

# DC/23/130851 Nicholas Court, 166 Burnt Ash Hill, SE12 0JD

## Introduction

The virtual local meeting started at 7.30pm on 15 June 2023, and was hosted by Cllr Mark Jackson, one of three Councillor's of the Grove Park ward. Representing the Council was Max Curson – Planning Officer. Applicant Kris Collett of Castlemere Developments was in attendance, along with Scott Hull, the Applicant's Engineer.

10 local residents were in attendance.

Cllr Jackson introduced the local meeting and the Case Officer gave an introduction on the purpose and process of the local meeting. The application itself is for prior approval under Schedule 2, Part 20, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. Prior approval applications differ from a standard application for planning permission, and the assessment that will be made is restricted to eight conditions, urban design, transport impact, impact to the living conditions of the neighbours, contamination, air traffic defence, flood risk, internal natural light and impact on protected views.

Issues such as the service charge are outside the scope of the planning process, whilst topics such as the unit mix proposed are outside the scope of this type of prior approval application.

The Applicant Kris Collett provided an introduction to the proposal. He has experience in development building upwards. The development would use an offsite construction approach to minimise the impact on existing residents and the wider community. The approach also has green benefits. The on site construction works would take in the region of 8 weeks, before lighter elements such as decorating and electrical works. A meeting with residents was held ahead of submission of the first application which was refused. Since then, they have undertaken pre-application engagement with the Council to evolve the scheme. Burnt Ash Hill is a mix of two, three and four storey properties and the development aims to blend within this context. A number of other improvements would be made to the building, such as improvements to fire safety. The development would be clad in zinc and the design approach has tried to follow the guidance of Lewisham's Small Sites Design Guide SPD.

The Chair welcomes questions with priority given to those who registered in advance.

JB asked whether the Applicant had experience building on sites with London Clay and subsidence issues.

KC: Yes, they have experience working with such conditions

JB: Asked who would regulate the process.

MC: Informed that the structural integrity is outside of the scope planning process. Were permission granted, it would still be subject to the standard engineering, building control and construction checks and requirements. These are outside the scope of the planning process and are governed by separate processes and legislation.

JB: Queried whether the Applicant considers the building to be within the local vernacular. There is a lot of varied development on Burnt Ash Hill. Most of Burnt Ash Hill is two storey houses.

KC: Noted that there are a number of apartment blocks on Burnt Ash Hill. Having variation within an urban context is usual, and urban streets tend to vary.

HS: noted that the site is located on the crest of a hill, one slopes to Grove Park and the other slopes to Lee. All of the Grove Park Side is two storey semi-detached houses. Two sections which are distinct in appearance, and Nicholas Court is the end point of one style.

CT: How is the Applicant going to demonstrate that the proposal would retain the structural integrity of the development to protect the amenity of the neighbours? The site was underpinned in 1997 and the guarantee on that has since expired.

KC: They have looked into it. Ground investigations were undertaken and boreholes dug. This gives an understanding of the bearing and strength capacity of the soil. An engineer has modelled the loads of the new building and reached their conclusion as to whether that would cause any issues.

Scott Hull: The underpinning takes the foundations beyond the influence of trees. The engineering calculations that they undertake are sent to building control to get signed off.

KC noted that they had held discussion with the company who undertook the underpinning works in 1997. KC stated that the issues were caused by a tree, however, this was disputed by residents who stated the issue was caused by a cellar.

EC: Car parking in the access road is already quite crammed. Five additional flats could potentially lead to 10 more cars. The freehold has been split which removes the parking space of the rear garages.

MC: Both the previous and current application provided a parking survey. The previous application found no issue with parking. The results of the parking survey found that the surrounding road network had sufficient on street parking to accommodate the demand created by the additional units. The parking survey found parking stress was well below the 85% threshold after which mitigation measures may be required.

LF: Nicholas Court has limited outside space. A larger bin store and cycle parking would remove some greenery at the rear. Could the bins and cycle store be located at the front of the property.

KC: The bin store would be expanded but it is a marginal reduction in greenery. They have tried to improve the bin store to make it look as good as possible. They did consider locating the bin stores at the front of the property but ultimately decided against it. They were unsure of the visual impact it would have at the front of the property.

SS: SS lives on the top floor of the property. He currently does not have any flats located above his flat. The proposed layouts of the new flats do not line up with the current flats, which results in living rooms being located above bedrooms. There is the potential for increased structural borne noise. How would this be mitigated?

KC: No structure would be constructed directly onto of the existing ceiling. Modern construction and steel beams would push the whole floor level above the ceiling of the flats below. Sound proofing is a key component of noise control. Buildings were built differently in the 1970s. Modern building control standards are particularly stringent. An acoustic engineer would look at the overall design and the development would follow best practice.

SS: Where would the soil pipes go? Will they be taken outside the building which could potentially impact the appearance of the building, or would it be internal.

KC: The development is not yet at the stage. KC would need advice from the mechanical and electric engineers.

The Chair opens questions to the meeting attendees who did not register to speak in advance.

HS: Notes that concerns remain about the structural integrity.

MC: Reiterates that this is outside the scope of the current application.

LF: The previous Officer Report noted that the bins would need to be located in the front garden to meet policy guidance.

MC: Explained the guidance of the Small Sites SPD. As a general rule, bin stores should be located within 10m of the adopted highway. The current bin store greatly exceeds this distance. The two options are to locate the bin store in the front garden within that 10m distance, or arrange for a maintenance company to move the bins on a weekly basis. The Applicant has decided to use a maintenance company.

CT: Around 17% of two of the units is hallway. This is not usable space and the units are small, although it is acknowledged that the space standards are met.

KC: The building has been designed to comply with the requirements of the legislation and building control. The dwellings are small. The purpose is to provide affordable started homes at attractive prices.

JB: The use of zinc cladding makes the building look like a prison. Five flats increases the levels of overlooking of his property. The design only shows one tree in the front garden. Will additional trees be added?

KC: Design is subjective. The design approach has followed the guidance of the Small Sites Design Guide SPD. In general it is a standard metal clad design. There are no planned works to any trees.

Bob Howell: The bin and bicycle store may impact views of the ground floor flats. This would be better located at the front.

CT: There are safety concerns with the cycle parking and bin store being located at the rear of the property.

Cllr Jackson brings the meeting to a close. The application will be decided by a planning committee. The intention is for this application to be on the August committee agenda.