

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

HELD AT 7.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 6 MARCH 2013

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, 1ST FLOOR, TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE
CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Councillor Helal Abbas (Chair)
Councillor Bill Turner (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Stephanie Eaton (Items 7.1-
7.2 only)
Councillor Judith Gardiner (Item 6.1 only)
Councillor Carlo Gibbs
Councillor Dr. Emma Jones
Councillor Helal Uddin (Items 7.1-7.2
only)
Councillor Peter Golds (Items 7.1-7.2
only)

Other Councillors Present:

None

Officers Present:

Jerry Bell	– (Applications Team Leader, Development and Renewal)
Megan Nugent	– (Legal Services Team Leader, Planning, Chief Executive's)
Pete Smith	– (Development Control Manager, Development & Renewal)
Amy Thompson	– (Deputy Team Leader, Development and Renewal)
Mary O'Shaughnessy	– (Planning Officer, Development and Renewal)
Andrew Hargreaves	– Borough Conservation Officer
Zoe Folley	– (Committee Officer, Democratic Services Chief Executive's)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Zara Davis for which Councillor Peter Golds was deputising for items 7.1 and 7.2 only.

2. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillor Stephanie Eaton declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in agenda item 6.1 (Skylines Village, Limeharbour, London (PA/11/3617))

The declaration was made on the basis that she had a beneficial interest in land close to the application site that had been recorded in the register of Members interests. She indicated that she would leave the meeting room for the consideration of this item.

Councillor Peter Golds left the meeting for item 6.1(Skylines Village, Limeharbour, London (PA/11/3617)) as he had spoken against the item at the last meeting on 24th January 2013 when it was considered.

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

The Committee **RESOLVED**

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24th January 2013 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee **RESOLVED** that:

- 1) In the event of changes being made to recommendations by the Committee, the task of formalising the wording of those changes is delegated to the Corporate Director, Development and Renewal along the broad lines indicated at the meeting; and
- 2) In the event of any changes being needed to the wording of the Committee's decision (such as to delete, vary or add conditions/informatives/planning obligations or reasons for approval/refusal) prior to the decision being issued, the Corporate Director, Development and Renewal is delegated authority to do so, provided always that the Corporate Director does not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision

5. PROCEDURE FOR HEARING OBJECTIONS

The Committee noted the procedure for hearing objections, together with details of persons who had registered to speak at the meeting.

6. DEFERRED ITEMS

6.1 Skylines Village, Limeharbour, London (PA/11/3617)

Update report tabled.

Councillors Stephanie Eaton and Peter Golds left the meeting for the consideration of this item only.

Councillor Helal Uddin did not vote on this item as he was not present at the last Committee meeting where it was last considered.

Jerry Bell (Application Team Leader, Development and Renewal) introduced the item regarding Skylines Village, Limeharbour, London.

Pete Smith (Development Control Manager) made a presentation of the committee report and tabled update, as circulated to Members. The application was previously considered by the committee on 24th January 2013 where Members were minded to refuse the recommendation to grant for six reasons. This report detailed the developments since then to address these issues. There are summarised below:

Child play /community space revisions. The applicant was proposing to provide 11-15 age play space on site whilst meeting the overall play space requirement. The community space still complied with policy. The applicant had been engaging in continuous discussions about the provision of a youth facility on site that could be used by older children. There was also a full contribution for open space and community facilities.

Impact on health services. The applicant and Officers had engaged with the health services on site. Two of which wished to remain on site. The applicant had devised plans for the relocation and retention of these services on site as set out in the report.

Daylight impacts. It was acknowledged that there would be a serious impact on daylight to surrounding properties. The extent of the losses were set out in the report as requested at the last meeting. However, officers found such impacts were typical for a major development of this scale. This was a balanced judgement but Officers found that the benefits outweighed the impacts.

Height and Density. It was noted that the density exceeded the London Plan maximum. However, it was necessary to take into account the local context and the overall merits of the scheme when assessing this issue (the Borough's housing targets, the site designation, the full S106, and community space). In the balance, Officers continued to find the scheme acceptable taking into account the wider issues

Loss of employment floor space. It was likely that the proposed space (whilst under current levels) would provide greater flexibility for users and higher employment densities.

Another issues raised was the size of the retail units. The applicant was willing to accept a condition limiting the size of the retail units. It was expected

that the majority of units would be occupied by smaller businesses according to the applicant.

The waste collection plans were clarified.

It was confirmed that the application may be called in by the Mayor of London should Members be minded to refuse the scheme.

On balance, Officers continued to find the application acceptable. However they had drafted two reasons for refusal should members be minded to refuse the scheme, based on the reasons given at the last meeting.

Members raised questions around the following issues:

- The drug and alcohol team on site. In particular, the compatibility of such services with a residential development for both service users and residents.
- The lack of child play space. It was commented that the changes in this area were very minor. There was still an under provision of such space.
- The impact on the surrounding properties due to the height and scale of the scheme.
- Continuing concern about the bulk and density that remained unchanged.

In response, Officers confirmed the views of the drug and alcohol team on site (DAAT). The applicant had offered to help them relocate given their desire to do so should the new development go ahead. A letter from the service confirming this was in the update report. The other two youth groups were willing to stay on the new development and saw no issues in terms of compatibility. Officers were satisfied with the scheme in terms of density. There were special circumstances justifying a deviation from the maximum in the London Plan as with other developments accepted in the area.

On a vote of 4 in favour 0 against and 1 abstention, the Committee **RESOLVED:**

That planning permission (PA/11/3617) at Skylines Village, Limeharbour, London be **REFUSED** for proposed demolition of all existing buildings within Skylines Village and the erection of buildings with heights varying from 2 to 50 storeys for the reasons set out in the paragraph 7.4 and 7.6 of the committee report detailed below.

Reason 1

The proposal represents an overdevelopment of the site, in excess of the density ranges outlined by Policy 3.4 of the London Plan (July 2011) and the associated Supplementary Planning Guidance "Housing" and results in a scale, form and height of development which fails to adequately deal with the transition in built character between the Canary Wharf tall buildings cluster and the lower density development that lies outside the Canary Wharf Activity

Area, fails to provide adequate play space for all age groups and leads to a material loss of daylight to neighbouring residential occupiers, contrary to Policies 3.4, 3.6, 7.1, 7.4 and 7.7 of the London Plan (July 2011), saved Policy DEV1 of the adopted Unitary Development Plan (1998), Policies SP02 and SP10 of the Core Strategy (2010), Policies DM4, DM24 and DM25 of the Managing Development DPD (Submission Version May 2012) with modifications and Policies DEV1, DEV2, HSG1 and DEV27 of the Interim Planning Guidance (2007) and as a result, it is not considered to provide a sustainable form of development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Reason 2

The proposed redevelopment of the existing Skylines Village will lead to a net loss of B1 (Business) floorspace, contrary to Site Allocation 20 "Marsh Wall East" as identified in the Managing Development DPD (Submission Version May 2012) with modifications which states that development should re-provide and intensify existing employment floorspace, saved Policies EMP1 and EMP3 of the Unitary Development Plan (1998), Policy SP06 of the Core Strategy 2010, Policy Ee2 of the Interim Planning Guidance (2007 and Policy DM15 of the Managing Development DPD (Submission Version May 2012) with modifications and as a result, it is not considered to provide a sustainable form of development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

(The Members that voted on this item were Councillors Helal Abbas, Bill Turner, Carlo Gibbs, Dr Emma Jones and Judith Gardiner)

Councillor Judith Gardiner left the meeting after the consideration of this item (8.20pm).

7. PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DECISION

7.1 The Robin Hood Gardens Estate together with land south of Poplar High Street and Naval Row, Woolmore School and land north of Woolmore Street bounded by Cotton Street, East India Dock Road and Bullivant Street (PA/12/03318)

Update report tabled.

Jerry Bell (Application Team Leader, Development and Renewal) introduced the item regarding the Robin Hood Gardens Estate (PA/12/03318). The proposal was a reserved matters application for the replacement of Woolmore School following the outline planning consent granted by the committee for the wider scheme PA/12/00001.

The Chair invited registered speakers to address the Committee.

Tom Ridge spoke in objection to the proposal. He referred the applicant's 'justification for demolition document' that rejected option (b) due to the sewer works. (retaining the old building with a modern new school at the east). However, in the report, the option was dismissed as it divided year groups.

In the new building, a year group would be divided in several places at the upper level with an inadequate staircase.

The scheme would maximise disruption and place the sports and play area at the end of the site with the most pollution. The questionnaire was worded in favour of the plans – it asked do you agree with the plans that would increase school places? Mr Ridge questioned the accuracy of the heritage assessment commissioned by the applicant. It appeared that they were appointed to dispute the building's historic value. This application should be refused and consideration should be given to his option of retaining the old school with an extension to the east

In reply to Members, he stated that the building was not listed due such issues as the plastic windows that should be replaced. However, this did not mean it was not of value and should be demolished. The building was a pre war L.L.C building. One of 33 schools of such type. Each had unique features. This school was the only one with the unique chimney stacks and vents. He disputed the opinion that the building was an arts and craft school that changed into a neo Georgian school. This was incorrect. In fact, it was the opposite. The comparisons with the grammar school were inaccurate as they were not 'a like for like' in terms of type and location.

Hugo Nowell spoke in support of the proposal. He emphasised the lack of heritage value of the unprotected building that was not in a conservation area. The existing building did not meet modern standards and had experienced alterations and bomb damage leaving little historic features. The applicant had fully considered the option of retention. However none of the options were appropriate and would meet the needs of the school. The alternatives proposed would require extensive changes to the building that would heavily impact on its character anyway. These alternatives were presented to the schools and rejected. The scheme would supply much needed extra school places for the Borough. It was proposed to build the school at the eastern side, as opposed to the north. Bullivant Street was not available due to a separate planning consent. There would be a larger play space and screening to protect the building from noise from the Blackwall approach. It was expected that the new school would be ready for use by September 2014 with the existing school still in full use in the meantime. The school and governors fully supported the scheme and it should be granted.

In reply to Members, he reported that every effort had been made to try to retain the school but this was not possible. The heritage assessment took into account the Conservation Officer's expert advice and English Heritage views. The scheme would enable the school to meet modern standards in terms of access etc. This was key.

Amy Thompson (Planning Officer, Development and Renewal) made a detailed presentation of the committee report and tabled update, as circulated to Members. She explained the site location and the plans. She explained the outcome of the consultation with one letter in support and one objection. The concerns raised in this were addressed.

The current building was not fit for purpose on many fronts. The building was not protected. This needed to be given weight.

She explained the flaws with the alternative options, on investigation, that would result in less play space and substantial changes (as explained by the speaker in support). The proposal would also accommodate the additional school places. She explained the floor plans, noise insulation, noise buffer for the new play ground and the materials. In terms of amenity, the plans were found to be acceptable. Officers were satisfied with the level of detail submitted.

Also in attendance was the Borough's Conservation Officer, Andrew Hargreaves who reported his views in support of the recommendation.

Officers were supportive of the proposal and were recommending it for approval.

The Chair then invited questions from Members, which covered the following issues:

- The noise insulation for the building itself in view of the nearby Blackwall approach.
- The accuracy of the heritage assessment.
- The historic value of the building. Members noted the need for the extra school places and a new school. However were worried about demolishing the school to achieve this. The school was unique and there was only 33 of its type. It was questioned whether the option of improving the current school to achieve the aims had been fully explored. Full details of this should be provided.
- The decision to discount option (b) due to the sewage system. It was questioned whether the option had been fully investigated to see if it could be built with the sewage system.
- The school's views on the application.

Officers' responses included the following information:

The noise insulation for the building was of a high standard and complied with the relevant standards. The building would be mechanically ventilated. The measures would prevent any noise impact from the Blackwall Approach. Officers showed slides of the options assessed and rejected. Officers explained in detail why they unsuitable. This was due to a number of reasons such as: unacceptable layout, less room for play space and the unavailability of Bullivant street due to the nearby planning consent. Option (b) suggested

by Mr Ridge was not suitable due to the site constraints as well as the position of the sewer system.

The school had submitted a letter in support. This was a reserved matter application so the principal of the proposal had already been accepted.

On a vote of 3 in favour and 4 against the Officer recommendation, the Committee **RESOLVED**:

1. That the Officer recommendation to grant reserved matters consent (PA/12/03318) at The Robin Hood Gardens Estate together with land south of Poplar High Street and Naval Row, Woolmore School and land north of Woolmore Street bounded by Cotton Street, East India Dock Road and Bullivant Street be **NOT ACCEPTED** for submission of reserved matters for Woolmore School (Development Zone 1, Building Parcel R) relating to access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale of replacement school following outline planning permission dated 30th March 2012, reference PA/12/00001.

The Committee were minded to refuse the application due to concerns over the loss of heritage value of the existing school building.

In accordance with Development Procedural Rules, the application was **DEFERRED** to enable Officers to prepare a supplementary report to a future meeting of the Committee, setting out proposed detailed reasons for refusal, along with the implications of the decision.

(The Members that voted on this item were Councillors Helal Abbas, Bill Turner, Carlo Gibbs, Stephanie Eaton, Peter Golds, Dr Emma Jones and Helal Uddin)

7.2 Land adjacent to Langdon Park Station, corner of Cording Street and Chrisp Street, 134-156 Chrisp Street, London E14 (PA/12/00637)

Update Report Tabled.

Jerry Bell (Application Team Leader, Development and Renewal) introduced the item regarding Land adjacent to Langdon Park Station, corner of Cording Street and Chrisp Street, 134-156 Chrisp Street, London E14 (PA/12/00637)

Mary O'Shaughnessy (Planning Officer) made a detailed presentation of the committee report and tabled update, as circulated to Members. She explained the site and the surrounding area including the nearby DLR station and District Town Centre. The site had been allocated for residential use in planning guidance. A similar development had previously been granted. Therefore, the land use had been established. She explained the density range that should read 1385, (correction from the report). The density exceed the London Plan maximum. However, given the lack of impact and the

location, the scheme was acceptable on balance and supported in policy. She explained the outcome of the consultation and the issues raised.

There would be some loss of light to surrounding properties, as the site was now clear. However, the properties would still receive adequate levels of light (as supported in the sunlight assessment).

The proposal sought to provide 22% affordable housing. The tenure mix was explained. The viability of the scheme had been tested and the offer was considered acceptable following independent testing. Officers also explained the layout, amenity space, separation distances and car parking plans.

On balance, Officers considered that the scheme was acceptable and were recommending that the scheme should be granted.

The Chair then invited questions from Members, which covered the following issues:

- The design and its relationship with the surrounding buildings.
- The commercial space. There was some uncertainty about its eventual use given the large range of potential uses. Concern was expressed about this.
- The affordable housing, in particularly the social housing. It was noted that the offer fell short of policy. There was also an oversupply of small units and a lack of family units.
- The large number of small units and bedsits generally. Concern was expressed that they may be let out as short term lets to the detriment of community cohesion.
- The viability assessment.
- The scope of the consultation.
- The timescale for the contamination assessment.

Officers' responses included the following information

Officers were supportive of the contemporary design. Officers felt that it was of high quality and innovative with distinctive features. It would fit in with the surrounding buildings that were a mix designs. Various designs had been tested before choosing this one as the preferred option. There was a condition to ensure that the details of the design be submitted for approval. The site was not in the conservation area whilst near the Langdon Park conservation area.

The commercial space could be used for a range of uses. However this was found to be acceptable given the proximity to the District Town Centre. The consultation was carried out in line with the requirements with letters to households and site notice. The applicant also carried out a pre application consultation with the community.

There was a standard condition to require contamination testing prior to development to ensure any mitigation required. There were large family units at ground floor with a large public space. Officers were confident that the scheme would help create a sense of community.

The viability of the scheme was independently tested. A representative from the company that carried out that assessment was present to explain the testing. They explained that the scheme was robustly assessed taking into account such factors as property values for the area and market rents. Overall, it was found that the proposal was reasonable securing the best mix that could be provided. Officers listed average property prices for the area.

On a vote of 0 in favour and 5 against the officer recommendation and 2 abstentions, the Committee **RESOLVED**:

That the Officer recommendation to grant planning permission (PA/12/00637) at Land adjacent to Langdon Park Station, corner of Cording Street and Chrisp Street, 134-156 Chrisp Street, London E14 be **NOT ACCEPTED** for redevelopment of the site to provide a residential led mixed use development, comprising the erection of part 6 to 22 storey buildings to provide 223 dwellings and 129sqm of new commercial floorspace falling within use classes A1, A2, A3, A4, B1, D1 and/or D2, plus car parking spaces, cycle parking, refuse/recycling facilities and access together with landscaping including public, communal and private amenity space.

The Committee were minded to refuse the application due to concerns over:

- Height, design in relation to its lack of coherence with the surrounding area, bulk and scale of the scheme.
- Housing mix in relation to the high number of 1-2 bed and studio units.
- Lack of affordable housing particularly social housing.
- Overdevelopment.
- Size of the shop unit.
- Relationship/ lack of cohesion with the adjoining Langdon Park Conservation Area.

Concern were also expressed about use of the commercial floor space given the large range of potential uses.

In accordance with Development Procedural Rules, the application was **DEFERRED** to enable Officers to prepare a supplementary report to a future meeting of the Committee, setting out proposed detailed reasons for refusal, along with the implications of the decision.

(The Members that voted on this item were Councillors Helal Abbas, Bill Turner, Carlo Gibbs, Stephanie Eaton, Peter Golds Dr Emma Jones and Helal Uddin)

The meeting ended at 10.00 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Helal Abbas
Strategic Development Committee