

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON THURSDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2018

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

Members Present:

Councillor John Pierce (Chair)
Councillor Dan Tomlinson
Councillor Dipa Das
Councillor Kevin Brady
Councillor Val Whitehead
Councillor Rabina Khan

Apologies:

Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE
Councillor Zenith Rahman

Officers Present:

Paul Buckenham	(Development Manager, Planning Services, Place)
Gareth Gwynne	(Team Leader, Planning Services, Place)
Amanda Helliwell	(Legal Services, Governance)
Rikki Weir	(Planning Officer, Place Directorate)
Zoe Folley	(Committee Officer, Governance)

1. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillor Kevin Brady declared an Interest that must be registered (Other Interests) in item 5.1 Central House, 59 - 63 Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7PF (PA/18/01914) as a Trustee of Whitechapel Art Gallery that was near the site.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

The Committee RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Development Committee held on 25th October 2018 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) 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, Place 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, Place is delegated authority to do so, provided always that the Corporate Director does not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision
- 3) To note the procedure for hearing objections at meetings of the Development Committee and the meeting guidance.

4. DEFERRED ITEMS

There were no items.

5. PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DECISION

5.1 Central House, 59 - 63 Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7PF (PA/18/01914)

Paul Buckenham (Development Manager) introduced the application for the retention, refurbishment, extension and change of use of the vacant, existing building from an education facility to office accommodation with flexible units at ground floor.

Officer's presentation.

Rikki Weir (Planning Services) presented the application describing the existing site and the character of the area, including the nearby conservation areas and listed buildings.

The Committee were advised of the key features of the revised application, including images of the proposal in relation to the surrounding area and the Conservation Area and the proposed layout. Details of the issues raised in response to the consultation were covered in the report.

Regarding the land use, Officers considered that the loss of the education use was acceptable given the circumstances. The Greater London Authority (GLA) had confirmed there would be no net loss of education facilities due to

the relocation of the Holloway campus and the wider package of benefits including apprenticeship places. The provision of office space was consistent with the land use policy. 10% of which would be offered as affordable workspace. Up to 25% of the affordable workspace would be offered to local businesses on a first refusal basis at further discounted market rent. Overall, the provision exceeded the aspirational policy requirements.

The proposal would fit in well with its surroundings, given the design, involving: a recess above the sixth floor, the existing building being set back, and the stepped transition in height. This would help to break up the cluster and building massing amongst other issues.

The proposal would not adversely affect local views and the level of harm to the setting of the Conservation Area would be 'less than substantial'. Furthermore, it was considered that the merits of the proposal would outweigh any harm so the proposal was policy compliant.

Regarding the amenity issues, Officers were of the view that the impact on neighbouring properties and new developments (yet to be built) would be broadly acceptable in view of the circumstances. It was however noted that a number of properties would experience minor, moderate and major adverse losses of daylight and sunlight as a result of the development. The Committee noted details of the assessment as set out in committee report, together with the factors that ensured that the proposal was acceptable overall in regards to impact on amenity.

In Highways terms, the plans be would be acceptable including contributions for highway improvements.

Taking into account the merits of the proposals, Officers were recommending that it was granted permission.

Committee's Questions.

The Committee asked questions about the employment opportunities to be offered to local residents as part of the development. Officers confirmed that details of which would be secured in the legal agreement, including the measures requiring the developer to use best endeavours to ensure 20% of the construction work force would be local residents.

Regarding the affordable workspace, the Committee sought clarity on the policy criteria for such workspace and discussed the potential to increase the offer and how the plans would be enforced. The Committee also discussed the merits of providing the additional discount for local businesses instead of providing contributions for off-site affordable housing.

In response, Officers highlighted the requirements of the existing policy in terms of affordable work space and the weight that should be given to this policy. The Draft Local Plan introduced a new requirement. The plan stated that within major and commercial use schemes, at least 10% of the new

employment floor space should be provided as affordable space, where possible, based on the finding of the Tower Hamlets affordable work space study. The applicant's offer of 10% affordable workspace (90% of market rate) with 25% of this being available to local businesses at a further discount (75% of market rate) (as highlighted in the presentation) in place of the off-site contributions for affordable housing, went above and beyond the target in the draft plan. Council Officers had stressed the need for this to be delivered and stipulated that the 25% should be provided. The arrangements would be secured for the life of the development by the s106 agreement. The GLA were supportive of the proposals in terms of the affordable work space offer in view of the character of the area.

In response to questions about the loss of the education use, Officers highlighted some of the changes that had occurred in terms of higher education facilities and the policies in the London Plan. The policy sought to protect against the net loss of such facilities across the whole of London, rather than a particular area. Given the relocation of the campus to another site in London, the GLA were satisfied that education facilities on the site were no longer required, and that there would be no net loss of facilities across London.

In response to further questions, it was noted that the roof terrace would be accessible to all tenants, but there would be no public access to the terrace due to security issues. Officers had engaged with the Council's Urban Design Team regarding the landscaping measures and the need for additional soft landscaping on the upper floors that could be viewed from the street scene. Officers confirmed that there would be opportunities to secure this and they would work to secure this, in agreeing the details of the s106 agreement.

In response to questions about impact on heritage assets, it was confirmed that the issues primarily related to the loss of views and the scale of the development in close proximity to heritage assets. Given the design of the proposal and the plans to retain the existing building as well as the merits of the scheme, Officers reached the conclusion that any harm caused would be less than substantial.

Regarding the sunlight and daylight impacts, it was noted that the impacts had been fully assessed against the relevant tests as detailed in the report, including the impacts on the proposed development, Aldgate Place Block B. The Committee heard from the Council's independent expert who reviewed the Applicant's Daylight Sunlight report and carried out an independent analysis of the application site. The independent expert also explained the methodology used for the assessment, particularly focusing on the tests for developments yet to be built, and provided reassurances about the results.

In response to further questions, Officers also discussed with the Committee, the condition to secure the retention of the public art and the blue badge car parking space.

The Committee also discussed issues regarding the land value of the site and the adequacy of the s106 contributions. Officers confirmed that the requirement to submit a financial viability assessment only applied to residential developments, not commercial developments and provided clarification regarding the s106 contributions which would be secured by this application.

On a vote of 6 in favour, 0 against and 0 abstentions, the Committee **RESOLVED:**

1. That subject to any direction by the London Mayor, Planning permission is **GRANTED** at Central House, 59 - 63 Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7PF for the retention, refurbishment, part-four and part-five storey side extension, six storey upward extension and change of use of the vacant, existing building from an education facility (D1 use class) to office accommodation (B1a use class) with flexible units (A1/A2/A3/A4/D1/D2 use classes) at ground floor (PA/18/01914) subject to:
 2. The prior completion of a legal agreement to secure the planning obligations set out in the report.
 3. That the Corporate Director of Place has delegated power to negotiate the legal agreement indicated above. If by the date nominated in the Planning Performance Agreement the legal has not been completed, the Corporate Director Place is delegated power to refuse planning permission.
 4. That the Corporate Director Place has delegated power to impose conditions and informatives on the planning permission to secure the matters set out in the report and the additional condition in the update report regarding measures to prevent overlooking from windows

The meeting ended at 8.05 p.m.

Chair, Councillor John Pierce
Strategic Development Committee