

Follow-up Local Meeting Minutes:

Lewisham Gateway: s73 Planning Application: DC/16/098461

- Thursday 19th January 2017, 7:00pm – 8:30pm @ Albion Way Methodist Church, Albion Way
 - Chair: Cllr Stella Jeffrey (CSJ)
 - Lewisham Planning Case Officer: Helen Milner (HMI)
 - Applicant: Lewisham Gateway Developments Limited, Doug Finlay (DF)
 - Applicant's Team: Planning Consultant: Quod, Adam Coombs (AC); Architects: PRP Architects: UN Studio, Imola Berczi (IB); Environmental Consultants: BWB
 - Local Residents (R)
-
- At 7:00pm Cllr Jeffrey called the meeting to order and explained that this was a follow-up meeting to the local meeting held on 15th November and that following a presentation by the developer's team there would be time for questions before the meeting came to a close at 8:30pm.
 - HMI reiterated the reasons for the follow-up meeting, in that the previous meeting had failed to answer many of the questions posed on the night and therefore, whilst it was not standard practice, it was considered that in this case a follow-up meeting was required. It was also explained that the notification letter of 14th December, was notified residents that further information had been received in connection with Environmental Addendum submitted with the application. It is noted that the consultation deadline for comments was the next day (Friday 20th January), but comments could come after this date, although the sooner the better, so that they could be considered.
 - HMI introduced the application and explained that the planning application for consideration was submitted under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act for a minor-material amendment to the approved Outline Planning Permission (DC/06/62375). It was explained that as the proposal is to amend an existing and still valid planning permission Council Officer's could not reconsider matters that had already been granted planning permission. All the approved heights, massing and floorspace could not be revaluated, but what could be considered was the changes to the approval in terms of height and massing and the reconfigured floorspace proposal.
 - HMI explained that Council Officer's were still considering the application and that the purpose of the meeting was to facilitate the flow of information between the applicant and local community and that no decisions would be taken at this meeting. Once Officer's had concluded their recommendation for the application this would be put to the Strategic Planning Committee to determine the application. It was confirmed that the earliest meeting would be in February and whilst all those who had commented on the application would be officially notified of the committee date a week in advance it was agreed that Local Ward Councillors (Blackheath and Lewisham Central Wards) would be informed as soon as possible so they could inform their constituents.
 - Following the introduction IB carried out a presentation to explain the timeline of the application and the changes proposed, along with next steps. The presentation sought to reference key themes and questions that came out of the previous local meeting. This included going through existing and proposed massing visuals and explaining the changes to the public realm and land uses proposed.
 - It was also confirmed that the presentation and minutes of the meeting would be uploaded on to the Council website.

- The presentation was interjected by a number of questions from residents, whilst some are set out below, as there were recurring issues/questions, these are summarised;

Q: R – Why does the height of D1 increase in height from north to south so that it is at its highest when adjacent to D2, which is even higher?

A: IB – Explained the proposed design, including height, followed work by the architectural team to assess where on site was the most sensitive / appropriate location for such increases, which included environmental impacts.

Q: R – We are concerned about the daylight/sunlight impacts from the increase in height and also change in massing; surely increasing footprint changes the way the light impacts on the site and surrounding area?

Q: R – Please confirm that D2 volume is not the same as the consent

A: IB – The volume of the approved planning permission is not being amended in this application.

A: HMI confirmed that although the maximum floorspace of the approved planning permission had not envisaged to build out to the maximum parameters (height and footprint).

Q: R – The proposed changes fill in all the spaces between the existing building meaning open views through Lewisham centre will be closed and be solid buildings

A: HMI – The approved planning permission also allows for much of the built form as seen in the amendments proposal and the only areas we can consider are the additional to the approval.

Q: R – (in reference to plans on the presentation that show the approved and proposed layout) there are changes to the positioning and widths of the rivers.

A: HMI – The top section of the development, Blocks A and B and Confluence Place are not changing and have already been approved in detail under Reserved Matters applications, there are no changes to the rivers proposed. The difference in the two plans is because one shows the river channels and the other the water in the river channels, hence the difference.

Q: R – Won't there be a wind impact on public areas from these changes; there is already a wind tunnel between blocks A and B?

R – An insurance company informed me that Lewisham has freak wind and therefore analysing the impacts of the development on the assumption of a prevailing south westerly wind is not good enough.

A: BWB: hy does the height of D1 increase in height from north to south so that it is at its highest when adjacent to D2, which is even higher?

Q: Paul De Zylva: Will the highest buildings add to overshadowing? The massing seems to show that the buildings take up more space within the development site than existing with a loss of public realm? Could the land surrounding the buildings be better used? The is not sufficient detail for the public realm areas and how they will be designed; what is the public access into Confluence Place? What are plans for environmental improvements; SUDS? Living/green/brown roofs? The developer says that the amendments to the approved uses is responding to changes in market demand, what will happen if this changes again following the approval of the S73?

A: HMI - the current application is for amendments to the Outline consent full details of public realm are yet to be agreed and do not form part of this application

R: What is the different in building massing in volume?

There were a number of questions regarding the change in massing of the blocks between the approved Outline permission and the current proposal. People questioned how, if the floorspace is not increasing how come the buildings are now bigger?

There was some confusion about the use of 'volume' by the architects to mean floorspace in metres squared, which is not changing, but volume metres cubed is changing.

It was explained that yes there was an increase in massing, however the actual massing has not been calculated in cubic volume. This would be looked into.

One of the main and recurring concerns, was the proposed increase in height of the blocks. Residents were concerned that it would set a new benchmark for height in the centre and could not see the justification for such a changes, especially block D2, which has the largest increase in height proposed.

There was concern about the impact of the changes in height (and massing) on daylight and sunlight within the development, adjacent sites and Confluence Park

There are concern that there had been limited slides regarding daylight / sunlight impacts In regards to the changing height and massing people felt that the views provided from the Heath were not sufficient and additional views required, also that there were not enough views from Belmont Hill Conservation Area

A: It was explained that the views chosen were the same is the 2006 planning application, so to allow for a direct comparison between the approved scheme and the proposed amendments.

With an increase in building heights and massing, along with an increase in number of residential units proposed many people felt it was not acceptable that the development did not provide affordable housing, which is needed.

R: What is the actual decrease in public areas (not including private amenity space)?

A: There will be a net decrease of around 100 sqm or just over 1% of the 8,000 sqm in the approved scheme (2009).

R: Why is there is decrease in the size of the river going through Confluence Place (comparing approved layout with proposed)?

HMI: There is no change, the approved layout shows the river bed width and proposed just the water running along the rivers. There is an inconsistency on the slides in terms of context, but no change proposed.

R: why is there very little / no family housing?

A: The proposal follows the same ratios as approved in the existing Outline permission, but this can be considered in the current application to determine if the mix is still appropriate

There was concern from across the floor from residents that the impacts on infrastructure, transport specifically, arising from the changes to the Gateway development. It was expressed that the approved scheme would have an impact and the proposal now sought to increase the demand by increasing residential numbers. Additional there was concern about the cumulative impacts form other developments in Lewisham Town Centre having a great impact on an already congested transport system.

There was concern about the change in the mix of uses being proposed on site compared to the approved scheme. The benefits of the new mix was questioned and how this appropriate for the site and beneficial for the local community.

Concern about limited possibility for landscaping and that majority of public realm would be hard landscaping (paving) and therefore what landscaping would be in planters and the opportunity for real site 'greening' is limited.

A: It was discussed that the details of the landscaping / public realm were not part of this scheme and would be discussed further at the Reserved Matters stage.

It was noted by residents however that although full details were not provided the scheme presented did show limited opportunity for greening.

Overall the meeting was considered to be more informative than the initial meeting, however the questions and statements from residents showed that this was not a clear message from the applicant as to why the scheme needed to be amended, how the amendments would improve the scheme and what the full impacts of the changes would be. Affordable housing provision was a key concern as was the increased heights and residential numbers.

The meeting closed at 8:45pm.