

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.00 P.M. ON WEDNESDAY, 22 JULY 2020

ONLINE 'VIRTUAL' MEETING - [HTTPS://TOWERHAMLETS.PUBLIC-I.TV/CORE/PORTAL/HOME](https://towerhamlets.public-i.tv/core/portal/home)

Members Present:

Councillor John Pierce (Chair)
Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Sabina Akhtar
Councillor Kevin Brady
Councillor Rabina Khan
Councillor Tarik Khan
Councillor Zenith Rahman
Councillor Dipa Das (Substitute for Councillor Val Whitehead)

Other Councillors Present:

None

Apologies:

Councillor Val Whitehead

Officers Present:

Akhlaqul Ambia	– (Planning Services, Place)
Jerry Bell	– (Area Planning Manager (East), Planning Services, Place)
Paul Buckenham	– (Development Manager, Planning Services, Place)
Julian Buckle	– (Planning Officer, Place)
Gisselle Casio	– (Housing Development Officer, Place)
Rachel Mckoy	– (Head of Commercial & Contracts, Legal Services, Governance)
Jen Pepper	– (Affordable Housing Programme Manager, Place)
James Woolway	– (Planning Officer, Place)
Zoe Folley	– (Committee Officer, Governance)

1. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest reported

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

RESOLVED:

1. That the minutes of the meeting of the Strategic Development Committee held on 17 June 2020 be agreed as a correct record

3. RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROCEDURE FOR HEARING OBJECTIONS AND MEETING GUIDANCE

To RESOLVE 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 Strategic Development Committee.

4. DEFERRED ITEMS

There were none

5. PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DECISION

5.1 Former Poplar Bus Depot, Leven Road, London, E14 0LN (PA/19/02148)

Update report was tabled.

Paul Buckenham (Development Manager, Planning Services, Place) introduced the application for retention of historic fabric and part demolition of the existing structures to provide a residential led development. The Officers recommendation was to grant the application. The update report covers a number of issues, including the results of the updated sunlight and daylight assessment.

Julian Buckle (Planning Officer, Place) presented the report, describing the site location, the evolving character of area and a historic timeline of the site. He also explained the key features and the merits of the scheme.

Consultation has been carried out on the proposal. The key consultees including, the Greater London Authority, TfL, Environment Agency and the Council's Building Control Service has no objections to the application subject to the conditions. In response to the consultation, 14 letters of objections were received about amenity impacts, the level of affordable housing, lack of open space, design and impact on highways, and these issues were set out in the Committee report.

In terms of the assessment it was noted that

- In land use terms, the provision of a mixed use development, with the retention of historic features complied with policy. The Ailsa Street Site Allocation and Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Area Planning Framework support high-density mixed used development in this location. Whilst it was noted that the proposal would result in a net reduction in employment floorspace, on balance this would be acceptable given the quality of the new floorspace. 20% of this floorspace would be provided at a rate of 20% the market rent, exceeding the policy target. The new workspace could support a range of business types.
- The scheme proposes 35% affordable housing by habitable room, with a 60/40 split in favour of affordable rent. Whilst this tenure split represented a deviation in policy, overall the proposal would achieve a good level of affordable housing
- The height, massing, and scale of the proposed buildings are considered to appropriately respond to the emerging local context. The quality of the design, the material and architecture is considered to be of an exceptional standard.
- It is considered on balance the scheme's impacts on amenity would be acceptable. Whilst some neighbouring properties would see an appreciable reduction in daylight, (notably Atelier Court), it was considered that this will be outweighed by the benefits of the proposals (such as the improvement in outlook, the wider enhancements to the public realm and overall living standards). It was noted that the design of some of the existing properties already restricted daylight to those properties.
- The development would lead to less than substantial harm to nearby designated heritage assets. However, it was considered any harm caused would be outweighed by the public benefits of the scheme, including the plans to frame the historic features of greatest significance. The proposal would have no impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the Greenwich Maritime World Heritage Site.

- A range of contributions have been secured and these were noted.

The Chair invited the registered speakers to address the Committee:

Mohamed Abdillahi and Paul Murphy expressed concerns about the following issues:

- Poor design.
- Overdevelopment of the site given the number of existing and proposed developments in the area.
- Daylight/sunlight impacts for neighbouring residents, particularly Hopwood Court from the increased massing, especially given the limited sunlight on Leven Road. In some instances, it would reduce daylight and sunlight by up to 40%
- To reduce this, the massing and height should be reduced
- That the eight storey blocks at D and E near the garage arches was too tall. It would dwarf the arches and should be reduced.
- Air quality issues for future residents, as air quality in the area was already poor.
- Noise levels from construction work.
- Lack of affordable housing given that it fell short of the GLA's aspirations of 50%.
- Housing segregation.
- A lack of community open space.
- The narrowing of the road size and the impact of this on emergency access.
- Lack of consideration to the results of the consultation.

Matthew Gibbs spoke in support of the application on behalf of the applicant. The application had been widely consulted on and the applicant had worked with the Islay Wharf developers to coordinate the design of two developments, and provide a continuous walkway for example. The developer had also worked with Officers to modify the height and layout of the scheme to minimise amenity impacts on neighbouring properties. The benefits of the scheme included: the provision of affordable housing at 35% of the housing mix, (increased from 30%) a range of business uses including affordable work space, public spaces and the retention of the historic features.

Committees questions to Officers

In response to question from Members the following issues were discussed.

- The level of affordable housing, given the overprovision of smaller units and slight under provision of 3 bed units. It was noted that, balancing the merits of scheme, the development should still provide a good level of housing. The housing mix had been altered during the course of the application.
- The 60/40 housing split given the 70/30 policy target. The Committee noted the need to look at viability of the scheme. Given this,

compliance with this target is not always possible. The viability report had been accessed and verified by the Council's viability officers and external consultants.

- Regarding the quality of the affordable housing, they would be of high residential quality, and architecturally of a the same quality as the market housing
- Details of the affordable rent products and that they complied with policy.
- Housing segregation concerns, and the issues around mixing the typologies. Officers provided reassurances that the occupants would have equal access to the amenity space.
- The daylight reductions, particularly affecting the ground floor at Hopwood Court and Atelier Court. The Committee noted images from the presentation clarifying the impact, and that these impacts were partly due to site circumstances. Any re-development of the existing site as a low lying warehouse would have some impacts
- On balance it was found that these impacts were acceptable and that it was difficult to prevent any impacts on the lower levels of the affected buildings when the site is redeveloped.
- That the scheme had been designed to minimise impacts through such measures as setting back the proposal from Leven Road and locating the taller elements and massing where there was greater opportunity for height and ensuring relief from the taller elements
- There would be bollards to restrict vehicular access at the northwest point of the site, but members of the public would have access to the riverside. There were no plans to install gates and the S106 will ensure unrestricted public access.
- Fire safety issues and access to the site. Following the submission of a Fire Safety Statement, the Council's Building Control Service were satisfied with the scheme, subject to the conditions.
- The indoor play space area. It was noted that the proposal would provide a generous level of play space for 0 - 4 ages and 5-11 ages, above the policy requirements. Officers had discussed at length the shortfall in over 12 play space. An indoor area would be secured by the s106 for all the residents, and overall, there would be a good provision of child play space.
- The height of the scheme has been determined through a number of factors, principally the need to defer from Islay Wharf as the landmark building but also to transition from tall buildings within the site allocation and opportunity area to within the existing urban grain. The site is outside of a tall building zone and must therefore accord with the emerging and existing townscape in terms of height, providing transition to the historic fabric also.

Committee's questions to Applicant's representative

In response to questions about the local benefits and the accessibility of the indoor play area to the public, particularly youth groups, it was noted that:

- The Applicant had looked closely at the use of employment space from the viewpoint of providing opportunities for the local groups particularly the local fashion cluster. Mr Gibbs underlined the Applicant's commitment to further explore this and future use of the internal play space by community groups.

On a vote of 6 in favour and 2 against the Committee **RESOLVED:**

1. That, planning permission is **GRANTED** at Former Poplar Bus Depot, Leven Road, London, E14 0LN for the following development
 - Part retention and part demolition of the existing boundary walls and the former tram shed depot arches, and retention of the three storey office building. Demolition of the remainder of the existing warehouse and the redevelopment of the site to provide 530 residential units (Class C3), 2644sqm (GIA) of workspace (Classes B1a, B1b, or B1c), 508sqm (GIA) of flexible retail; professional services; and restaurant/bar uses (Classes A1, A2, A3, A4), within buildings ranging from 3 storeys (20.2m AOD) to 20 storeys (72.7m AOD), with associated parking, landscaping, public realm and all associated works. (PA/19/02148)

Subject to:

2. The prior completion of a legal agreement to secure the planning obligations set out in the Committee report and the additional non financial contributions set out in the update report.
3. That the Corporate Director of Place is delegated the power to impose conditions and informatives to address the matters set out in the Committee report

3.1 **Land Under The DLR Bounded By Scouler Street And Aspen Way And Prestage Way, Aspen Way, London (PA/19/02292)**

Update report was tabled.

Paul Buckenham (Development Manager, Planning Services, Place) introduced the application for the provision of a 342-room, part-24 part-17 storey, apart-hotel, eight workspace units, new bus loop/stand, new youth play area, and public realm works. It was noted that the update report detailed amendments to the non financial planning obligations and updated conditions.

James Woolway (Planning Officer, Place) presented the report, describing the site location, and surrounds. The development sought to redevelopment and integrate seamlessly with the 2012 Blackwall Reach Master Plan replacing the

Blocks P and Q with the provision of infrastructure and road network. He described the key features of the scheme, the outcome of the consultation and the representations received.

In terms of the assessment, it was noted that

- In land use terms, the site had good transport links given its proximity to the Blackwall DLR Station and associated bus services providing immediate access to Canary Wharf and City of London.
- The proposal should not lead to an overconcentration of short stay accommodation given its proximity to other hotels in the area, given they were all conventional hotels.
- It was felt that this site was less suited to residential development given the air quality conditions due to its proximity to Aspen Way and the elevated DLR viaduct to the south of the site.
- In view of this, the provision of a high density apart hotel development complied with policy.
- The applicant had provided evidence (a residential re-delivery exercise) to show that the 73 residential units associated with Blocks P and Q of the previous consent, could be accommodated within the balance of the Masterplan in view of the site's inability to provide housing on site. This proposal sought to deliver the infrastructure for this housing and should not compromise the residential units future delivery
- The height, massing and design is considered to respond appropriately to its context within a Tall Building Zone and Opportunity Area. The proposal had been developed with and reviewed by the Council's Conservation and Design Advisory Panel and they raise no objections to the application on heritage grounds.
- The development would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of the Conservation Area and it was considered that it should contribute to the backdrop of the buildings in its setting.
- The development sought to provide a wide range of landscaping enhancements included the following: improved public realm, the delivery of a large high quality youth play area. The proposal would deliver biodiversity enhancements.
- The Highway improvement works, and the new bus loop have been developed in consultation with Transport for London, the GLA and Borough Highways Officers and will be secured by way of S106 legal agreement.
- The sunlight and daylight impacts have been assessed. Whilst the results varied, as detailed in the report, they were mostly minor in nature in respect of the existing residential accommodation and the consented parameter blocks of the Blackwall Reach Masterplan. Details of the properties mostly affected were noted. On balance the

impacts were considered to be acceptable, taking into account the merits of the application.

- A significant amount of financial and no financial contributions had been secured

Committees questions to Officers

In response to question from Members the following issues were discussed.

- The merits of the design and the choice of colour. The developments appearance and materials should provide a welcome point of contrast with the existing buildings.
- The management of the youth play area. Steps will be taken to provide a safe public area through the use of such measures as the provision of passive overlooking, enhancements in lighting, and ensuring that it gained a Secure by Design Accreditation.
- The site constraints, and the issues around the site's inability to provide residential units on site.
- It was emphasised that the residential study showed that the 73 units could be absorbed into the balance of Phase 4 that this scheme will deliver infrastructure to support the housing

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

1. That planning permission is **GRANTED** at Land Under The DLR Bounded By Scouler Street And Aspen Way And Prestage Way, Aspen Way, London for the following development.
 - 342-room, part-24 part-17 storey, apart-hotel (C1 Use Class), eight workspace units (B1 Use Class), new bus loop/stand, new youth play area, and public realm works(PA/19/02292)
2. subject to the prior completion of a legal agreement to secure the planning obligations set out in the Committee report and the amendments to the non financial planning obligations set out in the update report
3. That the Corporate Director of Place is delegated the power to negotiate the legal agreement. If within three months of the resolution the legal agreement has not been completed, the Corporate Director for Place is delegated power to refuse planning permission.
4. That the Corporate Director of Place is delegated the power to impose the amended conditions set out in the update report.

The meeting ended at 7:55PM

Chair, Councillor John Pierce
Strategic Development Committee