

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 12 JANUARY 2011

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

Members Present:

Councillor Carli Harper-Penman (Chair)

Councillor Judith Gardiner (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Peter Golds

Councillor Ann Jackson

Councillor Kosru Uddin

Councillor Stephanie Eaton

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Craig Aston

Councillor Oliur Rahman

Officers Present:

Owen Whalley	– (Service Head Planning and Building Control, Development & Renewal)
Ila Robertson	– (Applications Manager Development and Renewal)
Pete Smith	– (Development Control Manager, Development and Renewal)
Megan Nugent	– (Legal Services Team Leader, Planning, Chief Executive's)
Zoe Folley	– (Committee Officer, Democratic Services Chief Executive's)
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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Mohammed Abdul Mukit MBE.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Ann Jackson.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillor	Item(s)	Type of interest	Reason
Judith Gardiner	7.1	Personal	Former Councillor of the Limehouse ward
Peter Golds	7.1	Personal	Had dealt with routine Members enquiries and had received representations from residents of the area.
Kosru Uddin	7.1	Personal	Lives in ward concerned

3. UNRESTRICTED MINUTES

The Committee **RESOLVED**

That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15th December 2010 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 and those who had registered to speak at the meeting.

6. DEFERRED ITEMS

Nil items.

7. PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DECISION

7.1 Site at land adjacent to railway viaduct, Gill Street, E14

It was noted that Councillor Ann Jackson could not vote on this item as she had not been present during the entire consideration of the application.

Owen Whalley (Service Head Planning and Building Control Development and Renewal) introduced the item.

The Chair invited statements from persons who had previously registered to address the Committee.

Mr Geoff Sumnall spoke in objection. He had been asked by the Limehouse Community Forum to represent their concerns. The objections concerned loss of a community facility, open space and amenity issues.

He commented that the existing site provided a valuable area of open space. The new facility however would occupy 40% of the site. Therefore would result in a loss of open space, which was contrary to Council policy. In view of this he questioned whether the scheme could be relocated elsewhere.

He also objected to the access arrangements. Access would now be from an alternative point. Therefore would produce new movements along limited access routes.

Furthermore, the proposed number of visitors and vehicle activity at peak times would have a serious impact on the highway.

He considered that the plans to secure full community use should be agreed in consultation with the community before planning permission is granted. Otherwise this valuable community facility could be lost. He recommended that the application be refused.

Sister Christine Frost spoke in objection to the application. She stated that she was representing the SPLASH organisation. The key issue was the loss of the existing community facility. The portacabins were given to the community for community use in response to a local campaign. They were given to the community to compensate for the loss of a community space.

Ms Frost considered that the existing facility was well used by a diverse range of community groups and activities. (i.e. for children's parties, classes, Councillor's surgeries). She considered that women in particular found the existing facility very accessible and it was available to all faith groups. She queried whether the new community facility would be just as accessible to all groups. She questioned whether another site could be found for the existing community facility which was clearly run by and was for the community.

She feared that the community would lose a longstanding community facility.

Councillor Craig Aston spoke in objection to the application. He declared a personal interest in that he was the local ward Member and held his ward surgeries on this site. He also expressed concern over the loss of a community resource and resultant loss of community events there. He considered that the proposals didn't match the entire community's needs. He doubted the finding that the majority of visitors to the mosque would visit it by foot. Instead there would be traffic implications in the adjacent streets. The Council would be disposing of a valuable community resource for 'nothing'.

Mr Aun Qurashi (Applicant's Agent) spoke in support of the application. He drew attention to the Officers report. The report considered that the scheme would continue to provide a community facility with no adverse impacts and that it complied with policy. Therefore it should be granted.

Mr Qurashi considered that the community facility would be available for use to all community groups, and would provide a much better and larger community facility. It would be available at all times during opening hours save on Friday's during prayer. The only limitations would be anything incompatible with the mosque's activities. A large part of the site would be retained as green open space.

Ila Robertson (Applications Manager, Development and Renewal) presented the report. Ms Robertson explained the existing provision and uses and the new proposal. The application had been subject to a full public consultation as set out in the report. Officers addressed the main issues raised in objections around design, amenity, highways impacts, loss of existing community facility and impact on open space.

Officers considered that the design complied with policy and was in keeping with the area. Overall it marked an improvement on the existing building with no adverse impacts on the surrounding area. In terms of amenity impact, the travel survey indicated that the vast majority of visitors to the mosque would arrive on foot and the area was a controlled parking zone, so there would be no adverse highways impact. Furthermore there would be no loss of community floor space.

It was also noted that, whilst there would be a loss of estate grassed amenity land, this was not widely used for amenity purposes. On balance the loss of this space was considered acceptable given it would be for community space.

The applicant was happy to enter into an agreement securing wider community use of the hall by way of planning condition.

In summary the scheme complied with policy and therefore should be granted consent.

Officers also reminded the Committee that the issues around the disposal of the site were not relevant to this application and that the Committee should focus solely on the planning merits of the scheme.

In reply to the presentation, Members expressed concerns over loss of community space.

Accordingly, Members sought assurances that the community hall would be available to all community groups as at present. In particular they sought assurances that it would be accessible to women, all faiths groups and to a diverse range of groups. They considered that steps should be taken to secure such diversity of access.

Members also questioned:

- The term 'incompatible uses'. Asked that this be clarified.
- The ratio of male/female facilities. Number of disabled facilities.
- Adequacy of the waste storage facilities especially during Ramadan. Could an additional condition be added to deal with the waste produced at such peak times.
- Whether there were any issues between the current mosque and the activities of the existing portacabins.
- Measures to mitigate the loss of mature trees.
- The differences in planning terms between community and religious use and also whether there would be any business activity.

Concerns were also raised that the amplified call to prayer could be very noisy to neighbouring properties. It was also feared that there would be an increase in traffic/parking issues at peak times on Fridays.

In response to the questions, Officers clarified the following points -

- The application could only be used for religious/ community usages. Any proposal to use it for business purposes would be a change of use and require new planning permission.
- The building was designed for use by all groups. No element of the design excluded any group.
- The number and location of the male, female and disabled facilities.
- The awaited Management Plan. It was anticipated the Plan would identify and regulate hours and proposed usages. A key aim of which was to secure widespread community use of the hall equal to the existing provision.

With the permission of the Chair, Councillor Golds asked the Applicant to address the concerns around access to the hall.

In reply, the applicant's agent Mr Qurashi addressed the Committee for a further 3 minutes. He considered that all community uses and all faith events would be welcomed to use the hall. There were no plans for amplified calls to prayer. The proposed number of male/female facilities met the minimum requirement in building regulations.

Accordingly in view of the issues,

On a vote of 4 for and 1 against the Committee **RESOLVED**

That planning permission for the construction of a new mosque and community centre be **DEFERRED** pending the following:

- That a Management Plan be developed and presented to the Committee to address the issues around diversity of access which should at least be equivalent to existing uses.
- That a further condition be added to any planning consent to address the issues around the management of food waste.

8. OTHER PLANNING MATTERS

8.1 Columbia Market Nursery School, Columbia Road, London, E2 7PG

Update Report tabled.

Owen Whalley (Service Head Planning and Building Control Development and Renewal) introduced this item regarding the Columbia Market Nursery School, Columbia Road, London. The Committee were reminded that the Council was prohibited from granting itself listed building consent.

Therefore it was recommended that the application be referred to the Government Office for London for decision with a recommendation to grant approval.

Ila Robertson (Applications Manager, Development and Renewal) presented the report. The application sought consent to complete works not completed prior to listing.

In relation to the consultation, English Heritage had submitted comments as listed in the update report. The Applicant was happy to accept their comments and the changes could be made through condition

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

That the application for the Replacement of doors in main entrance; removal of window from rear entrance and replacement with doors be referred to the Government Office for London with the recommendation that the Council would be minded to grant Listed Building Consent subject to conditions as set out in the report.

8.2 Langdon Park Secondary School, Byron Street, London E14 0RZ

Owen Whalley (Service Head Planning and Building Control Development and Renewal) introduced this item regarding

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

That the application for the demolition of part of a the dining building, single storage sheds and a boundary wall to facilitate the partial re-development of the site be referred to the Government Office for London with the recommendation that the Council would be minded to grant Conservation Consent subject to conditions as set out in the report

The meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Carli Harper-Penman
Development Committee