

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE - PRE-APPLICATION

TUESDAY 12 MARCH 2024

Councillors Present:	Cllr Steve Race in the Chair
	Cllr Michael Desmond, Cllr Jon Narcross, Cllr Ali Sadek and Cllr Jessica Webb (Vice-Chair)
Absent	Cllr Michael Levy, Cllr Richard Lufkin and Cllr Clare Joseph
Officers in Attendance:	Nick Bovaird, Major Projects Planner Robert Brew, Major Applications Team Leader Natalie Broughton, Assistant Director Planning and Building Control Mario Kahraman, ICT Officer Christine Stephenson, Legal Officer Gareth Sykes, Governance Officer
Joined virtually	Cllr Clare Potter and Cllr Sarah Young

1 Apologies for absence

- 1.1 No apologies were given in advance of the meeting.
- 1.2 Cllr Michael Levy, Cllr Richard Lufkin and Cllr Clare Joseph were recorded as being absent.
- 1.3 Cllr Clare Potter and Cllr Sarah Young joined the meeting virtually.

2 Declarations of Interest - Members to declare as appropriate

- 2.1 None.

3 To consider any proposal/questions referred to the sub-committee by the Council's Monitoring Officer

- 3.1 None.

4 Minutes of the previous meeting

- 4.1 There were no minutes submitted for consideration and approval at the meeting.

5 2022/0150/PA: Shoreditch Works (Site Allocation 125), Land bounded by Curtain Road, Worship Street, Holywell Row and Scrutton Street EC2A

- 5.1 The designated Planning Officer introduced the report as published. The proposals before the Sub-Committee involved the redevelopment of a 1.3 ha site and represents one of the largest opportunities for comprehensive

employment led development in the borough, with opportunities to provide a full range of uses on an underdeveloped site. It represents an employment-led, mixed-use redevelopment of most of the urban block and allows for some retention of the superstructure of the existing buildings to be demolished. The new floorspace would be predominantly in office use but with active frontages at ground floor level, set around a new public realm within the interior of the block.

5.2 The Sub-Committee heard from various representatives for the developers about the proposals, including from TEOS and ING, the private real estate investment and development business HDG, the strategic real estate consultancy firm Kaufmanns, the architectural practice Kohn Pedersen Fox Associates (KPF) and chartered surveyors Montague Evans LLP.

5.3 During a discussion with Sub-Committee members the following points were made:

- The proposals were seen as an opportunity for the developer to make an active contribution to the local community and for all the various parties to work together. There had been extensive modelling with the aim to place 508 people into jobs during the construction phase which would be a contractual commitment. Additionally, the developers would seek to employ 1500 young people. The developers had embedded this approach into the proposals, above and beyond the S106 agreement and working closely with the Council;
- With the proposals the representatives for the developers stated that they would ensure on site working with the future tenants. Though still in the early stages it was understood that one occupier, who was socially conscious, was already interested in occupying the main part of the proposed site;
- The representatives for the developers cited the example of how they had been working with Southwark Council on various planning projects through 'Southwark Works'. The Sub-Committee understood that a similar type of project would be undertaken in Hackney;
- On ensuring the quality of the work placements for young people, particularly in relation when subcontractors, work would be undertaken to work closely with the developers to ensure that the commitments that were made were followed through. The representatives for the developers explained that the key was to embed the commitment into the tendering process with the contractor being made accountable and made contractually committed. The developers would then manage that relationship. The types of developments before the Sub-Committee were of the type that educational institutions wanted to take a more active role in helping young adults gain meaningful work placements and to open up opportunities with various contractors;
- The proposals before the Sub-Committee could see a site which could be occupied by both large and small companies and both could be accommodated by the plans. There would be a range of floor plates with a range of pricing. The representatives for the developers stated that a superior building was needed that would attract a key tenant who wanted to be carbon zero, platinum

scored. The representatives for the developers explained that in order to have the best talent there needed to be the best building for them to work in and would attract the best tech occupier;

- The proposed site already had an existing electric infrastructure to enable technology to work in the buildings. The representatives for the developers explained that the proposals would seek to simplify the site making it more flexible. Similar projects had been undertaken in London, such as in Covent Garden. One key benefit of the proposals, in particular for those residential properties, was the steps to be taken in decarbonisation with the removal of all the gas and instead the installation of a district heat network, which would be fully electrified and would pump hot water around all of the flats;
- The representatives for the developers stated that the proposed design would allow for small SME or start-ups to grow and allow them move around the development for bigger and more tailored floorspace;
- The representatives for the developers stated that the 30 businesses currently on site would be consulted and steps would be taken to retain them;
- The representatives for the developers stated that the residential element of the proposals would be built to Passivhaus standards
- Regarding the inclusion of a tower as part of the proposals, one of the current issues with real estate there had to be viability in the scheme in order to make it work. The representatives for the developers stated that the site had existing use value and in order to deliver all the proposals value had to be generated and that only the large building, building A, was of any scale. The representatives for the developers considered the design of the building very carefully but they recognised that there would be some harm but they considered it to not be substantial. On balance they felt the benefits of the scheme far outweighed the harm. The representatives for the developers felt that they had to be one large building that generated sufficient income, and was able to be pre-let, which would be the catalyst to make the entire scheme work
- With the design of the proposals, specifically the tower, the representatives for the developers were aiming to make the conservation area better. They saw it as a rare opportunity in a strategic location with a building that would never be in the city. The design was such that it would make a large tech or creative employer feel at home. The architects spoke of how they wanted to enhance the conservation area and they felt that the current open spaces on site were not working to their full potential and that the definition of the conservation area would be improved all around the perimeter of the site. The scale and granularity of the site would make it clear that someone was leaving the city. As well as the work on the conservation area the architects had also spent a lot of time working on the design of the tower but also respect the local views. It would not be in the heritage and local views. The tower would be finely poised and would work with the buildings around it;

- The architects emphasised the proposals were not a maximisation scheme it was an optimisation scheme. The historic buildings would be seen as they were intended;
- On a point of clarification, the representatives for the developer explained that the open space referred to the urban room. In the summer months it would be opened up and obligations would be included to ensure that area was properly curated;
- The representatives for the developers spoke of the proposals being a flagship scheme which brought together commercial, creative, civic and community uses but with a very strong focus on sustainability;
- The site was a city fringe location; it was in a conservation and office-priority area as well as being a part of the Opportunity Area Planning Frameworks (OAPFs). Contrary to the officer's report the representatives for the developers stated that the quantum of floor space would align with the site allocation which was included as part of the Council's Site Allocation Plan;
- The representatives for the developers explained that the concept of the Regenerative Business Hub was not a marketing tool. It was about celebrating the history of the proposed site. The scheme was cementing a flagship site and destination with an ideology and a brand which would be embedded from day one and which come through the tenant, the partners that the developers would be working with;
- Warehouse and terracotta bricks would be used in the construction of the tower. The use of glass blocks was modern looking but it would be a combination of old and new materials. The building would grow from the street gradually with a recognisable address and then would climb in gradual steps. Referring to the Computer Generated Images (CGI) for Plot A (The Tower) behind Plot B (the Flat Iron), the representatives for the developers explained that they were attempting to draw inspiration from the buildings of the past. From the townscape views the design would step back and was recessive and would carefully define Curtain Road. According the representatives for the developer the tower would not be viewed from Luke Street and would merge with the neighbouring townscape;
- Despite concerns raised by the Officer's report the representatives for the developers were of the opinion that the Hackney Design Review Panel (DRP) had stated that the proposals were respectful of the conservation area;
- The representatives for the Developer were of the view that the scale of the tower would not set a precedent for the conservation area and the driver for the proposals was to provide a range of different types of spaces to accommodate different types of tenants;
- The Planning Service had been in discussions with the developers for some time over the proposals and the central massing of the tower had remained the same for a while. The site allocation suggested that taller buildings in the centre, up to 12 storeys might be considered acceptable but that the proposed tower was 19 storeys. As such the Planning Service was not quite

there yet with the developers in reaching an acceptable design. Discussions were continuing;

- The representatives for the Developer included Greenlab, who stated that they worked with businesses to find sustainable and innovative ways of working and they had seeded a lot of companies to help them grow. Two examples were cited of the type of work that Greenlab did, such as helping to create a paint that did not contain as much petrochemicals as normal paint or working with companies to reduce food waste. The other representatives for the developers saw Greenlab as a part of the social element of the proposals and how social value was created and it was felt that there were spaces in the proposals to allow those types of businesses to flourish at ground floor, first floor and also being part of the affordable workspace offer. Partners in the project would be embedded and engaged early and also allow other businesses to realise how they could be supported so that they do relocate to other London Boroughs;
- The representatives for the Developer recognised that they had struggled to explain Greenlab's involvement in the project to the Planning Service, as it sat outside policy, and it was hoped with time this could be overcome. Officers did not comment on whether this was an appropriate representation of the discussions that had taken place so far. The representatives for the Developer were keen not to create a boring and sterile office campus, a vibrant space had to be created in order to make it work;
- For the representatives for the developers regenerative business meant doing no harm and being sustainable and innovative and how circularity was embedded on the entire site across a number of areas such as recycling and sourcing locally for example. They stated that this was felt to be the right thing to do and also good practice for future tenants but it was recognised that any development had to be commercially viable;
- In terms of developing the smaller buildings using innovative materials, the representatives for the Developer explained that they had a building by building strategy and that they were looking at a range of possibilities. The Sub-Committee noted that currently the proposed scheme had in excess of 40k+ kilos of embodied carbon. The representatives for the developers stated that were going through each building to lower the embodied carbon;
- The representatives for the developers stated that the public space on site would be open 24 hours, seven days a week and would not be gated. Work was currently underway to look at different types of seating to place in the area;
- The representatives for the developers stated that there would be a cultural programme for the proposed Urban Room working with the community and the various different groups such as colleges, charities and interest groups. It would be a flexible and openable space capable of many different uses and configurations. An Operational Management Plan, secured by S106 agreement, would secure this space;
- Currently the existing quantum of residential units was 38, the proposals would see an increase up to 78 units. The affordable

housing offer was aimed at 35 percent with a tenure mix that was in line with Greater London Authority (GLA) policy;

- The Sub-Committee welcomed that the heritage assets were being retained as part of the proposals. The representatives for the Developer were hoping to keep to the original historic intention behind Worship Street with workshops on the ground floor and family accommodation above. The architects involved with the project specialised in listed buildings. The Sub-Committee noted that the existing heritage building at 52-56 Scrutton Street would be incorporated into a big building;
- Though the site was in an office priority area there was an opportunity to include residential units compared to other sites in Shoreditch. It was understood that the 84 percent of the scheme would be office floorspace and would be taken into account when looking at the benefits of the scheme;
- Some of the Sub-Committee were surprised at the small increase in residential units included as part of the proposals. The representatives for the developers stated that they had worked hard to place as many residential proposals as possible on site, however, any more could limit the amount of commercial space, which they were not prepared to do;
- The Sub-Committee noted as part of the proposed scheme 44k+ square feet would be affordable office space, which was Hackney Council policy compliant. The representatives for the Developer explained that their proposals were still evolving and they were open to discussion on how to curate the affordable workspace and that there was not necessarily one way to deliver it and they were keen to work with the Council's Planning Service to shape it that was acceptable to both parties;
- The representatives for the developers stated that the tenure mix of the proposed units would include social rent and other forms of accommodation. It was proposed that 40 percent would be social rent and 60 percent would be intermediate housing. Currently it was proposed that the housing facing Worship Street would be earmarked for social rent housing (plot F) and duplex to the rear of plot L. Levels one and two of plot L would be allocated to intermediate housing. None of the town housing would be allocated to social rent. Every residential unit would be dual aspect;
- On the issue of energy efficiency, all the refurbished buildings would have to have significant insulation added internally which had to be undertaken by building by building basis whilst at the same time retaining the original architecture.

5.4 The Sub-Committee noted that at the next Planning Sub-Committee meeting was scheduled for 3 April 2024. The next Pre-Application meeting was scheduled for 20 November 2024.

CLOSE OF MEETING

Date of the next meetings: 3 April 2024 (Planning Sub-Committee meeting)

20 November 2024 (Pre-Application meeting)

Duration of the meeting: 6.30pm - 8.30pm

Cllr Steve Race, Chair of the Planning Sub-Committee

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