

# MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE A

Thursday, 14 November 2019 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors James-J Walsh (Chair), Tom Copley (Vice-Chair), Obajimi Adefiranye, Liam Curran, Caroline Kalu, Jacq Paschoud, Luke Sorba and Abdeslam Amrani

ALSO PRESENT:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sophie Davis and Councillor Octavia Holland

## 1. Declarations of Interests

Councillor Curran declared a personal, prejudicial interest as a Director of the Baring Trust, a heritage conservation organisation that operates in Grove Park.

Councillor Elliott speaking under Standing Orders representing his Ward, declared a personal interest that his wife is a Minister of the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Southwark.

## 2. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were amended as follows:

- reference to Sydenham Society Chair as 'Abigail McLaren', be corrected to read as 'Annabel McLaren'.
- Apologies sent by Councillor Amrani to Chair before meeting, but Chair did not receive it until after the meeting.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Planning Committee A held on 3 October 2019 be confirmed and signed as a true record, subject to the above amendments.

## 3. ST MILDRED'S CHURCH AND HALL, ST MILDRED'S ROAD, SE12 0RA

The DMTL gave an illustrative presentation to the report, recommending the refusal of planning permission for the demolition of church hall and construction of replacement part one/part two storey church hall and community space to the side and rear and entrance lobby to the front at St Mildred's Church, St Mildred's Road, SE12, together with 27 parking spaces, 3 motorcycle spaces, cycle storage and associated works.

The committee noted the report and that the main issues were:

- Principle of Development
- Heritage and Design
- Impact on Adjoining Properties
- Transport
- Trees and Landscaping

Following members' enquiries relating to the Church's stained glass windows, listing status, and existing building structure, the Conservation Officer advised that the proposed development would not obscure the stained glass windows. The Officer also advised the Committee that the church was of moderate significance overall, and of high significance in its own right as a non-designated heritage asset. The elevations onto St Mildred's Road were also considered to be of significance, and the loss of the green buffer to the front of the building was considered to harm the setting of the building and the streetscape. The Officer stated the development would clutter and obscure some of the principal architectural features.

Following a member enquiry regarding variances of substantial harm, the DMTL advised the Committee that balanced judgement was required regarding the scale of any harm, or loss, and that officers considered the benefits of the proposal had been outweighed by the harm identified. The DMTL also clarified that pre-application advice was not material to the decision regarding the application. The applicant addressed the meeting, with a suggestion to the Committee to approve the proposal in the report, with emphasis on there being no cost to the public for the site development, the services provided by the Church, and community support received. The applicant described the extensive pre-planning application advice taken, which they claimed was adhered to. The applicant also stated their proposal fully complied with planning policy. The applicant advised the Committee it believed that the Officers recommendation for refusal was unsubstantiated, and unreasonable.

In response to questions raised relating to: structural changes, outlook, alternative solutions to the proposal, site space, and operational times, the applicant stated there would be no structural change to the stained glass window, and the development would be constructed sensitively around the Church. The applicant confirmed there would be structural changes to the Church building, in the form of a roof light installed to allow light into the upper window of the existing structure, and a tilt and turn window installed to allow access to the roof.

The applicant suggested it was not possible to create the proposal using less space, as this would make the proposal an unacceptable 4 storey build instead of the 2 storey proposed. The applicant clarified that the space proposed was for services currently provided, and a survey conducted, concluded there would be more use of services on site, but no intensification in the number of users.

The applicant advised the proposed operational hours were for the hall not the Church itself, and were intended to be considerate to neighbours.

Councillor Colin Elliott addressed the Committee representing his Ward, Grove Park speaking in favour of the application.

Following member discussion, Councillor Sorba proposed a motion to overturn the Officers' recommendation to refuse planning permission.

This was seconded by Councillor Adefiranye.

The Chair cautioned the Committee with regard to the lack of conditions, and advised of possible consequences in overturning the Officers recommendation.

Following member concerns raised, the Committee meeting was adjourned at 9.11pm in order to take legal advice.

The meeting reconvened at 9.30pm. The Chair proposed that Standing Orders should be suspended for the rest of the meeting. The Committee members agreed to the proposal.

Councillor Sorba following legal advice decided to withdraw his motion and resubmitted it as an amendment with conditions. The Chair clarified to the Committee that Councillor Sorba had just withdrawn his original motion, re-amended it and resubmitted with conditions to the Committee. The Chair put the amended motion to a vote.

Members voted on the amended motion with a result of 5 against and 4 in favour of the motion. The Chair cast the deciding vote.

The Members then voted on the original motion with a result of 5 against and 4 in favour of the motion. The Chair cast the deciding vote.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That it be noted that the Committee agreed to **REFUSE** planning permission for the demolition of church hall and construction of replacement part one/part two storey church hall and community space to the side and rear and entrance lobby to the front at St Mildred's Church, St Mildred's Road, SE12, together with 27 parking spaces, 3 motorcycle spaces, cycle storage and associated work for the following reasons:

1) The proposed development, particularly the single storey element, by means of its bulk and scale, form, siting and materiality is considered to be an incongruent and over-dominant addition, which results in harm to the character and appearance of St Mildred's Church and the wider townscape. The proposed development is therefore contrary to Para 127 of the NPPF (2019); Policy 7.8 'Heritage assets and Archaeology' of the London Plan (2016); Core Strategy Policy 15 'High quality design for Lewisham' and Core Strategy Policy 16 'Conservation areas, heritage assets and the historic environment' of the Core Strategy (2011); and DM Policy 30 'Urban design and local character', DM Policy 31 'Alterations/extensions to existing buildings' and DM Policy 37 'Non-designated heritage assets including locally listed buildings, areas of special local character and assets of archaeological interest' of the Development Management Local Plan (2014).

2) The proposed loss of existing green strip and associated works to the existing trees and to accommodate car parking, would lead to a demise of the trees (T1, T2, T5, T6, T7, T8, T9 and T19) in the foreseeable future due to root loss, as well as post development pressures, which in turn would detract from the setting and character of St Mildred's Church, contrary to Core Strategy Policy 12 'Open Space

and Environmental Assets' of the Core Strategy (2011) and DM Policy 25 'Landscaping and trees' and DM Policy 37 'Non-designated heritage assets including locally listed buildings, areas of special local character and assets of archaeological interest' of the Development Management Local Plan (2014).

The meeting closed at 9.34 pm.