

Agenda Item 04

Supplementary Information Planning Committee on 6 May, 2020

Case No. 19/1241

Location	Car Park next to Sudbury Town Station, Station Approach, Wembley, HA0 2LA
Description	Re-development of existing car park for the erection of two blocks of residential dwellings, with associated residential amenity space, refuse storage, cycle parking, landscaping and other ancillary works, together with re-provision of disabled car parking bays nearest to Station Approach to serve Sudbury Town Underground Station (DEPARTURE FROM POLICY CP21 OF BRENT'S LOCAL PLAN).

Agenda Page Number: 161-202

Further representations

Seven additional objections have been received from local residents to the proposal, as well as a further objection from the Sudbury Town Residents' Association and an objection received from three residents writing on behalf of the "South Sudbury Residents Association" who describe themselves as a community support group consisting of over 300 residential properties from District Road, Central Road, Station Crescent and Station Approach, but are not registered with the Council as a formal Residents' Association.

Firstly, objections raised concerns regarding the impacts associated with the loss of the car park (e.g. on families and disabled people) and, on local parking stress. Officers have responded to both of these points of objection in the committee report.

Secondly, one objection has been received querying whether the TfL depot should be included in the development site and the development layout amended to free up land closer to the entrance to the station (towards the pedestrian ramp) for the retention of a larger number of car parking spaces (including for visitors and some loading and unloading), as well as a depot when required by TfL. An assertion has also been made that the depot would be accessed to the east of the site, from Barham Close.

The Council must consider whether the development that is proposed is acceptable, and cannot consider other options that are not proposed by the applicant. Notwithstanding this, TfL have advised that they continue to require the site to the immediate east as a depot for maintenance purposes, and it has not been a viable option to include this as part of the development site. Officers have made their assessment solely on the proposals as presented on the submitted drawings and supporting documents.

TfL have advised that there is no access to the depot from Barham Close. A retained access to the depot from Station Approach, through the site, is therefore required. The merits of this are discussed within the committee report.

Thirdly, objections raise concerns with the density of development given the current context of the Covid-19 pandemic. There is no reason why the management of the Covid 19 Pandemic could not be managed in a block of this nature in the same way as many other blocks across the borough. The density of development and quality of accommodation is discussed within the main committee report and this is considered to remain acceptable for the reasons set out in the report.

Fourthly, objections are raised concerning the 'virtual' nature of the committee meeting, and a perceived lack of transparency and public participation as a result of this. The Sudbury Town Residents Association have commented that certain statutory requirements have not been met and have asked that this item is deferred. However, they do not advise which statutory requirements they consider to not have been met. Officers consider that all statutory requirements have been met. The Government has legislated to enable Council meetings to take place virtually and has made it clear it wants Councils to continue to hold public meetings and make decisions to enable it to continue to carry out its functions. The Planning Committee will operate in the usual way but via Zoom rather than in the Civic Centre. People will continue to be able to register a request to address the Planning Committee and may speak on-line, using the Zoom app or using a telephone. The Committee will be live streamed as usual so anyone who might have come to the Civic Centre to watch, but not participate in the meeting, will still be able to observe proceedings. The planning committee meeting will continue to be transparent and public participation has not been reduced. The

Document Imaged

Council also has not extended “delegated powers” (i.e. the range of decisions determined by officers rather than committee) during the lock-down as some Councils have done.

The absence of a Planning Committee site visit or a site meeting with residents has also been raised by objectors. The objectors have raised concern that the planning committee may not be able to fully understand a number of matters, such as the availability of disabled parking, levels of on-street parking, the relationship with adjoining sites (and associated impacts) and the relationship with the depot. Planning Committee site meetings are not held for committee items, either with residents or the applicant / agent.

A planning application will have been already evaluated and the site inspected by planning staff and it is not necessary for a formal Planning Committee site visit to be made. There is no legal requirement for this to happen. Site visits may be held for a limited number of committee items when it is considered helpful to visit the site to understand the proposal and the site context. Committee members may visit a site in their own time should they consider it necessary to understand the site and its context. It is considered that members can evaluate the proposal using the application submission documents, site photos, committee report and other resources that are available (such as Google Earth and Google Streetview). The objectors state that such visits (or meetings) are important to enable the public to put their point of view forward. However Committee site visits are for observations only and not for conversations with members of the public or applicants – the place for this is at committee. There is a reasonable expectation the Planning Committee members are able to make a well informed decision from the information available to them.

Objections are raised on the grounds that letters received in support of the application have come from parties living outside the immediate area, and therefore should have less validity in the decision making process. Officers have a duty to report any correspondence received in connection with the planning application, whether for or against the scheme, received from those either working or living in the Borough or its immediate surroundings in line with the Council's guidelines. The decision makers can give more weight to comments received as they feel appropriate. This has been detailed within the committee report and this supplementary report.

Support

Finally, two further letters of support have been received to the proposal. The grounds for support re-iterate those already set out in the committee report.

Amendments to main report

Paragraph 73 of the committee report is incorrect with regard to the number of dual aspect units within the scheme. This should read as 20 units, rather than 36 units referred to in the first sentence. The paragraph is amended to read as follows:

'73. The overall scheme will deliver 20 units which will have true dual aspect, representing approx. 38% of the total. Given the constraints of the site and its deep length, and the implications of installing openings to elevations which would result in overlooking concerns to neighbouring properties, this is considered to be a reasonable provision and could not be notably increased without losing a significant amount of accommodation. The majority of the remaining flats have a north-west, south-west or south-east facing outlook, which is considered to be ideal as there are often problems associated with the provision of units that are solely north facing (lack of direct sunlight) or solely south facing (problems with overheating). Only 2 of the units would have a predominantly north facing, single aspect, which is an acceptable level given the scale of development on the site, its constraints and the high quality of accommodation being provided. It is considered that the level of outlook for all flats is acceptable.'

Recommendation: Continues to be grant, subject to the conditions and s106 Heads of Terms as set out in the committee report.

DocSuppF