

## **London Borough of Lewisham**

*Minutes of the Local Meeting held at St Bartholomew's Church, Sydenham, SE26 6QR on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2019 at 17:30.*

PRESENT: Councillor Curran (Chair), James Hughes (JH) – Planning: South Area Team Leader, Samuel James (SJ) – Planning Officer, Mr Lawton – Applicant's father, Miss O'Mahony – Applicant's Planning Agent, Mr Turner – Applicant's Architect.

11 Local residents attended the meeting and signed the attendance register.

Meeting Commenced at 17:32

Councillor Curran welcomed residents, explained the objective and reason for the meeting and asked those present to introduce themselves.

After introductions Mr Turner was asked to outline the proposal, to which he obliged.

One resident asked officers which policies were being considered in assessment of the proposal. JH responded that national, London, and local policies were considered, and this made up the Local Development Plan. Specific policies to be outlined where relevant in the officers report.

Another resident questioned the choice of windows, and asked why they were larger than those on the existing houses in the close. A different resident concurred, the proposal is not pastiche, but it could easily be. Mr Turner responded that the intent was not to directly replicate existing houses, but to remain in character which he felt the proposal achieved. Final materials were to be conditioned, and are intended to match existing houses as closely as possible.

Another resident did not accept the architect's point, and commented that it is unacceptable, as it won't look like it has always been there – how can one out of 30 dwellings look different, they should all look the same. The resident went on to state that the 30cm set-back is pointless, and there should be no set-down. Other residents expressed agreement.

A different resident asked whether a rendered band could be incorporated under the windows, in keeping with other houses on the close. Mr Turner agreed this could be explored.

One resident expressed concern that other spaces between houses on the close could be built on, as this would set a precedent. This proposal would upset the existing dynamic of the close, set out with green spaces in the corners. They thought it was unfair that one new dwelling would impact on 30 others. The noise from construction works would disrupt them whilst working at home.

Another point was brought up regarding existing ground instability in the close and surrounding area generally. Residents wanted a guarantee that their properties would not be harmfully affected by subsidence caused by the construction of a new

dwelling. Mr Turner acknowledged these concerns and stated that of course there would be ground investigations and calculations by a professionally qualified structural engineer prior to any works, and all necessary mitigation measures followed. The structural design would be thorough. Furthermore he noted that a separate building control application would need to be signed off prior to works beginning on site.

JH noted that for a scheme of this nature and scale, land stability would not be a material planning consideration for the committee, but that there were other controls in place for these issues, as explained by the architect.

Councillor Curran explained to residents that as land stability was covered by Building Control, it was not a material planning consideration, however went on to ask officers if there was some added level of control that could be used at the planning stage. JH stated that use of a condition requiring ground investigation works could be explored.

One resident noted that during construction of their extension, there were ground instability issues, and that the applicant was well aware of these, as they were the contractor working on said extension. Their point was that this is a real issue happening now, not a hypothetical situation.

Some residents of the close noted they had not received letters of notification for the proposal. JH explained that only directly adjoining neighbours are notified of schemes of this scale.

Another resident raised further concern over disruption during works. JH noted that construction management plans are usually not required for schemes of this scale, but a condition requiring one to be submitted could be added if members were minded to approve at committee.

The issue of parking stress in the area was discussed, and residents were unsatisfied that the parking survey was taken at night, because school users are the biggest cause of parking stress at drop off and pick up times. SJ explained that a parking survey had been carried out to the standard Lambeth methodology. The proposal would be expected to generate one vehicle, and the survey showed there was more than adequate space for one additional vehicle within walking distance. Only the impacts of this development can be considered.

Councillor Curran attempted to summarise the discussion thus far. He stated that there was some evidence of subsidence and that this could be addressed through condition, he then noted that there appeared to be some leeway on the design, and that maybe this could be altered in line with comments.

The issue of subsidence was further discussed, with one resident explaining that the whole area was once marsh/streamland, and therefore there must be a lot of underground streams causing the subsidence in the area. They wanted a full hydrological survey of the area carried out. Cllr Curran noted that the discussion appeared to be going beyond the scope of this application.

Mr Turner repeated that the ground conditions of the site would be surveyed by a suitably qualified professional, and that modern construction methods require less intrusion and therefore have less impact on land stability. The resident replied that a test pit should be dug prior to works beginning.

Another resident noted that their main concern was with the appearance of the proposal, particularly the windows. Mr Turner noted that the appearance could be amended, and that discussions would take place with officers following the meeting.

Councillor Curran started to summarise. The appearance concerns may be addressed following the meeting, a condition requiring a construction management plan could be added – including a timeline to completion and requirement for contractors to keep in contact with residents.

The applicant's agent noted that it is in the applicant's interest to build out the proposal as quickly as possible.

The developer's father noted that the applicant intended to use the house personally and not to sell it on, therefore it is even more in his interest to ensure subsidence issues do not occur.

One resident asked whether a CPZ could be implemented to help with the existing parking issues. It was noted by Councillor Curran that this was being explored currently, but that it falls outside the scope of this application. He asked whether there were any further concerns that hadn't yet been discussed.

A resident responded that they were concerned about light spill from the large front windows. Mr Turner responded that the front windows served bedrooms, so were unlikely to cause significant levels of light spill.

Another resident stated that they really enjoy the distinctiveness of the estate, the steady rhythm and imbalance between the rows, which give an interesting internal layout, they claimed that this proposal had not considered those and would therefore be out of character. He summarised that the window alignment at the very least should be amended if nothing else.

Councillor Curran asked for any further closing comments, thanked residents, planning officers and the applicant's representatives for attending and closed the meeting at 6:30.