

Planning Committee

Meeting of held on Thursday, 28 September 2023 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall,
Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Michael Neal (Chair);
Councillor Clive Fraser (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Ian Parker, Simon Brew, Lara Fish, Sean Fitzsimons,
Mohammed Islam, Mark Johnson, Humayun Kabir and Appu Srinivasan

Also Present: Councillors Chris Clark and Ria Patel

PART A

44/23 Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 3 August 2023 be signed as a correct record.

45/23 Disclosure of Interest

There were no disclosures of a pecuniary interest not already registered.

46/23 Urgent Business (if any)

There was none.

47/23 Development presentations

There were none.

48/23 18/05474/PRE - Woburn and Bedford Court, Wellesley Road, Croydon

Jason Balls and James Owens, with the assistance of colleagues delivered a presentation with the support of a 5-minute observation of the project model showcasing the landscape of the proposal. They then responded to Members' questions and the issues raised for further consideration.

The Members raised the following points and questions:

Principle of development

- Some Members commented that the proposed development was not centrally located in the town centre, which created a substantial contrast between the height of the development and the dominant streetscape of Victorian structures and lower buildings.
- 3 models of composition were shown to determine the best positioning of the buildings, and the Members were asked to provide their preference.
- Some Members showed preference for option 1 citing that the smaller building should be placed nearer to the Church to create symmetry with existing buildings and to prevent enclosure of St. Mary's Church.
- Other Members preferred the second option of placing the tallest building in the middle as it created a cluster shape which complemented the existing cluster in the area and reduced the impact to the Church.
- Option 3 was favoured by some Members who found it to have the least impact on the surrounding community.
- The Members felt that the development should consider the connectivity with The Elms and how it could serve the existing tenants and leaseholders in the area.
- The Members commented that given the magnitude of the redevelopment and the potential for affordable housing, the consultant residents of The Elms should be part of this scheme.
- The Members stated that the podium should create a sense of continuation and reflection of the conservation area.
- The Members asked if the developers had been in consultation with the Diocese and whether they had shared plans with them.
- The Members questioned the inclusion of lifts in each building.

Design, Townscape and Heritage

- The Members noted that Croydon had a unique architectural style whereas the projections featured generic city style buildings.
- The pink/red colours of the brick did not match the characteristics of good tall buildings in Croydon and reduced the ability to keep a distinct town centre.
- Residents in the area identified taller buildings as part of town centre and not in their community.
- The Members remarked that the podium should create a relationship with the conservation area or could produce a colonnade effect at the ground level that could create connection to the street.

Approach to public realm, private and communal amenity space, and child play space

- In reference to disabled parking, the Members noted that extra parking on the roads was not a suitable accommodation as parking should be proximate to residents.
- The Members showed support for water features but cautioned against the impact of water fountains on resident service charges.
- The developers were asked to evidence that crime and Anti-Social Behaviour was accounted for in the design.
- The Members asked for clarification on how the private spaces were defined.
- The Members questioned whether there was sufficient provision for open spaces, considering the scheme was for 465 flats, and how further spaces could be created, if needed.
- The Members questioned the dimensions and impact of the development along Wellesley Road.
- The members asked if the scope to increase the public realm had been considered, i.e., cutting back the podium.
- The Members questioned how the developer would be able to prevent residents parking on the site in an ad hoc manner, i.e., whether the proposal would include a management team to tackle issues such as illegal parking.
- The Members questioned whether that was sufficient space for children to play internally and externally and asked if calculations had been done on the potential number of children living on site.

Councillor Lara Fish left at 8.12pm and gave apologies for sickness.

Affordable housing provision

- The Members raised concern about the affordability of the for-sale properties for the existing residents and whether the units left over for affordable rent would meet the needs of people on moderate incomes.
- The Members questioned whether the mix between shared ownership and London affordable rent was viable.
- Some Members questioned whether first time buyers had been considered as an option for this site.
- The Members questioned whether the non-affordable homes would be designed for private sale or for a Build To Rent operation.
- The Members noted that the scheme should have residents with long-term interests in the property and not just a high turnover building.
- The Members asked where affordable units would be located within the development and how this would relate to Registered Provider needs.
- The Members asked if an affordable housing provider had been brought on board in terms of partnership and if they were committed to the scheme.
- The Members raised concern about the viability and occupancy of commercial units on the bottom floor and its impact on active frontages.

Residential quality and impacts on impact on surrounding occupiers in terms of light, outlook, and privacy.

- The Members questioned if further consultation would be undertaken with residents in the area.
- The Members also asked if the Diocese had been consulted on their preference for the placement of the buildings in relation to the Church and School.
- The developers were asked to discuss the scope of work done in relation to sunlight and daylight and what issues had been identified.
- In relation, to the school, the Members asked if privacy issues had been considered given that the flats would be overlooking the school.
- The Members questioned the high proportion of single units (47%) and emphasised the need for family accommodation.
- The Members questioned the use of glass balconies on the development in relation to privacy, cleaning, and maintenance issues.

Councillors Chris Clark and Ria Patel addressed the Committee with their views on the Pre-Application. The below gives a summary:

- Conscious of issues of anti-social behaviour on the site and supportive of measures that address these issues.
- The site could accommodate tall buildings; no strong preference for composition of buildings but the option with the tall building nearest to the church was the least preferable.
- The pink colour was not desirable; the colour should reflect the surrounding buildings or should be a more substantial departure.
- Supportive of Really Local Group and potential service options for the space.
- Fewer units of affordable housing may be offered but more social, living, affordable rent would be better.
- Public spaces, bins, and lighting were very important.
- Ongoing issues identified with fly tipping around garages on the site.
- Would be positive to see clearer consultation with residents.
- Supportive of the play area and increasing its size, where possible, and the inclusion of disabled friendly equipment.
- Supportive of outside space and expressed would be positive to see bio-diverse greening, i.e., communal outdoor spaces on the rooftop and a growing area.
- The mix of affordable housing needs to reflect the community.
- The pink brick does not match the character of the conservation area.
- A reduction in the size/scale of the blocks should be considered or could blend into surrounding area a bit better since the site is slightly outside the town centre.
- Supportive of provision of community space.
- Raised concerns about the maintenance of a water feature.

- The Councillors commented that it was unusual to see that there were no solar panels included on the site and stated a need for energy efficiency within the building.

49/23 **Planning applications for decision**

50/23 **Items referred by Planning Sub-Committee**

There were none.

51/23 **Other planning matters**

There were none.

52/23 **Weekly Planning Decisions**

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm

Signed:

Date:

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