

Agenda Item 10

Supplementary Information Planning Committee on 18 November, 2015

Case No. 15/0822

Location	Land on site of former Craven Park Health Centre, Knatchbull Road, London
Description	Construction of two buildings ranging from 4 to 6 storeys high providing 109 residential units (4xstudio, 60x1-bed, 44x2 bed, 1x3 bed) together with community space (Class D1/D2), private and communal amenity space, new areas of public realm, basement and on-street car parking, vehicle and pedestrian access, landscaping and ancillary development at Stonebridge Site 27, Stonebridge, London.

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Planning Committee members visited the site on 14th November 2015 and had a number of questions about the proposal which are addressed below.

Open space maintenance

Members queried whether the maintenance arrangement would cover the whole of the open space. For clarity, the majority of the open space has already been transferred to Brent as agreed as part of the wider regeneration plans for Stonebridge. The maintenance which is required as part of the current application relates specifically to the improvements proposed to the open space, which includes additional landscaping and children's play equipment. This has been secured to mitigate the shortfall in the provision of on-site amenity space and it would not be reasonable to extend the maintenance contribution to cover the entire open space.

Disabled access

The incorporation of the lift for disabled access to the raised circus level has arisen during the application process. Officers advised at the pre-application stage that it was important that access be provided however the proposal does not include a ramp due to practicalities including the restricted space and large level change, resulting in the lift being necessary. The applicant will need to make arrangements for the maintenance of the lift and officers understand concerns regarding cost, however as level access has not been designed in without a significant diversion this option is necessary.

Beames Road visual

At the site visit members asked whether the visuals provided of Beames Road was a verified view. The applicant advises that the visuals are the digital equivalent of 'artists impressions' created by photo-shopping a view of the model into a site photograph from the same angle and position. This is considered to be a good representation of the existing scene. It is noted that the inclusion of parking bays has the affect of widening the road.

Shared ownership unit mix and phasing

The proposed shared ownership units as set out in the accommodation schedule includes 4xstudio units, 15x1 bed units and 3x2 bed units. The units are largely in the southern building but are pepper-potted rather than being separated from the market units.

Regarding phasing, the applicant confirms that the pepper-potted nature of the shared ownership units means that they will be delivered inherently within the build programme. It is suggested that a trigger be included to require that, for example, the affordable housing should be provided before 50% of the market units are occupied. Officers do not currently know how the build is planned but the practicalities of this will be discussed with the applicant and officers request that the committee delegate the agreement of the final wording of this trigger to officers for inclusion in the legal agreement.

Social infrastructure

Members queried whether there was sufficient social infrastructure to accommodate the development and officers can confirm that the wider regeneration of Stonebridge has included a planned approach to social infrastructure. The Hillside Hub includes a PCT clinic, community hall and community rooms, in terms of sports and recreation, the regeneration scheme also delivered three new open spaces with play areas and the "Stonebridge pavilion" with its all-weather football pitches. The site is included in Brent's Housing

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trajectory which informs school place planning and the Council is also currently planning to expand Stonebridge School. The development will also be subject to CIL contributions which will contribute towards infrastructure, members will be aware that the CIL charge has been set at an appropriate level to ensure that the infrastructure needs of new development can be met.

Pest control

An issue was raised regarding rats in existing properties managed by Hyde. The proposal has been designed to include appropriate bin stores so there is no reason to think that the development would exacerbate this problem. Hyde have confirmed that they take their management responsibilities seriously and if an issue were to arise it would be dealt with accordingly.

Parking

The parking proposal for the development includes 92 off-street spaces, this is 0.84 spaces per unit. The average car ownership rate in the Stonebridge estate (south of the A404) is 0.56 cars/household (0.41 cars/household for flats), while this development is proposed as market and shared ownership units rather than social rent, it is not anticipated that the car ownership levels would be high enough in this high PTAL area to lead to much demand for overspill on-street parking by future residents. The applicant's parking survey shows roads to be 80%+ parked during the day while Brent's own over night survey shows parking falling to 70-80% which indicates that a certain amount of parking in the area is associated with commercial activity or commuters and suggests increased over night capacity. The on-street parking situation will be formalised with the inclusion of bays which will widen the roads and there remains some on-street capacity, as existing, for the existing churches and doctors surgery and visitors to the site.

Affordable housing viability

Members raised concerns about the affordable housing provision and the possibility of future changes to the proposal. The applicant as a social housing provider with a long term and on going involvement in the regeneration of Stonebridge are able to adopt assumptions outside of those adopted by the wider market. To provide reassurance that they are committed to providing the shared ownership units the applicant has suggested that on the commencement of the development the viability of the proposal could be reappraised and if viability has improved the affordable housing provision could be increased, however it would be framed in a way so that if the viability has reduced the offer will remain at 20% regardless. The final wording of this would be agreed in the legal agreement.

Conditions

Condition 3 relates to the efficiency of boilers which the applicant will be required to use. The applicant advises that a boiler with the NOx emissions as set out in the condition is not commercially available or suitable. However the wording of the condition states 'or other such level as is agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority'. Officers are satisfied that this does allow flexibility to agree to a different standard of boiler but maintains the ambition that the boilers be as efficient and economical as possible.

Condition 9 relates to the softlandscaping proposed in the development. Point (i) requires a 'well sized native tree' be included in the circus as shown on drawings. To ensure that a tree is provided with appropriate root space, detail of its proposed planter will also be required. It is noted that the tree species chosen should be of as high amenity value as possible while also considering light to the surrounding windows. Regarding point (ii) which requires the applicant to maximise front garden planting and include hedges the applicant has pointed out that a balance will need to be struck between softlandscaping, access and bin storage. This issue is noted and is not considered to conflict with the condition.

An amendment is proposed so that condition 9 point (i) reads as:

(i) Landscaping in the circus shall specifically include a well sized native tree, appropriate to its location and details of suitable planter dimensions and specifications.

Recommendation: Remains approval subject to conditions and legal agreement