

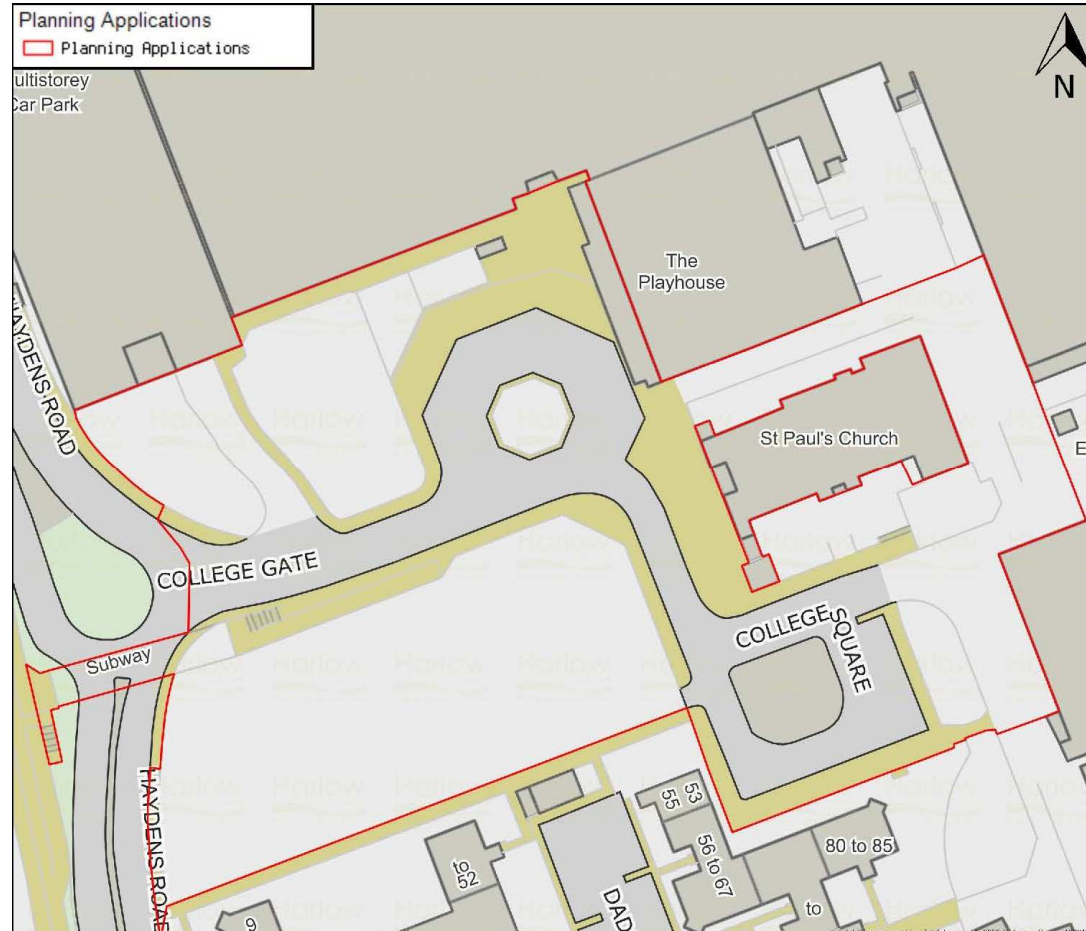
Land to the West of Harlow Playhouse, College Gate, Harlow

HW/FUL/23/00488

Redevelopment of land to the west of Harlow Playhouse, including Occasio House, to provide a 2no. Storey detached extension to Harlow Playhouse to provide creative studio, café, changing rooms and book office (Sui Generis); and an additional part 6no. and 5no. Storey building to provide flexible commercial and community floorspace at ground floor level (Use Class E) and Class F.1/F.2) with residential flats above (Use Class C); together with landscaping, public realm improvements, improvement works to the Haydens Road subway, re-direction of College Gate and re-location of the taxi rank; and associated access and parking provision.

Site Location

Site is edged in red



Existing Site



Existing Site



Existing Site



Existing Site



Purpose of Application

- HDC has successfully secured £19.6m from the Government's Levelling Up Fund.
- Money awarded to deliver a mixed-use, arts and cultural quarter.
- Proposed development to be focused around an under-utilised and utilitarian area of land in the south-west of Harlow town centre.

Components of Application

- Application includes the following elements:

Block E

A two-storey dedicated arts building with flexible performance and creative arts studio spaces, providing rehearsal, dance, teaching hire and classes, music school with rehearsal and recording space, café, and booking office, with ancillary supporting spaces and facilities (e.g. changing rooms).

Would complement and expand upon the existing offer of the neighbouring Playhouse Theatre.

Components of Application



Components of Application

Block ABC

A part five, part six storey mixed-use building.

Ground floor commercial/community and arts/culture gallery space.

47no. one and two bed flats with private and shared amenity space above.

Components of Application



Components of Application

Public Realm and Ancillary Works

Stopping up of College Gate and relocation of road and taxi-rank to south of Block ABC.

Creation of public square between Blocks E and ABC, and in front of St Paul's Church.

New pocket park with children's play equipment.

Accessible parking area to serve public and new flats.

Components of Application



Components of Application



Components of Application



Components of Application







Key Considerations

- Principle of development acceptable in town centre location. Aligns with Local Plan and Town Centre Masterplan Framework.
- Local Plan encourages the development of the visitor economy, particularly in relation to arts and cultural attractions.
- Would help to diversify Harlow's evening and night-time economy by encouraging more people to the town centre. Would have a positive effect on other town centre uses, such as leisure, food and beverage outlets.

Key Considerations

- Commercial uses would be restricted from 07:00 to 00:00. Balanced to support night-time economy whilst protecting residential amenity in a town centre location.
- Block E would be Sui Generis (class of its own) and ground floor of Block ABC would be restricted to Class F1 to facilitate the goal of achieving an arts and cultural quarter.
- Would allow provision of education, display of art works and museum uses.

Key Considerations

- Provision of 47 affordable 1 and 2 bed flats (100%).
- All would provide compliant space standards, and good outlook and aspect with private amenity space.
- Provision of wheelchair accessible units with accessible parking provision.
- Communal amenity deck at first floor level accessible to all residents.

Key Considerations

- Scheme has evolved following extensive pre-application consultation, including Quality Review Panel.
- The proposed height, massing, built form and layout represents high-quality design that would function well for its intended use.
- Promotes visual attractiveness and is sympathetic to the surrounding built environment and history of Harlow.
- Urban design officers consider it acceptable from an urban design perspective.

Key Considerations

- Scheme has considered impact on heritage assets. Application includes a townscape impact assessment and heritage statement.
- Reports concludes the scheme would have a moderate to substantial and positive impact on the townscape.
- Heritage officers consider the scheme would at worse lead to ‘less than substantial harm’ to the significance of Grade II listed St Paul’s Church. This is weighed against the significant public benefits (as required by national policy) and is considered acceptable.
- Development would better ‘frame’ views of the church and improve setting and character.

Key Considerations



Key Considerations

- Public square would include an outdoor performance space, with extensive hard and soft landscaping, including seating areas.
- Applicant has submitted a high-quality lighting scheme for public realm and buildings.
- Would achieve a biodiversity net gain.
- Scheme would deliver improvements to the Haydens Road underpass (e.g. lighting, materials, surfacing).

Key Considerations



Key Considerations

- Essex Police have reviewed the proposed design and consider it acceptable subject to a series of conditions. These would include the submission of a commercial and public realm management plan and the achievement of Secured by Design.
- Further details would be required at the detailed design stage to assess the safety of the improvement works to the Haydens Road underpass.

Key Considerations

- Highways consider scheme acceptable subject to conditions.
- Scheme would be car free with the exception of replacement accessible parking and spaces for accessible units and St Paul's Church. Would include EV charging, cycle spaces and cycling and walking improvement works to Haydens Road.
- Amendments to the scheme have been made to improve potential conflict between road users and pedestrians. Turning circle/taxi-rank has been enlarged to minimise number of vehicles passing by pocket park entrance.

Key Considerations

- Scheme assessed to be acceptable in regard to daylight/sunlight and noise.
- Would achieve a 50% reduction in site-wide CO2 emissions (inclusion of PV panels and ASHPs).
- Flood Zone 1 and would include a sustainable drainage system.
- Ecological benefits include BNG, increased number of trees and removal of invasive species.

Conclusions

- Continued regeneration of Harlow town centre to enable the expansion of the visitor and night-time economies.
- New, temporary and permanent job opportunities.
- Dedicated spaces to enable local creativity and expression.
- Energy efficient, affordable residential units in a sustainable location.
- High-quality, contemporary design that enhances the setting of St Paul's Church and contributes to the local townscape.
- New public realm with extensive landscaping and pedestrianisation that will be managed to ensure continuity and safety.
- A children's play area.
- Improvement works to the Haydens Road underpass.
- Biodiversity net gain.
- Sustainable drainage system.
- Financial contributions towards local infrastructure including early years and childcare, and libraries.
- That it is resolved that the Development Management Committee **grant planning permission** subject to planning conditions.