

## LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES

00/3562/OUT  
LAND NORTH OF MILL FARM BUSINESS PARK  
MILLFIELD ROAD  
HANWORTH

HEATHFIELD WARD  
Contact Officer:  
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**Proposal:** Construction of 75 new residential units with associated parking and external works.

**Applicant:** Clive Chapman Architects for Richmond upon Thames Churches Housing Trust

**Application received:** 21 December 2000

**Consultations:**

ADV, Site Notice  
59-63 (odd) Mill Farm Crescent  
Flats 20-91 Farm Road  
1-10 Mill Farm Business Park

**Main development plan policies:**

UDP ENV 4, 7, 8, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 39, 43 and 47, HSG 6, 11, 17, 18 and 19, EMP 1, TRN 8, 22 and 23, RIV 11, 12, 13 and 14, W13; UDP - First Review ENV 2, 5, 6, 9, 18, 19, 20, 21, 32 and 33, BLT 9, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 16, TRN 2, 4 and 12, HSG 6, 11, 17 and 18, W13; Conflict with Development Plan; Archaeological Priority Zone; Adj Green belt

**Present use:** Vacant

**Site, history and proposal:** This 1.13 ha site is on the Borough boundary with Hounslow and is contained by the River Crane corridor to the west, the recently erected PO distribution

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centre immediately to the north and Richmond Housing Partnership four storey blocks of flats to the south.

This Council owns the site and adjoining land to the east, which was transferred from Hounslow Council in 1994 following the Boundary Review Commission conclusions. The eastern element of the land is not part of this planning application and its future development has not been decided yet.

The site is relatively flat although it slopes downwards from east to west and was used many years ago for the breaking up of airplanes etc. resulting in ground pollution. Some of the contamination has been removed prior to the land being transferred to Richmond. It is in a relatively wild condition with scrub and woodland having colonized the site and has a small pond area in the south-west corner close to the Millstream, which effectively parallels the Crane at this point.

The site is the subject of Proposal W13 in the Adopted Unitary Development Plan 1996 which seeks to develop the whole site, including that portion immediately to the east, as industry in association with the industrial development of the former Feltham Marshalling Yards which Hounslow Council has granted and is currently being implemented. W13 goes on to advise that traffic to and from the site should be via Godfrey Way to the east, a purpose-built road to serve the employment uses of this area. Furthermore, any development should contain a buffer of land of nature conservation importance to link to the area to the west.

Subsequent to this, the emerging Unitary Development Plan - First Review has redesignated the land for industrial/housing reiterating the justification but including advice that the western half of the site could be developed for affordable housing with access from the adjoining residential development in Farm Road. The recent Inspector's report on the Review Plan has endorsed the current proposal for the site, namely industrial/housing, subject to nature conservation and traffic (from the industry) being dealt with at planning application stage. Whilst the approved Plan remains the principal determining factor more weight can now be given to the mix of land uses given the Inspector's comments. However, the application remains a departure and, as it comprises Council-owned land, it must be sent to the Secretary of State for his consideration prior to a decision being given, if approval is recommended. Moreover, the current application seeks housing on more than half the site and is therefore in itself a departure from the Review Plan. The recommendation at the end of the report makes reference to this issue.

As initially submitted the application was for 77 units comprising 14 houses, the remainder as flats, with heights varying between two and four storeys. Part of the scheme is built round a square for children's play area with an arm splitting off to give access to more units facing towards the River Crane. Fifty (50) units are to be retained by the housing association, the remainder being sold on the open market. Vehicular access would be via an extension to one of the arms off Farm Road, which runs between two of the existing four storey flat blocks. This access would result in the removal of mature trees. A cycle path was shown to run along the edge of the Millstream through the site with the intention of linking up with land in Hounslow.

The application is submitted in outline with access and siting to be considered only at this stage.

### **Public and other representations:**

**English Heritage** recommends that there be a predetermination evaluation of the site for archaeological assessment.

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**The Environment Agency** objects to the proposal as insufficient information has been provided to assess the proposal on the impact on the flood plain and river corridors, including nature conservation, but if this can be resolved it lists conditions that should be attached to any approval.

**The GLA Biodiversity Manager** advises that the site is of significance as it adjoins Land of Metropolitan Importance in nature conservation terms and suggests that it should have been so included when under the control of Hounslow council. Recommendations are suggested to protect some of the area for wildlife.

**The London Borough of Hounslow** has no objection in principle but recommends trees etc be closely examined and be supplemented to soften the impact of the buildings as seen from the Crane valley. It supports the cycle link. A Section 106 Agreement should provide mitigation against harm caused to the valley; the site is near a land fill site and remedial measures may be necessary to protect future occupiers; The Borough would like to be consulted on details in due course.

No other third parties have written direct to the Local Planning Authority about the application.

**Amendments:** The applicant has submitted a comprehensive Ecological report concluding that the site can be developed for housing but with amendments to meet the concerns raised by both the EA and GLA with regard to protecting some of the more important parts of the site in the interests of nature conservation. The scheme has been amended to set buildings away from the Crane valley and the cycle path has also been relocated from the edge of the site. The pond area is shown to be retained and suggestions are made as to how to develop and improve this area including an 8m deep section along the whole site to be excluded from development in accordance with Environment Agency advice. The access point has been modified to protect major trees on the boundary. This has resulted in two units being removed. An archaeological report has also been submitted and English Heritage concludes that this aspect can be dealt with by condition.

### **Professional comments:**

#### Land use

Whilst the adopted Unitary Development Plan 1996 recommends that the site be retained for industry only, the Review Plan recognises that given that the adjoining land is being redeveloped for major industrial uses with the consequent traffic implications on the area, a reconsideration of the issues has led to a change in proposed land uses. Part of the site for housing which has different traffic patterns and less heavy vehicle flows seems more appropriate in this location. Moreover, housing on the site gives a major opportunity to achieve much needed affordable housing. Whilst I note that more than 50% of the overall land owned by this Council will be lost to potential employment generating uses, a still not inconsiderable area is left for such activities at a future date which could take the form of the existing light industrial units to its immediate south.

In these circumstances I am of the opinion that the provision of so many affordable housing units, whilst maintaining some industrial land, is a satisfactory reason to depart from the adopted Unitary Development Plan 1996 whilst remaining in conformity with the thrust of the Review Plan. The Inspector's conclusion on the Unitary Development Plan - First Review gives further comfort to this conclusion.

#### Nature conservation

This is a key issue in this case given the close proximity of the land designated as of Metropolitan Importance for Nature. Advice has been sought from the GLA and EA and both have provided helpful strategies that could be pursued to maintain a significant element of

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nature on the site which in turn can 'run' into the Crane valley to the west. Whilst it is recognized that the GLA would much prefer a greater area of land left undisturbed I must weigh up all the planning considerations so as to provide a balanced recommendation. The applicant has responded to the main issues raised by providing a corridor of open space to be managed in the best interest of nature conservation. A large area is to be retained to protect the pond created from the level changes, and possibly due to a broken drain, which has partly flooded the area. In these circumstances I take the view that this material consideration has been successfully dealt with and is the subject of conditions. The realigned access also retains principal trees on the southern boundary.

### Other matters

Highway aspects have been satisfactorily dealt with and I am advised that the access point leading out onto Farm Road is adequate for the requirements of this size of development. The increase in traffic can be acceptably handled given the option of two accesses onto Hanworth Road. Sufficient parking is provided and the cycle route is most welcome as it can link Crane Park to the south with Hounslow Heath to the north, subject to rights of access to the latter area.

The Education Department advises that there is no education supplement required in this case.

The layout of the housing has been designed to avoid any material harm to neighbouring residents who live in the four storey flats. The facing flats would be some 60m away whilst some of the existing blocks are at right angles to the new build and 24m away. These distances are quite acceptable in suburban locations. The internal arrangement of the new estate is interesting and should provide reasonable levels of amenity for the occupiers thereof.

A children's play area has been incorporated into the scheme in accordance with the Review Plan. There is limited play space in this locality for very young children and this could be used by both existing and new residents.

The land has been polluted over time and methods have been established to remedy this and this will be brought about by complying with the relevant condition listed below.

I therefore recommend **that planning permission be granted subject to the conditions and informatives listed below and subject to no adverse direction from the Secretary of State.**

### **Standard conditions:**

- BD03A - Outline application - design details
- BD12 - Details to be approved
- DS02 - Wheelchair housing
- DV02A - Boundary fencing
- DV18A - Refuse arrangements
- DV19A - Parking - private vehicles
- DV27A - Recycling - details required
- DV33A - No reduction in dwelling units
- GD02A - Restriction on alterations/extensions-general amenity
- LA04A - Protect trees - shown on plan
- LA11A - Landscaping required hard and soft - 'Ground re-profiling works and the formation of a small side spill weir from the water course should form part of the landscaping of the site'
- LA30 - Landscape works - implementation
- LB12A - Archaeology
- PK02A - Parking etc construction - 'parking/turning/access' 'MFS176A'

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- RD02A - Details required - new junction
- RD04A - Details required-access road
- RD09 - Levels of thresholds

### **Non standard conditions:**

- NS01 - The development shall not be carried out other than in accordance with the conclusions laid down in the Contamination and Geotechnical Assessment Report dated January 1998. Details of appropriate measures to monitor this work shall be submitted to and be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. REASON: To prevent pollution of the water environment and to protect the amenities of future occupiers of the housing units.
- NS02 - Surface water control measures shall be carried out in accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing with the Local Planning Authority before development commences. REASON: To prevent the increased risk of flooding and to improve water quality.
- NS03 - A landscape management plan, including long term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for the area between the proposed housing and the Millstream, identified on the submitted drawing, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The landscape management plan shall be carried out as approved. REASON: To ensure that the proposed development preserves and enhances the nature conservation interests of this important area of metropolitan importance.

### **Standard informatives:**

- IE05 - Noise control - building sites
- IH06 - Damage to public highway
- IL12 - Approved drawing Nos - 'MFS17A received on 23 July 2001'
- IL16 - Relevant policies and proposals - 'UDP ENV 4, 7, 8, 16, 17,18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24, 39, 43 and 47, HSG 6, 11, 17 and 19, EMP 1, TRN 8, 22 and 23, RIV 11, 12, 13 and 14, W13' 'ENV 2, 5, 6, 9, 18, 19, 20, 21, 32 and 33, BLT 9, 11, 12, 14, 15 and 16, TRN 2, 4 and 12, HSG 6, 11, 17 and 18, W13
- IT06 - Nature conservation
- IX04 - Thames Water Utilities
- IX12 - Environment Agency

### **Background papers:**

Application forms and drawings  
Letters from EA, GLA, London Borough of Hounslow  
Soil report  
Ecology report  
Archaeological report

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