

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS****MINUTES OF THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE****HELD AT 6.35 P.M. ON THURSDAY, 27 APRIL 2023****COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL****Members Present in Person:**

Councillor Abdul Wahid  
 Councillor Suluk Ahmed  
 Councillor James King  
 Councillor Amy Lee  
 Councillor Amin Rahman (substitute for Councillor Iqbal Hossain)

**Members In Attendance Virtually:**

Councillor Amina Ali

**Apologies:**

Councillor Iqbal Hossain (sent substitute)  
 Councillor Kamrul Hussain

**Officers Present in Person:**

Paul Buckenham (Head of Development Management, Planning and Building Control, Place)  
 Sally Fraser Team Leader (East)  
 Gareth Gwynne (Area Planning Manager (West), Planning and Building Control, Place)  
 Fran Haines (Planning Officer, Planning and Building Control, Place)  
 Nicholas Jehan (Planning Officer, Development Management – West Area)  
 Astrid Patil Planning Lawyer  
 Simon Westmorland (West Area Team Leader, Planning Services, Place)  
 Joel West (Democratic Services Team Leader (Committee))

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

Members declared interests in items on the agenda for the meeting as set out below:

| <b>Councillor</b> | <b>Item(s)</b> | <b>Type of interest</b> | <b>Reason</b>                    |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Amina Ali         | 5.2            | Other interest          | Lives close to application site. |

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| James King  | 5.2 | Other interest | Lives close to application site.                                       |
| Abdul Wahid | 5.2 | Other interest | Had been approached by various parties in relation to the application. |

## 2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

The Committee **RESOLVED**

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 30 March 2023 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

None

## 5. PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DECISION

### 5.1 PA/22/01049/A1 242 Hackney Road, London E2 7SJ

Paul Buckenham introduced the report for Construction of 2 storey roof extension to deliver 6no. residential apartments (use class C3), associated amendments to cycle parking and refuse store. New green roofs to existing flat roofs and proposed new roof. Installation of air source heat pumps and

solar PV panels to new flat roof. Recladding and replacement of other combustible materials.

Nicholas Jehan, Planning Officer, provided a presentation on the application. The Committee was reminded of the key features of the application, including photographs of the site and surrounds. The Officer's recommendation was to grant planning permission with conditions and planning obligation.

Further to questions from Committee Members, officers provided more information on:

- Previous planning inspectorate rulings on the application site and how they impacted the current application. Also, the issues identified by the planning inspectorate and how these had been addressed.
- The consultation process, numbers of objectors etc. It was noted it was not possible to establish the exact number of residents consulted, but there had been several consultation exercises which had included both LBTH and LB Hackney residents.
- Nature and precedent of the proposed London wide Santander cycle hire scheme which was indicated to be secured by legal agreement. Officers explained they were confident this obligation could be enforced.
- Anticipated disruption during construction phase and plans to mitigate it.
- Technical explanation of the refusal reason provided in the planning history section of the report that 'The site is located within 3km of the perimeter of an aerodrome'.
- Highways assessment of the scheme consideration loading bays, access for contractors etc. No objections from the highways team had been received.

Following questions to officers, Councillors debated the application and expressed concern that the proposal to provide cycle hire scheme access instead of dedicated cycle storage/parking was setting a dangerous precedent and may not fully comply with planning policies. Councillors suggested that the Local Plan could aim to strengthen this policy area in future revisions.

On a unanimous vote the Committee **RESOLVED** that planning permission is **GRANTED** for 242 Hackney Road for:

- Construction of 2 storey roof extension to deliver 6no. residential apartments (use class C3), associated amendments to cycle parking and refuse store. New green roofs to existing flat roofs and proposed new roof. Installation of air source heat pumps and solar PV panels to new flat roof. Recladding and replacement of other combustible materials,

Subject to the financial obligations, non-financial obligations, planning conditions and informatives as set out in the report.

## 5.2 PA/22/02551 7-15 Blount Street, London E14 7RL

Paul Buckenham introduced the report for demolition of the existing buildings on the site of 7-15 Blount Street, London E14 7RL and redevelopment to provide 106 purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) rooms, with associated internal and external amenity space and cycle parking, alongside commercial space at the ground floor level.

Fran Haines, Planning Officer, provided a presentation on the application. The Committee was reminded of the key features of the application, including photographs of the site and surrounds. The Officer's recommendation was to grant planning permission with conditions and planning obligation.

The Chair invited Shahunur Khan to address the meeting in objection to the application. Mr Khan highlighted the following:

Local residents had submitted a petition drawing attention to the adverse impact the proposal would have on environment, loss of sunlight and air, increased pressure on public services; that the proposed scheme would alter the characteristics of local area. Mr Khan indicated the petitioners felt the space could be utilised better, including being used to build more social housing. He also expressed concern around construction noise and pollution especially on elderly residents.

The Chair invited Martin Chalker and Tom Slingsby to address the meeting in support of the application. They highlighted the following:

- The proposal would secure Affordable Student accommodation and would enhance the site. The proposed provider was a registered charity. Comments from the consultation had been reviewed and taken into account when finalising the proposals for the application.
- The history, purpose and current operations of the proposed provider, Students House; how it worked closely with LBTH groups and partners; Its scholarships scheme and mechanisms to promote good behavior from its residents; and its community help and outreach programs. Martin explained the provider has only received one complaint with regards to student behavior.

Further to questions from Committee Members, officers provided more information on:

- Previous planning applications on the site and reasons why housing provision had not been approved.
- Application of policy provisions on height and distance from neighbouring buildings. How the assessment of informal surveillance had influenced officers' recommendation that the proposed distance would be acceptable.
- Anticipated noise from the construction and plans proposed to mitigate it.
- Security and noise concerns identified from the proposed use as student accommodation and the plans proposed to mitigate them.
- Balcony/terraces location, use and restrictions.
- Sunlight assessment and the relative weighting given to bedroom windows in the assessment.

- Future change of use. Officers noted that a request for change of use could not be ruled out, but any such request would be subject to a new application and would require planning permission.
- Assessment of the housing and affordable viability of the site taking into consideration the history of previous applications.
- Further detail of consultation responses and explanation of assessment that some petition signatories were outside the consultation area.

Further to questions from Committee Members, objectors provided more information on the main causes of their objections to the proposal. They explained they felt that the increased density and likely misbehaviour of student occupants would negatively impact the livelihood of residents, particularly the elderly, young and disabled residents.

Further to questions from Committee Members, the applicant's representative provided more information on:

- Security and noise concerns identified from the proposed use as student accommodation and the plans proposed to mitigate them.
- Track record of the provider in promoting good behaviour and sanctions in place to address any undesirable behaviour, including its zero tolerance approach to drugs.
- Wider benefits to be provided. Martin explained that Student House has a track record of outreach and engagement and strives for its students to become part of the local community.

Further to the above, officers asked the Committee to note that planning permission was linked to the application site, not the proposed operator and the application must be determined on its own merits.

Councillors debated the application and made the following points:

- Assuming student misbehaviour is wrong. Many students are committed to learning.
- The site could be better utilised for housing and/or affordable housing. The planning history had not demonstrated that housing on the site was not viable. The borough already had an oversaturation of student accommodation whereas social housing is in acute demand.
- Concern over the bulk and massing being out of character with the residential locality. There would be loss of light, privacy and amenity to neighbouring residents. Some members disagreed with officers assessment regarding the importance of bedrooms in assessments.
- Proximity of the building to neighbouring properties at around 1 meters is significantly below policy guidelines for 18 metres. Loss of privacy/light impacts will be significant.
- Concerns the use as student accommodation may attract undesirable activities such as drug dealing.

On a unanimous vote the Committee **RESOLVED** that planning permission is **REFUSED** for 7-15 Blount Street, London E14 7RL for:

- The demolition of the existing buildings on site and redevelopment to provide 106 purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) rooms, with associated internal and external amenity space and cycle parking, alongside commercial space at the ground floor level.

The reasons for the resolution to refuse were:

- Scale and density not in keeping with existing residential character of locality.
- Negative impacts on amenity through loss of daylight/sunlight
- Concerns of overlooking due to the proximity to neighbouring properties
- Impact on housing supply and concerns the development would compromise the supply land for self-contained housing.

## 6. OTHER PLANNING MATTERS

None.

The meeting ended at 8.40 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Abdul Wahid  
Development Committee