

# ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

## PLANNING BOARD

20 APRIL 2021 DATE AT 6.30PM

### MINUTE

#### **PRESENT:**

##### **Members:**

Councillor Stephen Brain (Chair); Councillors Norman Adams, Olu Babatola, Gary Dillon, Ian Hawking, Denise Hyland, Clive Mardner and Nigel Fletcher

##### **Officers:**

Assistant Director Planning & Building Control, Planning Manager (Major Developments), Senior Principal Planner, Solicitor for Legal Services and Committee Services Officer

##### **Under Standing Orders:**

Councillor Charlie Davis and Matthew Morrow

At the commencement of the meeting (conducted remotely) the Chair announced the procedure which the Meeting of the Board would be followed for considering the item(s) before the Board.

#### **Item**

#### **No.**

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received for Councillor Geoffrey Brighty

#### **2. Urgent Business**

The Planning Board noted and accepted the Planning Officers' Addendum Report's, circulated in advance of the meeting, in relation to;  
Item 5 – Land to the rear of 55-75 Kingsdale Road and adjacent to Gilbourne Road, London, SE18 - Ref: 21/0383/F

#### **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 meeting of the Planning Board held on 1 December 2020 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

#### **5. Land to the rear of 55-75 Kingsdale Road and adjacent to Gilbourne Road, London, SE18 - Ref: 21/0383/F**

The Planning Board noted the Planning Officers Addendum report, which had been published in advance of the meeting, and accepted an illustrative presentation of the application from the Senior Principal Planner.

In response to Members' questions, the Senior Principal Planner advised that the Councils Highways Department had been consulted in respect of pedestrian safety and proximity of the entrance to the Rockcliffe Manor Primary School and they had no concerns or objections to the proposal. That 166 consultation letters were sent to surrounding properties, including the six adjacent blocks, Kingsdale Road and Gilbourne Road; 6 objections were received. That all the existing trees would be retained, and 15 additional trees would be planted.

Councillor Charlie Davis addressed the Planning Board, as the Opposition Spokesman for Regeneration, stating that this was another situation where communal green spaces were being used for new housing, rather than utilising unused brownfield sites. The Councils' Planning documents show the green area are used by the community and the alternative green areas are not necessarily accessible to the less able bodied residents. Further, whilst policy was not to provide parking, in order to discourage residents from driving, the reality was that residents would own cars, as 60% of the Boroughs residents currently did. The parking provision with this application is inadequate.

Councillor Davis continued that the proposal appeared to be dropped in to the site with no acknowledgement to the heritage of the area or any apparent attempt to fit in with its surroundings, which was a failing of the new build project. He summarises that his objection to the proposal was based on the loss of further green space, failure to provide adequate parking and failing to fit in with the surrounding area and existing buildings.

In response to Members' questions, Councillor Davis noted that a lot of Greenwich Build units did not fit in with their surroundings, in part due to the modular build style, but aspects of the design such as the roof were adaptable. Further, the surrounding area was predominately two-story residential homes

The Planning Board accepted an address from a resident, who felt that, due to the pandemic, it had not been possible to undertake a proper consultation process and resident could only give feedback online, which was impossible for those without internet access. Whilst the homes would be carbon neutral there were no specific details of the internal environment mitigations or on the use of biomass boilers, heat recovery and insulation systems, rainwater harvesting, etc. The proposal would see an increase in car's, which had become an increasing problem over the past 10 years due to insufficient car parking spaces and, whilst the proposal would see 11 spaces for 15 homes and there was a need for increased parking in the area. The retained adjoining green spaces around the neighbouring blocks required improvement to allow greater use such as child play areas, ball sports and general recreation and with greater biodiversity and community access.

In response to Members' questions the resident advised that the consultation letters were received around Christmas, address to 'the resident' rather than individual names. Currently the green areas around the blocks was just grass and would benefit from play facilities, an enclosed ball and improved greening and seating areas. There was a space at the end of the development that could be used to create more parking spaces.

Councillor Matthew Morrow addressed the Planning Board, as a Ward Councillor, welcoming the application to provide much needed affordable new Council housing. The proposal would provide 15, carbon neutral, mixed units, which would be affordable and meet sustainability requirements and urged the Board to grant consent for the proposal.

In response to Members' questions Councillor Morrow noted that opinions on design were subjective and felt that the proposal was a modern build version of the existing, neighbouring blocks. He noted the additional each block would still retain green space and the proposal would provide an improved public realm, including publicly accessible seating and play equipment.

The applicant's planning consultant addressed the Planning Board, advising that the proposal had been developed in consultation with the Council's Planning and Urban Design Offices and through local consultation to arrive at

a scheme which was acceptable in terms of the principle of development for the site.

The applicant's presentation team advised that the houses and ground floor apartments would have private amenities and shared access, with the upper floor units, to a large courtyard secured by access control gates, providing a doorstep play area with new planting elements. All the flats, 1<sup>st</sup> floor and above, would have private balconies.

That following discussions with the School and a public consultation event, concerns were raised in respect of parking and it was considered that the new off street car parking spaces, associated with the application, be located to the rear of the site to prevent conflict between resident parking and visitors to the school; signage would be fitted to discourage non-resident parking. It was considered that there was sufficient parking provision on site and in the wider area to accommodate the existing parking need.

That all existing trees on site, including the prominent mature Poplar tree and mature screening to the site boundaries would be retained. In addition, 20 new trees would be planted along with bird and bee boxes and low level planting to increased biodiversity. The area of retained public green space, centred around the Poplar tree, would be enhanced with further seating, planting and informal play elements. A waiting area, adjacent to the school entrance, used by parents to drop off and pick up children from school, would be enhanced, in consultation with the school and the pavement along Gilbourne Road would be widened.

The applicant's agent summed up the presentation that the principle of development was considered acceptable by Planning Officers as was the impact on the townscape and was compliance the relevant national and local policies.

In response to Members' questions the applicant's agent responded that a range of unit sizes were provided in line with the Local Authority Housing Department request. A third of the units would be family sized.

In respect of the use of a flat roof, the applicants architect confirmed that in order to ensure carbon neutral, a flat roof would allow for a greater number of Photovoltaic (PV) solar panels to be fitted. It also allowed for more units to be included in the development, whilst retaining the overall height of the building in line with the existing blocks surrounding the site.

A Member expressed concerns that the Planning Board was being asked to agree an application without a clear landscape plan or proposals for

landscaping improvements to the wider community green spaces. Further, their appeared to be no financial contribution towards improvements to the wider communal green areas surrounding the adjacent blocks and if this could be re-considered under the Head of Terms for the Directors agreement.

The applicant's team responded that there were enhancements to adjacent retained green areas on the application site, such as additional low-level planting and publicly accessible informal play and seating area. The private area to the rear of the proposal would be enclosed and secured for use of the new development in order to limit the potential for anti-social behaviour. A significant amount of open green space, to the immediately adjacent blocks, would be retained.

The Assistant Director, Planning and Building Control advised that the application would provide 15 new units, and in terms of proportionality, the scheme was mitigating its impact on the site. Whilst there may be a desire for wider improvements in the area, the secured s106 was considered appropriate to the scheme.

In considering the application before them a Member noted that they remained extremely concerned at the loss of green space and hoped that the applicants team took the Members comments into consideration and investigate the possibility of wider improvements to the retained green spaces in that area. They felt, however, that there were insufficient reasons for refusal. They noted that the School had expressed no objections and they were aware that the roads were quiet, though they retained concerns regarding traffic issues at the other side of the site.

A number of Members concurred with the comments, in respect of the treatment of the wider green environment.

A Member commented that the last few Greenwich New Build applications had proposed developments in keeping with the environment, however, in this case the lack of a pitched roof and design competed with the existing blocks, appearing to be a factory default design. They strongly felt that it was important that the development was in keeping with the surrounding area.

A Member noted that they share the concern that the proposal bore little relationship to the surrounding environment and whilst they had no concerns over the treatment of the elevation, they questioned if there were innovative ways of complying with the aim of carbon reduction whilst retaining a pitched or mono pitched roof. They felt that there was an increase of proposals with flat roofs, which did not look particularly impressive. Whilst accepting

the need for single occupancy units they had some concern at the greater number of single units than family units being provided.

A Member shared concerns at the design of the proposal and was disappointed at the unit size mix but also accepted the urgent need for accommodation. They felt that land was precious in the Borough and it was imperative that any Greenwich New Build developments maximised the use of whatever land was at the Authorities disposal for larger, family size accommodation.

A member commented that they felt that there was a need for both family and one bed properties, noting that single bedroom accommodation was often rented out a high premium. They welcomed the retention of all 22 existing trees and additional planting. They appreciated the concerns raised at the use of a flat roof but, whilst preferring an alternative roof style, felt the development was of an interesting design.

At the request of and on behalf of the chair the Clerk sought confirmation from all Members that they had maintained zoom connection for the entirety of the presentation and discussion on this item. No Member indicated that they had experienced any loss of connectivity.

The Planning Officers recommendation to grant planning consent was put to the vote with 6 Members in favour, 0 against and 2 abstentions.

### **Resolved –**

That planning permission be granted for the proposed construction of 15 dwelling houses (Class C3) together with associated landscaping, amenity space, refuse, cycle and car parking spaces

That Planning Permission be granted subject to:

- i. The prior completion of a Directors' Agreement containing the planning obligations as summarised in the heads of terms as set out in the report (Section 21), its addendum and the minute of the Planning Board meeting.
- ii. The authorisation of the Assistant Director of Planning & Building Control to:
  - make any minor changes to the detailed wording of the recommended conditions as set out in the report (Appendix 2), its addendum and the minute of this Planning Board meeting, where the Assistant Director of Planning & Building Control considers it appropriate, before issuing the decision notice; and

- finalise the detailed terms of the Directors' Agreement, as set out in the report (Section 21), its addendum and the minute of this Planning Board meeting; and
- iii. That in the event that the Directors' Agreement is not completed within three (3) months of the date of the Planning Board meeting, to authorise the Assistant Director of Planning & Building Control to consider whether permission should be refused on the grounds that the proposal are unacceptable in the absence of the benefits which would have been secured, and if so, to determine the application with reasons for refusal which would including the following:
  - In the absence of an agreement to secure financial and non-financial contributions for Transport the development is contrary to policies T2 and T5 of the London Plan (2021), IM4 and IM(b) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (Adopted July 2014) and the Planning obligations (s106) Guidance SPD (adopted July 2015).

The meeting closed at 07.44pm

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