

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Tuesday 28 November 2017 at 7.00 pm

MINUTES

PRESENT: Councillor Liz Atkins (Substitute), Councillor Malcolm Clark, Councillor Diana Morris, Councillor Joanne Simpson (Vice-Chair) and Councillor Clair Wilcox (Chair)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Nigel Haselden and Councillor Mohammed Seedat

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Kevin Craig and Councillor Ben Kind

1. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Although not a pecuniary interest, Councillor Clark stated that he knew one of the objectors to 74 Roupell Street in a professional capacity, but that he had not had any discussions with her regarding the application and was satisfied that he was able to make an objective decision.

2. MINUTES

Councillor Morris requested that in item three (Kennington Green), the first bullet point on page five be amended to include 'The choice of brick design would result in the mortar appearing irregular.'

RESOLVED: That, subject to Councillor Morris' amendments, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 07 November 2017 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings.

The Chair announced a provisional timetable for the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 9.9.1.

3. 74 ROUPELL STREET (BISHOPS) 17/01398/FUL AND 17/01399/LB

Case Nos. 17/01398/FUL and 17/01399/LB (agenda item three, page 11 of the agenda pack, page 1 of the addendum and page 1 of the second addendum).

The Planning Officer gave a presentation which included a summary of the report and subsequent addenda that had been published on Friday 24 November and the day of the meeting. Members were advised of the key material planning issues for consideration which included the demolition of the existing wall, railings and gates with the erection of a two storey extension, the impact on the Waterloo and Roupell Street Conservation

Areas, the design of the application and the public benefits of the proposal. Members were shown images of the existing site, the proposed elevations, scale and massing, the proposed footprint of the site compared with the original infants' hall, the existing and proposed waste storage and proposed views of the site. Proposed materials were shown to Members.

Following the officer's presentation, the objectors raised the following concerns:

- Roupell Street was a remarkably homogenous area, with its importance having been recognised through its designation as a Conservation Area. The harm to heritage assets would not be outweighed by public benefits. Insufficient consideration had been given to the impact of the proposal on the local area.
- The design was too assertive and was not respectful to the character of the area.
- The courtyard provided much-needed green space and mature trees would be lost if the application was approved. The argument that the proposal would restore the original quadrangle was unconvincing.
- Residents could make only limited changes to their homes, and it was not clear why the school should be able to make such substantial changes.
- A petition against the proposal had received 11,000 signatures.
- The extension was not necessary for the school's success.
- The proposal would break up the existing context of the street.

The applicant then provided the following information in support of the application:

- The applicant had occupied the site since 1992, providing English language classes to students from across the world.
- Student numbers would not increase as a result of the application.
- The application would improve facilities in an exemplary, contemporary building and an award-winning architect had designed the proposal.
- The history of the area had been researched and the design had been developed to reference the architectural heritage of the site.
- Extensive consultation had been conducted through the application process.

Councillor Ben Kind spoke as the Ward Councillor for Bishops objecting to the application, stating that:

- Pre-application advice from officers in 2016 had raised concerns regarding the amenity impact of Roupell Street as a result of the loss of open space from the courtyard.
- There was currently an issue with students congregating on the pavement, which the application would exacerbate.
- Officers had opposed the application in principle in 2016, but there was no mention of this in the report.
- The application breached policies Q2, Q10 and EN1.

Councillor Kevin Craig then spoke against the application as Ward Councillor for Bishops, raising the following points:

- The application did not provide public benefits that would outweigh the harm to heritage assets.
- No education service was provided to Lambeth residents. The applicant was a business not a school or college.

- The design was not in keeping with the area. The Council had worked to protect Roupell Street and granting the application would undermine these efforts.

Officers then provided the following information in response to questions from Members:

- Policy did not require the design to be a reinstatement or pastiche of the demolished infants' hall. The design was a response to the context of neo-Gothic buildings on Roupell Street.
- The meaning of 'public benefits' in planning policy terms had been noted in the report.
- The private courtyard did not fit within the definition of open space, and as such, policy EN1 did not apply.
- The courtyard had never been considered as open space, but its openness had been acknowledged. The pre-application advice referred to by Councillor Kind did not raise concerns at the design of the proposal and considered that there would be minimal harm to the openness of the site. Tree officers had expressed concerns regarding the loss of trees, but these had been resolved.
- The pre-application advice objected to the loss of open space. However, as the courtyard did not fit the definition of open space, that objection could not be carried forward.
- Historic England had raised concerns at the loss of openness, but considered the harm to be less than substantial.
- The infants' hall was in place from the 1870s to 1951, when it was demolished following bomb damage. The courtyard had therefore been occupied for 87 years, and unoccupied for 66 years.
- The environmental benefits had only been measured from the proposed building.
- The street tree had recently been inspected and was found to have an acceptable useful life. It would be positively integrated into the proposal.
- Two London plane trees would be retained in the courtyard. These were not native species and did not considerably contribute to biodiversity. An indicative landscaping plan had been developed and condition 11 to 17 related to the landscaping.
- 62% of the courtyard would be retained.

In response to a question from Members regarding whether, in considering the proposed benefits of the scheme, there were any differences between a school run as a statutory service and a school run as a private business, the Legal Officer advised the Committee that:

- The meaning of public benefit was set out in national planning policy and that did not frame the issue in terms of whether the provider was in the public or private sector. A public benefit should be of benefit to the public at large and should not just be a private benefit but did not always have to be visible or accessible to the public.
- Members were reminded of the recent appeal decision as noted in the officer's report. In that case the particular type of school in question was used only by a small proportion of the public. The Inspector had been satisfied that a recreational/cultural facility of public benefit was being provided and that on the facts of that case there were other public benefits arising such as outreach work.
- Members needed to satisfy themselves as to the nature of the

public benefits proposed in this case.

The Committee considered points raised by speakers and information provided by officers in conjunction with the report before making the following observations:

- Some Councillors felt that the loss of openness would not harm the existing building, due to the original design with the infants' hall. However, others felt that the application and the impact on openness should be compared to the existing site.
- There would be a reduction in visual amenity to neighbouring properties.
- Some Members were not satisfied that public benefits were being provided that would be sufficient to outweigh harm to heritage assets. There would be no permanent jobs created as a result of the application, and the environmental benefits only related to the proposed building. Other views were expressed that the provision of English language teaching could be considered a public benefit and that it could not be assumed that the recipients of the teaching would not stay in the area.
- Some Members considered that there would be harm to the listed building itself; other Members were concerned about the impact on the setting of the listed building and the impact on the Roupell Street Conservation Area. Harm would be less than substantial. Some Members felt the design was appropriate and responded positively to the context. Others raised concerns regarding the design's prominence and its relationship with the listed building.
- The site was located in Waterloo Conservation Area, which had a greater variety of building styles than the neighbouring Roupell Street Conservation Area.
- There was approximately only 10 years' difference between the number of years that the infants' hall had been in place and had been demolished.

17/01398/FUL:

It was MOVED by Councillor Simpson to grant planning permission in accordance with officers' recommendations and

NOT CARRIED

It was then MOVED by Councillor Atkins, SECONDED by Councillor Clark and

RESOLVED, by three votes to two

1. To REFUSE planning permission contrary to officers' recommendations for reasons relating to the loss of openness, the loss of visual amenity, loss of trees, the impact on the setting of the Roupell Street Conservation Area and the less than substantial harm that is identified not being outweighed by the public benefits, and to delegate the detailed formulation of the reasons for refusal to the Interim Assistant Director of Planning and Development in consultation with the Chair.
2. In the event that there is a subsequent appeal against the refusal, delegated authority is given to officers, having regard to the heads

of terms set out in the report, to negotiate and complete a Section 106 Agreement in order to meet the requirements of the Planning Inspector.

17/01399/LB:

It was MOVED by Councillor Atkins, SECONDED by Councillor Clark, and

RESOLVED, by four votes to one

1. To REFUSE listed building consent against officers' recommendations for reasons relating to a level of harm to the listed building and its setting, which would not be outweighed by the public benefits, and to delegate the detailed formulation of the reasons for refusal to the Interim Assistant Director of Planning and Development in consultation with the Chair.
2. In the event that there is a subsequent appeal against to the refusal, delegated authority is given to officers, having regard to the heads of terms set out in the report, to negotiate and complete a Section 106 Agreement in order to meet the requirements of the Planning Inspector.

4. APPEAL AND ENFORCEMENT DECISIONS JULY 2017

Members noted the large number of appeals and thanked officers for their work defending Council policies.

CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 9.00 pm

CHAIR
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE
Tuesday 12 December 2017

Date of Despatch: Wednesday 6 December 2017

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