

ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

WOOLWICH & THAMEASMEAD AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE

23 MARCH 2021 AT 6.30PM

MINUTE

PRESENT:

Members:

Councillor Stephen Brain (Chair); Councillors Dominic Mbang, Gary Dillon, Nigel Fletcher, David Gardner, Averil Lekau and Clive Mardner.

Officers:

Assistant Director Planning & Building Control, Area Planning Manager (West), Planning Officer x3 and Committee Services Officer.

Under Standing Orders:

Councillor John Fahy

At the commencement of the meeting the Chair announced the procedure which the remote meeting of the Area Planning Committee would be following for considering the item(s) before it.

Item No.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received for Councillor John Hills.

2. Urgent Business

The Chair advised that the order in which the items would be considered would be reversed, with Item 7 being considered first, then Item 6 with Item 5 last.

The Area Planning Committee noted and accepted the Planning Officers Addendum Report's, circulated in advance of the meeting, in relation to;

Item 5 – The Stables - East wing, Charlton House, Charlton Road,
Greenwich, London SE7 8RE - Ref: 20/3357/F & 20/3358/L

Item 7 – Schoolhouse Education, 42 Combwell Crescent, Abbey Wood, SE2
9LZ – Ref: 20/3891/F

The Cahir advised that at 8pm the Committee would hold a minute's silence for reflection, as part of the national 'Share the light' commemoration of the one year anniversary of the Covid-19 Lockdown.

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 Area Planning Committee held on 23 November 2021 and 26 January 2021 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record's.

5. The Stables - East wing, Charlton House, Charlton Road, Greenwich, London SE7 8RE - Ref: 20/3357/F & 20/3358/L

The Area Planning Committee received and noted the Planning Officers Addendum Report, circulated in advance of the meeting, and accepted an illustrative presentation of the application.

The Planning Officer confirmed the ground floor would be divided into small offices; the nursery would be based on the open plan first floor. The first floor was only be accessed by stairs which was considered acceptable, in this instance, as the ground floor was unsuitable for use as a nursery.

He advised the nursery attendance was expected to be 30 to 35, children aged 2 to 5 with a minimum of ten staff on site; toilet facilities were on the ground floor and use of the area and facilities was dependent on Ofsted approval.

The Planning Officer confirmed the nurseries use of the external green area was considered reasonable and the area would be surround by a fence, the exact design and mechanism for installation and removal to be agreed with

Planning Officers under Condition. The Management Plan would set out the hours of use of the space and the remainder of the green area would remain accessible to the careers centre. The carers centre had raised no objection to the fencing off of less than a quarter of the green area and that this would have no adverse impact on the on the operation of the carers centre.

That the applicant would be expected to enforce the travel plan; if a large volume of private cars were observed accessing the site the situation would be investigated and, if necessary, enforcement action taken. The Area Planning Manager added that, in line with Condition 5, the applicant was required to specify the monitoring and review mechanism they would implement, which would be reviewed by the Highways Department.

Councillor John Fahy addressed the Area Committee, on behalf of the adjoining, Friends of Carers Centre, advising that he was not opposed to the provision of the nursery and would be reflecting the concerns raised by carers and constituents of his Ward.

He advised there was concern at the loss of 120 meters of green area to the nursery, as this was a private space valued by carers and their family as an area of peace and tranquillity for many years and its loss would have a significant impact on those that use the Centre. The outdoor areas were also frequently used in the summer and concern existed that the secure fencing would not be robust enough to be taken down, as and when needed, and as such would be retained in place around the area. He requested that negotiations were undertaken between the users of the Carers Centre and the applicant to ensure the benefits for both parties, sharing the space, were maintained and not detrimental for the carers and their loved ones.

He expressed that it was felt that the applicant had not given enough attention to look at alternative locations that would provide the internal and external space required.

The applicant's agent addressed the Committee advising that the proposal met with the objectives of the Greenwich Heritage Trust (GHT) to bring the vacant part of the building back into use. The ground floor offices would be occupied by the GHT whilst the nursery, providing a community resource, would be located on the first floor which featured a large open plan area with kitchen and its use would require no structural changes to the listed building.

In respect of concerns raised, the applicant's agent advised that no request had been made for the provision of disability access nor, at this stage, was it required. If, at a future point, disability access was required the necessary permissions for provision would be sought. The toilets were on the ground

floor and were for the use of the nursery children with an agreement made with the Carers Centre for office staff to use the toilets in the West Wing.

She explained that a small area of the courtyard would be fenced off to provide a safe, secure space for outdoor supervised learning based play, limited to two groups of around 15 children at a time, for maximum of two hours a day; one hour in the morning one hour in the afternoon. Further, the noise levels generated by the children would be lower than the background noise levels, including from local road traffic. The fencing would be removed to allow the entire courtyard space to be used for events, as required and an agreement on the use of the space, between the Carers Centre and the Greenwich Heritage Trust, had resulted in the Carers Centre withdrawing its initial objection on this point. In respect of potential alternative locations for the play space, all the surrounding gardens and community areas were publicly accessible and, therefore, unsuitable.

She noted that an Ofsted inspection, in 2019, considered the first floor space was suitable for a nursery and could accommodate 30 to 35 children.

In response to a Members' concern at the lack of accessibility for disabled children, the applicant's agent reiterated that the Ofsted inspection, in 2019, had considered the current position accepted. Any future requirement for disability access would be applied for as significant changes to the listed building would be required for installation.

The applicant's agent assured Members' that the fencing would be movable, and was not intended to be a permanent fixture and the Greenwich Heritage Trust had assured the Carers Centre that they would have use of the entire space for any planned events.

In respect of the Travel Plan, around 50% of people used public transport to get to the Centre and it was the applicant's ambition to go beyond this figure. The Travel Plan details would be agreed between the applicant and Planning Officers prior to occupation.

The applicant's agent confirmed that the toilet facilities, for the nursery children and staff use, was retained on the ground floor so as to minimise the requirement for structural change to the building. The Greenwich Heritage Trust office workers, currently located in Charlton House, would occupy the ground floor offices and would use the facilities in the West wing of the stables block. There would be no public access to the building.

Members' expressed a number of concerns, as follows

- given the children would be spending most of their time indoors, would the open plan space be sufficient, given it would be used for children, equipment, storage and as play space.
- that disability access should be provided as a matter of course, not just when there was 'a need' for it. The current proposal indicated that disabled children could be disadvantaged and disabled staff may not be employed, given it may take up to 18 months to get consent for and install disability access.
- that the toilet facilities were only being provided on the ground floor, given the children's age range.

The Chair noted that, not to dismiss concerns held about the children's education and learning, some of the concerns were not of a material planning consideration and could not be taken account of as part of any planning consent.

The applicant's agent responded that the applicant was trying to minimize the impact to the listed building. However, consideration could be given to a stairlift, which may not require building consent and could be discussed further with Planning Officers.

With the consent of the Chair, the Area Planning Manager (West), clarified that it was possible to secure a high level of accessibility with a new build development however, in this case this may result in substantial conversion of a Listed Building. Members' would need to balance the benefit of the scheme; bringing the building back to viable use with a nursery provision for the wider community, against limited accessibility.

The Area Planning Manager (West) advised that due to the potential level of conversion to the listed building, it was considered it was appropriate to proceed without the provision of a lift . It may be possible for the applicant to provide toilet facilities on the first floor level, but this would be covered under separate legislation and was not a consideration within planning consent.

The Planning Officer confirmed that any disability access proposals would need to be provided in order to assess their feasibility, in line with any heritage considerations . If installation of disability access were conditioned it may not be possible to comply with this, either from a heritage or practical sense.

In considering the application before them a Member noted that whilst the issues of installing a lift and the toilets being situated downstairs were not, necessarily, material planning considerations but they were still areas of concern.

A Member noted the Carers Centre was set up to provide a facility for carers to escape and relax and was concerned the application would impinge on the tranquillity of the area and have an adverse impact on patrons attending the Carers Centre. Whilst appreciating the Greenwich Heritage Centres need to raise revenue, they were not sure this was a suitable location for a nursery.

A Member noted that, having considered all the information presented and accepting it was not a material planning issue, they were concerned at the nursery being located on the first floor and its accessibility.

A Member commented that they understood the concerns raised, particularly in relation to accessibility, which it may or may not be possible to address at a later stage. In respect of some of the other concerns, such as noise disturbance, the proposed layout appeared to minimise this. They felt that it was an appropriate use of the building, noting that, as a listed building, there were constraints which appear to have been considered. Overall, they did not see any substantive material planning objections that would indicate grounds to overturn the Officers recommendation.

The Chair accepted a request by the Area Planning Manager (West) to address the meeting, cautioning that as Members' had moved to determination, their comments must not seek to influence the decision of the Committee.

The Area Planning Manager (West) confirmed that his comments would not seek to do so. He wished to advise Members' that, as they appeared to hold concern at accessibility to the first floor, they may determine the application, as presented, or defer a decision in order to enable officers to investigate the options for addressing this.

The Chair advised that this would be held under consideration for once Members' had completed their determination.

A Member considered that the application would promote the conservation of the building which was an important aspect of the NPPF as well as the London Plan; heritage conservation. In order to sustain the heritage environment required income and the Council was pursuing a Community use. However, there were constraints with the space, particularly that the

nursery provision should be inclusive, and, as well as Planning Legislation the Committee also had to have regard to the Equality Act. They considered that there were issues that need to be resolved and whilst appreciating time was of the essence and that assurances had been given, they felt that it may be appropriate to defer a decision for further information,

A Member stated they too held concerns regarding access but felt this was something which could be addressed, accepting that as a listed building permission for structural change may be required. However, they considered that it would not be appropriate to proceed without accessibility and the opportunity to amend this should be explored.

Councillor Fletcher moved for a deferment in order that the applicant could investigate and present further options in respect of Members' concerns regarding the lack of disability access to the upper floor nursery. Councillor Lekau seconded the motion.

The Chair noted that it would also be appropriate to undertake a site visit, in line with Covid-19 restrictions.

Before moving to the vote on the Motion the Chair accepted a further address from a Member who had not made comment.

They noted that accessibility issues were part of everyday life for a lot of people and whatever measures were put in place to resolve this should be permanent. Having said that, they were opposed to a deferment as they considered that a deferment to look at a matter that did not form part of the Planning Consideration.

Before moving to the vote on the Motion to defer the Chair accepted an address from the Assistant Director; Building and Control, who advised that a deferment would allow Officers to explore a permanent option for addressing the accessibility issues. The solution, depending on what it was, may or may not require planning permission but, potentially, would require Listed Building consent. Further, depending on the form of the proposed solution, that it may be possible to include the proposals in the building plans, and/or the Listed Building plans, which was before Members', as part of the application, and would come back to the Committee for decision.

A Member raised the concern that a wide range of options could be considered, some of which may not require planning consent and to limit options considered to this requirement could restrict the solution's available.

A Member commented that they considered a deferral would allow the applicant to explore a permanent solution to accessibility concerns, to be brought back before Committee for consideration.

The Chair put the Motion submitted by Councillor Fletcher, seconded by Councillor Lekau to defer a decision on the application in order that the applicant investigate and present further options in respect of the lack of disability access to the upper floor nursery. That, lockdown guidance allowing, a site visit also be undertaken.

At the request of and on behalf of the Chair, the Committee Officer sought confirmation from all Members' that they had maintained zoom connection to the meeting for the entirety of the presentation and discussion on this item. No Member indicated that they had experienced any loss of connectivity.

The motion to defer was put to the vote with;
7 Members' in favour of deferment
0 against
0 abstentions.

Resolved Unanimously -

That the decision on the application be deferred in order that the applicant investigate and present further options in respect of Members' concerns regarding the lack of disability access to the upper floor nursery.

That, lockdown guidance allowing, a site visit also be undertaken.

6. 36 Riverdale Road, Plumstead, London, SE18 1NZ – Ref: 20/3775/F

The Planning Officer gave an illustrative presentation of the application and, in response to a Members' question advised that the matter was called to committee by a Councillor Cornforth due to concerns at the retrospective nature of the application. No objections to the proposal were received from neighbours.

Members' raised a number of concern's at the number of refuse bins conditioned and questioned how this supported the Councils drive to reduce waste as well concerns at how theywould be stored.

The Planning Officer accepted there was a general issue with bins being left on the street and it would be conditioned that refuse bins be stored within the boundary of the application. The condition for provision of five (5) 40ltr bins and two (2) 11ltr bins had been raised with Waste Services, who believed

that this was an appropriate number for an HMO. He noted that, whilst a similar applications provision was amended by Committee, if Waste Management did not agree with any amendment it would not be possible to discharge planning consent. However, there may be scope for the applicant to explore the provision requirement with Waste Services at the time of the discharge of Conditions.

The Area Planning Manager (West) added that further consent for any excavation of the front garden area to accommodate the bins would depend on the extent of excavation. Further, that as with all terrace homes which may be occupied by a number of family members, egress in the case of a fire would be through the front or rear door.

The Chair requested that it be noted in the minute that internal fire safety measures, for HMOs, should form part of any future policy and that Planning Officers noted that Members' wanted this to be looked at with some urgency.

Action: Assistant Director; Planning and Building Control

The Area Planning Committee accepted an address from a representative for the Positive Plumstead Project who considered it was unfortunate that the application would see the loss of another family home and felt that there was an increasing need for the Council to develop a policy to address this continuing loss. They were concerned that with six (6) occupants there could be six (6) additional vehicle on an already pack street which had seen incidents of road rage. Whilst there were proposals for a CPZ, none had been introduced.

Further the Positive Plumstead Project was concern the landlord, who had other HMO properties, had not submitted an HMO conversion planning application until a complaint was submitted. The rooms are designed for single occupancy, but tenants may move in partners and it was not clear how this would be monitored and addressed by the landlord. Further, whilst the rooms were of the minimum size standard, that did not mean this was a standard that Council should be aspiring to, for its residents. The issue of refuse bins being left out on the pavements had been raised but the removal of bins often resulted in an increase in bags being left out for days prior to collection.

Members' had no questions and moved to accepting an address from the applicant's agent who advised that the applicant had purchased the premises as an existing HMO. However, the HMO status was undocumented, and the applicant sought to create improvements, through the reduction of room

numbers from seven (7) to six (6). The internal layout had been reconfigured to create bedrooms that exceeded space standards, with bathroom provision for each resident and 96 square meters of external community space.

The applicants agent noted that the Councils Highways Officers confirmed there would be no highway safety impact from the proposal. In respect of bin storage, it was agreed that the required bin provision was excessive and was the highest provision request of any of the 600 HMO applications they worked on each year and the applicant was happy to discuss a lower provision with waste management. Further, bin screening from the street scene could be fitted by recessing the storage area off the pavement and the small amount of excavation required could be discharge under planning condition. He confirmed secure bike storage was required to prevent cycle theft.

The applicant's agent considered the scheme represents an improved quality HMO to that which existed and which it was hope would set a high standard for Greenwich.

In response to a Members' question, the applicant's agent advised that a detailed waste management plan had not been submitted as waste management provision for HMOS differed across the country. In order to meet Greenwich standards further consideration was need on how to address the typography of the site and it had been considered better to address this at the discharge of Planning Condition stage, in order to allow for detailed discussions with the Planning and Waste Management Teams. The applicant's agent noted that the property was an existing HMO, and his client was seeking to reduce the occupation, which should reduce waste levels.

In respect of the level of waste bin provision, Councillor Gardner proposed Condition three (3) be re-worded to include 'refuse storage must meet a minimum standard, to be explored between waste services and planning for final approval by planning.', which the Chair agreed, in principle.

The Planning Officer sought clarification that the Members' proposed amendment to Condition three (3) would retain current wording but with no specific number of bins be prescribed and the addition that 'the applicant explored the possibility of lowering the bin provision with Waste Services'.

The Chair put the proposed form of words to the Committee, which agreed adoption, should the application be granted.

In considering the application a Member felt that it was unfortunate the Committee was being asked to consider another retrospective application for a HMO and felt a Planning Policy on the provision of HMOS, in order to protect family accommodation and address saturation levels, needed to be brought forward. That the Committee had to make its determination within the current planning framework and, subject to the amendment in relation to bin storage, considered there was no alternative but to support the application, which did appear to be of a high specification and met minimum standards.

A Member liked the internal layout and standard of decoration but was disappointed a waste management plan had not been submitted with the application and hope that this would not be the case for any future HMO applications the Committee was asked to consider. Having said that, they accepted a waste management plan was pending and had full faith that Planning Officer would ensure it was appropriate.

A Member concurred with the frustration expressed by the retrospective nature of the application and the concerns at the lack of a specific Planning Policy in respect of HMO's. In considering the application they believed that there was little option but to approve and felt that the points that had been raised would be mitigated and followed up.

At the request of and on behalf of the chair the Committee Officer 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, with amendment to Condition three (3) was put to the vote with
7 Members' in favour
0 against
0 abstentions.

Resolved unanimously -

That full planning permission be granted for a retrospective application for use of the building as an HMO of up to 6 persons (Class C4)

That consent be granted subject to:

- i. The conditions in appendix 2 of the report, to be detailed in the notice of determination; with agreed amendment to Condition 3

- a) *Within one month of the date of this decision, the layout and details of the refuse storage units, recycling facilities and refuse collection storage, including plan, elevation and materiality details, associated with the use hereby approved shall be submitted to the local planning authority for subsequent approval. **The applicant should explore the possibility of a provision lower than the recommended 5x240L bin provision if acceptable to the local authorities' waste department.***
- ii. Authorise the Assistant Director of Planning & Building Control to make any minor change to the detailed working of the recommended conditions, as set out in the report and its addendums, where the Assistant Director of Planning & Building Control considers it appropriate, before issuing the decision notice.

7. Schoolhouse Education, 42 Combwell Crescent, Abbey Wood, SE2 9LZ – Ref: 20/3891/F

The Area Planning Committee received and noted the Planning Officers Addendum Report, circulated in advance of the meeting, and accepted an illustrative presentation of the application.

The Planning Officer responded to Members' questions confirming that consultation, which included letters to residents and site notice's, closed in January 2021 and no objections were received. A further consultation process was undertaken with Crossrail and Greenwich Council Officers, which extended the consultation process to 26 March 2021. He confirmed that if any material planning objection were received, the matter would be re-presented to the Committee, should consent be granted at this meeting.

The Planning Officer advised that, as the development was of less than 600 residential units, a travel plan could not be conditioned, however, cycle parking provision would be condition. As the area had poor public transport services the provision of five parking spaces was considered to be acceptable and adequate.

At the request of the Chair, the Area Planning Manager (West) clarified that the PTAL rating for the area was the lowest possible and, until Crossrail commences service it could not be taken into account. Further, Crossrail would have a minor impact on the PTAL rating and the need for parking spaces would remain. The Occupational Therapists require one disabled

parking space, as a key provision. The remaining spaces would be for staff and visitors and would remove pressure on existing residents parking.

The Chair noted that given the nature of the proposed service provision, service users may need to arrive during the night, and it may not be possible or appropriate for them to get to the facility by public transport.

The Planning Officer responded to Members that the service provision was aimed at adolescent rather than primary aged children and, whilst there was no specific play area provision, 216sq metres of rear garden space was being retained. He confirmed that a number of staff spaces were provided, including a staff office, communal staff room and a staff bedroom on the top floor.

The Area Planning Committee accepted an address from Councillor Matthew Morrow, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, who felt that this was an important provision needed in order to support and increase the number of placements available for young people within the Borough. He noted that existing, similar provisions, had good relationships with neighbours and was confident that situation would be replicated. Parking provision, whilst not desirable, was necessary in this case. That the proposal would enable the Council to provide an extremely valuable local service to young people that could make a huge difference in their lives.

N.B Councillor Morrow lost connection to the Zoom meeting, returning after the applicant's address.

Councillor Morrow responded to Members questions that the majority of people would arrive during the day, during main service provision, but it was not impossible that someone may need to arrive or leave during the night, which would be similar to any private dwelling.

The applicant addressed the Area Committee who expressed that, if agreed, this proposal would build on the success of the existing Children's Home provision in the Borough and would be run by Greenwich Council . As a residential centre, registered with Ofsted, it would provide a safe haven for adolescents who need short term, perhaps just one night, rather than long term placement supported by multidisciplinary high skilled staff. The applicant's architect advised the proposal would see a vacant building brought back into use for the community with minimal intervention and maximum benefits. Whilst restoring its original design adjustments would be made to facilitate the safe operation of the building to accommodate a wider range of users.

Improvements would include thermal efficiency by fitting double glazed window units, provision of additional sanitary facilities and a new annex, with no change in the building's footprint as internal reconfiguration would provide 200 square meters of usable space. The flood risk assessment recommendations had been incorporated, disability access and areas of shared use provided.

In considering the application a Member felt the design would not adversely impact the area. The additional car parking facilities were acceptable, given the location and would only be used by staff or families dropping into visit.

A Member commented that they were pleased to see this valuable asset brought back into use. As it was not easily accessed off the main road, with a 10 to 15 minute walk to the nearest rail station and the nearest buses being some distance away, the parking space provision would be adequate.

Two Members' concurred with previous views and would be supporting the proposal

A Member noted that the facility would provide a family style setting for young people who require a temporary placement for a variety of safeguarding reasons.

At the request of and on behalf of the chair the Committee Officer 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

7 Members' in favour

0 against

0 abstentions.

Resolved unanimously –

That planning permission be agreed for the construction of a new 2-Storey Side Extension to replace the existing attached outbuilding, replacement of windows and doors with double glazed units and associated internal and external alterations in connection with the change of use of the existing

building from Class F1 (Former Class D1) 'Non-Residential Education Institution' to Class C2 'Children's Home.'

That consent be subject to:

- i. The conditions set out in appendix 2 of the main report, to be detailed in the notice of determination, following the expiry of the consultation period on the 26th March 2021 and subject to no further responses being received; and
- ii. The authorisation of the Assistant Director of Planning & Building Control to make any minor change to the detailed working of the recommended conditions, as set out in the report, the addendum and, where the Assistant Director of Planning & Building Control considers it appropriate, before issuing the decision notice.

The meeting closed at 9.35pm

Chair