

BROMLEY CIVIC SOCIETY *News Bulletin September 2012*

Site L development - One Westmoreland Road – former DSS building at Bromley South.

An outline planning application has been submitted reference number 12/02385. The following policies in the Town Centre Area Action Plan apply (extracts reproduced here).

Policy BTC19 Building Height There **may** be potential for the development of taller buildings in locations identified on the Key Diagram subject to design and environmental considerations, impact on listed buildings and the Bromley Town Conservation Area, impact on views of the Keston Ridge and integration with the surrounding area.In particular, it will be necessary to take account of key views and vistas and impact on the character of town centre and Conservation Area and residential amenity.

5.10.Site L: DHSS building Taller buildings may be acceptable where this will not conflict with important vistas from the High Street. Development will be required to respect and enhance the setting of the adjacent listed building and seek to minimise impacts on existing residential amenity including parking in surrounding residential roads.

Analysis of the proposals and issues Within the terms of the Town Centre Area Action Plan it is accepted that a development will take place on this Council owned Site. The Planning Issues are whether or not the proposals take sufficient account of the safeguards set out in the Policies BTC tall building and OSL 5.10, relating to 1) the protected view of Keston Ridge from the High Street 2) the setting of listed and locally listed buildings and 3) the existing residential amenity of the adjacent residential streets.

1. The protected View of Keston Ridge This view of open countryside from our High Street was identified as important in the 1986 Borough Plan and has remained so in the subsequent UDP plans as well as the current AAP. Despite this the Police Headquarters was allowed to be built destroying most of the view from the lower part of the pedestrian precinct where it had been most impressive. Further down the High Street we get still get wide views which will be seriously compromised by the current proposals. The lower section is said to be taller than the existing building topped also by a roof garden and the tall section will intrude both horizontally and vertically into the view. It should be noted that the Council policy only says that taller buildings **MAY** be appropriate on identified sites and clearly, in this case they are not. The applicant has produced photomontages as if seen from the top of a bus in the middle of the road rather than from the pavement. See our photo montages attached which attempt a more accurate view based upon what info is available.

2. Settings of adjacent listed and locally listed buildings These are statutory considerations in relation to the development. With regard to the Listed St Marks School there appears to little reference either in design or materials to the listed building although much better than the proposals several years ago which was thrown out partly because of the adverse comments of the Victorian Society and English Heritage. The setting of St Marks Church tower is clearly compromised in views by this much taller building.

3. Residential amenity Clearly the height and stepped balconies at the rear of the buildings create overlooking issues for existing residents. Equally important, the development intensification and pressure for car parking on surrounding streets by new residents and hotel users is an issue especially since the nearby Westmoreland Road Car park development will reduce public car parking from 600 to just 200.

If you wish to comment on any aspect of the development

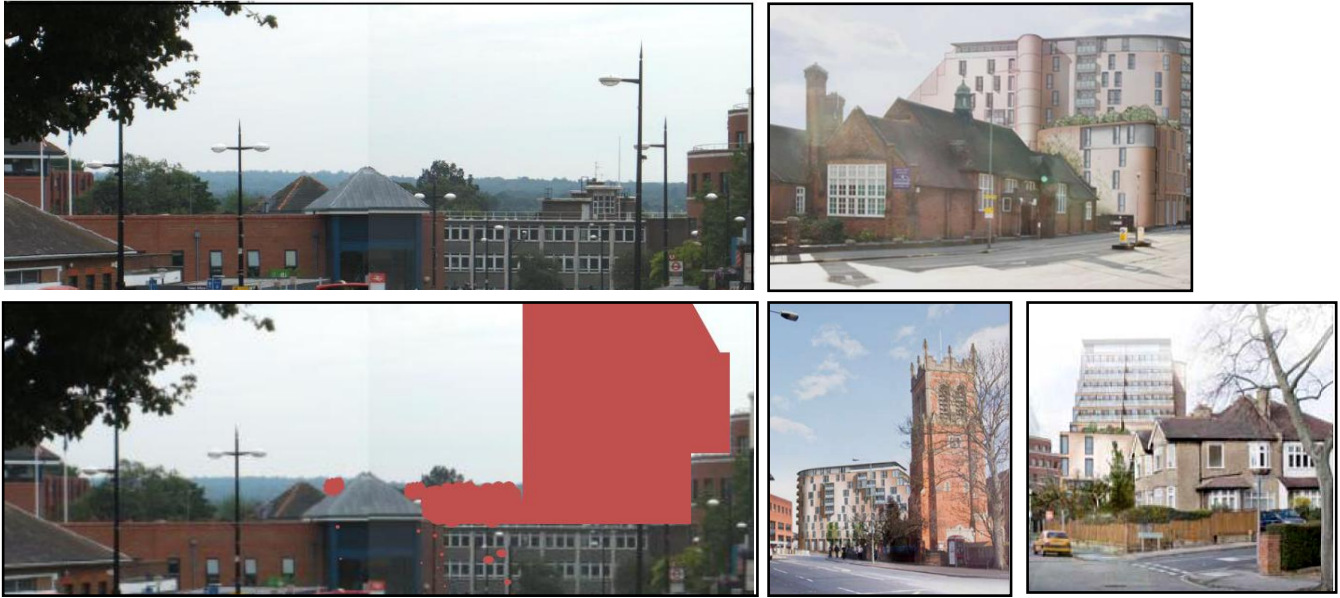
Address your comments to: **The Chief Planner**

By letter to: Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley, BR1 3UH

By email to: planning@bromley.gov.uk (must include your full address)

Quote Planning number: 12/02385 - 1 Westmoreland Road, Bromley

The application documents can be seen online at www.bromley.gov.uk under search planning applications or in person by arrangement phoning the planning department 020 8464 3000.



Above: Our impression of the view of Keston Ridge before and after the proposed development. *Top right and Centre* : the development in the setting of the listed St Marks School and locally listed Church *Centre right* : the impact on the adjacent residential area

Other news

Queens Garden Thanks to the 170 people who objected to the restaurant development which was refused by Development Control Committee by a majority of three. BCS and the Friends of the Town Parks put in a strong case based on Council Policy and that of the new National Planning Policy Framework and we were fully supported by the ward councillors. An appeal seems unlikely in view of policy so the next step is to get the Leader of the Council and his Executive Committee to revoke their resolution to sell off the Italian Garden and take steps to secure its current use in perpetuity. The Glades Terrace is a separate matter. Mean while we are pursuing the case for registration of both sites as a Town Green.

Site B - Tweedy Road A dreadful development on this site next to the Grade I listed Bromley College was thrown out on appeal on conservation area grounds several years ago yet the principle of the development remains live in the Area Action Plan. Currently we understand the Council intend to clear the site for a temporary car park to make up shortfall when the Westmoreland Road Car Park redevelopment (site K) is going on.

Old Bromley Heritage Trail As part of our contribution to the Town Centre Heritage trail we are persuading selected traders to display specially designed heritage information panels in their shop windows. This has taken some time to develop but there are now 15 up and running with another 20 or so in the pipeline. They feature old photographs kindly supplied by the Local Studies Archive and together present a fascinating picture of life in Bromley 100 years ago in the same environment we are all familiar with today. Frames and Art in the Upper High Street also have an exhibition of selected enlarged versions.

Town Centre Festival The recent one day festival was a great success. We shared a stall with the Friends, displayed our town centre heritage exhibition and gave out over 150 heritage trail booklets and leaflets. We also did two heritage walks attended by over thirty people each. Despite downpours, all had a good time and had the special treat of a tour of the Grade I listed Bromley College Alms Houses. Outside the Bell Hotel (mentioned in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*) we were accosted by a frenzied lady in early 19th costume claiming to be Elizabeth Bennett desperately searching for gentleman called Mr Darcy! The street entertainers were excellent. Placed around the town were also beautiful gold picture frames on easels framing historic buildings sponsored and organised by Frames & Art in the Upper High Street which is fast becoming an important cultural centre in the town hosting not only our Old Bromley exhibition but with plans for regular gallery exhibitions of local artists. The Festival was organised by the Town's excellent manager, Lorraine McQuillan.

The Mary Portas Bid for funding of Bromley North Village improvements was unsuccessful but a valuable spin off was the creation of the **Town Team** made up of traders and community representatives including Bromley Civic Society for heritage matters. The team leader, Tonina Hoang, franchisee of McDonalds, is fully committed to promoting the heritage of the Town as a trading asset and has one of our window displays in pride of place. All of our heritage promotion proposals are also being adopted by the Council and funding being sought. **OLD BROMLEY - Things are looking up !**

Tony Banfield - September 2012.

www.bromleycivicsociety.org.uk