

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.34 P.M. ON MONDAY, 9 DECEMBER 2024

COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, WHITECHAPEL

Members Present:

Councillor Jahed Choudhury - (Chair)
Councillor Iqbal Hossain - (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury
Councillor Kamrul Hussain
Councillor Shahaveer Shubo Hussain
Councillor Kabir Hussain
Councillor Amin Rahman

Officers Present:

Paul Buckenham – (Head of Development Management, Planning and Building Control)
Gareth Gwynne – (Area Planning Manager (West), Planning and Building Control)
Ian Austin – (Principal Lawyer for Planning)
Justina Bridgeman – Democratic Services Officer (Committee)
Ronan Murray – (Principal Planning Officer)
Simon Westmorland – (Team Leader Development Manager, West Area, Planning and Building Control)

Officers Present Virtually:

Robin Bennett – (Principal Planning Officer)

1. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

Although no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests were made; the following Members received emails from residents regarding the submitted applications: Councillor Iqbal Hossain, Councillor Amin Rahman, Councillor Shubo Hussain, Councillor Gulam Kibria Choudhury and Councillor Kamrul Hussain.

Councillor Kamrul Hussain also noted that he is a Member of the Whitechapel Art Gallery but was not involved in any discussions regarding item 5.2.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

The minutes of the Strategic Development Committee meeting held on 13 November 2024 were approved and signed by the Chair. The minutes of the meeting held on 25 November will be submitted at a future meeting.

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 Housing and Regeneration 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 Housing and Regeneration 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 for the Strategic Development Committee.

4. DEFERRED ITEMS

There were no deferred items for consideration.

5. PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DECISION

5.1 PA/24/01229: Royal Mint Court, London, EC3N 4QN

Update Report noted.

Paul Buckenham introduced the applications for the redevelopment of the site to provide an embassy (Sui Generis use class), involving the refurbishment and restoration of the Johnson Smirke Building (Grade II listed), partial demolition, remodelling and refurbishment of Seaman's Registry (Grade II listed), with alterations to the west elevation of the building, the retention, part demolition, alterations and extensions to Murray House and Dexter House, the erection of a standalone entrance pavilion building, alterations to the existing boundary wall and demolition of substation, associated public realm and landscaping, highway works, car and cycle parking and all ancillary and associated works.

Mr Buckenham informed the Committee that on 14 October 2024, the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government, Rt Hon Angela Rayner, requested that these applications be referred to her for consideration. A local inquiry will be held on 11 February 2025 for approximately eight days. The Committee were requested to confirm to the Secretary of State, that had the Council had the opportunity to determine the applications;

- Planning Permission would have been granted subject to planning conditions and obligations, and
- Listed Building Consent would have been granted subject to conditions.

After the Committee has made its decision, the Secretary of State will be notified.

Ronan Murray, Principal Planning Officer, provided a presentation to accompany the application, including the location, road network, surroundings, neighbouring residential estate and existing buildings, two of which are Grade II listed. Mr Murray then gave background details on the site and noted that planning permission was granted in 2017 for an office-led redevelopment but it was not implemented and permission expired in 2020.

In 2021, an application was submitted for use as an Embassy and Officers recommended the Strategic Development Committee to grant it. This was refused by the Committee in 2022. This current application is identical to the previous one. At that time reasons for refusal were noted as:

- Adverse impacts on safety and security, which would place increased strain on local police resources.
- Adverse impacts on local tourism due to concerns over the effect of potential protests, acts of terrorism and related security mitigation measures on the backdrop of national significant tourist attractions.
- Increased congestion of the local highway network, vehicular and pedestrian activity, due to potential protests and events.

- Adverse impacts on heritage related assets, as a result of potential protests, acts of terrorism and related security mitigation measures.

The Committee affirmed that although the aforementioned reasons for refusal for the 2021 application are a material planning issues for Officers, there has been no sufficient evidence to support these reasons. No clear evidence has been presented that an Embassy Land use would cause these adverse impacts.

Mr Murray outlined the proposed design, which is smaller than the initial application and has better views of the listed building. The Committee were then informed of the main issues regarding the proposal, which include:

- Public Consultation
- Land Use
- Heritage and Design
- Public Safety and Security
- Neighbour Amenity
- Highways and Transport
- Environment
- Previous Refusal of Identical Proposal

Mr Murray noted that this application has attracted a lot of public interest since the public consultation issued in June 2024. The consultation zone was extended for this application Five site notices were erected and 1,017 letters were sent to neighbouring properties. 246 letters of support were received and 273 letters and two petitions in objection.

Background papers related to planning considerations raised during the public consultation were noted. This included but not limited to; the impact on highways network, the impact on surroundings from protests and terrorism, the restoration of historic buildings and environmental benefits.

Details on Land use for the new proposal were given, as the site is within the London Plan Central Activity zone and the proposal seeks to change the use of the site to an Embassy. Mr Murray stated that this application does not grant permission for a particular nation as this site could be used for any nation in the future, without requiring planning permission. This proposal complies with the Council's development plan.

The Committee heard how the proposal would improve local heritage sites, as the scheme has been designed to preserve and enhance the character of the conservation area and is deemed acceptable in heritage and design. Details on archaeological ruins, Monastery remains and the first Black Death Plague burial site, located within the grounds and underneath the listed buildings were noted and how they would be preserved and viewed to the public.

Members were informed that there would be less than substantial harm attributed to these historical ruins if permission was granted. In fact it would provide a public benefit and deemed acceptable and compliant.

The presentation included details on public safety and security and noted the Metropolitan Police Services (MPS) objections to the proposal, including congestion to the highway network and high level, unmanaged protests. A 'Pedestrian Capacity Assessment' has been submitted by the applicant, which showed capacity for approximately 2,000 people in the front of the building. This has been reviewed by the Transport for London (TfL) and its conclusions were agreed. There has been no evidence to indicate that Embassy Land Use will result in unmanageable protest levels.

Officers have had numerous discussions with the MPS, TfL, the Council's Community Safety Teams and residents regarding public safety and security and have devised several measures to mitigate unmanageable protests. These include:

- Event/Protest Management Plan
- The storage of protest control barriers on site for use by MPS
- The provision of two parking spaces for MPS
- Hostile Vehicle Mitigation bollards around public realm
- CCTV financial contribution
- Royal Ming Green financial contribution
- Street lighting and refuse bin review and possible replacement
- Improvements to St Mary Grace's Court access.

The Committee then heard details on neighbourhood amenities, highways and transport proposals to reconfigure the traffic system around the site. Details of the financial contributions and the public benefits were also outlined included:

- Sustainable redevelopment and reuse of site buildings.
- Enhancement of heritage assets (including listed buildings, conservation area and setting to the World Heritage Site).
- Public access to heritage interpretation and display spaces.
- Improved public realm.
- Employment benefits.
- Increased local spend.
- CIL of £6M.
- MCIL of £11.2M.

The Committee were requested to confirm to the Secretary of State that had the Council had the opportunity, to determine the following applications:

- a) Planning Permission would have been granted subject to planning conditions and obligations, and
- b) Listed Building Consent would have been granted subject to conditions.

- c) The receipt of a satisfactory EIA.

The Chair approved the request to permit more requested speakers than usual to discuss the application. The Chair then invited Sue Hughes on behalf of the Friends of St Katharine Docks, to address the Committee in objection to the application. The following concerns were highlighted:

- Residents have been ignored by the applicant and denied representation on the matter by Tower Hamlets Council.
- The Embassy and negative publicity surrounding it will cause adverse impacts to neighbouring residents.
- No consideration given to the adverse traffic impacts caused to neighbouring roads surrounding the site. Royal Mint Street, East Smithfield, Lemn Street and Dock Street are regularly congested now.
- No consideration given for GP services and school places and surrounding infrastructure for residents.
- The application violates the following London Plan 2021 policies: GG1, GG3, GG6, D11, and the HC2 and is identical to the initial proposal already refused by the Strategic Development Committee heard in 2021.

The Chair then invited Jason Chao from Hongkongers in Britain (HKB), to address the Committee in objection to the application. Mr Chao highlighted the following concerns:

- Personal safety and privacy is a material planning concern, which has not been considered with this unique application. The Chinese Government is known to possess sophisticated surveillance capabilities, employs facial recognition systems and has Diplomatic Inviolability, preventing access without exception, unless explicit consent is given.
- Although human rights violations abroad are not a material planning consideration, protests around the site would cause adverse impacts to the neighbouring residents. There are many events and protests which will take place with around the site, on at least a monthly basis.

The Chair next invited Councillor Peter Golds to address the Committee in objection to the application. Councillor Golds declared he had no contact with the applicant, agent or any advisors but has spoken to interested parties. Councillor Golds then highlighted the following concerns:

- Although the nation has not been noted, The Financial Times reported that the Chinese Government has been attempting to influence support

for this application, hence the letters support received. This does not reflect the community who are against the application.

- The report itself states in 5.28 that 'As embassies are often exposed to security threats, there are concerns over the safety of residents of Royal Mint Estate and aside from additional CCTV we would request that the applicant gives further consideration to mitigating security threats to residents.'
- The notion that 2,000 people could stand outside the Embassy is not accurate. The impact of the traffic and the surrounding area would be immense.

The Chair then invited David Hodges, Chief Inspector, Metropolitan Police, Jonathan Boulton and Freddie Mills, to address the Committee in objection to the application. Chief Inspector Hodges highlighted the following concerns:

- The application would attract significant protest activity to the site and surrounding areas. The site can only accommodate around 200 protestors. There are around 50,000 vehicle movements daily around the junction of Tower Bridge Road and Tower Hill and protests would affect routes to the nearby Royal London Hospital.
- Across London there have already been approximately 800 protests outside Embassies this year alone, and 40 of those exceeded 200 protestors, with several others reaching 10,000. These all caused traffic problems as protestors spilled onto the roads.
- The rear of the site is residential properties and any protests would cause significant disruption to the community with the disruption of roads and local footways.
- The adverse impacts on policing and resourcing, as police would have to be removed from front line duties to police any spontaneous protesting that may take place. This has not been considered in the local policing model for the borough.
- The MPS core responsibilities of protection of life and properties, maintenance of the Kings peace and protection and detection of crime. The Local Authorities have general responsible for public safety.

The Chair then invited Barnaby Collins from DP9 Ltd, to address the Committee in support of the application. Mr Collins highlighted the following benefits:

- Acknowledged that the application is the same as the previous one, with the addition of updated technical information, reflecting new building regulations and mandatory fire safety staircases.

- The application was resubmitted as it was believed that the planning decision should be made locally. The Embassy has continued engagement with the community and believes that the previous reasons for refusal are without merit and have no basis in planning policy, which the Officers recommendation concurs.
- Reiterated Mr Murray's statement that this application does not grant permission for a particular nation, as this site could be used for any nation in the future. This proposal complies with the Council's development plan.
- The MPS did not oppose the previous application, which has been resubmitted at this meeting. This application has been thoroughly assessed and is policy compliant.

Following questions by the Committee, Officers, objectors and supporters;

- Explained that a 'Pedestrian Capacity Assessment' has been submitted by the applicant and TfL assessed and accepted the findings in which the Highway Authority agreed. No evidence has been provided that an Embassy Land use would increase the number of 2,000 potential protestors and adverse impacts to the community.
- Confirmed that the applicant agreed to quite a financial contribution towards maintaining the green space. An 'Events Management Plan', designated parking spaces for Police Officers close to the site and additional CCTV, would mitigate damage to the green space.
- Confirmed that leaflets were distributed to local residents and TRA groups were invited to attend public exhibitions on-site.
- Objectors noted that although invitations were received to attend an open day by the Embassy, residents were deterred, as registration could not be obtained without scanning a QR code to upload all personal details, including passport and driving licence information. It was also noted that the assistance received for the application was obtained the day prior to residents being allowed to attend, as a private gathering was held.
- Confirmed that a large number of consultation responses were from local residents both supporting and objecting to the proposal. There were approximately three received from outside the UK.
- Clarified that the MPS security advice had been considered and a Protest Management Plan will be submitted in due course. Bollards around the edge of the site have been included as part of the proposals.

- Reiterated the details on material considerations for both support and objections received. These included support for site being back in active use and has been vacant for over five years. Support for the restoration of historic buildings, the high quality appearance of the proposed buildings and being able to view the archaeological ruins. Objections were made on impact on the highway network congestion and potentially disruption to the local footway and the impact on the surroundings from protests and terrorism.
- Noted that some support letters were received via email, but a large number received were 'proforma style' support letters where the main heading is typed out with a blank section for supporters to provide reasons.
- The MPS confirmed that granting the application would put pressure on services, as they are not equipped to cope with potential disruption on a local level. It was noted that there were 47 protests outside the site between 2023 and 2024. 14 of these were planned protests and had over 100 protesters attend. Seven of these had over 100 protesters. Due to the publicity, it is estimated that many more protestors would attend and a large number of MPS protection teams would be required.
- Acknowledged that the details on air quality and noise assessments are out of date and based on the previous application submission. This was due to the timing from the Secretary of State's request for referral of the applications and the agenda publication. The updated details have now been received and will be submitted to the local inquiry scheduled for 11 February 2025.
- Clarified that the MPS respond to spontaneous and pre-planned protests. In the first instance local police would attend to assess the situation and respond accordingly. With pre-planned protests, intelligence would be gathered to establish the number of attendees and if large enough, assistance from other police stations would then be sought. The level of resources is dependent on the protest.
- The MPS explained that the police would not usually discuss security issues with the Embassy, as Parliamentary and Diplomatic protection teams would be responsible. Accredited Police Commanders would attend the site of a planned protest, to determine the potential crowd numbers and disruption levels.
- Clarified that the Secretary of State has exercised powers to call in the application and the Strategic Development Committee have been asked to determine what the Council's position would be before the inquiry.

- Observed that acts of terrorism are not a material planning consideration and Members were requested not to allow that to impact any decision made on this application.
- Confirmed that the Design Out Crime Officer is a statutory consultee and all large-scale planning applications are submitted to them. Discussions with the MPS take place and depend on each application. In this instance, as the application was re-submitted, the Design Out Crime Officer, again discussed the application with various MPS Officers, who this time raised concerns.
- Objectors stated that if the application was to be granted, this would result in more protesters and more road congestions and road closures in that area. Residents already have the London Marathon and other events happening and often cannot move their cars when events and protests occur.

Paul Buckenham informed the Committee that they must vote on two applications this evening and Ian Austin, Principal Lawyer, Planning, advised Members to vote only on the merits of the application and not the applicant. The Chair then asked Members to vote on both applications and provide explanations for the decisions.

PA/24/01229: Full Planning Permission.

Upon a unanimous vote in favour, the Officers recommendations to GRANT planning permission as set out in the main report were not agreed.

It was therefore **RESOLVED**;

To inform the Secretary of State that the Council's view is that planning permission for development at Royal Mint Court, London, EC3N 4QN be **REFUSED** on the following grounds:

- Adverse impacts on tourism.
- Adverse impacts on heritage assets.
- Adverse impacts on residents.
- Concerns over the effects of potential protests, acts of terrorism and related security mitigation measures on highway and pedestrian safety.
- Contravenes Tower Hamlets Local Plan Policies: S.TR1, D.TR2, D.TR4 and the London Plan policies T1, T2, T4.

PA/24/01248: Listed Building Consent.

Upon a vote of 5 in favour, 1 against and 2 abstentions the Officers recommendations to GRANT listed building consent as set out in the main report were not agreed.

It was therefore **RESOLVED**;

To inform the Secretary of State that the Council's view is that listed building consent at Royal Mint Court, London, EC3N 4QN be **REFUSED** on the following grounds:

- To protect the heritage buildings.
- The listed building consent is contingent on the full planning application.

The meeting **adjourned** for a short while then **reconvened**.

5.2 PA/24/00173: 2-6 Commercial Street, 98, 101-105 Whitechapel High Street and Canon Barnett Primary School, London

Under the planning code of conduct; Members must hear the entire application and must withdraw from the Committee if they arrive whilst it is being heard. Although Councillor Kamrul Hussain and Councillor Amin Rahman were late to return to the Chamber, the Chair agreed to restart the application.

Update report noted.

Paul Buckenham introduced the application for the demolition of 101 Whitechapel High Street, 6 Commercial Street and the western annex of the Canon Barnett Primary School; partial demolition and partial retention of 102 - 105 Whitechapel High Street (with internal alterations) and 2 – 4 Commercial Street (façade retained); and redevelopment to provide buildings ranging from ground plus 17 storeys, comprising office floorspace (Class E(g)), community hall (Class F2); relocation and expansion of the existing school playground and School Annex (Class F1); associated car and cycle parking, hard and soft landscaping and other associated works. The Officer's recommendation is to refuse the application.

Robin Bennett provided a presentation to accompany the application, which included the site and surroundings. The application relates to two plots, plot 1 will from Commercial Street and Whitechapel Road was proposed as office building, 18 stories high building, with a single storey community hall. Plot 2 proposed a part-single part 5 storey extension to Canon Barnett Primary School, and a new school playground.

Members were informed that an earlier proposal on this site for an office building of up to 15 storeys, was refused by the Strategic Development Committee on 22 March 2022. Reasons for refusal were;

- its impact on Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area and heritage impact.
- the scheme was outside the Tall Buildings Zone.
- the development caused very severe adverse daylight and sunlight impacts.

- the loss of a language school.

Supporters of the scheme believe the proposed height is in context, it is well designed and respects the conservation area. Other responses highlighted the economic benefits, the school benefits and the improvements to public safety. Objectors to the scheme believe it is inappropriately located outside a Tall Buildings Zone and taller than the proposal that was refused. The scheme has adverse design and heritage impacts, adverse daylight/sunlight and privacy impacts. It was noted that Historic England and the Victorian Society also raised objections.

Mr Bennett informed the Committee of the acceptable land use for the proposed site and the anticipated loss of retail if the scheme were to be granted. It also contradicts several Development and Local Plan policies. Details on the loss of existing education and training spaces resulting from the proposal were noted. Those specific uses are protected under Community Facilities policies.

The Committee were informed that the proposed use of the Community Hall has not been defined. Mr Bennett noted that the scheme does not fall within a designated Tall Buildings Zone, nor enhance the character of the area and detracts from heritage assets and key views. This contravenes Local Plan (2020) Policy D.DH6, London Plan (2021) Policies D3, D9, HC1 and SD4.

The detailed designs and heritage matters were outlined, as were the conservation area and listed buildings near the site, including the proposed extension at Canon Barnett Primary School. The proposal was deemed detrimental to the school, as it is within the conservation area. The design of the Canon Barnett Yard and Community Hall's proposed images were deemed acceptable in principle, from a design and heritage perspective.

The presentation included the key considerations given to the application, including details of two public consultations held in March and October 2024. 1,144 letters were sent to neighbouring properties, 4 site notices were erected around the site and a press notice sent. A total of 312 letters were received, with 17 in support, including a petition with 71 signatures and 180 in objection, including several organizations and businesses.

Members were informed that the proposal would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area and would cause harm to the setting of listed buildings. The building also overlooks nearby windows and balconies, situated near the new playground, overlooking it and causing overshadowing. This would result in adverse daylight/sunlight effects, with the playground being reduced from 78% to 61%, and the proposed rooftop play area reduced from 57% to 13%.

Other amenity considerations discussed were neighbouring residents. Mr Bennett noted that Gunthorpe Street, 112 Whitechapel High Street, Kensington Apartments, and Canon Barnett Primary school would lose approximately 40% of their daylight and negatively affect the living conditions

if the proposal was granted. This contravenes Local Plan (2020) Policy D.DH8 and the provisions set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023).

Mr Bennett went on to discuss the public benefits of the proposal, which included:

- Regenerating an underused brownfield site.
- Removal of a car park.
- Up to 1,793 to 2,297 jobs in the completed development, training and apprenticeship opportunities in both phases.
- New affordable workspace, 10% of the office floorspace at 37% discount for the lifetime of the development.
- New Community Hall.
- New accommodation for Canon Barnett Primary School.
- Relocation of school playground.
- New open space – ‘Canon Barnett Yard’.

The financial benefits were outlined. This included £300K for enhancements to the Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area, £408,664K towards carbon emission off-setting, Borough and London CIL’s of £4,182,947.80 and £7,838,464,36 respectively.

The Committee were informed that the Officer’s recommendation was to refuse the application for the following reasons:

- The development is not high quality or place sensitive design by virtue of its layout, scale, bulk and height, appearance and architectural features and fails to respect or integrate positively with the finer grained low to medium rise context of the site.
- A tall building outside of a designated tall Building zone, which would detract from landmarks, heritage assets and key views, and wouldn’t achieve exceptional architectural quality or enhance the character and distinctiveness of the area, or positively contributes the skyline.
- A failure to either preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Whitechapel High Street Conservation Area and harm to the setting of listed buildings that harm not being outweighed by the public benefits.
- The deterioration in daylight and sunlight to neighbouring residential developments.
- The adverse impact to Cannon Barnett School in terms of deterioration and levels of daylight and sunlight, unacceptable overshadowing to the school playground, overlooking an invasion of privacy into the school building and play areas, and the introduction of a high degree of enclosure and overbearing impact to the west of the site.

- The loss of ground floor Retail space.
- The loss of existing education and training facilities.

The Committee were asked to vote on hearing the remainder of the application, since the meeting was nearing 3 hours. Members voted to continue the meeting for a further hour.

The Chair then invited Stuart Mundy, on behalf of Mulberry Canon Barnett, to address the Committee in objection to the application. Mr Mundy highlighted the following concerns;

- The scheme overlooks the privacy of the playground and will cause health and safety concerns for parents and is an oppressive outdoor environment for children.
- Adverse daylight and sunlight impacts due to the proposal. Early year and nursery play spaces and outdoor learning are vital for children throughout and they require more than one hour a day.
- Adverse wind conditions due to the proposal. High wind levels are a major issue and no mitigation response has been provided by the developer.
- Inadequate fire safety access and soft landscaping proposals.
- The construction programme will adversely affect the children's play space and learning.

The Chair next invited resident, Marion Walker to address the Committee in objection to the application. Ms Walker highlighted the following concerns;

- Whitechapel High Street already has under occupied office blocks, due to the Tall Buildings zone high lease costs. These buildings also create wind tunnels and block out natural light.
- The applicant Alliance Property Asia only formed in November 2023 and has not disclosed its company directors or company office, although the Head Office is in Panama. Further details on their finances and the interests of Alliance Property Asia are required. They appear to care more for profits than they do for borough residents.
- Families in the borough need housing and community space and the proposed site should be used for that purpose, not more office space.
- Any development on this site should be created as a Community Land Trust and not for private housing associations or be owned by corporate entities.

- We are living in a severe climate change and climate emergency mitigation needs to be centralised in all borough decisions. We need to reduce the need for cars and not create more car parks.

The Chair next invited Adnan Shaikh, the applicant, Oliver Sheppard, from DP9 Ltd and resident, Shahidul Alam Ratan, to address the Committee in support of the application. Adnan Shaikh began and highlighted the following benefits;

- The development will deliver close to 3,000 jobs once operational.
- The proposal will boost the local economy.
- The scheme will deliver around £23.5 million to the Council, £8.8 million, plus a potential profit share related to a land transfer agreement. This has not been adequately stated in the Officer's presentation.
- Acknowledge the concerns raised by Canon Barnett Primary School and have had numerous discussions to address them.
- The application playground proposals will alleviate air pollution concerns with conservation policies.
- The site is surrounded by neighbouring tall buildings but this scheme is smaller than at Aldgate Place Tower. Granting the application will benefit local groups, businesses, charities and the community.

Oliver Sheppard from DP9 Ltd then outlined the benefits:

- The development will regenerate the area and upgrade a derelict part of the borough.
- The site is in the City Fringe and a balance has been sought with conservation and growth areas.
- The building contemporary design is in keeping with the area and will create a public realm in the centre of the site.
- The public contribution £32 million

Shahidul Alam Ratan, a resident, then highlighted the benefits:

- The scheme's proposed extension will alleviate congestion to and from the school and playground.
- Parents collecting children to and from School will have an improved environment.

- The scheme will reduce anti-social behaviour and the new Community Centre will improve the area.

Further to questions from the Committee, Officers, objectors and supporters;

- Confirmed that there will be a reduction at grade in terms of the proposed school playground, although there will be an additional rooftop provision.
- Explained that the applicant had numerous meetings with the school, had architects visit the school and had input with the local education authority. The relationship with the local businesses and the applicant is assisting them in relocating premises by signing them to reputable estate agents.
- The Applicant explained that the height of the scheme has been designed to be slightly taller, further to the North along Commercial Street so less visible and more sensitive to heritage assets.
- Officers concluded that from an urban design perspective the buildings proposed scale and massing does not respond to the conservation area. Both Historic England and the Victorian Society identified harm to historical assets is the same level as the previous application.
- Confirmed that the value of the land transfer details are a separate issue and not a material consideration to the application.
- The Applicant explained that to their knowledge there is no in person language school, although there may be one online. The proposed community hall can be used for community language courses and
- Officers stated that the loss of retail space with the proposal of an office lobby will negatively impact local residents who use the current businesses.
- The Applicant confirmed that an environmental assessment was undertaken to establish any issues arising from redevelopment. Findings showed the site to be acceptable.
- Officer's confirmed that the proposed scheme is outside of the tall buildings zone, in a conservation area and contravenes policy.

Councillor Amin Rahman moved and Councillor Shubo Hussain seconded to defer the application for a site visit.

It was stated that one was offered prior to the meeting but only Councillor Iqbal Hossain attended. Ian Austin, Principal Lawyer, Planning, informed Members that a site visit should only be selected or voted for where there is a

clear and substantial benefit to be gained, pursuant to Part D, section 54, Rule 13.1 of the Council Constitution.

Upon a vote of 4 in favour, 1 against with no abstentions, the Officers recommendations as set out in the main report to **REFUSE** planning permission was deferred for a site visit.

It was therefore **RESOLVED**;

That consideration of the planning application at 2-6 Commercial Street, 98,101-105 Whitechapel High Street and Canon Barnett Primary School, London E1, London be **DEFERRED** for a site visit.

The meeting ended at 10.12 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Jahed Choudhury

Strategic Development Committee