

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.30 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 10 AUGUST 2022

**COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT,
LONDON, E14 2BG**

Members Present:

Councillor Abdul Wahid (Chair)
Councillor Kamrul Hussain (Vice-
Chair)
Councillor Iqbal Hossain
Councillor Suluk Ahmed
Councillor James King

Officers Present:

Jerry Bell – (Area Planning Manager (East), Planning
Services, Place)
Katie Cooke – (Planning Officer, Place)
Diane Phillips – (Lawyer, Legal Services)
Zoe Folley – (Democratic Services Officer, Committees,
Chief Executive's Office)

Apologies:

Councillor Amina Ali
Councillor Amy Lee

**1. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND
OTHER INTERESTS**

Councillor Abdul Wahid declared a Non Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in agenda item 5.1, 42-44 Thomas Road, London, E14 7BJ (PA.21.02729). This was on the basis that he had visited the site.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

The Committee **RESOLVED**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12th July 2022 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. **RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROCEDURE FOR HEARING OBJECTIONS AND MEETING GUIDANCE**

The Committee **RESOLVED** that:

1. The procedure for hearing objections and meeting guidance be noted.
2. In the event of changes being made to recommendations by the Committee, the task of formalising the wording of those changes be delegated to the Corporate Director, Place along the broad lines indicated at the meeting; and
3. 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, Place be delegated authority to do so, provided always that the Corporate Director does not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision

4. **DEFERRED ITEMS**

There were none

5. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DECISION**

5.1 **42-44 Thomas Road, London, E14 7BJ (PA.21.02729)**

Update report published.

Jerry Bell introduced the application for the installation of gates and highlighted the contents of the update report

Kate Cooke presented the report advising of the following:

- The site and surrounds. The site was located in the Limehouse Cut Conservation Area
- Overview of the approved permission, for the wider development, including the s106 agreement, requiring the retention of the public open space, and submission of secure by design measures (condition 18)
- Key features of the proposed gates.
- Outcome of the statutory consultation. 53 representations were received in support and 1 in objection.
- The consultee responses. The Secure by Design Officer has noted the lack of compliance with the secure by design condition. This is being investigated. Whilst they considered that the installation of the gates would provide some deterrent, they had also expressed concerns about design features and wished to see further changes.]
- No objection to the design of the gates themselves however heritage concerns were had. By locating gates at the eastern and western ends,

access through the site and to the canal to the south would be restricted, in turn failing to provide a positive relationship between the existing building and the Cut. Given that the canal is considered an important part of the conservation area, which provides an area of open space, restricting access would not preserve or enhance the conservation area, and would fail to comply with policy.

- The access concerns. That proposal gates would restrict access to the Limehouse Cut Canal and access to water space, Limehouse Cut. Therefore, the proposal was contrary to policy as set out in the Committee report.
- The crime statistics. Officers noted a break down of reported crime in June 2022 for the Mile End ward, as detailed in the report. The results show that they were comparable to London as a whole. The site also fell outside of the crime hot spot areas. Overall, based on the level of recorded offences, officers did not consider that this site is of a particular high-risk area that would justify a departure from policy to allow the provision of the gates. Officers considered that in the long term the installation of gates would displace crime and they would encourage the applicant to look at other security measures.

Officers were recommending that the application was refused permission.

The Chair invited the registered speakers to address the Committee. David Hill, and Dr Andres L Mikkelsen, local residents, address the committee in support of the proposal highlighting the following points:

- Drug dealing and ASB was commonplace on land at the site.
- Given it's secluded nature, parts of the land are more commonly used for criminal activity, than public use.
- There had been a huge increase in crime since this site was opened, based on annual crime figures. The monthly crime figures underestimated the level of crime.
- There were other developments that had gates.

The Committee then asked questions of the Officers and the registered speakers around the following points:

- Precedence set by other developments in terms of installation of gates. It was noted that the Council assessed each case on it's merits and take a consistent approach in accordance with policy. In this case, it was seen as important to secure the public access to water space and the public right of way, in accordance with the s106 agreement for the wider proposal. If approved, the applicant would need to seek authority to vary this.
- Security issues. The supporters considered that other pathways in the area were also not accessible to the public. Therefore, the benefits of the proposal, in terms of increased security would outweigh the issues around access - given the existing restrictions. They also commented that they had taken a range of steps to attempt to prevent incidences which were noted, including installing CCTV, and that there had

recently been break-ins. The measures had done little to prevent problems. It was felt that the installation of gates would make the develop more secure and was a low cost solution.

- Crime statistics including the incidences of ASB. Officers confirmed that they had taken the statistics from the Metropolitan police website.
- The conflict with policy. Officers explained in further detail which polices the proposals breached.
- In summary the Committee felt that the installation of the gates was not the solution and other options to improve security should be explored. It was also considered that that it was important to preserve access to the canal and that more evidence would need to be presented to demonstrate that crime levels justify such measures. There were also concerns that this proposal could set a precedence.

On a unanimous vote the Committee **RESOLVED**:

That subject to any direction by the Mayor of London, conditional planning permission is **REFUSED** for the erection of three sets of gates to the existing building for the following reasons, as set out in the Committee Update report.

1. The proposed pedestrian access gates would restrict movement on a publically accessible space and would not promote socially inclusive and cohesive neighbourhood which is contrary to Policy D.DH2 of the Tower Hamlets Local Plan (2020 and Policies D3 and D5 of the London Plan (2021).
2. The proposed pedestrian access gates would restrict public access to water space, in the form of the Limehouse Cut, which is contrary to Policies S.OWS2 and D.OWS4 of the Tower Hamlets Local Plan (2020) and policy SI16 of the London Plan (2021).
3. The proposed pedestrian access gate would act to restrict access to the Limehouse Cut, which is a key open space within the Limehouse Cut Conservation Area, and hence would not preserve or enhance the character of the conservation area. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to Policy S.DH3 of the Tower Hamlets Local Plan (2020).

6. OTHER PLANNING MATTERS

None

The meeting ended at 7.30 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Abdul Wahid
Development Committee