

COMMITTEE:	PLANNING AND LICENSING	
DATE:	12 FEBRUARY 2002	
SUBJECT:	PLANNING BRIEFING NOTE: 55 – 61 SEASIDE ROAD (HOUSING ADVICE CENTRE)	
REPORT OF:	HEAD OF PLANNING	
Ward(s):	All	
Purpose:	To approve the publication of the planning briefing note.	
Contact:	Lisa Rawlinson, Senior Planning Officer, Planning Regeneration and Amenities Tel: 01323 415255 or internally on extension 5255.	
Recommendations:	That the planning briefing note for 55 – 61 Seaside Road (Housing Advice Centre) be adopted and authorised for publication.	
1.0	<u>Introduction</u>	
1.1	The four storey Edwardian terraced premises at 55 – 61 Seaside Road are situated within the Town Centre and Seafront Conservation Area and are currently in use as the Council’s Housing Advice Centre and associated offices. The authorised use of the premises therefore falls within Class B1 (Business) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987.	
1.2	The attached planning briefing note has been written to identify the planning constraints associated with the buildings and looks at possible alternative uses, in the event of the premises being available for sale.	

1.3	The briefing note will greatly assist negotiations with any future prospective owners.	
1.4	The premises in question are owned by the Borough Council and it follows therefore that any proposal for the premises cannot proceed without the specific approval of the Council to sell the buildings.	
2.0	<u>Consultations</u>	
2.1	A copy of the draft planning briefing note for the premises was circulated to relevant internal key officers and no adverse comments were received.	
3.0	<u>Financial Implications</u>	
3.1	There are no financial implications as a direct result of this report.	
4.0	<u>Human Resource Implications</u>	
4.1	There are no adverse staffing implications as a result of this report.	
5.0	<u>Environmental Implications</u>	
5.1	The planning briefing note will ensure that any alterations to the premises will safeguard the appearance of the attractive Edwardian buildings which are within the Town Centre and Seafrost Conservation Area.	
6.0	<u>Other Implications</u>	
6.1	There are no youth, anti-poverty, crime and disorder or human rights implications as a result of this report.	
7.0	<u>Conclusion</u>	

7.1	In light of the above, members are recommended to adopt this planning briefing note and authorise publication of the document.	
Author : Lisa Rawlinson Title : Senior Planning Officer		
Background Papers: The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows: Eastbourne Borough Plan (1998) Eastbourne Borough Plan (2001 – 2011), Revised Deposit Draft Eastbourne Borough Council – Seaside Road Regeneration Strategy (2000) To inspect or obtain copies of background papers please refer to the contact officer listed above.		
Lr/TP15/31 Reports/Draft 55-61 Seaside Road(HAC)		

Appendix

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Housing Advice Centre and associated offices currently occupy all four floors plus basement space of the buildings at 55-61 Seaside Road. These tall, brick built properties in a “Dutch gable” style are in the middle of an Edwardian Terrace, on the southern side of Seaside Road and are within the Town Centre and Seafront Conservation Area. (Location Plan – Appendix 1)

1.2 The buildings are owned by Eastbourne Borough Council and this Planning Briefing Note will identify the planning constraints associated with the building and will look at possible alternative uses, in the event of the building being available for sale.

2.0 Description of Site

2.1 These four storey buildings with basement have a 12 metre wide frontage to Seaside Road and have a total floor area of approximately 860 square metres. The double fronted ground floor premises have a timber painted, glazed shopfront with deep timber fascia board and painted lettering. Along the full width of the premises, on the edge of the footway, there are galvanized railings which are proposed for removal as part of a highway improvement scheme (see para.7.0 below).

2.2 There is an existing vehicular access at the rear of the premises, accessed off Elms Avenue and sufficient on-site parking for approximately three cars.

3.0 Current Use

3.1 The premises at 55-61 Seaside Road are in use primarily as Council offices with ancillary facilities on part of the ground floor for visiting members of the public to gain access to help and advice on housing matters. Such a use falls within Class B1 (Business) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 and is defined as:

“Use for all or any of the following purposes-

- (a) as an office other than a use within Class A2 (Financial and Professional Services),
- (b) for research and development of products or processes, or
- (c) for any industrial process, being a use which can be carried out in any residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit.”

4.0 Planning Policy

4.1 The Revised Deposit draft of the Eastbourne Borough Plan (2001-2011) contains Policy BI 1 which seeks to retain Class B1, B2 and B8 sites and premises within the town. Therefore, 55 – 61 Seaside Road would be covered by this policy.

4.2 The Draft Plan also identifies the premises as being within a Secondary Retail Area. The Plan seeks to retain the primary uses in Seaside Road as A1 retail. To this end, Policy TC5 seeks to prevent no more than three consecutive premises in numbers 3 – 95 and 12 – 68 Seaside Road from being in non A1 use.

4.3 Furthermore Policy TC14 supports the conversion of upper floors above shops and other businesses to residential use, subject to residential amenity considerations.

4.4 The Seaside Road Regeneration Strategy (July 2000) recognises that whilst the Street occupies an important position between the Seafront and Terminus Road, the area has been in decline for a number of years. The Strategy is committed to addressing the physical, social and economic problems in Seaside Road and has helped to pull together Council initiatives and acts as a lever towards attracting and securing external funding into the area. (see paras 6.12, 6.13 and 7.1 below).

5.0 Covenants

55-59 Seaside Road

5.1 This property was acquired by Eastbourne Borough Council in November 1988. At the time of the sale, the vendor reserved any rights and easements that may have been in existence. No rights were actually specified at the time, however that is not to say that none exist.

61, 61a, 61b Seaside Road

5.2 This property was acquired by the Council in 1975. There are no restrictions on this title. However there is a statutory declaration supporting the Council’s claim to a right of way over the passage at the rear of the property.

6.0 Development Guidelines

Alternative Uses

6.1 As the buildings are within a Conservation Area there is a presumption against its demolition. The

preference is for a re-use of the property.

6.2 Should the current Housing Advice Centre cease operating from 55-61 Seaside Road and the premises become available for sale or for let, the Council's preferred use is the continuation of the B1 office designation. However, if this proves unviable there are a number of alternative uses the building could be put to, subject to complying with Borough Plan policy.

6.3 Having regard to the size and siting of the four storey properties with basement accommodation, in the Seaside Road area of the town, it is considered unlikely that the premises would be sold to, or let by a single organisation or company and used wholly as Class B1 office space. However the building could be subdivided to provide office accommodation on the upper floors for a number of companies and providing any future use of all or part of the building falls within the authorised Class B1 use, planning permission will not be required.

6.4 If it can be demonstrated in line with Policy BI 1 of the Revised Deposit Draft of the Eastbourne Borough Plan (2001-2011), that no effective demand exists for the office use the following alternative uses would be considered.

6.5 Subject to the above, the ground floor of the premises could be subdivided to provide two separate units, as the premises currently have a double frontage.

6.6 The Seaside Road Regeneration Strategy and the Revised Deposit Draft of the Eastbourne Borough Plan (2001-2011) identify the premises as being within a Secondary Retail Area. Therefore, if satisfactory marketing of the premises indicate that there is no effective demand for the existing office space, then a change of use of the ground floor premises to Class A1 retail, would be considered favourably.

6.7 Furthermore, if there proves to be no demand for office space, the Council would support the change of use of the ground floor unit(s) to non-retail use(s), bearing in mind the current authorised B1 use.

6.8 The Seaside Road Regeneration Strategy supports the provision of good quality residential accommodation on the upper floors of premises between Terminus Road and Cavendish Place. Therefore, subject to their being no proven demand for office space, any application to change the use of the upper floors to residential will be considered favourably.

6.9 In order to recognise the aim of regenerating residential accommodation in the area, any proposals for change of use of the ground floor of the premises will need to demonstrate that they would have no harmful effect on residential amenity. It is therefore likely that restrictions on hours of operation will be attached to any grant of planning permission for change of use.

Alterations

6.10 The footprint of the building at 61 Seaside Road covers the entire site. The main building has a large flat roofed single storey addition at the rear with a part first floor extension above. To the rear of 55-59 Seaside Road there is an area of hardstanding which is used for the storage of refuse and the parking of up to three vehicles. This is accessed via the

rear service road off Elms Avenue.

6.11 Bearing in mind the limited space available, it is considered that there is little space for further extensions to the property, other than to possibly redesign and rebuild the existing additions.

6.12 Planning permission will be required for any external alterations to the external appearance of the buildings. As the premises are within the Town Centre and Seafront Conservation Area, any elevational changes will be expected to enhance the character and appearance of the locality.

6.13 During the last three years, the Council has managed the Conservation Area Partnership Scheme (CAPs), a discretionary grant scheme for the repair of historic buildings and reinstatement of architectural details. The CAP scheme covers Seaside Road, Seaside and the surrounding residential streets. The scheme, which ended in January 2002, has been very successful in tackling a number of building renovation schemes.

6.14 To continue the improvement works, Eastbourne Borough Council has now established a Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS) for the Seaside Road area. The scheme is being funded by the Council and its partners at English Heritage and East Sussex County Council. The scheme will run until March 2004, and funds will be available for general repairs to historic buildings as well as for new shopfronts and the repair and reinstatement of lost architectural features. As part of the previous and ongoing initiatives in Seaside Road, several modern shopfronts have been replaced with new shopfronts which are more in character with the Edwardian buildings which line Seaside Road. A grant of 75% of the eligible cost of such works will normally be offered under the HERS initiative. However as 55-61 Seaside Road had a replacement shopfront in 1990 and the premises are in reasonably good order, the premises would not be considered a priority for grant aid.

6.15 In addition to the possible external alterations outlined above, any future use(s) of the buildings will require new signage. In sensitive areas such as the Town Centre and Seafront Conservation Area, the Council expects fascia signs to be in proportion and in a style appropriate to the design of the shopfront and will not normally allow projecting box signs or internally illuminated signs.

7.0 Highway Improvements

7.1 As part of the Seaside Road Regeneration Strategy, the Council is currently preparing a draft scheme for improving the street scene. A draft scheme is likely to be ready for public consultation during the early summer of 2002 with a view to implement in late 2003.

8.0 Finance

8.1 The Council has a statutory duty to ensure that it obtains the best price for the site and will seek independent advice on the value of the premises.

9.0 Plans Accompanying the Briefing Note

Appendix 1 - Location Plan

Appendix 2 - Floor Plans

Appendix 3 - Photographs

10.0 Contacts

_10.1 Should you require any further information, or wish to discuss this Planning Briefing Note in more detail, please contact Miss L. Rawlinson, Senior Planning Officer, at 68 Grove Road, Eastbourne. Tel No. 01323 415255.