

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 21 May 2020 at 5.30 p.m.

Online 'Virtual' Meeting - <https://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

UPDATE REPORT

This meeting is open to the public to attend.

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5 .3 Update report

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UPDATE REPORT, STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE. 21 May 2020

Agenda item no	Reference no	Location	Proposal / Title
5.1	PA/19/01760	Islay Wharf, Lochnagar Street	Demolition of existing warehouse building and redevelopment of the site for mixed use development comprising two blocks ranging in height between 12 storeys and 21 storeys, accommodating 351sqm of flexible uses classes (Class A1, A2, B1, D1, D2) on ground floor and mezzanine with associated public realm works and residential accommodation (Class C3) on the upper floors providing 133 residential units.

1.0 NEW REPRESENTATION

1.1 A further objection was received on 21st May 2020 from a resident in Hopwood Court, Leven Road, who has objected previously. The letter reiterates previous grounds for objection to the scheme, as below, which have been previously considered within the report.

- Height & scale of development
- Daylight and sunlight impacts

1.2 The letter raises the following further points:

- A loophole will allow 2x 21-storey blocks
- Social housing should be calculated by unit, not habitable room
- Social housing “ghettoised” in shorter 12-storey block
- Applicant did not engage with neighbours
- More 3-bed flats within the private block should be provided
- Affordable housing should be 50% by dwelling
- All affordable housing should be integrated with market housing

1.3 The above points area addressed within the officer’s report and presentation or do not constitute valid material planning considerations.

1.4 With regard to the concern raised pertaining to a perceived “loophole”, if planning permission is granted the development must be carried out in accordance with the approved plans, listed in the main report and controlled by a planning condition.

CLARIFICATIONS

2.1 Section 8.3 of the report should include the below non-financial planning obligations

- Affordable Housing
- Wheelchair Accessible Dwellings
- Accessible Residential Parking Spaces

- Public Realm Access

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Officer recommendation remains that planning permission should be GRANTED for the reasons set out in the main report and all conditions/obligations.

Agenda item no	Reference no	Location	Proposal / Title
5.2	PA/19/02837	55-56 Chamber Street, London, E1 8BL	Redevelopment of the former railway sidings and outbuilding, including demolition of outbuilding, to allow for mixed-use development in two buildings, comprising a part 10, part 11 storey building providing office floorspace (Use Class B1) at ground and first floor and serviced apartments (Use Class C1) on the upper floors and a 2 storey office building (Use Class B1).

1.0 NEW REPRESENTATIONS

- 1.1 An additional statement of support has been received on 19th May 2020 from a local resident.
- 1.2 In summary, the statement is in support of the scheme amendment to retain a section of bomb-damaged wall on the Chamber Street frontage. The statement also describes the following:
- An insight into the history of the bomb-damage caused during the Second World War to this part of East London.
 - The significance that the subject wall holds to the local community and to the story of the area.
 - The retention of the wall is an enhancement to the original design.

The full statement is appended to the end of this update report.

2.0 CLARIFICATIONS

- 2.1 The Financial Obligations within Chapter 8 of the report should be amended to the following in regards to the monitoring contributing:
- £1,500 monitoring fee

3.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Officer recommendation remains that planning permission should be GRANTED for the reasons set out in the main report and all conditions/obligations.

Appendix 1: Statement received from local resident (PA/19/01760)

The height of 21 storeys of at least one block is far too high, blocking daylight to Atelier Court, Nairn Rd and the other existing residential blocks.

The tower block would form a row of 5 or 6 tower blocks, as there is to be a block of 16 storeys in the Nairn Rd development adjacent to the left, and 3 tower blocks in the proposed former Poplar Bus garage to its right. These will combine to make a canyon along Leven Rd. The Poplar bus garage is no more than 4 storeys and Atelier Court is 4-5 storeys.

I could not at that time see any proposed proportion of social housing. Tower Hamlets want 50% social housing.

There is a further loophole with the original planning application: it allows 2 blocks between 12 and 21 storeys. This wording in theory allows the developer to build 2x 21-storey blocks, even though their current plan is 1x 21 storey and 1x 12 storey block.

Since the original consultation period deadline for comments on 24/9/19, LBTH planning dept has uploaded a document on 29/11/19 showing the planned mix of private to social housing. This shows 31 of 133 dwellings as social housing, or 23.3% social housing by dwelling. I think 'by dwelling' is the appropriate figure to use rather than 'by room'. the 'by room' figure is 37%, which still does not meet the LBTH target or the GLA London Plan figures, both 50%. The proportion of social housing needs to be increased, I say to 50% by dwelling.

In addition, all social housing dwelling is 'ghettoised' in the shorter Islay Wharf block. This is also a feature of the Poplar Bus Garage development. This says social housing is separate and inferior, and that you are just building a row of luxury tower blocks along the river. I say that private and social housing should be mixed together with equal social status.

I note in para 37 of the non-technical report that '[planning] applicants are encouraged to have continuing engagement with neighbours'. I see and have had no evidence of this.

In terms of 'family' accommodation, all bar 1x 3-bed flat is again ghettoised in the social housing block, with only 1x 3-bed flat for private sale. If this happens, it means the private sale blocks will be for more transient, lacking rootedness in the community, and possibly empty just as investments. You need more 3-bed flats in the private sector.

To sum up objections:

We need a lot more social housing which need to be integrated with flats for private sale

The tower blocks (bearing in mind it's part of a row of 5) need to be a lot shorter for less shadow, less canyoning and more integration with existing blocks.

In addition, in relation to cycling provision, I very much support emphasis on cycling in the plans, especially the foot and cycle bridge over the Lea which will be brilliant.

However there is a big block to all-round cycling access - on the other side, the A12 is possibly the most awful, un-cycle-friendly road in London. It is impossible to cycle up or down it and its 3 lanes each side create a massive barrier.

In the light of recent positive plans to close some main roads and devote lanes of others to cycling, I have emailed Sadiq Khan asking him to turn one lane each side of the A12 into a cycle lane.

Appendix 2: Statement received from local resident (PA/19/02837)

In February of this year, Historic England refused to list this site stating, “whilst the section of wall is undoubtedly of interest as a rare surviving example of substantial Second World War bomb damage in east London, it does not embody a clear and specific story”. I wanted to briefly tell one of the stories of this wall.

When I was a kid in the sixties attending Tower Hill School in Chamber Street, just yards from this site, I remember my dad telling me and my sisters the story of this wall as we passed by.

He showed us the shrapnel holes in the stonework and the gouged brickwork clearly showing the power of the Luftwaffe bombs which devastated this part of the East End north of the Docks. This is real history and the effects of those dark days in 1940 – 41 are still felt today. On the street where I live nearby one of the Peabody blocks took a direct hit in September 1940 killing 78 local residents. Many of their relatives are still around today and we remember them at a memorial on our street.

In due course, I told the same story my dad had told to me, to my own three daughters. I showed them the same wall and explained, as my dad had done, what it represented. We can ill afford to lose such direct and real links to the past and the lessons that they provide for us about preventing war and conflict.

After the permission to demolish was given by the council late last year, I made contact with the developer, Marldon.

I had already been in discussion with them about the preservation of another historical item at this location. Fortunately, Marldon recognised the point I made about the significance of this site and why I was asking that they make efforts to retain it.

Marldon’s first proposal - to re site the damage to an adjacent railway arch, meant it was likely to be fairly inaccessible and to lose its original context. At the same time, there was also a growing chorus of concern being voiced on Social Media about this potential loss.

Revisions were made, those which you are considering this evening, so that the wall (or at least parts of it) would be incorporated into the façade of the new building.

Though I recognise that we will lose some of the brickwork – part of the sections that show the angular spread of the blast, the proposal is one that I support because this bit of history is largely preserved in-situ.

With the proposal to add explanatory texts on an adjacent glass panel, people passing the site will better understand the meaning of this feature on the new building.

Having looked at the drawings, I also think it is a great enhancement to the original plain design – I hope Marldon agree!

So, despite Historic England’s rather dismissive attitude to this site. The “story” can now be passed on to new generations and we retain and give new prominence to one of the many historical features of our borough.

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