

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

HELD AT 7.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2018

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

Members Present:

Councillor Marc Francis (Chair)
Councillor Asma Begum
Councillor Md. Maium Miah
Councillor Shafi Ahmed
Councillor Danny Hassell (Substitute for Councillor David Edgar)
Councillor John Pierce (Substitute for Councillor Sirajul Islam)
Councillor Muhammad Ansar Mustaqim (Substitute for Councillor Gulam Robbani)
Councillor Peter Golds (Substitute for Councillor Julia Dockerill)

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Andrew Wood

Apologies:

Councillor David Edgar
Councillor Sirajul Islam
Councillor Gulam Robbani
Councillor Julia Dockerill

Officers Present:

Paul Buckenham	(Development Manager, Planning Services, Place)
Kirsty Gilmer	(Principal Planning Officer, Place)
Brian Hurwitz	(Legal Advisor)
Zoe Folley	(Committee Officer, Governance)

1. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made

2. 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.

3. DEFERRED ITEMS

None

4. PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DECISION

4.1 The Former Royal London Hospital, Whitechapel Road, London (PA/17/02825 (Full Planning Permission) & PA/17/02828 (Listed Building Consent))

Paul Buckenham (Development Manager) introduced the application for planning permission and listed building consent for part-demolition, alterations and refurbishment of the former Royal London Hospital building to provide a new Tower Hamlets Council Civic Centre

Kirsty Gilmer (Planning Services) presented the application describing the appearance of the Grade II listed former hospital building within the London Hospital Conservation Area, and opposite the Whitechapel Market Conservation Area. Members were also reminded of the key features of the surrounding area including the location of the new Royal London Hospital and the nearby Whitechapel Station

It was noted that the application had been subject to three rounds of consultation, resulting in one representation in support from Queen Mary University of London. No representations in objection from residents or the National Amenity Societies had been received. The Committee also heard about the pre-application engagement held between planning officers and the applicant's team. In response to the comments raised, the applicant had made a number of changes to the application to retain the façade of the Grocer's wing and had reduced the height of the proposal to minimise the impact of the proposal.

The Committee noted the key features of the application proposal including: the height, massing, design of the proposal in relation to the local context. The Committee were also advised of the proposed layout including: the internal configuration, the access arrangement and the public realm improvements. These plans would improve permeability through the site and the public use of the building.

In heritage terms, the plans and the views had been assessed to ensure that they met the tests in relation to the NPPF policies. In terms of the findings, it was noted that: the new building would integrate well to the host building and would be lower in height than the new hospital building. The height and massing would relate well to the surrounding buildings. The development would only be visible from a limited number of views and be barely visible in long range views from Whitechapel Road. The proposal would not detract from the setting of surrounding statutory and local listed buildings and overall would enhance their setting. Therefore, it was considered that the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to heritage assets and that the public benefits of the application would outweigh any harm identified.

It was considered that there would be adequate separation distances to the surrounding buildings and the proposal would have a negligible impact on sun light and daylight to the surrounding properties. The site had excellent transport links. There would be no car parking on site with the exception of the provision of two Blue Badge Spaces. A Delivery and Servicing Plan would be secured by condition. The access arrangements for the site had been assessed by the highway experts and subject to a stage I Road Safety Audit. The submitted plans of the junction design would be given further consideration and finalised at the detailed design stage. The Committee were also advised of the cycle parking plans and that TfL and Highways considered that the plans were acceptable subject to the conditions.

Overall, the proposals would bring back into use a heritage asset and deliver a range of public benefits. On balance, Officers considered that the scale of the public benefits would outweigh the less than substantial harm to the building itself. Officers were therefore recommending that the application be granted planning permission and listed building consent.

In response, the Committee asked questions about the planning obligations, especially the commitment regarding 20% local jobs/good/services at the construction phase. It was questioned whether this could be increased. It was reported that the proposal met the Council's Planning Obligations SPD 2016. With the permission of the Chair, the applicant's team provided assurances that they intended to meet and, if possible, exceed this target.

Members also asked questions about the car parking plans. Members questioned the adequacy of the amount proposed given the expected footfall for a civic office building. It was also questioned if the number of accessible car parking spaces met the requirements in terms of equalities. Officers advised that there had been a considerable amount of discussion with the applicant's team about this and they had made clear that they intended to

provide parking spaces in Watney Market for essential car users (in addition to the two accessible spaces on site). The applicant would continue to work with TfL and Highways to secure the additional off site car parking. It was also reported that the policy generally supported car free developments and the proposal exceeded the policy requirements in terms of the provision of accessible parking.

Members also expressed comments about the layout of the office accommodation, particularly the concentration of wheelchair user space in one part of the building. Officers explained the reasons for the proposed layout. They considered that there would be ample opportunity to provide such desk spaces within the development and also emphasised that the plans were indicative at this stage.

The Committee also asked questions about the reinstatement of the chapel windows. The applicant's team advised that this did not form part of the application given the costs involved. However, the applicant would take steps to secure other potential restoration funding sources to reinstate the windows.

Questions were also asked about the separation distances to the hospital and the potential for overlooking to patient areas given the points raised by Barts Health NHS Trust. Officers advised that there was no planning guidance in respect of separation distances between commercial developments. However, Officers were satisfied that, in this instance, they would be of a sufficient width to ensure there would be no overlooking. Furthermore, the difference between the floor levels should prevent overlooking. The applicant's team had also advised that further engagement would be held with Barts regarding the issues raised.

Regarding the comments from the Metropolitan Police, it was noted that the applicant's team had engaged with the Police to understand their concerns and that there would be a condition requiring that the proposal gain a Secure by Design accreditation

The Committee also asked questions about the demolition of the west wing, the Grocer's wing and the south-west wing and why they were viewed as having less historic significance. In response, Officers reminded Members of the appearance of these buildings. It was considered that due to the scale of the modifications internally and externally, they had lost a lot of their original significance. It was also noted that the historic elements of the building would be restored and refurbished (including the façade of the Grocer's Wing, the former Mansard Roof, the Portico and Chapel extension) to restore the building's grandeur. There would also be a condition on the listed building consent to require that any historic fabric found on site should be retained.

Members also asked questions about the loss of open space, in view of the issues around the delivery of the London Square (relating to the rear of the site). Officers reported that there had been a lot of discussion with the applicant about these issues. It was noted that there would be some theoretical loss of open space given the location of the new building within an

area with planning permission for open space. However, it was noted that the proposal would deliver a significant amount of public open space to the front of the site (with the ground floor level also being publicly accessible). The combination of this additional public open space and regeneration benefits would outweigh any theoretical loss. Furthermore, it was planned that the London Square proposal would come forward as a separate application and the applicant had jointly agreed a memorandum of understanding with Barts to deliver this. Cabinet had also agreed CIL funding for the London Square to ensure its delivery.

Officers also responded to questions about the signage for the front of the development and it was noted that the consultees would have been aware of this at the consultation stage.

On a vote of 7 in favour 0 against and 1 abstention, the Committee **RESOLVED:**

1. That Planning permission and Listed Building Consent be **GRANTED** at The Former Royal London Hospital, Whitechapel Road, London for

Full Planning Permission:

Partial demolition, including removal of the remaining west wing and the grocer's wing (behind retained facade), alteration and refurbishment of the former Royal London Hospital and erection of a part four-storey and part seven-storey extension (including partial basement) to provide a new Tower Hamlets Council Civic Centre, comprising; office space (Use Class B1) on upper floors; a library and other customer facing functions (Use Class D1), council chamber, conference, exhibition and/or function space (Sui Generis) and an ancillary café on the ground floor; bicycle-parking spaces, refuse store and associated facilities within the basement; blue badge car-parking spaces, a new sub-station, landscaping and associated works

Listed Building Consent:

Part-demolition, alterations and refurbishment of the former Royal London Hospital building including: retention and repair of the front and rear facades (including 1895 Portico and front Chapel extension); Removal of existing redundant pipework and wiring from facades; Demolition of existing south-west wing; Demolition of Grocer's Wing (behind retained façade at first, second and third floor level) and facsimile reconstruction of mansard roof, dormer windows and chimneys; repair and replacement of all existing windows; Internal reconfiguration and refurbishment works including opening up and removal of internal walls and partitions; and the installation of connecting 'bridge' links to a part four-storey and part seven-storey extension (including partial basement) at the rear of the building. All in connection with the proposed redevelopment and change of use of the building to provide new Tower Hamlets Civic Centre

SUBJECT TO::

2. Any direction by The Mayor of London.

3. That the Corporate Director of Place is delegated power to negotiate the legal agreement indicated above acting within normal delegated authority.
4. That the Corporate Director of Place has delegated authority to recommend the conditions and informatives in relation to the matters set out in the Committee report for Full Planning Permission:
5. That the Corporate Director of Place has delegated authority to recommend the conditions and informatives in relation to the matters set out in the Committee report for Listed Building Consent:

The meeting ended at 8.10 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Marc Francis
Strategic Development Committee