

ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

PLANNING BOARD

14 JULY 2020 AT 6.30PM

MINUTE

PRESENT:

Members:

Councillor Stephen Brain (Chair); Councillors Norman Adams, Olu Babatola, Peter Brooks, Garry Dillon, Ian Hawking, Denise Hyland, Clive Mardner, Linda Perks, Geoffrey Brighty and Nigel Fletcher

Officers:

Assistant Director Planning & Building Control, Planning Manager (Major Developments), Senior Principal Planning Officer, Legal Advisor and Corporate Governance Officer's x 2

Under Standing Orders:

At the commencement of the meeting the Chair announced the procedure which the remote Meeting of the Board would be followed for considering the item(s) before the Board. The Chair confirmed the names of members of the public who had registered to speak on the item(s) and clarified that only those members of the public who had registered to speak 2 working days before the meeting had been provided with a link to participate in the meeting.

Item

No.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received for Councillor Mehboob Khan.

2. Urgent Business

The Planning Board noted and accepted the Planning Officers' Addendum Report and public written comments which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, in relation to Item 5 – Kidbrooke Village, Phase 3 (Blocks F & G only) and Phase 5 (Blocks C, E & J Only), Kidbrooke, London. SE3 9YG - Ref: 19/3215/F

3. Declarations of Interest

The Chair announced that, in advance of the meeting, Councillor Khan had advised that he would not be in attendance due to a personal and prejudicial declaration in relation to Item 5, in that a close family member lived in an adjacent block and had lobbied him in respect of the application.

Councillor Adams made a personal and financial declaration in relation to Item 5 as the owner of a property in an adjacent block and would leave the meeting, taking no part in the debate or vote on the item.

Councillor Hyland made a personal declaration in relation to Item 5 as the President of the Greenwich World Heritage Site.

Resolved -

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

That the declarations made be noted.

4. Minutes

Resolved -

That the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Board held on 12 February 2020 and 17 February 2020 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate records.

5. Kidbrooke Village, Phase 3 (Blocks F and G only) and Phase 5 (Blocks C, E and J only), Kidbrooke, London, SE3 9YG - Ref: I9/3415/F

Councillor Adams had made a personal and financial declaration in relation to this item, as the owner of a property in an adjacent block and withdrew from the zoom meeting, taking no part in the debate or vote on the item.

The Planning Board noted the Planning Officers' Addendum Report and public written comments, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

The Planning Board accepted an illustrative presentation of the report from the Senior Principal Planning Officer.

Councillor Hyland noted the reference to the Greenwich World Heritage Site, included in Senior Principal Planning Officer's presentation and made a personal declaration as the President of the Greenwich World Heritage Site. She confirmed, to the Legal Officer, that this was a steering group, and any decisions were made by consensus as a group. The Legal Officer confirmed that this would be a personal declaration and she could continue to participate in the decision-making process of this item.

The Assistant Director: Building and Planning Control responded to a Members enquiry that the development agreement was between the Council, as the Local Authority, and the Landowner and was not a matter of material consideration for the Planning Board.

The Senior Principal Planning Officer responded to Members' that Block F had received consent as a single L shaped 9 storey building. The proposal before Members sought to separate it into two separate blocks with F1 at a maximum height of 17 storeys and F2 up to 12 storeys. Further, that Block J received consent at 6 storeys, and it was proposed to increase this to 9 storeys, at the tallest point.

Members' noted that the height of several the buildings was increasing and the impact of this on the skyline from Blackheath was not clear on the photographs within the presentation. Members expressed concern that the Kidbrooke Village development was already impactful on the skyline view and believed that the tall building at the centre of the Kidbrooke Development (Birch House) was to be a landmark building. However, the presentation image indicated that the new proposal would remove that landmark aspect and significantly impinge on the view of the skyline.

The Principal Planning Officer brought up the image which showed the projections of the approved Kidbrooke Masterplan and Kidbrooke Village Station Square and explained that the changes in the proposal would appear as additional tall buildings within the cluster of existing tall buildings.

In respect of the reduction of light to some units within blocks A, D, F & H, the Senior Principal Planning Officer advised that the affected windows were either directly below balconies which impacted the light levels, or the impact was mitigated by these windows serving rooms having another window or the existing approved levels of light were low.

The Senior Planning Officer confirmed to Members' that Block J would be entirely Social Housing units, Block F entirely private ownership and the remaining units a mix of private and shared ownership,

The Planning Board accepted an address from a local resident who noted that there were three major developments ongoing in the area and that it was already almost impossible to board a train during the morning or evening rush hour commute. The increased height of the blocks would add to passenger numbers and little regard appeared to have been given to the impact of the increased pressure on public transport and local roads.

He further commented that, whilst the pavilion building was a nice idea it would take away more land from the environmental park area, which was already going to lose land to buildings already agreed as part of future developments.

The Planning Board was addressed by a resident of Kidbrooke Village who stated that whilst supporting the principal of the Kidbrooke Village development the significant increase in the density was far above the original proposals and would remove the aspiration of a 'Village' feel to the development. The changes would have a detrimental impact on the daylight and sunlight to residents in Block C. She expressed concerns at the accuracy of the transport modelling. That any increase in number of units should be to provide London Affordable Housing. They felt that the developer was trying to make one last cash grab on the site and highlighted several reasons that, she felt, the applications should be refused including that it;

- Defied the SPD policy on tall buildings in this area
- Significant impact on daylight & sunlight of existing residents
- Purchaser were misled by Berkley Homes on the height of the buildings.
- The Increased density would put additional pressure on the train service.
- That the development was not delivering on truly affordable units in numbers or in line with London Affordable Rent Policy.

In response to a Members question, the speaker advised that there was a move to more sustainable forms of transport and reduction of car use which would impact a public transport service and the train was already frequently full by time it got to Kidbrooke Stations and impossible to board at then next stop, Blackheath. She noted that whilst it was likely that there may be a long-term move to people working from home, the proposal would still create a significant uplift in numbers and no mitigation appeared to be considered, particularly when combined with the TFL development.

The Planning Board accepted an address from a representative of the South Greenwich Forum (SGF) which supported the points made by the Blackheath Society. That the major concern of the SGF was the impact that the change to block J, creating two buildings, would have on Sutcliffe Park and Meadowside. That the CGI gave a false impression that Meadowside was a spacious, wide road, which it was not and the new proposal would undo the original approach to reduce overshadowing of the 2 storey houses in Meadowside.

She continued that the SGF held a long-held concern at the level of affordable housing, noting that the 35% affordable offer would all be delivered in the final phase of the development in 2029, whereas this type of housing was required now. That all indications were that Covid-19 would change the housing market and the increased levels of unemployment would impact the people's ability to raise funds for deposits, including for shared ownerships. The SGF urged the Planning Board to revert to the original plan in relation to the blocks facing Meadowside, and ensure the affordable housing is 70% rent, 30% shared ownership and delivered as a priority.

The Planning Board accepted an address from the representative of the Blackheath Society who advised that, in general, the Society supported the development but had concerns with certain aspects in particular the intensification of the development, the impact on amenities of neighbours and the treatment of the affordable housing provision. The Society would encourage the Planning Board to scrutinise these aspects, both in terms of this proposal and the precedent this could set for future proposals. The Society fully supported the SGF points in respect of overshadowing and amenities loss.

He continued that; in respect of affordable housing the Society would encourage the Board to challenge the Officers view that the under provision of London Affordable Housing could be offset by an overprovision across the Kidbrooke Village development. He requested that the findings of the early stage review be presented to the Planning Board for clearance to ensure robust challenge. That, unlike other phases, all the affordable housing provision was allocated to a single block located in a remote part of the development, some distance from the transport, commercial and retail hub at the centre of Village.

The Planning Board accepted an address from the Director for Berkley Homes East Thames who stated that the proposal was for 1,306 high quality mixed tenure units. Block J would entirely provide affordable rent units and be managed by London & Quadrant who required all the affordable units in

one block for management purpose. As part of other phases there were affordable units provided across the entire Kidbrooke Village development.

He continued that the approach taken to establish the height of blocks had changed since the initial consent and the blocks would still be subservient to Birch House. That the changes to Block FI & CI would open up the ground floor and green area access. He accepted that the issues around public transport had been challenging but felt that this was adequately addressed.

The applicant's daylight and sunlight consultant advised that the light assessment showed that there would be no noticeable impact to units and was acceptable, in line with BRE Guidance. There would be moderate to minor effects to windows below balconies.

In response to Members' questions he confirmed that a number of units had a living room window below a balcony and, whilst this created a reduction in light it would be minor to moderate and still acceptable within guidelines.

Members noted the ideal of peppering social rented units across the development and were concerned that Block J would create a separated and segregated social rented block. It was also questioned as to whether it was necessary to provide a single social rented block and if such, why it was not more centrally located, such as forming part of Block G.

The Director for Berkley Homes East Thames responded that the principles of the development were a balanced approach to all tenure types across the entire Masterplan. Block J was comparable to all other blocks, would be built to high standards and be tenure blind in appearance and the location was not isolated from the rest of the Village or facilities.

He gave assurance that the issues around Transport had been considered and there would be limited adverse impact, as a result of the uplift proposed by the application. He also noted that TfL were proposing upgrades to the line and the creation of additional capacity.

Further, that the play spaces and public amenities would be freely accessible to all residents. That residents of one block would be able to use the facilities located in or around another block.

In considering the application before them a Member noted that they had listened carefully to the arguments for and against the application and, whilst accepting the initial development proposal had changed, on balance they would be in favour of the application.

A Member expressed disappointment that there was not a larger affordable housing offer but would be supporting the application.

A Member expressed concern at the proposed height increase, especially Block FI, and the impact on surrounding units and the negative impact on the skyline view across the Blackheath Conservation Area. They were concerned that there would be an impact on transport due to more units, particularly as a number of assumptions were being made on improvements by TfL, that may not come to fruition.

A Member expressed concern at the location of Block J and supported the concerns around transport issues

The Chair put the Planning Officers' recommendation to grant planning consent to the vote with 4 Members' in favour; 4 Members' against. on the basis of the reasons already given, and 0 abstentions. As the vote was equal, the Chair used his casting vote as not in favour of agreeing the Officers' recommendation.

Resolved –

Not to grant consent on the basis of:

- Increase in height causing unacceptable harm to the Blackheath Conservation Area
- Segregation of Affordable Housing Block J
- Unacceptable public transport implications

The meeting closed at 20:30

Chair