

ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

WOOLWICH & THAMESMEAD AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

TUESDAY 26 JANUARY 2021 AT 6.30 PM

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Members:

Councillor Stephen Brain (Chair), Councillors Gary Dillon, David Gardner, Dominic Mbang (from Item 3), Linda Perks and John Hills

Officers

Assistant Director Planning and Building Control, Area Planning Manager East, Senior Planning Officer, Planning Officer x 2, and Committee Services Officer

Other Councillors in Attendance

Councillor Ivis Williams

At the commencement of the meeting, the Chair announced the procedure which would be followed for considering planning applications.

Item

No.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Averil Lekau, Clive Mardner and Nigel Fletcher.

2 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

3 Declarations of Interest

Resolved –

That the list of Councillors' memberships as Council appointed representatives on outside bodies, joint committees and school governing bodies be noted.

4 Minutes

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meetings of the Woolwich and Thamesmead Area Planning Committee held on 12 November and 16 December 2020, and the minutes of the joint meeting of the Greenwich and Woolwich & Thamesmead Area Planning Committees held on 10 December 2020, be agreed and signed as true and accurate records.

5 160-168 Plumstead Common Road, Plumstead, London, SE18 2UL

The Planning Officer gave an illustrated introduction to the report. He drew Members' attention to the changes in the addendum report.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Planning Officer replied that the anti-social behaviour mentioned in relation to the previous operation included such things as operating in a noisy manner, water spraying over adjacent gardens and rudeness by staff when dealing with local residents who raised issues. He confirmed that the operating hours were proposed to be 9am to 6pm Monday through to Saturday and closed on Sunday. He indicated that the staffing numbers and business model were determined by the applicant. He replied that the development was considered to preserve the character of the conservation area because the changes would not be visible from the public realm, and it could be argued that the replacement of the fence was an improvement given its current condition. It was considered that the height of the fence would not result in a significant unacceptable loss of amenity for neighbours and that it could result in an improvement if noise and water spraying over these properties had been an issue. He confirmed that TfL had considered the application and the impact on the operation of the highway. It was understood that the public house next to the site was currently closed but only because of the pandemic lockdown.

The Committee was addressed by three neighbouring residents. Concerns were raised around the lack of toilet facilities for staff members, a matter which had been an issue before. It was suggested that there seemed to be a

discrepancy about staffing numbers. It was highlighted that if the spray went into neighbouring gardens it would for example affect clothes that had been put out to dry and soak the porous brickwork of the houses leaving them damp. It was not felt that the fence or canopy would prevent the escape of noise and smells, there would be pollution from idling car engines, and that the height of the fence would affect daylight. Signage had been an eyesore in the past and the worry was that could happen again. It was said that the service station did not make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. It was emphasised that the proposal would have a major impact on traffic. It was felt that the proposed traffic management system was unworkable as the petrol station itself was often at capacity leading to queues and access being blocked; there was no room for additional queuing and little space for manoeuvring and it would lead to Plumstead Common Road being blocked. The entrance was also at a pinch point with a building merchant's opposite, and the road was close to a busy junction.

In response to questions from the Committee, one of the residents clarified that the issue was that for cars to get to the car wash at the back they had to navigate through the garage forecourt, and with cars backing onto the road to get to the petrol pumps there would be a blocking of access.

In response to questions from the Committee, one of the residents replied he had not been consulted with regard to the height of the fence, and that its height would significantly affect daylight. It was thought that the extra height would not prevent spray from getting into the garden.

The Planning Officer advised that the height of the fence was secured by condition so if the Committee felt it would have an impact the height could be revised.

The Committee was addressed by Ward Councillor Ivis Williams. Councillor Williams highlighted the effect on the amenity of neighbouring properties. Residents were suggesting that the proposed business was not appropriate for that side of the site. It was in a conservation area and would be operating six days a week. She noted that other examples of past anti-social behaviour included shouting, and fighting which had been reported in the local paper. It was not felt that the fence would prevent any spray from going into the neighbours' gardens and if the fence was too high that would affect residents' enjoyment of their gardens. Councillor Williams highlighted that Plumstead Common Road was a main bus route and it tended to have built up traffic there. It was suggested that the car wash in addition to the petrol station would exacerbate problems in the road. She raised the issue of customers waiting, causing an obstruction into the road, and their idling engines causing

pollution. Councillor Williams did not feel that the proposed mitigation measures addressed the issues raised by residents, and she requested the Committee refuse the application.

The Committee was addressed by the applicant. He was aware that there had been problems on the site in the past. He had twenty years' experience of working with car washes and never had problems at other sites. He recognised that he had to guarantee that everything would be perfect. He explained that he would have four full time workers and two part-time and that they would do no more than forty cars a day.

In response to questions from the Committee, the applicant replied that the car wash was a totally separate business from the petrol garage; he was a franchisee. He would not be using an automatic car wash unit like there used to be on the site, the building which housed it would now be used for cars to pass through. His workers would use the toilet facilities inside the shop, which was only for the use of staff not for customers, and he had permission from the landlord for that, but a portable toilet could be considered. He explained that the proposal was commercially viable because he would be using less labour and charging more for a good service. It was expected that there could be three to four cars in the service area at a time. He said there would be a gate to prevent other cars from getting in, so there would not be a queue. They would have a booking system alongside the ability to access on the day if there was capacity.

There was a discussion of the matter. Members gave weight to the residents' evidence that the proposal would impact on residents' amenity, and that there would be an effect on traffic. It was queried why use could not have been made of polycarbonate tunnels which would stop the escape of any spray. It was suggested that a proper appointment scheme might have gone toward alleviating traffic problems. Concerns were raised about the toilet facilities.

The Planning Officer further informed the Committee that the proposal was for a temporary permission for a year which the Committee could shorten. In response to a Member's question he confirmed that Highways Officers had given detailed comments on the application. He informed the Committee that the Highways Officers had noted that hand car washes were common on such sites as this, and had considered that the vehicle flow would be similar to that which accessed the petrol station and that the increase in the number of cars arising from the addition of the car wash would not significantly exacerbate any existing parking issues; on that basis Highways Officers had not made an objection.

The Area Planning Manager East advised the Committee that the applicant had mentioned that there was an agreement for the workers to be able to use toilets, there was no requirement for him to provide toilets for customers. The workers conditions was not a planning matter.

The matter was put to the vote and it was unanimously.

Resolved –

That planning permission for the installation of new hand car wash (Use Class Sui Generis) and for the installation of a canopy screen and boundary fence be refused.

Reasons for Refusal

1. The proposed hand car wash operation would result in unacceptable noise and disturbance for neighbouring properties surrounding the site and the proposed 3m high eastern boundary treatment would result in an unacceptable sense of enclosure for the adjoining property at no. 170 Plumstead Common Road. As such, the development is contrary to Policies 7.6 and 7.15 of the London (2016) Plan and Policies DH(b) and E(a) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with detailed policies (2014).
2. The proposed hand car wash operation would unacceptably exacerbate traffic and congestion on Plumstead Common Road and would compromise the safe and efficient movement of vehicles on the collocated service station forecourt and the highway generally, contrary to Policies 6.10, 6.11 and 6.12 of the London Plan (2016) and Policies IM4, IM(a) and IM(b) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with detailed policies (2014).

6 Tramshed, 51-53 Woolwich New Road, Woolwich, SE18 6ET

The Planning Officer gave an illustrated introduction to the report.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Planning Officer replied that because Wilmount Street was very narrow there was not much scope for a lot of public realm improvements. He clarified the situation with regard to the doors and windows.

The Committee was addressed by the applicant. It was explained that the current building was not fit for purpose and the application sought to address that.

In response to a question from the Committee, the applicant confirmed that the building would be fully accessible for the disabled.

In discussing the matter Members noted the Tramshed's contribution to the borough. It was felt that the application respected the heritage of the existing building.

The matter was put to the vote and it was unanimously

Resolved –

That full planning permission for the refurbishment and extension of the existing Tramshed building to provide theatre and office space, subject to the conditions set out in appendix 2 of the report and as amended by the addendum report be granted.

7 3 Burrage Place, Plumstead, SE18 7BG

The Senior Planning Officer gave an illustrated introduction to the report. The Committee was asked to note in particular Condition 1.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Senior Planning Officer replied that a consultation on a retrospective application would make note that it was retrospective or that works had commenced. The floor-to-ceiling height on the upper floors would be restricted but because it was an extension to an existing single-family dwelling house it was not something that Planning Officers could consider.

The Committee was addressed by a neighbour. He explained his objection was to the height of the extension and the loss of light arising from it. That the current extension had been put in place without any planning permission was remarked upon. Clarification was sought as to the finishing, as the current extension was already on his side of the boundary. It was commented that the garden of 3 Burrage Place had since been cut in half and the bottom part now formed part of the Sandy Hill development. It was queried whether the applicant was the same as the applicant for the Sandy Hill development.

In response to questions from the Committee, the neighbour replied that he not been approached to discuss a party wall agreement. He had not had a

professional sunlight analysis undertaken in respect of loss of daylight. He indicated that 3 Burrage Place was currently vacant. He said there had initially been some discussions with the original applicant and he had told that applicant that he would not be happy with any increase of height.

The Committee was addressed by Ward Councillor Ivis Williams. Councillor Williams spoke in support of the neighbour's objection. It was accepted that the reduction in height was some improvement on the existing structure but it was still too high. It was suggested that it would impact on outlook and result in the loss of sunlight, particularly for the downstairs kitchen area. It was commented in relation to compliance to proposed conditions that the current extension had been built without planning permission.

The Committee was addressed by the applicant's agent. He felt the changes that had been made addressed the reasons for the previous refusals. The extension had been built because they had been led to understand that the proposal would be acceptable. He assured the Committee that there would be compliance with conditions.

In response to questions from the Committee, the applicant's agent replied that they were not aware that they were on the neighbour's land, but they would not build on anyone else's land and they would be happy to enter into a party wall agreement. If they were tight on the boundary then they would use brick slip rather than a brick finish. Since the last refusal they had worked hard to make sure that the height was acceptable in terms of the neighbour's amenity. It was his understanding that the previous refusal had been because of loss of light to the neighbour's bedroom window and not about loss of light to the ground floor. He did not own the property and the extension was for much needed family living space rather than to increase the commercial value of the property. If the application was agreed the property would be immediately sold to a family; the applicant had changed since the last application, and the new applicant was that family.

The Senior Planning Officer informed the Committee that the previous refusal had not been on the grounds of unacceptable impact on the windows at ground floor level; the ground floor windows would have been impacted by the previous wall. The Senior Planning Officer advised the Committee that with regard to impact the point to be considered was whether it was unacceptable. She added that due to the orientation of the property it would not have any direct sunlight anyway, and that as well as reduction in height there was also an offset so that the depth was also reduced.

In response to further questions from the Committee, the Senior Planning Officer replied that the rear garden of 3 Burrage Place would be reduced if the granted planning consent in respect of Sandy Hill was implemented but that was not a consideration for this application. The drawings of the application were within the curtilage of 3 Burrage Place and the remedial works would also have to be within that curtilage. Party wall agreements were not part of the planning consideration.

There was a discussion of the matter. It was noted that the application addressed the reasons for the previous refusal. It was felt evidence should have been produced in terms of loss of light. It was requested that an informative be added to ensure the construction was within the curtilage of the application site.

The matter, with the addition of an informative to the effect that the construction must be within the curtilage of the application site, was put to the vote, and with five votes in favour and one abstention it was

Resolved –

That conditional planning permission for the construction of a part one, part two storey rear extension according to the conditions in appendix 2 of the report, with the addition of an informative agreed at the meeting to the effect that the construction must be within the curtilage of the application site; to be detailed in the notice of determination be granted.

The Assistant Director of Planning & Building Control is authorised to make any minor changes to the detailed wording of the recommended conditions as set out in the report and its addendum, where the Assistant Director of Planning & Building Control considers it appropriate, before issuing the decision notice.

The meeting closed at 8.53pm

Chair