

ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

PLANNING BOARD

2 JUNE 2020 AT 6.30PM

MINUTE

PRESENT:

Members:

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

Officers:

Assistant Director Planning & Building Control, Planning Manager (Major Developments), Planning Officer x2, Assistant Head of Legal Services and Corporate Governance Officer x2.

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 Councillors Mehboob Khan and Clive Mardner.

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 – Former Police Car Park, r/o 18-26 Royal Hill, Greenwich.
Item 6 – Southwood Site, University of Greenwich,

Further, that a public submission had been circulated to Planning Board Members in advance of the meeting, in relation to item 5.

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 minute of the meeting of the Planning Board held on 4 February 2020 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

5. Former Police Car Park, r/o 18-26 Royal Hill, Greenwich, SE10 – Ref: 20/0718/F

The Planning Board noted the circulation of the Planning Officer's addendum report and public submission.

The Planning Officer gave an illustrative presentation of the application advising the Board Members that Planning Officers considered the proposal to be of a high-quality design which complimented the Greenwich Conservation Area and recommended approval.

In response to Members' questions, the Planning Officer advised that there was no evidence that a public right of way or right of access to the site had been established. That there would be adequate space for a small van to access the site, when the security gate was unlocked. It was considered that it was unlikely the proposed residents would drive therefore, a pickup / drop off point, adjacent to Circus street, was deemed appropriate.

The Planning Board accepted an address from the Greenwich Society representative who, in speaking in support of the application, stated that the Greenwich Society felt that the design was imaginative, making effective use of the site and the design the risk of overshadowing or overlooking. They considered that the formal design of the side facades, with the overall scale, subtle and well considered design as well as the use of London Stock brick and the proportion of the windows was respectful to the surrounding historic building. The Greenwich Society considered that, whilst being contemporary in feel the proposed building would blend well with the design of the neighbouring buildings.

He continued that the Greenwich Society positively noted the access residents would have to the garden and enclosed walk way and appreciated the proposal that local residents, who had formed an unofficial communal garden on the site, could help residents maintain the garden. He concluded that the building scored well on ecological and environmental and sustainable measures and the Greenwich Society felt that this was a good scheme and would recommend that it be approved.

In response to a Member's question, the Greenwich Society representative confirmed that the Society had opposed the two previous proposals. He noted that the Council had run a competition to design a scheme for the site and, whilst the Greenwich Society was not involved with this process they were impressed by the chosen architects' other designs and felt that they had done everything possible to mitigate the impact on the surroundings of the proposal.

The Planning Board accepted an address from a Planning Consultant (DRK Planning Ltd) who was authorised to speak on behalf of two residents of Royal Hill, in objection to the application. He advised that his clients living room window would be 2 metres from the development. The proposal was of a greater overall floor area, with more units and greater density than the previously refused applications for the site. This would increase disturbance by way of people accessing and leaving the site and undermine the quiet character of the area.

He continued that his clients felt there was a lack of recognition of the risk to the Royal Hill terrace, including their home and Grade 2 Listed building, of complete collapse due to the construction work. The report briefly referenced site investigations but there were no engineering details or reports submitted with the papers before Members, despite the issue of collapse being recorded and raised by engineering experts as well as by Members on previously refused proposals. Whilst his clients appreciated the importance of provision for people with learning difficulties, the proposal still failed to overcome the concerns raised in relation to previously refused applications regarding density, overdevelopment, harm to or loss of heritage assets and the prospect of the collapse of neighbouring homes and therefore, ask that Members refuse this application.

The Planning Consultant clarified for Members that, whilst he had been engaged by his clients to represent them as a Planning Consultant he had a background as barrister, solicitor and chartered surveyor.

A Planning Board Member advised that they were also a chartered building surveyor and, as a point of clarification, noted that should consent be granted and given his clients building foundations would be within 6 metres of the development, there was a statutory requirement to engage in a Party Wall agreement, in line with the 1996 Party Wall Act. Further, that any such party wall agreement should encompass and address the concerns which had been raised.

The Planning Consultant responded that concerns regarding the impact on the stability of the properties along Royal Hill had been raised at previous meetings, though had not been given as a reason for refusal. That his client could only make assessment from the papers provided for consideration and had noted that no information on their concerns was provided.

In response to a Member's enquiry, the Planning Officer brought up images from the presentation, showing the relationship between the proposed building and the objectors proposer. She advised that the 1st floor windows from Royal Hill would overlook the site and would be at an angle to the proposed building. Further that the applicant proposed to fit louvered windows to prevent any overlooking to or from the properties in Royal Hill.

The Planning Consultant was unable to clarify any further information or details as to the effected window as due to Covid-19 restrictions he had been unable to visit the site. He also clarified for Members that his instructions suggest his clients were concerned at the potential collapse of the building, not a garden wall.

In response to a Member's request the Planning Officer confirmed that the Member was correct that several of the matters raised were between the developer and the owner/occupants of Royal Hill and were not Planning Matters. That they would be discharged by Building Control and the Party Wall Act. Conditions were proposed relating to the impact on amenity.

The Planning Consultant stated that he believed the concerns raised were relevant under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requiring consideration of such issues where there would be potential for substantial harm or loss to heritage assets, which formed part of his representation and respectfully submit this was a planning matter and should be given consideration. He also clarified that one of his clients had also requested to address the Board on further issues.

The Assistant Director Planning and Building Control advised the Board that the Officer's addendum report set out information in relation to additional condition's including the requirement for the submissions of a construction method statement to be signed and endorsed by a chartered engineer.

One of the residents of Royal Hill, who had also been represented by Planning Consultant addressed the Planning Board advising that the site the railway viaduct spoil heap. That eight years ago half the building, currently on the site had to be partially demolished and re-built to rectify stability issues, subsequently further cracks occurred to the building following the use of heavy machinery on site. There would be a need to use heavy machinery to construct the new building and, in mind of the above, believed the construction vibrations could cause considerable damage to Royal Hill which would be a financial risk to the Council, a health risks to builders and new occupants which could not be mitigated 100%. He believed it was an inappropriate site when good and viable alternative sites existed. He drew the Boards attention to incorrect band revisions from the 19 May mentioned in the report and the changes had not been reflected in the site plan on page 30 of the Agenda. Further, the public footpath's shown on page 27 were illegally closed off. He felt that the site was too small and problematical and urged Members to refuse the application.

The Planning Board accepted an address from Councillor Maureen O'Mara, who, speaking as a Ward Councillor, advised that she had issued a written submission of supported to the planning application and encouraged the Planning Board Members to grant consent for this application.

The Planning Board accepted an address from Councillor Anthony Okereke, Cabinet Member for Housing, who spoke in support of the application advising that Greenwich Build had amended the proposals based on feedback from residents, Councillors and MP's. The proposal complied with national and local guidelines and was supported by the proposal for the use of small brown field sites. He appreciated the residents' concerns advising that, if granted, great care would be taken over how the development proceeded and engagement would continue to inform residents. The development would be zero Carbon, with a green roof,

rainwater harvesting system and cycle provision and he hoped that the Planning Officer's recommendation for approval was agreed.

In response to a Members enquiry Councillor Okereke confirmed that he was not speaking on behalf of the development company but as the Cabinet Member for Housing.

The Planning Board accepted an address from the architect for the applicant who stated that they were only involved in the current proposal and commended the Council's positive handling of the site through opening the design to competition and engaging with and listening to the comments of residents to develop a proposal that was respectful to its location. That an investigation report had looked at ordnance, ground contamination and the underground structures to establish a conclusion as to how to address the issues, which had been raised in the past. He noted that the application was for housing to support adults with learning difficulties with the aim of create a place to let the people build confidence to engage with locals and the community beyond not to create a development with an institutional feel .

The architect for the applicant noted it was a complex site and the design aimed to compliment the various building design aspects of the area and work with the unique character of the site. The foundations would be pilled through the railway cutting and old railway sleepers would be used in the garden. He noted the concerns raised regarding the possible damage to neighbouring properties and gave assurance that all safe construction methods would be used and engagement around party wall agreements would be undertaken.

In response to Members' question's the applicant's architect advised that a range of units were to be provided giving assurance that the 4-bed unit was not a family unit but designed as a shared space for those who were confident to live with others. There would be two full time staff on site, 24/7 and the office was to provide them with a space to retreat to and, in order to avoid the feel of a care home, was located over the training space not residents' homes. He confirmed that the proposal was of a reduced height to those previously refused.

In considering the application before them two Member's expressed that they felt that the application had been exhaustively explored, had considered the issues raised and could see no reason why not support it.

A Member commented that they considered the proposal was a vast improvement on previous schemes. He still had some concern at the potential for damage to (properties in) Royal Hill and was taking it on trust that the party wall and method statement plan would cover these.

A Member noted that the previously refused application had not been on the principle of development but the design and was reassured by the Greenwich Society's support. He appreciated that the site had been open for some time, but the loss of view was not an issue, in this case, that would support refusal. He felt the quality of design was positive and the scale and massing were now acceptable

A Member commented that they were encouraged that the Greenwich Society and Ward Councillors had spoken in favour of the application.

Two Member's commented that, whilst s happy to support the application, they emphasised the requirement for an enhanced construction method statement to be provided to recognised residents' concerns before works commenced on site.

The Chair put the Planning Officers recommendation to approve planning consent to the vote with 10 Member's in favour, 0 against and 0 abstentions

Resolved unanimously -

That planning permission for the construction of supported housing scheme containing five dwellings (1 x 4-bed and 4 x 1-bed) (C3b use class), a training dwelling with staff office/bedroom (Sui generis use class) and associated landscaping, waste and cycle store be granted

That consent be granted in accordance;

- i. To the conditions in appendix 2 of the report as updated by the addendum report, to be detailed in the notice of determination; and
- ii. To authorise the Assistant Director of Planning & Building Control to make any minor changes to the detailed wording of the recommended conditions as set out in this report and its addendums, where the Assistant Director of Planning & Building Control considers it appropriate, before issuing the decision notice.

6. Southwood Site, University of Greenwich, Avery Hill Road, London, SE9 2UG - Ref: 20/0252/F

In presenting an illustrative report of the application the Planning Officer advised that an addendum report had been circulated which mainly related to amendment to conditions within the main report.

In response to Member's questions the Planning Officer confirmed that if the building was required for use beyond the 5 years temporary period, a further application would need to be submitted for planning consent.

In respect of the trees to be removed the Planning Officer advised that the application before the Board was a revised version and as it was on Metropolitan Open Land (MOL) there was a desire to keep the temporary building close to existing buildings in order to reduce the impact on the open character of the land. He advised that if the building were move it could result in a greater number of trees being lost or further impact on the existing parking, which was being reduced by 1 space by this proposal. He noted that the 4 trees in question could currently be removed at any time but the proposal required the immediate planting of 4 replacements trees on site and, at the end of the 5 year use and removal of the building, a further 4 trees being planted. The trees were on the University campus and, as it was set back from the public realm, there was little impact on the general public and confirmed that the Councils Tree Officer would be consulted to ensure that correct type, height and size of the replacement trees.

Board Members noted that there were no public speakers on this application and felt that they had sufficient information to move directly to the vote.

The Chair put the Planning Officers recommendation to grant consent for planning permission for temporary construction to the vote with 10 Member's in favour, 0 against and 0 abstentions.

Resolved unanimously -

That planning permissions be granted for the installation of a temporary modular building for use as a chemistry teaching laboratory for 5 years, subject to the Conditions set out in Appendix 2 of the report, as updated by the addendum.

The meeting closed at 08.10pm

Chair