

# MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE B

Thursday, 29 February 2024 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Jack Lavery (Chair), Billy Harding, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Hilary Moore, John Muldoon, Oana Olaru, John Paschoud and Aliya Sheikh (Vice-Chair)

ALSO PRESENT: Aaron Lau (Principal Planning Officer), Melanie Dawson (Legal Officer), Max Curson (Planning Officer), Thomas Simnett (Planning Officer), Sarah Assibey (Committee Officer)

Apologies for absence were received from: nil

## 1. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

## 2. Declarations of Interests

No interests were declared.

## 3. UNIT 1, ASHBY MEWS, LONDON SE4 1TB

3.1. The Planning Officer gave an illustrative presentation of the proposed application for the partial demolition of the front of the existing light industrial building and alteration and extension to provide a terrace of 4 two-storey, live/work units, together with the provision of private amenity space, associated cycle parking and refuse collection facilities at Unit 1 Ashby Mews SE4.

The key planning considerations were Principle of development; housing; urban design; transport impact; sustainable development; natural environment. The planning officer stated that the planning considerations were deemed acceptable. It was the officer recommendation for approval of the application.

3.2. It was asked how officers were going to ensure that this would be a live/work space and not just residential. The planning officer stated that the conditions are enforceable which will ensure the correct use of the units. The workspace will be finished before the residential units. The existing work use is also outlined in the planning conditions and safeguards employment use.

3.3. It was asked if an application could be put in for change of use in the future. The officer responded that each application will be considered on its own merit. Policies would be triggered and the application would need to be policy compliant.

3.4. It was also asked how it can be ensured that the residents would not sublet the workspaces and that they would be the ones using it. The officer responded that this eventuality is covered by planning condition.

3.5. The applicant then gave their presentation. They summarised that:

3.6. The scheme would be of a high quality design and would be another positive impact on the local environment and street scene, preserving and enhancing the mews conservation area. The design, scale, massing and materials of the proposal would be in keeping with the character and appearance of this part of Ashley Mews and it would preserve its significance. The living conditions of the future occupiers would be acceptable and there would be no harm to the amenities and neighbouring properties and no adverse impact on parking. In its context within the historically light industrial character of this part of the conservation area setting, it provides 4 live/work units with clear differentiations between the living and workspaces that will ensure the light industrial character uses in Ashby Mews are maintained and reinforce the overall form of investment is the same.

Retaining a semi industrial appearance including the presence of ground floor courtyards at the rear the scale massing and appearance of the proposal would not be dissimilar to the existing building. To further facilitate and define the internal network spaces the proposal will provide for bin storage, cycle parking courtyards and soft landscaping. They also stated that the objections should also be mindful of the fact that the existing building has an unfettered commercial use that could be used without restriction to all manner of industrial and commercial uses.

3.7. Members asked why there was no pre-application engagement on the application. The applicant stated that they did not feel it was necessary given the history of the site and that there was lengthy discussion with planning officers.

3.8. A supporter of the application also spoke in favour of the proposal. His key points were:

20 years ago him and his partner moved into a little work warehouse in Victoria Works and in the 20 years that they have lived there they have seen Victorian Works developed and transformed into a vibrant community of creators and artists who now occupy and brought some life back into the old buildings. He stated that it is a great place to live and work and having seen the development plans for Ashby Mews, he believes that it too could expand and develop and continue to be a viable place for creatives to live and work together with the community spirit. He gave examples of the successful works that have come from creators from the area and said that having looked at the layout and scale of the proposed 4 units, he believes that they are large enough and designed well enough to attract some significant arts to the Mews and those who might require these types of spaces to live and work.

3.9. Members asked if the supporter had an interest in Ashby Mews or is he speaking generically on the practicality of the space. He responded that the advantages were quite wide and that it is a community and the advantages are significant.

3.10. The objector then spoke and the following were their key points:

They felt that there had been misleading representations which suggests the application is not viable. The developer in the previous application stated that unit one was granted planning permission previously as a joint live/work unit with unit 2, however according to council records it had supposedly been under construction for the past five years during which no business rates have been paid. Unit 1 is now covertly a house, so perhaps unit two is an ambitious proposal. The lowering of a party fence is opposed due to potential lack of amenity in neighbouring gardens, the increased light pollution and noise disturbances. There are overstated dimensions of the wall between the development in neighbouring gardens which raises questions to the accuracy of the information provided in the application.

3.11. The planning officer addressed the 2013 decision referenced. Members were to only to consider this current application as the previous application was not planning consideration. He confirmed that a Parking Stress survey had been conducted- one after covid, and one before that- a further assessment was not necessary.

3.12. Councillor Penfold spoke under standing orders. The following were his key points:

The Mews originated as an unmade service road running behind the large Victorian houses in the Brockley conservation area. Over the last 10 years particularly in the case of Ashby Mews there has been a movement away from workshops to live/work units. There have been three previous attempts by the applicant to change the unit into solely residential combination but the applicant has reverted back to the live/work approach. Many of the objections accept the work unit however they have a high degree of scepticism as to whether this is what the applicant really wants. He accepted that the planning officers can only deal with facts and not intentions however given the history of the applications for this unit, he stated that it is a very real possibility that the applicant will at some stage try to make the unit solely residential. With this, space will be lost and the character of the Mews will be further diluted and undermined.

He also stated that officers believe that the site is a low flood risk about this there is frequent water pooling on the tarmac road north of the Mews. He also raised concerns about units not using the bin storage and that bins may be left on Ashby Road without enforceability. He stated that an explicit stewarding strategy is needed.

3.13. The Planning Officer emphasised that enforceability of these concerns is secured by conditions outlined in the report. The consequence of not adhering to these conditions would be enforcement action.

3.14. It was MOVED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to approve the application.

#### **4. GARAGES AT LAND ON WESTERN SIDE OF MILLBANK WAY, LONDON SE12**

4.1. The planning officer gave an illustrative presentation on the application for the demolition of existing garages and construction of 9 dwelling houses, together with associated car and cycle parking spaces, refuse and recycling stores, amenity space, landscaping and associated works on land to the Western Side of Millbank Way, London, SE12.. The key planning considerations were: principle of development; housing; urban design; impact on neighbouring amenity; transport; sustainable development and natural environment. The application was recommended for approval by the officer.

4.2. Members asked that given the space at the front of unit for bin storage is very tight, could this be amended so residents have space to move them in and out, particularly those with accessibility issues. The officer responded that the bin storage area was reviewed by the highways officer, and they raised no concerns with regards to space or accessibility.

4.3. Members also asked who would be responsible for maintaining the green roof. The officer responded that it was conditioned that it must be looked after by developer.

4.4. The applicant was invited to give his presentation. the following were his key points:

The site benefits from a previous planning application which was approved planning for a block of flats. The optimised construction provide less density and more families and the design of the building is in keeping with the neighbouring buildings. The scheme has received support from the planning team and the Lee Manor society welcome the provision of family homes and the retention of the green space. The scheme has considered the comments received from ecology by including the green roofs, net zero and flood risks. There were no objections from highways officers, environmental protection, urban design and tree officers.

Planning consultants advised the applicant to send out letters to neighbours which they took on board. The 16m distance has been kept between front facing windows and non-habitable windows are facing the rear of the property to protect the privacy zone of the rear garden. A condition has been imposed to keep the obscured glazed windows. A daylight/sunlight impact assessment was undertaken where all windows comfortably passed the BRE recommendation. The development maintains the majority of the green space in addition to a green roof and children's play area. the overall massing as a lower roof than the previous scheme. Two parking spaces were allowed for the development and have been provided.

4.5. It was asked by members how the risk of overlooking was mitigated. The applicant responded that there was no overlooking at the rear of site. Beyond that is the 10 metre zone which protects the private area and prevents overlooking.

4.6. The objector spoke and raised the following points:

4.7. In correspondence to the letter sent by the applicant, the objector stated that the letter should have been canvassed to 60 neighbouring properties, not the 20 that had received a letter. He wanted to express some broader concerns

aspects and believes that a consultation still needs to take place to alleviate the concerns. In regard to visual impact, he stated that there is a blind corner on the development and there's pressure on parking and that creates the danger. he emphasised the need for a consultation, because if the developer had visually interacted, he was not convinced that proposal in comparison to what went before actually achieves appropriate landscaping.

4.8. The officer responded to the objector's statement that there was engagement surrounding the application, although, it is not a requirement for the developer to consult ahead of the submission of the application.

4.9. Members raised concern about the location of the play area which was at the end of the development near the main road, but close to the units. Members asked officers to provide a condition to ensure the maintenance of the park/play area.

4.10. It was MOVED, SECONDED and RESOLVED to approve the application specifying the tree retention and protection highlighted in condition 19 and the maintenance plan for the play area.

**5. DEFERRED- 135 MINARD ROAD, LONDON SE6 1NN**