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Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee

Date: Wednesday, 5 April 2023

Venue: Council Chamber, Ealing Town Hall, New Broadway, Ealing W5 2BY

Attendees (in person): Councillors

R Wall (Chair), L Brett, G Busuttil, T Mahmood (Vice-Chair), D Martin, S Padda, M Rice, G Stafford, M Hamidi, A Kelly, S Khan, S Kohli and G Shaw

Apologies:

C Summers

1 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies were received from Councillor Summers with Councillor Rice as substitute.

2 Urgent Matters

There were none.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

4 Matters to be Considered in Private

There were none.

5 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 1 March 2023 were agreed as a true and correct record.

6 Site Visit Attendance

The following Committee members attended site visits prior to the Committee meeting:

Councillors Brett, Mahmood, Martin, Padda, Wall, Hamidi, Kelly, Khan and Shaw.

7 Planning Application - 224371FUL - Land Between Park View And Cloister Road Western Avenue Acton London W3 6XZ

Chris Maltby, Planning Officer, introduced the report and explained that the application before the Committee was for the redevelopment of a small, 0.82ha, area of land between Park View and Cloister Road on the south west intersection of Horn Lane with Western Avenue. The proposal was for the erection of 6 residential buildings ranging in height from 2 to 17 stories to provide a total of 300 new homes, of which 35% were going to be affordable by habitable room. The site had a high PTAL rating and the proposals were likely to have only negligible impacts on surrounding areas.

Mr Maltby outlined the context of the application. The site had originally been acquired to facilitate the widening of the A40, a project which was later abandoned. There had been two recent Planning permissions granted on this site. The first permission was granted in 2015 for the site's redevelopment with residential blocks between 3 and 6 stories and a 6-storey hotel. The second permission was granted in 2018 and sought residential led development with blocks ranging from 3 to 9 stories. Both permissions expired after not being implemented.

Mr Maltby outlined some of the key determining issues in relation to the application, which included the principle of the development, design, housing standards, energy and sustainability, neighbourhood impacts, environmental protection, affordable housing, transport, the Acton Green corridor, responses to consultation, and Planning obligations. Overall, Mr Maltby considered that the proposal was going to result in the effective use of this brownfield site and was going to bring forward a wide range of high-quality residential dwellings, including a good proportion of affordable ones. On balance of the relevant considerations, Mr Maltby recommended that the Committee grant planning permission subject to conditions, the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement and a stage 2 referral to the Greater London Authority.

A briefing note in respect of the application had been produced by Planning Officers, circulated to the Committee and published on the Council's website prior to the meeting. It had provided information corrections and clarifications to the report, further written representations made in relation to the application and amendments to the proposed conditions.

Caroline King, an objector to the development, made a representation to the Committee which included the following key points:

- Although Ms King agreed there was a need for building new homes in London, Ms King considered that the proposal was not appropriate for this area of land.
- Ms King disagreed with officers that this proposal was compliant with local and regional policy on tall buildings. Ms King referenced the London Plan policy D9 and Ealing Council's policy to restrict tall buildings to only specific sites.
- Ms King noted that the applicant referred to the tall buildings in North

Acton as a justification for the heights of the proposed blocks. Ms King considered that this justification was weak insofar the setting of buildings in North Acton was across the A40 and was very different from the setting in the local area in West Acton which was predominantly low-rise.

Martin Scholar, on behalf of the applicant, spoke in favour of the application. The representation made the following key points:

- This scheme had been brought forward as one of the final stages of the construction of the Western Circus project.
- Mr Barratt outlined some key benefits of the scheme, which included strong transport links, policy compliant provision of affordable homes, new public spaces and a landing point for a bridge over the A40 should one be made.
- Mr Barratt acknowledged the concerns raised by residents about the east west connection through the site. Mr Barratt disagreed that the connection risked attracting anti-social behaviour to the area.

Councillor Daniel Crawford, a local ward councillor, made a representation to the Committee which included the following key points:

- Councillor Crawford disagreed with the officer's recommendation for this application and with the views expressed by Mr Scholar during the applicant's address.
- Councillor Crawford reiterated the concerns of residents which had been raised during consultation. He considered that the impact of the proposals on the local area were likely to be considerable and disagreed that the impact was satisfactorily mitigated in the proposals.
- Councillor Crawford raised concerns about the removal of an existing green space on the site to facilitate the proposed green corridor.
- In relation to the proposed east west pedestrian connection through the site, Councillor Crawford considered that this was likely to attract anti-social behaviour to the area.
- Councillor Crawford considered that the Section 106 contributions were insufficient for the scheme and referred to some of the shortcomings in the allocated contributions for air quality, highways and education.

Councillor Crawford raised concerns about a member of the public with disabilities who had not been permitted to speak. It was clarified that speaking rights were allocated in accordance with the public speaking protocol on a first come first served basis and that a public speaker had already been registered.

The Committee asked questions and debated the proposal. In response to some of the questions and points raised, officers confirmed that:

- There was going to be a review mechanism for the opening and

- closing times of the pedestrian east west connection through the site.
- There was going to be active management of the site by way of a concierge and a facilities management team. They would be responsible for opening and closing the pedestrian access.
 - The distances from the facing elevation/windows of the closest property on Park View ranged from 31.2m to 35.7m. The nearest facing elevation/windows to Cloister Road was 21.6m. The nearest facing elevation/windows to the South on Cecil Road ranged from 22.3m to 33.7m.
 - Concerns about privacy between homes had been mitigated through the design of the blocks. Measures included ensuring adequate distance between windows and that windows of habitable rooms did not directly look at each other.
 - Section 106 agreement contributions had been set in consultation with relevant stakeholders such as the NHS and education bodies.
 - There was going to be a private gym on the site which was only going to be available for use by residents of the development.
 - The Section 106 contributions were required to be spent in the locality of the development.
 - Through consultation, the height of the tallest block had been reduced from 20 to 16 stories. The distribution of heights of the blocks across the development had been the subject of negotiation and had evolved through the planning process.

In relation to the review mechanism of the opening times for the pedestrian east west connection, the Committee indicated to officers that any review period should be at least a year.

The Committee proceeded to vote on the application.

RESOLVED:

That for the reasons set out in the committee report, planning permission for application REF **224371FUL** be **GRANTED** subject to:

1. Successful resolution of Planning Conditions of Consent;
2. Satisfactory completion of a Section 106 Legal Agreement; and
3. A Stage II referral to the Mayor of London.

8 Planning Application - 224773FUL - Brook House, 100 Gunnersbury Lane, Acton, London, W3 8HS

Gregory Gray, Planning Officer, introduced the report and explained that the application before the Committee was for the demolition of existing buildings on the site of Brook House, 100 Gunnersbury Lane, and the site's redevelopment with a building of up to 15 storeys to provide up to 102 dwellings.

The proposal was the result of an application by the current owner of the site, Women's Pioneer Housing, to increase their capacity as a social housing

provider and to redevelop the buildings on the site. The proposal was to replace the existing 39 flats with up to 102, 100% social rent affordable flats. The proposed flats were going to be for existing tenants wishing to return as well as for new ones. Mr Gray noted the location of the site in Acton, close to Acton Town Station and frequent bus services.

The application had been brought by Women's Pioneer Housing, a social housing provider, which provided housing across London for single women, particularly those who faced inequality, abuse and disadvantages. Women's Pioneer Housing had continuously owned and provided homes for tenants at Brook House since 1935.

Mr Gray recommended that the Committee grant planning permission for the application, subject to conditions, prior completion of a Section 106 Legal Agreement and a Stage II referral to the Mayor of London.

A briefing note in respect of the application had been produced by Planning Officers, circulated to the Committee and published on the Council's website prior to the meeting. It had provided information on corrections to the reports and further written representations received, one of which was from the London Fire Brigade.

Dr Ray Batchelor, an objector to the development, made a representation to the Committee which included the following key points:

- Dr Batchelor disagreed with the balance of considerations which planning officers had put forward. He considered that the social benefits of the proposal did not outweigh the environmental damage it would cause.
- Dr Batchelor outlined four respects in which he disagreed with the balance outlined by officers: (1) that a tall building was not the only viable way to address the genuine social issues, (2) the degree of environmental impact had been underestimated, (3) too little weight had been attached to the views of local residents, and (4) the proposed building was going to set a precedent for future applications.
- Whilst not against tall buildings in principle, Dr Batchelor considered that this proposal in this specific location was going to irreversibly damage the surrounding environment.

Tracey Downie, on behalf of the applicant, spoke in favour of the application. The representation made the following key points:

- Women's Pioneer Housing had a long history dating back to the Suffragette movement of providing safe and affordable housing for single women. There continued to be a strong social need for affordable housing for single women with 600 single women currently on the Council's housing waiting list.
- It was no longer practical for the organisation to continue providing its accommodation in the existing buildings on the site through a process of refurbishment. The existing buildings were small, difficult to heat and

with outdated amenities.

- Ms Downie noted that there were physical constraints on the site which made it necessary to propose a taller building with a smaller footprint. The proposal made it viable for the applicant to provide 100% affordable housing on the site.

The Committee asked questions and debated the proposal. In response to some of the questions and points raised, officers confirmed that:

- It was the opinion of officers that this proposal, if granted, was unlikely to set a precedent for the creation of similar buildings in the area. The committee was referred to page 152 of the agenda pack where it gave more information on this topic.
- The proposals offered both 100% affordable housing by unit and by habitable room.
- There were no direct protections which would prevent the site being sold on to another developer in the future. However, there were practical considerations which made this unlikely, such as the long history of the applicant on this site and that certain grants from the Greater London Authority may have to be paid back if the use changed.
- The nearby replacement rail workers accommodation block was going to reach a height of 4 stories, with the closest proposed block of the Brook House development to be the shorter of the two, at 11 stories.
- Following the demolition of the existing Brook House buildings, vehicular access to the site was going to move to the North of the site. All storage was going to be placed in the area which was the existing car park of the site.
- The shortfall in the amenity space on the site was going to be justified by a financial contribution to improvements to Heathfield Gardens and Gerome allotments.

The Committee proceeded to vote on the application.

RESOLVED:

That for the reasons set out in the committee report, planning permission for application REF **224773FUL** be **GRANTED** subject to:

1. Successful resolution of Planning Conditions of Consent;
2. Satisfactory completion of a Section 106 Legal Agreement; and
3. A Stage II referral to the Mayor of London.

9 Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday, 26 April 2023.

Meeting commenced: 7.03 pm

Meeting finished: 8.34 pm

Signed:

Dated: Wednesday, 26 April 2023

R Wall (Chair)

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