

**PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MINUTES**

**Tuesday 3 November 2020 at 7.00 pm**

**Held via Microsoft Teams (please copy and paste the following link into your browser):**  
**<http://ow.ly/DktV30rgj3r>**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Ben Kind, Councillor Jessica Leigh, Councillor Mohammed Seedat, Councillor Joanne Simpson (Vice-Chair), Councillor Becca Thackray, Councillor Clair Wilcox (Chair) and Councillor Timothy Windle (Substitute)

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor Scarlett O'Hara and Councillor Emma Nye

**1. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

With regard to application 20/01347/FUL, Councillor Mohammed Seedat stated that while not a pecuniary interest, he was a member of Impact Brixton, which was one of the organisations in consultation with the applicant for the application at 20-24 Pope's Road as a possible operator of the affordable workspace.

**2. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of a previous meeting held on 25 August 2020 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings, subject to the addition of Councillor Windle in attendance.

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

**3. 20-24 POPE'S ROAD (COLDHARBOUR) 20/01347/FUL**

Case No. 20/01347/FUL (agenda item three, page seven of the agenda pack, page one of the addendum and page one 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 30 October 2020 and the day of the meeting. Members were advised of the key material planning issues for consideration and noted that the design of the building had been amended since the last meeting on 25 August 2020. The design amendments were submitted on 30 September 2020 and the re-consultation occurred between 2 to 23 October 2020. Officers highlighted that the Community Involvement Strategy had been strengthened as detailed in the second addendum. This would include additional heads of terms relating to the establishment of a Community Development Group and the subsequent convening of a Community Development Committee. There had been a 25% uplift in the affordable workspace offer, which would be secured at 50% below market rents. Officers provided an update on further consultation responses received since the publication of the addendum. This included a further email of objection attaching a link to an online petition of objection purporting to include over 7,300 signatures. Officers had requested but not been provided with an electronic full copy of the petition and were therefore unable to confirm the accuracy of the petition. Officers advised that the application is not located within a Conservation Area but does sit on the boundaries of both the Brixton Conservation Area and the Loughborough Park Conservation Area. A number of additional views including rendered and wirelines views were presented. Members were advised that the proposed development would cause harm to a number of heritage assets, which officers considered to be less than substantial

harm. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) required that any harm to designated heritage assets to be weighed against the public benefits, which the Planning Officer advised was detailed within the published officer report. Members were advised that public benefits could be anything that delivered economic, social or environmental objectives as described in paragraph 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework and contributed towards the achievement of sustainable development. Amendments to the conditions were included in the second addendum to require the submission of an internal lighting scheme (condition 37) and an additional condition to remove permitted development rights relating to electronic communications equipment. The Planning Officer's presentation highlighted the design amendments to the scheme, the lightening of the material palette and indicative images showing potential uses of the proposed public square. There would be a publicly accessible open space within the building at ground floor level and dedicated community floorspace at first floor level had been relocated to a more accessible location. Members were presented with further details of the wind mitigation measures. The Planning Officer advised that a further Wind Microclimate Assessment would be required in advance of implementation of the development were it to be granted. This would provide the necessary safeguards to ensure policy requirements were met. The development would seek to achieve a BREEAM rating of Excellent, with the 70% credits required to achieve this being exceeded in the pre-assessment.

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

- The application was not in compliance with Site Allocation 16 of the Lambeth Local Plan, by virtue of the proposed development including tall buildings.
- The reported benefits did not outweigh the heritage harm which would be substantial and therefore the application should not be approved.
- The height of the building would be intimidating and dominating in the local area and would displace other small businesses around the local area.
- The proposed development would prevent Brixton from developing a London Overground Station which would run contrary to a firm commitment from the Council to improve the public transport in the area.

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

- The development highlighted the commitment made to a new civic realm space which would offer new opportunities for the residents in Lambeth.
- The building would respect the Brixton Recreational Centre and the surrounding area and would create a strong contribution to Brixton's economy.
- Research had identified that there were fewer than 100 unused desk spaces in Brixton and that this building would deliver an eco-system of jobs and create affordable desk space for 600 people.

Councillor Scarlett O'Hara and Councillor Emma Nye then spoke as Ward Councillors for Coldharbour Ward, stating the following:

- This application would drive out Brixton residents with the domineering and intimidating structure of the building. It would not sit well next to the low-rise Victorian buildings next to it.
- 15 out of the 20 heritage assets in the area would be harmed and Brixton residents would feel daunted by the security guards in the building.
- The proposed development would have a harmful visual impact on the surrounding conservation area and would look odd with its looming structure amidst Brixton town

centre.

- The view from Brockwell Park would be undesirably altered and changed due to this building.

Helen Hayes, MP for Dulwich and West Norwood, stated the following:

- Historic England objected to the application as it compromised the local area's unique heritage and the applicant did not provide a convincing argument.
- Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the future world of work would be uncertain as many companies had implemented more flexible and remote working policies. Creating workspaces for a post-Covid-19 society may not be beneficial.

*At 8:27 pm due to the technical issues, the meeting was adjourned for a few minutes. Once the issues were resolved, the meeting continued.*

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

- In terms of land usage, officers confirmed that they had undertaken multiple reports and surveys, but did not have much local insight. It was confirmed that Lambeth had a small percentage of office space in inner London, approximately 3% of overall stock in inner London. Office locations within Brixton were key for locally based businesses as there was a lack of supply, but consistently strong demand. Brixton had low vacancy rates at 2.1% over the last 10 years.
- It was highlighted that there was a real desire to work in Brixton and 32 million tube entry and exits meant that it would be imperative to use Brixton as a spoke and hub model. The data showed that Brixton market was lacking in space and had an accessible location through walking, cycling, tube or train. Brixton was characterised by a young population, densely populated (population of around 30,000 in the immediate area) and had a relatively large residential catchment area.
- There was a clear need for office space, especially as there were a lot of creative based businesses in Lambeth who were seeking this. The proposed development would allow existing businesses to seek quality of space, not too far from central London.
- There would be a diversity of different affordable workspace including coworking space to support Brixton's working economy. The space in the building would be 2400 sq metres, approximately half the size of International House in Brixton.
- The initial model of the scale up strategy would be an element as part of the workplace management plan, which would be a robust enforcement regime.
- The dedicated community floor space had been relocated to a more central location at first floor level. Other uses at first floor included affordable workspace and retail and/or restaurant uses.
- In response to a question about wind impacts to publicly accessible areas above ground floor level, the Environmental Health specialist advised there would be no impact on the train line and no unacceptable wind implication to the people using the platforms in the adjoining train station.
- Officers stated that there would be no unacceptable impact on the privacy of adjoining residential occupiers.

*At 9:00 pm the meeting was adjourned for 10 minutes.*

The Committee considered points raised by speakers and information provided by officers in

conjunction with the report before making the following observations:

- Members of the Committee acknowledged the concerns of objectors that the use at some stage might be changed from office to residential. Members were advised that any change of use would be subject to a separate application and that the outcome of that could not be determined at this stage. It was agreed that an informative would be included on the decision notice reiterating the Committee's firm view that the proposed building as designed was appropriate for office use on its upper floors and not for other uses including residential.
- Councillors were concerned of the wind mitigation measures not being strong enough. This included how the high level solid canopy to the western façade would function during a heavy rainfall.
- Councillors raised concerns around the view into adjoining residential properties.
- Councillors were concerned about the heritage impact and the identified substantial harm to listed buildings and the conservation area as raised by an objector.
- Councillors highlighted the carbon requirement in the Draft London Plan and questioned whether embodied carbon had been considered in the design of the building.

*At 22:00 the Committee elected to proceed with the meeting for a maximum of a further 45 minutes in order to conclude the remaining matters of business.*

The Committee continued to make the following observations as they discussed the application:

- Some councillors were concerned with the introduction of more office space when a post-Covid-19 working society was uncertain and many businesses had already advocated that they would be remote working indefinitely. Officers indicated that if office space was not needed, the applicant would then need to reapply through the Council.
- The size of the building was discussed, with some councillors highlighting its intimidating and domineering nature. In comparison to other buildings in the vicinity, which were much smaller than the proposed building, councillors were unsure about the acceptability of the scale of the building.
- It was reiterated that the NPPF highlighted that new buildings should enhance the natural, built and historic environment and contribute to a low carbon economy. However, this proposed development would negate what the Council had been committed to in terms of adopting a low carbon economy.
- Other councillors praised the proposed development for improving an underdeveloped site, providing additional market space and positively contributing to the public realm. The community aspect was highlighted and the height of the building was seen as one of the benefits of the proposal.
- Some councillors were content with the amended application since their last discussion and indicated that they did not believe the building would cause substantial heritage harm. It was also highlighted that this development would help support struggling businesses and boost South London's economy.
- Other councillors indicated that despite it being disappointing that this proposal was coming forward during the coronavirus pandemic, when the future was uncertain, the design of the building had been reworked and improved since their previous meeting on 25 August 2020.
- It was noted that despite there being less than substantial harm to the surrounding areas, it would still be harmful and the impact of the building would be of significant concern for residents. Despite these concerns, this application would provide employment

opportunities for the local residents and would be a positive feature for the Brixton community.

- Concerns were expressed on the possible noise pollution which would cause sound issues in Brixton should the high-level terraces be used for commercial hire. A condition was suggested that a 10:00pm curfew be considered to mitigate this issue
- The management of the site for private hire events was discussed and Members questioned whether the Committee could require the submission of a management plan to govern the use and time of the building.
- The proposal's compliance with the Draft London Plan policy requirements around embodied carbon was debated.

It was MOVED by Councillor Wilcox, SECONDED by Councillor Seedat  
RESOLVED, by four votes for to three against,

1. To GRANT conditional planning permission subject to the completion of an agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) containing the planning obligations listed in the report and any direction as may be received following further referral to the Mayor of London and subject to the following:
  - i. A condition to limit the hours of use of the external terraces and to require the submission of a management plan for these areas, with the final wording to be agreed by the Director of Planning, Transport and Sustainability in conjunction with the PAC Chair.
  - ii. An informative to reiterate the Committee's firm view that the proposed building as designed is appropriate for office use on its upper floors and not for other uses including residential.
  - iii. An informative to advise that the post-decision submissions should include information explaining how it would be possible for the building to achieve embodied carbon targets in the Draft London Plan.
  - iv. An informative advising that the Workspace Strategy is reported back to PAC for consideration.
2. To delegate authority to the Director of Planning, Transport and Sustainability to:
  - a. Finalise the recommended conditions as set out in the report, addendums and/or PAC minutes; and
  - b. Negotiate, agree and finalise the planning obligations as set out in the report, addendums and/or PAC minutes pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
3. In the event that the Section 106 Agreement is not completed within 6 months of committee, delegated authority is given to the Director of Planning, Transport and Sustainability to refuse planning permission for failure to enter into a section 106 agreement for the mitigating contributions identified in the report, addendums and/or the PAC minutes.

**4. 339 NORWOOD ROAD AND 3 THURLOW PARK ROAD (THURLOW PARK) 19/03669/FUL**

The Chair proposed that due to lack of time, the item be deferred.

It was MOVED by Councillor Wilcox, SECONDED by Councillor Kind, and  
RESOLVED, unanimously

To DEFER consideration of the application.

CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 10.34 pm

CHAIR  
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE  
Tuesday 24 November 2020

Date of Despatch: Wednesday 11 November 2020

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