

Appendix 1 – Note of Public Drop-in Session in relation to Former Deptford Police Station (10 December 2019)

A public drop-in session was held from 6pm to 8pm on Tuesday 10 December at Deptford Lounge. All those who had submitted comments on either the planning application or listed building consent application were invited to attend. A total of 10 people came along to the session during the course of the evening. The session was attended by three representatives from the applicant team together with the planning case officer. A note of the comments (C) made by attendees, and the responses (R) given is set out below:

Principle

C: The proposal is unacceptable in principle as it would result in a significant loss of existing studio workspace, meaning that many of the artists who currently rent space at the Old Police Station would need to find alternative accommodation.

C: The Old Police Station currently provides artist workspace at low-cost rents. There is no alternative accommodation available locally at these rental levels, so artists will be pushed out of the area.

C: The Deptford and New Cross area has recently been designated as a Creative Enterprise Zone (CEZ). To allow the loss of artist workspace in this location flies in the face of this designation.

R: It was explained that the Council is championing the CEZ and is taking forward a programme of actions to support and develop this role. The Council would wish to retain the artist studio workspace within the Old Police Station. However, given the current planning policy context and in light of the decision of the Planning Inspector in relation to the previous planning appeal, officers do not consider that they have the planning basis to resist the partial change of use to residential at this point in time.

C: On this basis, the Council should put a hold on determining planning applications until its Local Plan has progressed.

R: The Council is required to determine applications within defined timescales on the basis of the policy context at that point in time and other relevant considerations. If the Council refused to determine applications, its decisions would be subject to challenge via appeal, and costs could be awarded to the Council by the Planning Inspectorate.

C: Where new creative workspace has been created as part of recent mixed use developments (for example Deptford Foundry), this space is not affordable to artists even if it is classed as 'affordable workspace'. Therefore there is no replacement low-cost workspace being created in the local area.

C: It makes sense for historic buildings like this to be used for creative purposes. Artists have sustained and kept this building going for the last 10 years, through

renting the space and acting as custodians of the building. Now that they have served their purpose, they are being forced out.

C: What value does the proposed development bring to the area? It will result in the loss of many artist studios pushing creatives out of the area, and will only deliver nine apartments, none of which will be affordable. The development will contribute to the gentrification of the area.

Impact on use of retained artist studio space

C: Introducing residential accommodation to the building will lead to conflicts with the artist studios that would be retained. Future residents are likely to complain about noise and activity associated with the studios, and this could constrain the scope to use the studio space and ultimately push out the studio use altogether. The relationship between one of the ground floor apartments and the adjoining studio space was identified as being particularly problematic, given that the apartment's bedroom would directly adjoin the studio space.

R: The applicant team explained that a noise assessment had been undertaken which demonstrates that with appropriate sound insulation measures there should be no unacceptable level of noise transference for future residents. They identified that people buying the apartments will know that there are artist studios within the building and so will therefore expect a level of activity associated with this. The case officer explained that the proposal had been amended during the course of the application's consideration, to afford greater separation between the means of access to the apartments and the workspace, in order to limit the potential for future conflicts in this respect.

C: The space at ground and basement level which is proposed to be retained as artist workspace will not provide a satisfactory standard of workspace. The basement accommodation is only being proposed as workspace as the space is unsuitable for residential use given the poor light levels and outlook. The basement level space will have poor light levels for studios, and the former cells at ground floor level are not suitable for use as studios due to their constrained size and small high level windows. Therefore even the limited space that is being retained will not provide suitable accommodation for studio workspace.

R: The applicant's architect identified that in his view there was potential to carry out some internal reconfiguration of the accommodation at basement and ground floor level to maximise the use of this space as artist studio workspace, whilst being sensitive to the building's Grade II listed status.

C: There is a minimum critical mass in terms of the number of artist studios within a building from a building management perspective. Given the limited amount of studio floorspace that would be retained, it may not be viable to effectively manage the space meaning that the workspace as a whole would cease to operate.

C: The Old Police Station serves a wider community role – it is open to the public for exhibitions, and allows public access into this historic building. This would cease as a result of the proposed development.

C: The proposal provides insufficient outdoor space to serve the artist studios which are to be retained. The existing yard area is used for creating and assembling works, and for exhibitions.

R: The applicant's architect identified that there may be scope to increase the area of yard space serving the studios, by reducing the communal amenity space that would be provided for residents of the proposed apartments. They would discuss this further with their client and the planning case officer.

C: The proposal results in segregation between the artists and the residents, and there should be more integration provided for within the spaces.

R: The applicant's architect identified that this arose from meeting policy requirements in terms of providing designated communal amenity space for future residents. It was however discussed that there may be scope to look at this again, and provide an outdoor space that could be shared between artists and residents.