure floorspace.
- Building heights would range from 4 to 12 storeys.
- The car parking provided by the multi storey car park would be replaced by underground car parking (418 spaces) within the new development that would not lead to additional capacity. 73 car parking spaces would be provided for residential occupants (1 per flat).
- A publicly accessible central piazza linking the two phases of the development.

Illustrative plans indicate that the layout of the scheme would comprise three principal buildings or blocks with one adjoining the retained building. The piazza provides the focus for the site connecting two the two phases around a central axis.

3.2 The application is accompanied by a number of supporting documents including a Planning Statement, Design and Access Statement, Transport Assessment, Archaeological Statement, Flood Risk Assessment, Renewable Energy Report and Air Quality Assessment.

4. Main Issues and Relevant Policy Considerations

4.1 The following are the main regional issues associated with the application, along with the relevant Regional Spatial Strategy policies that need to be considered:-

- The location of the proposal, with the following policies being relevant:
 - Policy Q1 of RPG9 and Policies CC8a and LF4 of the draft South East Plan – urban focus;
- Development in town centres, with the following policies being relevant:
 - Policy Q5 of RPG9 and Policies TC2, TC3 and LF7 of the draft South East Plan – town centres;
- Economic development, with the following policies being relevant;
 - Policies RE1 and RE4 of RPG9 and Policies RE1, RE4 and RE5 of RPG9 and Policies RE2 and LF6 of the draft South East Plan – Employment and Economic Development;

- Infrastructure, with the following policies being relevant;
 - Policies CC5 and LF5 of the draft South East Plan;
- Transport, with the following policies being relevant;
 - Policies T1, T10, T12 and T13 of RPG9 Policies T1, T5, T7 and T8 of the draft South East Plan;
- Other issues;
 - Flood risk Assessment – Policies INF1 and INF2 of RPG9 and Policy NRM3 of the draft South East Plan.
 - Resources – Policies INF2 and INF4 of RPG9 and Policies CC2, CC3, CC4, NRM1, EN1, W2 and M1 of the draft South East Plan.
 - Environment – Policies E1, E2 and E7 of RPG9 and Policies BE1, BE7, CC12 and NRM4 of the draft South East Plan.
 - Affordable Housing – Policy H4 of RPG9 and Policy H4 of the draft South East Plan.

5. Policy Assessment

Location of Development

- 5.1 The proposal is on a previously developed site in Staines town centre. As such it is acceptable in principle under Policy Q1 of RPG9 and Policy CC8a of the draft South East Plan which look to urban areas as the prime focus for new development and redevelopment.

Town Centres

- 5.2 Policy TC2 and TC3 in the draft South East Plan seek to ensure that large scale developments are concentrated within the strategic network of town centres across the South East. Policy LF7 reflects this approach for the London Fringe Sub-region and looks to support Staines role in the strategic town centre network.
- 5.3 Policy TC2 of the draft South East plan also seeks to ensure that town centres are a focus for retail and employment (offices) development with residential development provided where possible to create mixed use developments. Therefore the proposal is consistent with the policy objectives and are appropriate to the role and function of Staines as a secondary regional centre as identified in Policy TC2.

Economy

- 5.4 Policy RE1 of RPG9 states that the regional economy should be fully supported and further developed and Policy RE4 of RPG9 seeks to encourage business to adopt the principles of sustainable development. Policy RE5 of RPG9 and Policy RE2 of the draft South East Plan seek to encourage industrial and commercial development in urban areas, but also encourage the re-use of developed land and intensification of use on existing sites. In addition, they seek to promote increasing access by sustainable transport modes. Draft South East Plan sub-regional Policies LF1 and LF6 seek to focus employment related development on land already in employment use or available for such use.
- 5.5 The redevelopment of the existing employment site will lead to the intensification of office and retail development in the centre of Staines close to sustainable modes of transport and is therefore consistent with regional policy objectives for the economy.

Infrastructure

- 5.6 Policies CC5 and LF5 of the draft South East Plan seek to ensure that the necessary infrastructure required to serve new development is available or will be provided in time and that contributions from development will also be required to help deliver the necessary infrastructure. Therefore, the Borough Council will need to ensure that the provision of new infrastructure or contributions towards improvements to existing infrastructure are secured through the imposition of conditions and /or legal agreements to satisfy regional policy objectives.

Transport

- 5.7 Policy T1 and T5 of the draft South East Plan seek to achieve a rebalancing of the transport system in favour of non-car modes as a means of access to services and facilities. Policy T5 of the draft South East Plan indicates that this should be through an integrated package of measures. Policy T7 of the draft South East Plan relate to parking and support maximum parking standards and the provision of sufficient cycle parking at new developments. Policy T8 of the draft South East Plan relate to travel plans and advice.
- 5.8 The Transport Assessment (TA) undertaken highlights that the site is accessible by all modes of transport and that there is capacity on the nearby bus and rail networks to accommodate the additional trips per person. The supporting information also indicates that there have been discussions with Surrey County Council as Highway Authority regarding the preparation of a travel plan as a means of further encouraging walking, cycling and the use of buses and trains for journey to work trips.

- 5.9 The detail of the TA is essentially a matter for consideration by Surrey County Council as Highway Authority. Nevertheless, in order to satisfy Policies CC5 and LF5 of the draft South East Plan, the Borough Council will need to be satisfied that there is adequate transport infrastructure to support the development or whether additional measures need to be secured and that an appropriate travel plan can be agreed to accord with the principles of Policies T1, T5, and T8 of the draft South East Plan and to satisfy Policy CC5 of the draft South East Plan.
- 5.10 Policy T7 of the draft South East Plan relates to parking provision. The supporting information indicates that the proposed provision for the office uses falls within the range of 1:30 sq m and 1:100 sq m for BI land uses as set out in the policies. Provided that sufficient cycle parking is also included, the proposals would not materially conflict with regional parking policy.

Flood Risk

- 5.11 The application site lies within the floodplain of the River Thames and is within Flood Zone 3, 'high risk category'. In accordance with Policy NRM3 in the draft South East Plan the applicant has consulted the Environment Agency on the design of the proposal to ensure that it is resilient to flooding. However the Borough Council must satisfy itself that flood risk mitigation and measures to reduce surface water runoff and minimise adverse impacts on groundwater have been addressed to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency. Appropriate mitigation measures will need to be secured through the imposition of conditions and/or legal agreements and through the consideration of subsequent reserved matter applications in relation to these issues to comply with Policies NRM1 and NRM3 of the draft South East Plan.

Resources

- 5.12 Policies CC2, CC3, CC4, NRM1, EN1, W2 and M1 of the draft South East Plan consider matters relating to water efficiency, energy efficiency and renewable energy and sustainable construction and how development can address these issues. In the Planning Statement submitted with the application it states that the design will seek to ensure that the design minimises energy consumption, water usage and incorporates renewable energy generation. The application is in outline form with detailed matters of design and materials to be determined at reserved matters stage. To accord with policy objectives, therefore, the Borough Council will need to ensure that appropriate measures are secured through the imposition of conditions and/or legal agreements and through the consideration of subsequent reserved matter applications.

Environment

- 5.13 Policies BE1, CC12 and NRM4 of the draft South East Plan promote good design and enhancement of the urban environment. Whilst the design of the development is not a regional matter, and one that is ultimately for the Borough Council to consider in determining the application, the Council should be satisfied that the design is consistent with, and will secure regional policy objectives.
- 5.14 An archaeological Assessment of the site has been undertaken and revealed that the site lies within an area of archaeological potential. In accordance with Policy BE7 of the draft South East Plan (protecting and enhancing areas of cultural and historic value) the Borough Council will need to ensure that appropriate measures to mitigate any potential impact on the archaeological heritage are undertaken.

Affordable Housing

- 5.15 Although it is not a regional significant issue, the proportion of affordable housing being proposed is in accordance with Policy H4 in the draft South East Plan.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The proposed development is broadly in accordance with the regional and sub regional policies in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG9 and Alterations) and the draft South East Plan. The Borough Council will need to be satisfied that the design of the scheme fully addresses flood risk mitigation, water efficiency, energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable construction and will not give rise to adverse environmental impacts. It should also secure an appropriate package of transport infrastructure and other measures to promote alternatives to the car and an agreed travel plan.

7. Recommendation

- 7.1 Members are requested to agree the following recommendation to the local authority:

The Assembly considers that the application is consistent with the Regional Spatial Strategy (RPG9) and with the draft South East Plan, subject to the local authority considering all relevant Development Plan matters in detail and subject to the requirements of the Environment Agency regarding development within the flood plain.

- The Borough Council should use appropriately worded conditions and/or legal agreements to secure:
 - The necessary transport infrastructure to support the development and promote alternatives to the car and an agreed travel plan in accordance with Policies T1, T10 and T13 of RPG9 (as altered) and Policies T1, T5 and T8 of the draft South East Plan and to satisfy Policy CC5 and LF5 of the draft South East Plan.
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Date: 2 April 2008

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