LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

MINUTES OF THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

HELD AT 6.30 P.M. ON THURSDAY, 3 FEBRUARY 2022

COUNCIL CHAMBER - TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG

Members Present:

Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE (Chair)
Councillor Kevin Brady (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Leema Qureshi
Councillor Dan Tomlinson
Councillor Kabir Ahmed (on – line)
Councillor Sabina Akhtar (Substitute for Councillor Sufia Alam)
Councillor David Edgar (Substitute for Councillor Kyrsten Perry)

Other Councillors Present:

None

Officers Present:

Paul Buckenham	–	(Head of Development Management, Planning Services, Place)
Gareth Gwynne	–	(Area Planning Manager (West), Planning Services, Place)
Mustafa Khan	–	(Senior Planning Lawyer, Governance, Legal Services)
Nicholas Jehan	–	(Planning Officer, Development Management, West Area, Place)
Simon Westmorland	–	(West Area Team Leader, Planning Services, Place)
Zoe Folley	–	(Democratic Services Officer, Committees, Governance)

Apologies:

Councillor Kyrsten Perry
Councillor Sufia Alam

1. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

None declared

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

The Committee **RESOLVED**

1. That the unrestricted minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 6th January 2022 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject to the following addition:
   - That it be recorded that Councillor David Edgar was elected to Chair the meeting of the Committee

3. RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROCEDURE FOR HEARING OBJECTIONS AND MEETING GUIDANCE

The Committee **RESOLVED** that:

1. The procedure for hearing objections and meeting guidance be noted.

2. In the event of changes being made to recommendations by the Committee, the task of formalising the wording of those changes be delegated to the Corporate Director, Place along the broad lines indicated at the meeting; and

3. 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 be delegated authority to do so, provided always that the Corporate Director does not exceed the substantive nature of the Committee's decision

4. DEFERRED ITEMS

There were none

5. PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DECISION

5.1 Walker House, 6-8 Boundary Street (PA/20/01442/A1)

Update report published

Paul Buckenham introduced the application for change of use of first floor office use (use class B1a) to 4no residential units (Use class C3), with the construction of a two-storey building to the rear to provide office space (use class B1a). The application also sought to provide amendments to the residential entrance at junction of Boundary Street and Calvert Avenue.

He also advised of the contents of the update report, including an updated description (as above) and an additional condition.

Nicholas Jehan (Planning Services) introduced the application highlighting the following:

- The site location within the Boundary Estate Conservation Area.
- The characteristics of the area and Walker House, including the existing Ivy on the wall.
- Key features of proposals including the proposed housing arrangements, new office space, the green biodiverse roof, the amendments to the main entrance to Walker Houses, which should help address ASB, which had already been granted consent under a previous application.
- The planning history for the site and the reason for refusing the previous (application ref: PA/17/03009) refused on 30 July 2019. The scheme had been amended to address the issues, with regards to the height, massing and design. Details of these changes were noted. The Committee noted images of the proposed design compared to the previous design.
- In response to the consultation, 41 letters of objection had been received as well as an additional 9 objections since publication of the Committee Report and further detailed in the update report. They related to a number of issues including: the land use, height, bulk, mass and scale, amenity impacts, parking impact and the public benefits of the development
- That Officers had no issues with the land use - both in terms of the proposed office use given the City Fringe Location, or the proposed residential use. This was because this was generally consistent with the character of the surrounding area. The development would provide a variety of dwellings which would be of a suitable high standard.
- Design and the heritage assessment. Overall, Officers conclude that the issues with the previous application had been addressed. The scheme would preserve the setting or significance of the surrounding Listed Buildings and would only have a negligible impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Balanced against the public benefits, Officers considered that the proposals satisfied the relevant policy tests.
- Similar to the previous scheme, the impacts in terms of amenity were considered acceptable.
- It was proposed that conditions would be secured in relation to the maintenance of the Ivy wall and in relation to the proposed biodiversity enhancements.
- The Committee also noted details of the parking arrangements, the cycle parking, access and servicing and the waste collection arrangements.

Officers were recommending that the application was granted permission subject to conditions.

The Chair invited the registered speakers to address the Committee

The following addressed the Committee raising objections:

- Gary Groenheim (Walker House resident)

- Jean Locker (Wargrave House resident)
- William Mann (Boundary Estate Conservation Group, Cleeve House resident)
- Susanna Kow (Chair, Boundary Tenants and Residents Association)

They expressed concerns about the following issues:

- Overlooking to properties.
- Increased noise disturbance from the proposed plant.
- New balconies will add to noise and disturbance adding to the acoustic canyon effect.
- New building will dominate courtyard.
- Impact of proposed roof lights – in terms of light pollution into bedrooms and the effectiveness of the proposed mitigation, in the form of blinds.
- Use of the proposed development as a night time economy venue, and for private hire.
- Loss of sunlight/daylight particularly to Leyton House and Walker House due to the development's proximity to the properties.
- Responsibility for management of the green roof and the Ivy, how would this be secured?
- Adverse impact on wildlife
- Overdevelopment

Concerns were also expressed about the detrimental impact on the setting of the Conservation Area and listed buildings, due to the height, massing and design. It was a modern structure. The proposal would be visible and would be seen from the surrounding area. It would still be visible over the wall, despite the claims about the mitigation.

Concerns were also expressed over the images – there was a need for verified views of the development, arial views, to judge the development accurately.

Paul Osborne spoke in support of the development. He highlighted the following:

- He noted the measures to address the issues with the previously refused application, in terms of the reduced scale, massing, the height and the introduction of the green roof, which will improve the visual amenity of the courtyard as well as providing biodiversity enhancements.
- The revised materials to provide a contemporary response to better reflect the setting of the area. This included the provision of the terracotta baguette, in colours to reflect the brickwork of the Estate, instead of the pre – oxidised cladding, previously proposed
- Other key benefits of the scheme included much needed new housing, the improved entrance to Walker House, and conditions setting out the biodiversity improvements, including the maintenance of the Ivy. It was

in the applicant's own interests to maintain this and they have agreed plans with the Council to ensure this.

The Committee asked questions of officers and the registered speakers around the following issues:

- The concerns about the impact on the Conservation Area and the heritage assessment given the contemporary design. Clarity was sought on changes to address these issues. In response, Officers explained in further detail the external amendments to the scheme to ensure that it will better fit in with the area. This was in relation to - the new flat roof, the stepping down of the roof at certain points to reduce the massing and to reduce the proposals visibility. Amendments had also been made to the roof profile, with the introduction of a glazed slope and to the materials to reflect the area more appropriately.
- The sunlight and daylight impacts. Officers noted the concerns over the 'blocking up of existing windows at Leyton House. However, it was noted that these windows were very small. The rooms will still have access to alternative sources of light. In addition, they would only be for commercial uses. Given this, it was felt that the concerns had been alleyed.
- In relation to Leyton House, it was noted that none of the windows from the proposal would directly look onto this property, due to the layout. There would no loss of outlook or privacy. It was also clarified that the lower ground floor windows at Leyton House also had obscured glazing.
- The separation distances with nearby properties – particularly with Leyton House, and Walker House. Officers confirmed the distances between these properties. In most instances these met the minimum required separation distances, with the closest element at a 12 metre distance (similar to the previous scheme, which was considered acceptable). It was also anticipated that the foliage and Ivy wall should also help minimise any impacts. Overall, the impact would be negligible, in terms of neighbouring amenity.
- The light pollution from roof lights. Officer drew attention to measures in the Applicant's energy statement, including the proposals to use lights that would go off when not in use for example overnight. Conditions could be imposed to address this issue further.
- Responsibility for the maintenance of the Ivy wall throughout the year. It was confirmed that this would be up to the applicant to maintain. Any breaches would be investigated by the Council and appropriate action taken.
- The concerns around use of the office building as a night time economy venue. The Committee were advised of the proposed use class – B1 (a), (now the new Class E). They also noted the restrictions preventing any change of use without planning permission. The applicant stated that they had no intention to use the office building as a night time economy venue.
- The concerns around the noise disturbance, including the acoustic canyon impact from the balconies. The applicant provided assurances

about the location of any proposed plant and the proposed restrictions on its use. He also stated that given the nature and scale of the proposal - it was unlikely to generate a lot of noise to the courtyard area. The surrounding area also already contained commercial uses, with similar arrangements, and the impacts should be minimal.

- Construction impacts and the disruption to residents given the restricted nature of the highway network in the area. It was noted that conditions were recommended to control this. It was also anticipated that when considering this matter at the conditions stage, that Highway Services will carefully assess these issues, in accordance with the standard practice for their involvement in considering such applications.
- The concerns about the views/images of the proposals. The Committee sought assurances and requested verified views of the proposals.

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

1. That the application at Walker House, 6-8 Boundary Street for the following be **DEFERRED** for a Committee Site Visit.

    - Change of use of first floor office use (use class B1a) to 4no residential units (Use class C3). Construction of a two-storey building to the rear to provide office space (use class B1a). *Amendments to residential entrance at junction of Boundary Street and Calvert Avenue*"

6. OTHER PLANNING MATTERS

There were none

The meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Abdul Mukit MBE
Development Committee