

## Agenda Item 06

### Supplementary Information Planning Committee on 14 March, 2018 Case No.

17/0322

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Location	1-12 INC, Queens Parade, Willesden Lane, Willesden, London, NW2 5HT
Description	Demolition of existing retail units and erection of part-six, part-seven, part-eight storey building, comprising 117 student residential accommodation units (Use class Sui Generis) on the upper floors, ground floor retail floorspace of 324.5sqm providing 5 commercial units (Use class A1) and entrance lobby for the student accommodation, and use of basement level to provide retail warehouse floorspace of 226.5sqm (ancillary to A1) along with cycle parking, bin stores, laundry and plant room ancillary to the student accommodation, with associated enhancements to the public realm at street level

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#### 1. Committee site visit

Members visited the site on 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2018 and viewed the site from the surrounding area. Members queried the following:

- Whether Brent is meeting its housing targets
- The number of student schemes that have been granted within the Borough.
- The impact on daylight/sunlight of the rear of the properties on Walm Lane and the opposite side of the road (Willesden Lane).
- Whether the clock on top of Electric House will be moved to a more visible location.
- Confirmation on the existing and proposed width of the rear service yard within the development.

1.1 The annual monitoring report shows that Brent has met its year-on-year housing targets since 2014/5, and has cumulatively met its housing targets within the period of the current local plan (from 2010). In the assessment of this proposal, consideration was given to the fact that the site forms part of a Site Specific Allocation (SSA) which is discussed in detail in paragraph 3 of the Committee report. The SSA covered both Queens Parade and the adjoining Electric House development. The SSA specified a capacity of 17 residential units across the entire site allocation, including the Electric House site. 25 units have been constructed already within the Electric House site and the original target of 17 has already been exceeded.

1.2 A total of 11 student housing schemes have been approved, giving a total of 6,406 rooms. Six of these schemes have been completed and five have consent. All of the sites are located within Wembley where there is a cap on student rooms set out within policy WEM23 of the Wembley Area Action Plan. This policy and the associated cap does not apply to the application site.

1.3 The rear of the proposed building would be level with the rear of the existing building and also set in 9 metres from the side of Rutland Park Mansions on Walm Lane. There are also no habitable room windows in the side elevation of Rutland Park Mansions. As such it is considered that there would be no material loss of daylight/sunlight here. With regard to the properties on Willesden Lane due to the separation distance of over 20 metres between those properties and the application site it is considered that there would be no material loss of daylight/sunlight. All of these properties were taken into account in the applicants' Daylight/Sunlight report where it was found that any reduction in light would be within acceptable levels.

1.4 The matter of the clock was discussed in the Consultation section of the Committee report. The clock would still be visible on top of Electric House when approaching the site from High Road and Willesden Lane.

1.5 The width of the existing service yard to the rear of the application site is 1.2 metres. The proposed width of the service yard would be 1.8 metres.

#### 2. Further representations

2.1 Seven additional objections were received: four from local residents; one from Willesden Town Team Ltd

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and one each from Cllr Jones and Cllr Long. A number of the comments received were matters that have already been addressed in the Consultation and Remarks section of the Committee report. However the following were additional comments:

<b>Objection</b>	<b>Response</b>
One of the units should be used as start up space or an enterprise hub	There is no policy requirement to provide start up space or an enterprise hub.
Pressure on local services such as GPs, waste collection, street sweeping and libraries	Contributions will be payable through the Community Infrastructure Levy towards community infrastructure. Street sweeping and waste collection are not "infrastructure". However, the proposal is not considered to have a significant impact with regard to these matters.
Failure to meet affordable housing targets	In accordance with London Plan Policy, a s106 legal agreement would seek affordable student accommodation should no educational institution be brought on board.
The students should have access to storage	There are no policies or guidance relating to the provision of storage for students. However, all of the student rooms include wardrobes that could be used for storage.
The student accommodation should include a 'rec room'	There are no requirements in planning policy or guidance for student accommodation to have a recreation room.
The building should relate to the Willesden/Walm Lane triangle	Improvements to the public realm are proposed as part of the proposal and a financial contribution for street trees and new paving will be secured as part of a s106 legal agreement
There are no assured benefits to outweigh negative impacts	The need for student accommodation is set out within London Plan policy and discussed within the committee report. The scheme makes efficient use of already developed land. Nevertheless, while there are considered to be benefits associated with the proposal, the recommendation of approval is primarily based upon the scheme's compliance with Planning Policy and Guidance rather than a balance between benefit and harm, with the level of harm associated with the proposal being limited.
The new planning code has only recently been approved. Nevertheless it would be interesting to know which councillors have met with the developers/applicants/owners of this site	The applicant has confirmed that they met with Cllr Jones prior to submission of the application
The student accommodation will be exempt from Council tax	Student accommodation is exempt from Council Tax
The student accommodation could not be used for housing	This would require planning permission to convert the building to residential accommodation. The prospect of using the site for residential accommodation has already been discussed in paragraph 3 of the committee report
Insufficient cycling space	The amount of cycling space proposed is considered to be acceptable and is discussed in paragraphs 34 and 35 of the committee report
The potential impact on the Grade II Listed Willesden Green Underground station and Mapesbury Conservation Area.	The Willesden Green Underground station and Mapesbury Conservation Area are located 230 and 300 metres away from the site respectively. It is considered that due to the separation distance between the site and the named heritage assets that the proposal would not affect the setting, character or appearance of either

2.2 A resident has stated that there is an error in the committee report and specifically the outlook of a flat in Electric House. The committee report at paragraph 23 refers to the fact that the units on the north-west side of Electric House consist of a dual aspect living room with the primary outlook to the north-east and secondary outlook to the north-west. However a resident has disputed this and queried where this information came from. The information was obtained from the approved plans for application 13/1428 which confirms the layout of the flats on the north-west side of Electric House. The plans show that the living room is served by two windows: one to the north-west and one to the north-east. The window to the north-west serves the balcony and the window to the east serves as outlook. This is why it was considered that the primary outlook was to the north-east rather than north-west.

2.3 The resident has raised concerns with servicing however this is discussed in detail in paragraphs 36 to 39 of the committee report.

2.4 The resident has raised concerns that the report does not justify why the benefits of the proposed development do not outweigh the harm and that alternative uses such as offices have not been considered. The benefits of the scheme are considered to be more efficient use of already developed land, good quality student accommodation for which there is a demonstrated London need, purpose built retail units with basement storage and improvements to the public realm. The proposal is considered to be well designed and will not materially harm the amenity of neighbouring residents. With regard to other potential uses such as offices, the Council is legally required to consider the proposal put before it. The provision of student accommodation with retail below is considered to be in accordance with Brent and London Plan policy.

2.5 The resident has stated that a design solution should be found to reduce the impact on outlook. The level of impact is considered to accord with relevant policies and guidance, as set out in the committee report.

### **3. Letters of support**

3.1 A resident has raised concerns with letters of support that were received, questioning whether these are legitimate. The letters of support came from a number of local businesses/residents and consisted of a template with identical content. However all of the letters were signed by different individuals and the name of the business/address printed on the letters. The applicant has confirmed that the owner of the site went around to local people/businesses to ask for support for the proposal and used the template letter in case they did not wish to write a personal letter.

3.2 The points raised in the letters were taken into consideration when assessing the application. However they were given limited weight with the main considerations being whether the proposal complied with planning policy and guidance which officers consider that it does. The compliance with planning policy and guidance was therefore the basis for the recommendation of approval.

### **4. Corrections to the report**

4.1 Paragraph 9 of the committee report stated the following:

*While no specific educational provider is currently affiliated with the proposed development, a Section 106 clause will be sought in order to achieve this. In the event that no single educational provider is brought on board a viability review mechanism will be used in order to secure affordable student accommodation, in line with the aspirations of the London Plan.*

However this paragraph should have stated:

*While no specific educational provider is currently affiliated with the proposed development, a Section 106 clause will be sought in the event that no single educational provider is brought on board. This clause would require a viability review mechanism in order to secure affordable student accommodation, in line with the aspirations of the London Plan.*

4.2 Paragraph 11 of the committee report as well as the Proposal section mistakenly refers to the amount of proposed retail space as 298sqm however this should have stated that 324.5 sqm are proposed which would result in a loss of 265.5sqm rather than 292sqm as stated. The amount of basement storage space for the retail units was also mistakenly referred to as 236 sqm and should have stated that 226.5 sqm are proposed.

**Recommendation: Remains approval subject to conditions and section 106 legal agreement.**

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