

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MINUTES

Tuesday 9 February 2021 at 7.00 pm

**Microsoft Teams (please copy and paste the following link into your browser):
<https://bit.ly/2JUOVkP>**

PRESENT: Councillor Scarlett O'Hara, Councillor Malcolm Clark (Substitute), Councillor Jessica Leigh, Councillor Mohammed Seedat, Councillor Joanne Simpson (Vice-Chair), Councillor Becca Thackray and Councillor Clair Wilcox (Chair)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Ben Kind

1. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were none.

2. CRESSINGHAM GARDENS ESTATE, ROPERS WALK (TULSE HILL) 20/02406/RG3

Case No. **20/02406/RG3** (agenda item two, page one 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 5 February 2021 and the day of the meeting. Members were advised of the key material planning issues for consideration and noted a correction to the number of existing affordable habitable rooms, which was 24 and not 44 as detailed within the officer report. This meant that there would be a greater uplift in affordable housing, with the scheme offering 20 new units, a net increase of 12 affordable homes and 46 affordable habitable rooms. The context of the neighbouring buildings was largely residential, and this proposal would make effective use of the site whilst enhancing the streetscape. Officers confirmed that no third party was currently commissioned to develop a masterplan for the wider Cressingham Gardens Estate and that this application was to be considered as a standalone planning application. Members were shown images of the site, its context, proposed materials and design, and existing and proposed views.

Officers emphasised that the existing building was in poor condition and its redevelopment would provide the opportunity to optimise the site. In relation to the site being adjacent to the Brockwell Park conservation area, it was confirmed that the site was not located in a conservation area. Officers stated that the proposal would not be largely visible from Brockwell Park due to the trees and foreground elements and the proposed development would sit comfortably within the street scene. The proposal would not have a dominant effect on the setting of the Grade II Listed Holy Trinity Church, but a neutral one and would comply with policy. Officers confirmed that the proposed development would not cause harm to the significance of any heritage assets.

The existing building would be demolished, and the proposal would be a part 3 and part 4 storey block arranged in an L-shape. The existing affordable floorspace amounted to 524sqm, whilst the proposal would deliver 1,567sqm of floorspace in the 20 affordable units. Officers were satisfied that the requirements of Policy EN1(a) in the Lambeth Local Plan concerning circumstances in which the loss of existing open space could be considered acceptable, were met.

Improvements would be made to the quality of open space, and affordable housing would be provided including two wheelchair user units. As regards to open space and play space provision, the proposed planning obligation envisaged a cascade mechanism first looking to improve open space at different locations within the estate and second, through a monetary contribution if the former were not possible. In relation to sunlight and daylight, the proposed development would not result in unacceptable harm to neighbouring properties.

The proposal would result in the loss of trees of significant amenity value, which would be a departure from Policy Q10 of the Lambeth Local Plan. However, Officers advised that there were material considerations that justified the departure from policy, specifically making effective use of land, the provision of 100 per cent affordable housing of which 70 per cent would be for social rent, provision of fully accessible dwellings and public realm improvements on Hardel Walk. Officers advised there would be a carbon reduction of 80 per cent, and a contribution of £13,000 would be provided for employment and training, to increase access to job opportunities for local people.

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

- The proposed building lacked distinction, and demolishing and redeveloping the site would represent an incoherent strategy.
- The bulk, scale and height of the proposed building would represent an unsympathetic development that fails to respond to the character and appearance of the immediate area and the building should instead be retrofitted and repaired.
- Residents did not wish to move out of their homes, and it would breach their human rights in relation to peaceful enjoyment of property.
- Residents without access to the internet or email had not been effectively consulted.
- The proposal would be ugly and architecturally boring. It would expose vulnerable residents to anti-social behaviour.
- The proposal represented 'salami slicing' and it was being artificially separated off from a wider scheme to avoid providing financial viability information or an environmental impact assessment.

The agent, applicant and architect then provided the following information in support of the application:

- The proposed development would optimise the existing site, which was a key priority for Homes for Lambeth (HfL). This was to be considered as a standalone application, which should be determined on its own merits.
- The development would be sustainable in accordance with local planning policies and would comply with the London Plan.
- The development would deliver 20 high-quality homes, 100 per cent affordable, with 14 units at Council rent level. The pandemic had served to emphasise the importance of good quality homes and HfL was determined to be at the forefront of the economic recovery in Lambeth.
- HfL was aware of the concerns of residents liable to be displaced from existing properties and was continuing to engage with those affected.
- The design of the proposed development would be of high quality and would provide much needed affordable housing. The L shape of the development would provide a meaningful communal garden, and would introduce a wider pavement, which would improve the public realm. Heritage assets were important and would not be affected.

Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP then spoke as MP for Streatham, stating the following:

- She was objecting to the application on behalf of her constituents. She stated that the application would go against residents' aspirations, the number of objections was high, and the proposed development would fail to preserve the character of the surrounding

area.

- Concerns were made about the lack of a Master Plan and the term ‘salami-slicing’ was being used to describe this development.
- Environmental impacts needed to be addressed and residents had not been effectively consulted.

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

- Policy Q10 of the Lambeth Local Plan, unlike the Publication of the London Plan, did not contemplate a compensatory mechanism for the loss of trees. However, the Publication London Plan allows the use of a standard CAVAT methodology to calculate a monetary value for the trees to be lost to be spent on tree planting in the vicinity of the site. Officers confirmed that the Council’s tree officer had identified locations for the planting of 160 new street trees within Tulse Hill ward and locations for additional planting in neighbouring wards. In response to questions raised on the biodiversity aspect of the removal of trees, it was stated that the CAVAT value of £182,564 would provide 284 trees which could be planted on the highway and other locations. Officers advised that Condition 46 required the developer to demonstrate that a biodiversity net gain would be achieved prior to commencement of development.
- The proposal achieved an Urban Greening Factor of 0.4 which was a policy requirement in the Publication London Plan. This would indicate that proposals should create a landscape that would provide habitats for existing species. A survey had been carried out to ensure that the development would not harm any protected species.
- Officers outlined the cascade mechanism relating to open space mitigation and play spaces for older children, which would first seek to provide improved open space and play space near the site, then elsewhere in the estate, and if this was not possible, then to provide a contribution of £65,000 to make improvements to Brockwell Park in terms of open space enhancements. This would be secured by a s106 required by a Grampian condition. The communal landscaped area would be accessible to all the residents of the development. Amenity space would be provided for the development and the space would be accessible to occupiers of the block, regardless of their tenure.
- The Met Police Designing Out Crime Officer indicated that gates should be included in the development.
- The proposed development would be 2 metres taller than the existing building. The view of the building from the top of Brockwell Park where the effects of the rolling landscape is optimised would be covered by the trees, and the limited visibility from the perimeter path would not be harmful to the setting of the Brockwell Park Conservation Area and the setting of the registered historic park.
- The tower and the spire of the Grade II Listed Holy Trinity Church would remain the ‘eyecatcher’ of the street. At present the church spire could be seen over the roof of the existing building block from the edge of the estate and the proposal would cause a slight reduction in visibility of the church spire in this view. The change would not be adverse and would not cause harm to the significance of the church.
- The colour palette of bricks of the proposed development would be a red and brown colour tone which would add to the local distinctiveness.

Officers responded to the concerns about ‘salami-slicing’ and stated that this application was being assessed on the basis that it represented a standalone project. It was not yet known what form any wider development would take. The proposal was not considered to amount to an estate regeneration scheme for the purposes of the London Plan. A master plan for the wider estate had not yet come to fruition. Reflecting the Council’s Statement of Community Involvement, the applicant and officers had been engaging with residents. Housing management options were being made available to existing residents affected by the proposed development.

The Chair adjourned the meeting for 10 minutes at 9pm. After the adjournment, Officers continued to provide information as follows in response to questions from Members:

- The architect confirmed that the proposed floor areas of the units would be larger than the existing floorspace across all unit sizes including and the existing 2-bedroom 4 person units which are currently split level and incorporate staircases.
- 30% of the units would be shared ownership and would be provided in accordance with the London Plan Shared Ownership terms. The shared ownership units would be on the second and third floors and there were options for these to be taken up by existing resident homeowners under Key Guarantee 1. All residents would have access as between the floors, apart from the ground floor units which would have their own front doors.
- Due to the application being a standalone one, it did not need to be subject to environmental impact assessment.
- Officers confirmed that the applicant had carried out a walkover ecological survey and no protected species were identified on the site.

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

- Concerns had been expressed regarding biodiversity, but it was noted that a condition was proposed that prevented development taking place unless it was demonstrated that there was a biodiversity net gain.
- The departure from development plan policy in relation to the loss of trees was noted.
- Whilst what had been said about the absence of a master plan was noted and whilst it was understood that in planning terms, the proposal had been assessed as a standalone scheme, the absence of a master plan and the associated uncertainty about the existence and status of such a plan, was disappointing. The view was expressed that the absence of a master plan for the Estate as a whole made it difficult to assess the current application.
- The provision of open space specifically for future residents of the development was welcomed.
- The provision of affordable housing, with 14 units at Council rent levels and the remaining 6 as shared ownership units, corresponding to an uplift of 12 affordable homes, was a material consideration carrying significant weight, in view of the very pressing need for more affordable homes in the borough.
- The proposed building would not detract from the townscape and officers' advice regarding impacts on heritage assets was noted.
- Strong concerns were expressed at the publication of a lengthy second addendum in the middle of the afternoon on the date of the meeting.
- A resident who was affected by the proposal but was not able to access email may have been disadvantaged in the process.
- Whilst the view was expressed that there had not been enough time to digest all the issues fully before the PAC meeting, the view was also expressed that the officer report and presentation were very detailed and that enough information to reach a decision was available.
- Concern was raised regarding the two single aspect units, which could be justified but should not form part of future HfL proposals.

At 10:00pm 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.

- Councillor Thackray MOVED to defer the application on the grounds that more time was required for consideration of the application, but the motion was NOT SECONDED.

- It was proposed that a condition should be added requesting that in addition to the bat and bird survey, a toad survey would be carried out. Officers agreed that the condition requiring further ecology work to be carried out could be amended to include reference to toads.
- Members expressed their disappointment that the application did not come forward as a master plan and that the design included two single aspect units.

It was MOVED by Councillor Simpson, SECONDED by Councillor Seedat and RESOLVED, by six votes for to one against

1. To GRANT conditional planning permission including a Grampian Condition requiring completion of an agreement under section 106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 containing the planning obligations outlined in the officer's report and published addenda and subject to the following:
 - Amend the relevant condition relating to further ecology information to include a toad survey as well as the bat and bird survey.
2. Agree to delegate authority to the Director of Planning, Transport and Sustainability to: finalise the recommended conditions as set out in this report, addendums and/or PAC minutes.

CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 10.11 pm

CHAIR
PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE
Tuesday 30 March 2021

Date of Despatch: Friday 26 February 2021

Contact for Enquiries: Farah Hussain

Tel: 020 7926 4201

E-mail: fhussain1@lambeth.gov.uk

Web: www.lambeth.gov.uk