



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Wednesday 11 February 2026 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Kelcher (Chair), Councillor S Butt (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Ahmadi Moghaddam, Akram, Begum, Chappell, Johnson and J.Patel.

1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of interests

In relation to Agenda Item 4: 25/0041 - Little Trainers Playground and Hazel Road Community Centre, 26 Hazel Road and Harriet Tubman House, 28 Hazel Road, London, NW10 5PP, Councillor Kelcher declared a personal interest, noting that he knew some of the objectors personally. He further advised that residents had approached him regarding their views on the application but confirmed that he had not expressed any opinion.

Councillor Kelcher had not sought to take any predisposed position in the consideration of the application and therefore felt able to consider the matters relating to the planning application impartially and without any form of pretermination. He therefore remained present for the duration of the discussion and consideration of the application for decision.

No other declarations of interest were made during the meeting.

3. Minutes of the previous meetings

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meetings held on Wednesday 12 November 2025 and Wednesday 10 December 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

4. 25/0041 - Little Trainers Playground and Hazel Road Community Centre, 26 Hazel Road and Harriet Tubman House, 28 Hazel Road, London, NW10 5PP

PROPOSAL

Demolition of all existing buildings and structures and erection of 4 storey mixed-use building comprising of training centre and community hall uses (Use Classes F1/F2), with roof and rear first floor terraces, associated cycle parking, refuse storage, landscaping and all other associated and ancillary works.

RECOMMENDATION

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That the Committee resolve to GRANT planning permission subject to:

- (1) The completion of a legal agreement to secure the planning obligations as detailed within the committee report.
- (2) The conditions and informatives, as set out in the committee report.

The Chair began by noting that a request had been received for an adjournment in the consideration of agenda item 4, on the basis of allegations concerning bias and predetermination of the process. The Chair confirmed that a decision had been taken not to adjourn the Committee's consideration of the application. The Chair then invited Paul Weeks (Senior Lawyer- Planning) to address the Committee on the matter.

In addressing the Committee, Paul Weeks (Senior Lawyer- Planning) advised that Legal Services had undertaken a review of the complaint that had been raised and informed the Committee that, following that review, Legal Services had concluded that there was no legal basis to prevent the meeting from proceeding. It was therefore confirmed that there was no legal reason why the Committee should not continue with its determination of the application.

In moving on to consider the application, Curtis Thompson (Career Grade Planning Officer) introduced the report, advising members that the application sought full planning permission for the demolition of all existing buildings and structures and erection of 4 storey mixed-use building comprising of a training centre and community hall uses (Use Classes F1/F2), with roof and rear first floor terraces, associated cycle parking, refuse storage, landscaping and other associated and ancillary works. Attention was also drawn to the supplementary report circulated in advance of the meeting, which outlined further objections that had been received on behalf of the Willesden Local History Society, together with further comments provided by Brent's Heritage Officer (November 2025). Victoria McDonagh (Development Management Service Manager) further advised that an additional condition had been proposed stipulating that no demolition of Harriett Tubman House should take place until a binding contract has been entered into for the demolition and construction of the new development. The recommendation remained to grant planning permission subject to the completion of a legal agreement to secure the planning obligations, the conditions and informatives as detailed in the committee report, together with an additional condition: that no demolition of Harriett Tubman House should take place until a binding contract has been entered into for the demolition and construction of the new development.

The Chair thanked Curtis Thompson and Victoria McDonagh for introducing the report. As there were no Committee questions raised at this point, the Chair then moved on to consider a request which had been received to speak on the application and invited Phil O'Shea (who had registered to speak as an objector) to address the Committee in relation to the application, who highlighted the following points:

- Phil O'Shea informed the Committee that he was a resident of Hazel Road and was speaking on behalf of the Kensal Green Residents Association. He

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was stated that there were clear reasons why the application had attracted 134 objections and noted that even the officer report acknowledged that the proposal fell short of required standards. He felt that this alone demonstrated that the proposed development was not appropriate for the site.

- The objector explained that Hazel Road was located within a two storey Victorian neighbourhood. Reference was made to Brent's Historic Environment Strategy and it was stated that once heritage buildings such as Harriet Tubman House were demolished, their value to the community was permanently lost. It was asserted that the proposed development, consisting of a glass and aluminium structure, was wholly out of keeping with the surrounding brick built Victorian context. It was further stated that the proposed four storey height would be over dominant and would cause harm to the local character.
- The objector then referred to Brent Local Plan policies which supported contemporary design only where it respected and complemented historic character and which required development to conserve and enhance heritage assets. It was felt that the proposal failed to meet these policy requirements.
- It was stated that the demolition of the existing Community Centre, which provided space for playgroups, exercise classes, warm space provision, counselling, arts activities, church groups and community Christmas lunches, would result in a reduction of more than 53% of dedicated community space. Phil O'Shea expressed the view that the suggestion that these groups could instead hire facilities such as a training room, an IT suite or a roof terrace from Making the Leap was not viable.
- Attention was drawn to the committee report which suggested that the scheme would improve local safety. Phil O'Shea disputed this, stating that the Hazel Road frontage incorporated a covered porch and alcoves which were likely to attract anti-social behaviour after dark.
- The objector stated that residents living opposite the proposed development would experience a reduction in daylight of up to 36.5%, including in homes occupied by vulnerable individuals. It was added that users of the proposed roof terrace would have the ability to look down through the skylight of that property and into the bedroom below.
- Concern was further expressed that a significant part of Hazel Road Open Space would be lost during the construction period. It was stated that Making the Leap proposed to reclaim an area of parkland adjacent to the children's play area.
- Phil O'Shea additionally reported that Network Rail had objected to the proposal in January 2025 because of the proximity of the Bakerloo and Lioness lines, which he stated ran approximately five meters beneath Harriet Tubman House. It was noted that the objection had been withdrawn in the

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previous month without any publicly available explanation, and that it was unclear what assurances or technical information had been provided by the applicant to address Network Rail's earlier concerns.

- In concluding his presentation to the Committee, Phil O'Shea (as objector) stated that when viewed as a whole, the proposal caused clear harm to heritage, residential amenity, safety and community provision. For these reasons, he emphasised that residents believed the application should not be approved.

The Chair thanked Phil O'Shea for addressing the Committee and then invited members to ask any questions they had in relation to the information presented. As there were no Committee questions raised at this point, the Chair then moved on to consider an additional request which had been received to speak on the application and invited Philip Grant (who had registered to speak as an objector) to address the Committee in relation to the application, who highlighted the following points:

- Mr Grant (as an objector) began by outlining the heritage related objections to the proposal. The Committee were referred to part e) of Policy BHC1, which stated that "proposals affecting heritage assets should ... seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Substantial harm or loss should be exceptional, especially where the asset is of high significance. Any proposed ... loss of a heritage asset ... should require clear and convincing justification and can be outweighed by material planning considerations in the form of public benefits, but only if these are sufficiently powerful.' It was noted that the proposal involved the demolition of a heritage asset. Philip Grant informed the Committee that his detailed Alternative Heritage Statement, submitted in February 2025, had demonstrated that the building had high significance. He further stated that his assessment had explained why the principal public benefit claimed by the applicant did not constitute any meaningful benefit.
- Philip Grant stated that he had shown that the proposals failed the test set out in part e of Policy BHC1 but that the Case Officer had wished to recommend approval of the application. It was stated that the Case Officer had therefore asked the applicant's agent to submit a revised heritage statement and, when that version was not considered adequate, had advised the agent on the content that the document ought to include. It was further stated that consultation on this second revised statement had opened on 10 June, although the document itself had not been published until 9 July.
- The objector stated that the comments made by the Heritage Officer in November 2025 included what he described as a serious error and referred specifically to a statement that 28 Hazel Road was not considered to have reached the threshold for local listing. It was noted that if that statement had been correct, the building's significance score could not have been greater than five. It was additionally stated that this was the score the Heritage Officer had assigned. Philip Grant informed the committee that he had raised this error with the Heritage Officer, but felt that the Committee report had

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continued to rely on what he considered to be an incorrect assertion. It was added that the supplementary report appeared to seek to reinterpret this point, but Philip Grant believed that all non-designated heritage assets identified in 2016 would have scored at least six. It was stated that, in his view, the true significance score was nine.

- Philip Grant further highlighted that the committee report relied upon the public benefits claimed by the applicant's agent yet did not acknowledge his counter arguments. It was stated that the proposal would reduce the amount of dedicated community space by approximately half, to only 115sqm, whereas the applicant's agent had claimed that the figure should be treated as 450sqm. It was felt that this inflated figure included training rooms that might only occasionally be made available for hire. It was noted that the proposed Access Plan condition would apply solely to one small community room.
- In concluding his presentation to the Committee, Philip Grant emphasised that the heritage asset was of high significance and that the public benefits claimed were not sufficiently powerful to justify its demolition and therefore urged the Committee to refuse the application.

The Chair thanked Philip Grant for addressing the Committee and then invited members to ask any questions they had in relation to the information presented, with the following being noted:

- As an initial query, members sought clarification from the objector, Philip Grant, regarding the comments made by the Heritage Officer as detailed in the supplementary report in relation to the heritage value of the building. In response, Philip Grant advised that the justification for the heritage score of 9 out of 12, which he had set out in his Alternative Heritage Statement dated February 2025, had been based upon the scoring system approved by the Planning Committee in July 2015. It was stated that this scoring system had subsequently been amended, but at the time of preparing his assessment he had followed the approved guidance on how scores ought to be awarded. Philip Grant further stated that, in his view, the Heritage Officer's proposed assessment, which suggested a low to medium significance score, had relied upon the same four categories contained within the 2015 scoring system. However, he believed that the Heritage Officer had then introduced individual judgement on how the scoring should be applied within each category rather than following the scoring method as originally determined by the Planning Committee.
- The Chair then sought views on whether the objector considered that the entire building possessed a level of heritage significance that justified the high score he had attributed to it. In doing so, the Chair referred to the frontage of the building on Hazel Road, which retained the classical historic façade of the building, and contrasted this with the side and rear elevations, which featured issues relating to overlooking and overgrown trees. In response, Philip Grant emphasised that, aside from some minor alterations,

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the frontage of the building remained largely unchanged from its original construction in 1888.

- The Chair invited the objector to comment on whether there existed any further public benefits that could be added to those identified within the committee report, which already indicated social infrastructure and community outcomes, design quality, and environmental and climate improvements. The Chair questioned whether, in the objector's view, any such additional benefits could outweigh the harm identified, or whether the demolition of the existing building would be so harmful that no benefit could outweigh it. In response, Philip Grant expressed that there was at present a purpose-built community center constructed approximately 25 years ago immediately adjacent to the application site. It was explained that this facility contained two community rooms and had been built in a Victorian style to be sympathetic to the existing heritage building. It was noted that this had been undertaken by Making the Leap shortly after the organisation had obtained the heritage building from Brent Council. It was added that the heritage building had previously operated as a youth and community center and that, as part of the arrangement with Brent Council, the delivery of a purpose built community center containing two community rooms had been secured. The objector felt that one of the principal public benefits of any redevelopment should have been at least an equivalent replacement of the existing community space. It was additionally stated that the proposal reduced that provision from two rooms to one, and that the single proposed room would be smaller than either of the existing rooms. It was acknowledged that the scheme offered some benefits, including the provision of a larger training space that would be used by local people. However, it was felt that, on the design side, the proposal was entirely out of character with the surrounding area. Philip Grant was of the view that the proposed design conflicted with three separate Brent Local Plan policies which he identified as DNP1, BD1 and BP6 Southeast. In his view, the design therefore did not constitute a benefit but represented an adverse impact. In concluding his response, Philip Grant contended that while some benefits existed, they were not, in his opinion, sufficiently powerful to justify the demolition of the heritage building.
- Views were sought from Philip Grant by members on how he would approach the site if responsibility for redesign rested with him. In response, Philip Grant opined that Making the Leap could make better use of the available space, with particular regard to the rear extension. It was noted that the existing building likely met the relevant requirements so as not to create any risk in respect of the railway tunnels located below the site. It was additionally stated that this constrained the ability to add significant weight through additional construction. Philip Grant proposed that removal of the existing brick rear extension and its replacement with a lightweight extension, designed in a manner consistent with the existing building but of a much smaller scale than that proposed in the application, could increase the amount of training space while retaining the existing community center at 26 Hazel Road intact. In his view, Philip Grant felt that such an approach would deliver improvements without necessitating the demolition of the heritage asset.

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The Chair thanked Philip Grant for responding to the Committee's queries and then moved on to invite a joint presentation from two Ward Councillors, Councillor Nerva and Councillor L. Smith who shared a speaking slot of 5 minutes in relation to the application, who highlighted the following points:

- Councillor L Smith began by confirming that there was no objection in principle to Making the Leap redeveloping the site and acknowledged elements of the application that described increased facilities to support the charity's purposes and trading operations. Notwithstanding that position, three specific concerns were identified.
- The first concern related to height and positioning. The Ward Councillor observed that the proposal was for a 4 storey building. Although the top storey was shown as recessed, the building would be located in close proximity to surrounding properties. While the committee report drew comparisons with other taller buildings in the locality, Councillor L. Smith highlighted that those comparator buildings were situated further away and on lower ground. By contrast, the proposal would sit on the same level as the Victorian terraces on Hazel Road. Councillor L. Smith stated that some of the comparisons in the report relied upon buildings that were positioned further down the slope or further removed from the terraces and would not therefore have an equivalent impact.
- The second concern related to community access. The Ward Councillor accepted that measures concerning glazing and lighting could be valuable in relation to anti-social behaviour. However, with regard to public and community use, reference was made to clause 22 and concern was expressed that the relevant agreement had not been made public, did not form part of the application documentation, and contained no information regarding pricing or access arrangements. Councillor L Smith felt that these matters were of considerable concern to community groups that currently used the space and to those that wished to make use of it in future. The Ward Councillor indicated a desire to see the relevant agreement before any consent was finalised.
- The third concern related to consultation. Councillor L Smith emphasised that although consultation had taken place, it appeared to have been very limited. It was noted that the Committee had initially been informed that 800 letters had been sent, whereas it was now understood that 55 letters had been issued in the first instance. Councillor L Smith stated that the applicant could and should have undertaken greater effort to engage with the community and to secure its support.
- In continuing the presentation to the Committee, Councillor Nerva indicated support for the points raised by Councillor L. Smith and proceeded to highlight further issues. First, Councillor Nerva addressed the footprint and construction matters. The site was described as being enclosed on three sides, with Hazel Road at the front and Hazel Road Open Space along the

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southern and rear boundaries. Councillor Nerva stated that the application and proposed conditions did not make clear how the building would be physically constructed within the overall footprint. It was unclear whether scaffolding would be required on public space to the front on Hazel Road or to the rear within Hazel Road Open Space, which would have a significant impact. It was also unclear whether the proposed footprint would be smaller than the existing, which might allow construction to proceed without encroachment. Councillor Nerva did not feel that these issues had not been properly explored in the committee report.

- Second, Councillor Nerva referred to the issue of benefits to residents. Disappointment was expressed that there were no formal or informal public realm improvements offered as benefits to local residents. Potential areas for improvement were identified as the pedestrianised frontage on Hazel Road and the rear area around Hazel Road Open Space. Referring to the plan, Councillor Nerva drew attention to the map on page 3, noting that while the application site was the oblong area, the remainder comprised Hazel Road Open Space. Councillor Nerva stated that no resident benefits had been identified in relation to these areas.
- Finally, Councillor Nerva observed that the application was not for housing and that no viability study had therefore been provided. Councillor Nerva additionally noted that it was for a developer to bring forward a proposal that met community needs and expressed the view that the proposal in its current form did not meet the needs of the local community. In concluding the presentation to the Committee, Councillor Nerva suggested that an alternative proposal might attract consensus.

The Chair thanked Councillors L. Smith and Nerva for addressing the Committee and then invited members to ask any questions they had in relation to the information presented, with the following being noted:

- Views were sought from the Ward Councillors on whether it was felt, given their view that the proposed building was out of keeping with the local area, a development of approximately two to three storeys would be considered more appropriate. In response, Councillor Nerva stated that there was considerable scope for a development that was more in keeping with the character of the area. It was additionally noted that the site was directly abutted by two storey Victorian houses, and therefore a building of a similar scale would be more sympathetic to the surrounding context.
- The Chair then asked the Ward Councillors for their views on whether significant public realm improvements in the immediate locality could alter their position. The Chair observed that the open space had recently benefited from investment, including new play equipment, but that the area immediately outside the site, including the road, trees and benches, would also benefit from further enhancement. The Chair queried whether, if the Committee were to seek additional commitments or conditions to improve these areas, potentially as mitigation for other impacts, this would influence their position.

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The Chair also asked what specific improvements they would seek. In response, Councillor L Smith stated that such improvements would be welcome and that there was local consensus that the area had begun to improve but required further enhancement. However, it was felt that the height of the proposed building remained a significant obstacle.

- The Chair referred to the layout of the site, noting that one side adjoined the open space containing the playground, but that the area behind the building was underused, lacked overlooking, and had attracted episodes of anti-social behaviour. The Chair questioned whether opening up that rear area or creating additional passive surveillance might assist in addressing such issues. In response, Councillor L Smith confirmed that such measures would be helpful. Councillor L Smith accepted that a glazed, well-lit building could improve passive supervision and be beneficial in reducing anti-social behaviour. Councillor L Smith further acknowledged the earlier point raised by Councillor Nerva regarding the length of the construction period and stated that there was a risk of loss of access to the public space and potential damage to it during construction. It was also stated that safeguards would be required to ensure not only that the area was restored but ideally improved as part of the development. Councillor Nerva additionally stated that, should the Committee be minded to grant approval, there would need to be meaningful consideration of the impact of construction on an area that the Council, working with the local community, was striving to improve. It was stressed that it would be highly undesirable for existing Council investment in Hazel Road to be undermined by the effects of construction activity. Councillor L Smith further noted that the committee report referred to harm caused to the use and operation of the open space and playground during construction. It was additionally mentioned that the proposed response was to attach a condition requiring a Construction Ecological Management Plan setting out how the existing ecology of the site would be protected. It was felt that this was not the same as safeguarding the use of the space, ensuring continued access, or maintaining its facilities, all of which were vital given that the park was used daily by young families and older residents.

The Chair thanked Councillors L. Smith and Nerva for responding to the Committee's questions. As there were no Committee questions raised at this point, the Chair then moved on to consider a further request which had been received to speak on the application and invited Tunde Banjoko (who had registered to speak as the applicant) to address the Committee in relation to the application, who highlighted the following points:

- Tunde Banjoko began by informing the Committee that he was the Chief Executive and Founder of Making the Leap and had established the organisation in Harlesden, NW10, in 1993. It was explained that the organisation existed to raise the aspirations of young people from less advantaged backgrounds and to increase their access to opportunities. It was additionally stated that he was a long-standing resident of Brent, that his children had grown up in the borough, and that he was deeply committed to improving outcomes for local young people.

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- The applicant advised that Making the Leap had taken ownership of the former Hazel Road Community Centre and the adjoining houses at 26 and 28 Hazel Road in the year 2000. It was stated that the organisation had raised and invested £1.2 million to redevelop what was now known as Harriet Tubman House and to construct the adjoining community centre. Making the Leap had occupied the premises since 2002. Tunde Banjoko further stated that he cared greatly for the area, knew many of the young people who had grown up locally, and had provided youth clubs free of charge and emphasised that he regarded the locality with affection and had a strong personal commitment to supporting the community.
- Tunde Banjoko noted that, with the passage of time, the existing building was no longer fit for purpose. It was explained that the organisation had grown significantly and was assisting increasing numbers of young people through activities that were making meaningful impact both within Brent and beyond. It was highlighted that Making the Leap wished to expand and improve its facilities so that it could offer more support to young people and better serve the local community.
- The applicant further informed the Committee that the site was constrained by its position above Network Rail train tunnels. It was explained that Network Rail had advised the organisation, at the outset of discussions, that no additional weight could be added to the existing structure. As a result, it had been concluded that the only viable option to increase usable space and enhance facilities was to demolish the existing building and construct a new, lighter timber-framed structure. Tunde Banjoko added that he had asked the architects to be mindful of the residential properties opposite, given that those residents were neighbours and that Making the Leap cared about their amenity. It was additionally mentioned that the part of the proposed building that would front Hazel Road would be only marginally higher than the current building and would rise in a straight line rather than including additional massing.
- In concluding his presentation to the Committee, Tunde Banjoko emphasised that the intention behind the proposals was simply to improve the facilities available to the young people whom the organisation existed to support, and to deliver benefits for the wider area.

The Chair thanked Tunde Banjoko for addressing the Committee and then invited members to ask any questions they had in relation to the information presented, with the following being noted:

- Noting concerns raised by local residents that the proposed development offered limited community benefit and that the dedicated community facilities would be significantly smaller within a larger building, the Chair asked the applicant to explain what offer was being made to residents of neighbouring streets, particularly in terms of the facilities they would be able to hire and use, and how the proposed development would serve their interests. In response, a member from the applicant's team acknowledged that there

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would be an overall reduction in the total floor area dedicated to community facilities. The Committee was advised that the existing community facilities were split across a ground floor and a first floor, and that the first floor was accessible only by stairs, with no lift access. It was explained that the proposed scheme would replace this arrangement with a single larger community space on the ground floor. The representative stated that the new space would be significantly larger than either of the existing rooms and would be more flexible, with the capacity to accommodate a wider range of uses. The member from the applicant's team further stated that, from a functional perspective, the proposed facility constituted an improvement, as it would form a single accessible space rather than being divided into two rooms, one of which was currently inaccessible. The Committee was informed that the new facility would also be entirely new, well heated, well lit, and supported by upgraded amenities including modern toilet facilities, making it a more usable and higher quality community space, albeit slightly smaller overall. Tunde Banjoko additionally highlighted that the current building was used for activities such as mothers and toddlers groups and similar sessions. It was explained that, under the new scheme, additional spaces within the building, including upstairs rooms equipped with computers and other facilities, could also be made available for use by community groups. The Committee was advised that the proposed community hall would be larger than either of the existing community rooms and that other usable space would be spread throughout the building once the two existing structures were consolidated into one.

- The Chair noted concerns raised regarding temporary loss of access to the park and the current poor condition of the public realm in front of the building. It was questioned how the applicant intended to minimise construction impacts and what improvements or contributions they might be prepared to commit to in order to enhance the playground or wider public realm. The Chair further queried whether improved public realm, rather than merely making good any damage, could be offered as a community benefit, and asked what specific commitments the applicant might be willing to consider. In response, a member from the applicant's team stated that modern contractors would ordinarily sign up to a considerate contractor scheme, involving measures to limit noise, suppress dust and mitigate disruption. It was noted that the scheme remained at a pre-planning stage, and that no contractor had yet been engaged. It was further stated that detailed construction management measures would typically be secured by condition and approved by officers. The Committee was advised that the proposed structure would be lightweight and would not require significant piling or extended construction periods. It was emphasised that this would limit disruption. On the question of access to the open space, clarity was provided that there was no reason why public access could not be maintained, subject to any minor road closures required for technical reasons.

Concerning additional public realm improvements, it was reiterated that Making the Leap was a charitable organisation and that the new building would be funded entirely through fundraising. It was explained that no fundraising could commence until planning permission had been granted,

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because the organisation needed certainty about what it would be fundraising for. It was further noted that construction costs had increased significantly due to national inflationary pressures. It was highlighted that any additional obligations for public realm improvements would represent additional costs at a time when the projected cost of the building had already significantly increased since the process began approximately 3 to 4 years earlier.

- The Chair sought reassurance regarding the applicant's ability to secure the necessary funding to deliver the project should planning permission be granted. Questions were raised around what funding sources had been identified and how confident the applicant was that the project could be delivered once permission was in place. In response, Tunde Banjoko highlighted that fundraising could not begin until planning permission was granted. It was confirmed that no development would proceed unless and until all necessary funds had been raised. Assurance was provided to the Committee that if the funds were secured, the development would proceed in full and without delay, but if fundraising were unsuccessful, the scheme would not go ahead.
- Clarification was sought on what additional activities or services the proposed building would facilitate that could not currently be delivered within the existing premises, and what benefits would be gained in terms of outreach and the client groups served. In response, Tunde Banjoko conveyed that when Making the Leap moved into the existing premises in 2002, the building had been of a higher quality than facilities that many young people had previously experienced. Over time, however, schools and workplaces had modernised, while the existing building had not. As a result, young people often felt a stark contrast between the facilities at Making the Leap and the more modern environments they aspired to enter in employment. It was further highlighted that the new building would provide modern, open spaces with high-speed internet access, addressing current difficulties arising from the existing building's layout of corridors and doors. It was explained that the design aimed to create an environment that felt familiar and accessible to young people, making it easier for them to adjust when attending opportunities in Central London. It was further added that the upgraded building would also provide high quality facilities for the wider community. It was further emphasised that the organisation's ambition was to create a modern building capable of serving young people and community groups for the next 100 years.
- Details were sought on how the reduction in dedicated community space could be justified within the context of the proposal. In response, Tunde Banjoko advised that the current community centre operated across two floors, with the upper floor accessible only by stairs. Under the new scheme, a larger community space would be provided on the ground floor, supplemented by additional community-usable spaces upstairs that could be accessed via a lift. It was stated that the new arrangement would improve accessibility and allow the community to use areas that were currently inaccessible.

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- Referring to census data identifying disproportionately high levels of disadvantage among young black boys in Brent, members queried whether this was the demographic primarily served by the organisation. In response, Tunde Banjoko that Making the Leap was a social mobility charity working with young people from less advantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, who in Brent disproportionately came from black and Asian communities. The Committee were informed that over 90% of the young people supported by the charity were from black and ethnic minority backgrounds. The organisation provided soft skills training and access to opportunities with major national employers to support young people in progressing into careers and working their way out of poverty. It was further expressed that the work undertaken by the charity was of significant value and constituted a clear positive contribution to Brent.
- Considering the concerns raised by objectors regarding the consultation process, members asked the applicant to respond to the issues that had been identified. In response, a member from the applicant's team noted that it had been suggested that the applicant had indicated that approximately 800 letters would be sent, but that only 55 had been issued. Confirmation was provided that well over 800 letters had in fact been distributed to the community. The Committee was also informed that a community event had also been held on 14 September 2024, which took place shortly before the submission of the application, the timing having been affected by delays relating to Network Rail. It was additionally noted that in the context of a planning application of this nature, a reasonable level of outreach had been undertaken. It was further stated that the existing community centre was located on the doorstep of the community and that the applicant had always been available for dialogue. It was emphasised that those conversations would continue should permission be granted, as the applicant was part of the community and intended to maintain engagement. It was acknowledged that the organisation was a charity and therefore limited in the resources available, but it was considered that the level of consultation conducted had been sufficient.
- Members were keen to seek details on what changes to the proposal had been made in response to the feedback received during consultation. In response, a member from the applicant's team confirmed that feedback had influenced the development of the proposal. One of the key areas of change concerned the massing of the building. The Committee was informed that the scheme had originally comprised a larger and more rectilinear form. However, following pre-application discussions and stakeholder engagement, massing had been drawn back from the edges of the building, particularly at the top storey. It was explained that this adjustment had increased structural costs but had been undertaken in response to community concerns regarding townscape appearance, daylight and sunlight impact. As a result, the recessed upper storey was designed so that it would not be readily visible from street level. It was stated that the building would present as a three-

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storey structure in most views, with only long range and elevated viewpoints able to perceive the fourth storey.

- In commending the applicant for work undertaken with the community, details were sought on whether the design process had taken into account the heritage character of the area. In response, Tunde Banjoko conveyed that the organisation would have preferred to retain and build upon the existing structure. However, Network Rail had made clear that no increase in structural weight could be permitted above the railway tunnels. It was further explained that the need to increase usable space, combined with the weight restriction, had necessitated the development of a lightweight replacement structure. It was additionally noted that attempts had been made to explore retention of the existing building, but the weight constraint made this unfeasible and had influenced the final form of the proposal.
- Following on from the previous question, details were sought on whether alternatives to the proposed height had been explored in order to better align with the scale of surrounding buildings. In response, a member from the applicant's team stated that all possible alternatives had been considered and advised that it was not feasible to excavate a basement due to cost and the presence of railway tunnels. The footprint was also constrained by the surrounding streets, the open space and the parkland. It was further explained that floor to ceiling heights had been minimised to the extent possible to ensure functional spaces while keeping the overall height as low as practicable. It was additionally stated that the proposal represented the most efficient use of the available area and volume given the constraints.

The Chair thanked Tunde Banjoko and members of the applicant's team for responding to the Committee's queries and then moved on to offer the Committee the opportunity to ask the officers any remaining questions or points of clarity in relation to the application, with the following being noted:

- Members questioned how, in developing the proposed scheme, consideration had been given to ensuring that the design was in keeping with the character of the surrounding area. In response, Damian Manhertz (Development Management Area Manager) advised that the starting point for assessment was the existing building, which he described as unique in form. It was stated that recreating what currently existed was not considered to be an appropriate design solution. It was explained that, in many cases, it was preferable to introduce a modern building of high quality and distinct appearance rather than to seek to replicate historic forms in a manner that risked appearing as a pastiche or a false addition to the street. Members were also informed that extending the existing structure was not feasible. Reference was made to the design section of the committee report, in which the proposed design quality was set out as being appropriate for the site. It was additionally noted that the perception of the building would vary depending upon a viewer's position. It was further explained that views close to the building, particularly within Hazel Road, would not reveal upper levels, whereas views from the park or more distant vantage points would show the

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building differently and would offset the perceived scale. For these reasons, the design was considered appropriate when assessed in its full visual context.

Victoria McDonagh (Development Management Service Manager) further advised that the design and character assessment had regard to designated heritage assets in the vicinity, including conservation areas and the listed park. It was indicated that these considerations formed part of the officer evaluation. It was added that there were existing buildings of four to five storeys on Harrow Road, located on the opposite side of Hazel Grove Open Space and further west. It was also noted that parts of Harrow Road were designated as an intensification corridor within the Local Plan, meaning that gradual change in character and development up to five storeys was anticipated. The proposal was therefore viewed in the context of this transitional character.

- The Chair questioned how officers were ensuring that the proposed outdoor terrace would not adversely impact neighbouring properties. Slides were presented illustrating the proposed site plan. In response, Victoria McDonagh noted that the separation distances between the lower floors of the proposed building and the properties opposite on Hazel Road were approximately 15 metres. It was explained that this reflected the established pattern of development, where shallow front gardens formed part of the local townscape. It was further explained that the upper floor containing the roof terrace was set back significantly, providing a distance of 19 metres between directly facing elevations. Reference was made to Supplementary Planning Document 1 (SPD1), which recommended a guidance distance of 18 metres between facing buildings while acknowledging that flexibility existed in areas where shorter distances formed part of the established character or where efficient use of land was required. It was further stated that the terrace would include screening and that any overlooking would be similar to that experienced at other floors, primarily directed towards the public realm of Hazel Road rather than private gardens. Damian Manhertz further mentioned that a condition was proposed requiring a site management plan, which would include controls such as hours of use and measures to prevent inappropriate use of the terrace.
- The Chair questioned how the heritage significance scoring undertaken by officers compared with the views held by local groups. In addition, the Chair queried why officers were confident that the scoring before the Committee represented the correct assessment, noting that this would affect the balance between public benefits and heritage harm. In response, Harry Lewis (Principal Heritage Officer) conveyed that the numerical scoring system was relevant only for determining whether a building merited inclusion on the Local List. It was emphasised that determining its heritage significance for planning purposes was a separate exercise. It was stated that, in his professional judgement, the building possessed heritage interest and some heritage significance but did not reach the threshold required for local listing. It was confirmed that he had applied the four metrics used for local list assessment, these being authenticity, architectural interest, historical interest

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and townscape importance. For authenticity, which considered the extent to which the original fabric and form of the building could still be understood, the Principal Heritage Officer had assigned a score of 1 out of a possible 3. It was explained that while there was some ability to appreciate the building in its original form, there had been several phases of alteration, and only one elevation retained a meaningful degree of authenticity. For architectural interest, the Principal Heritage Officer had assigned a further score of 1, stating that only one elevation exhibited architectural qualities of interest. For historical interest, which assessed the extent to which the building illustrated or was associated with significant local history, the Principal Heritage Officer had assigned a score of 2 out of 3. It was stated that while the building had a long history of approximately 125 years and several associative features, he did not consider these to be of special significance. For townscape importance, the Principal Heritage Officer had assigned a score of 1. It was explained that the building was no longer experienced within its original street plan, as its immediate setting had been altered by demolition of surrounding terraces. The Principal Heritage Officer did not consider the building sufficiently prominent or distinctive to constitute a townscape marker. It was noted that this total score of 5 out of a possible 12 meant that the building would fall short of local listing. It was further stated that the Principal Heritage Officer had undertaken a comparative analysis of similar mission halls and ecclesiastical buildings within Brent and across London, and that the building scored relatively low when assessed in that wider context. It was concluded that while the building was a non-designated heritage asset with some significance, it was not found to be essential to protect.

- Assurance was sought by members that the building, once constructed, would be managed in accordance with the approved plans and would not change its use in the future without oversight. In response, Victoria McDonagh reassured members that conditions would be imposed regarding the use of the building, including a community access plan and an operational management plan. It was confirmed that any future change of use would require a further planning application, which would be assessed against the planning policies in force at the time. It was further explained that heritage policy required decision makers to consider the significance of non-designated heritage assets whether or not they were included on the Local List. Reference was made to paragraph 2.1.6 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which required the consideration of the effect of proposals on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset and to undertake a balanced judgement, weighing any harm or loss against the scale and nature of the significance. Confirmation was provided that officers had carried out that balancing exercise and had recognised that demolition would cause harm, which had been weighed against the benefits of the scheme.
- Clarification was sought, in relation to the authenticity score, whether officers were required to consider the potential for reversing previous alterations to the building and what impact such reinstatement might have, should reversal be possible. In response, Harry Lewis (Principal Heritage Officer) conveyed that in considering such matters, two key concepts were relevant, namely optimum viable use and proportionality. It was explained that, when

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assessing whether reversal of alterations was appropriate, officers must consider whether reinstatement was genuinely desirable. Regard would be had to whether any reinstatement would risk resulting in a pastiche and whether there was sufficient certainty regarding the building's former appearance to justify attempts at restoration. Harry Lewis further stated that proportionality was a critical factor and advised that the building was not of sufficient heritage interest to justify a restoration exercise of that nature. It was acknowledged that individuals, including himself, may have personal or local attachment to buildings encountered in daily life, but emphasised that heritage assessment was undertaken within the national framework, with significance being evaluated against comparators and local building typologies. It was concluded that the building was not of a level of significance that would warrant reinstatement and that any extension intended to restore an earlier form would likely dilute the ability to understand the building. In his professional judgement, reversal was not proportionate and would not be justified.

- Reference was made to the detail provided within the committee report, which stated that the open character of the plot would be retained and that the design of the proposed building, while different, would not appear unusual for a community facility. Members questioned why the committee report did not make clearer that the buildings to the south of Harrow Road, used as comparators, were situated at a significantly lower level and at a considerable distance. In response, Damian Manhertz explained that the report referred to the existence of other four storey buildings to establish that the height proposed was not inherently out of character within the broader context. It was further clarified that assessment was not based solely on the height of surrounding buildings but also on how the proposed building would be viewed within its specific setting. It was additionally noted that the relationship between the proposed building and its surroundings was influenced by the presence of open space and the park, which provided separation and visual relief. It was further mentioned that from key vantage points the proposed building would not appear unduly bulky or dominant. It was added that the existing building already had a substantial ridge height, and the increase in height was not equivalent to an additional two or three full storeys above the current form. It was also stated that the massing was further mitigated by the recessing of the upper storey, which reduced visual impact. Victoria McDonagh additionally highlighted that the proposal had been reviewed by urban design officers who had assessed the height, massing and design quality within its broader context and had concluded that the proposal was acceptable and confirmed that they were supportive of the scheme.
- Questions were raised around what arrangements were proposed for blue badge holders. In response, John Fletcher (Team Leader – Development Control, Transport Planning) stated that the scheme was a car free development and that there was no space within the site boundary to provide off street parking. It was confirmed that any blue badge parking would therefore need to occur on street. Members were advised that double yellow lines were present along the frontage of the site, and that blue badge holders

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were permitted to park for up to three hours on double yellow lines, which was considered sufficient to support community centre use.

- The Committee queried whether the issue of scaffolding over public space during construction could be addressed at this stage. In response, Victoria McDonagh advised that detailed construction planning would be undertaken following the grant of any planning permission, during which building control matters and construction logistics would be finalised. It was noted that the proposal included a pre-commencement condition, which prevented any works from beginning until the condition had been discharged. It was confirmed that consultation with the Highways Team would occur at that stage. If any element of construction required encroachment on the public highway, this would require a separate agreement with the Highways Licensing Team. It was emphasised that the purpose of the planning condition was to manage construction to minimise disruption while ensuring appropriate engagement with relevant Council teams. John Fletcher (Team Leader – Development Control, Transport Planning) further mentioned that the applicant had prepared a draft construction plan. It was stated that scaffolding over the highway was feasible, provided that a pedestrian tunnel was maintained beneath it so that the footway remained open.
- Members noted that the 2016 local list review process stated that the side building was not locally listed because it had not reached the necessary threshold and questioned whether this meant the building had been assessed at that time, or whether it had simply not undergone a full assessment. Clarification was sought on when the assessment had actually taken place. In response, Harry Lewis (Principal Heritage Officer) explained that he had joined Brent approximately 6 months earlier and that comments previously made during the application process had been provided by his predecessor, who had been employed on a meanwhile contract. Reference was made to the 2019 Heritage Strategy, which included several categories of assets. It was further explained that the Local List comprised buildings that had undergone full assessment and had been formally adopted. A separate long list included buildings raised by community members, by the heritage officer, or by other interested parties as potential candidates for assessment. It was stated that the building in question appeared on the long list, meaning that it was recognised as having some heritage merit but had not been formally assessed for suitability for inclusion on the Local List.

David Glover (Head of Planning and Development Services) provided further information that the process for assessing heritage impact was the same regardless of whether a building appeared on the Local List. It was stated that decision makers were required to identify the harm generated by the loss of the non-designated heritage asset and to weigh that harm against the benefits, as set out in the committee report. It was acknowledged that differing professional views had been expressed regarding the degree of historical significance associated with the building. It was noted that where significance was greater, harm would weigh more heavily. It was emphasised, however, that the same balancing exercise must be undertaken whether or not the building was on the Local List.

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Victoria McDonagh provided further clarification that statutory listed buildings, such as Grade I, Grade II and Grade II* buildings, required listed building consent for internal alterations. Non-designated heritage assets, including locally listed buildings and buildings identified as having heritage value, did not benefit from statutory protection and would not require listed building consent, although planning permission might still be required depending on the nature of works. It was reported that officers had recommended conditions requiring a full survey of the building prior to any works, to ensure that the Historic Environment Record contained an accurate record. Members were also advised that conditions would require incorporation of memorabilia within the proposed building, such as a plaque or display boards, referencing the site's history. It was additionally stated that engagement with the Local History Society was recommended as part of this process.

DECISION

Having considered the application, the Committee **RESOLVED** to grant planning permission subject to:

- (1) The completion of a legal agreement to secure the planning obligations as detailed within the committee report.
- (2) The conditions and informatives, as set out in the committee report, together with an additional condition:
 - That no demolition of Harriett Tubman House should take place until a binding contract has been entered into for the demolition and construction of the new development.

(Voting on the above decision was as follows: 6 in favour of granting planning permission, 1 in favour of refusal and 1 abstention).

5. **25/3070 - North Eastern Lands (Plots NE04, NE05 and NE06) - Land bound by Engineers Way, to the south and Fulton Road to the North and East, Wembley**

PROPOSAL

Temporary use of land for meanwhile land uses comprising of; an outdoor sports facility (Use Class F2) to provide 5 five-a-side floodlit all weather football pitches with a single storey pavilion building and an ancillary support area; a temporary building for use as a leisure, entertainment and events venue with storage buildings and external plant equipment in an ancillary support area; boundary treatment; shared informal public realm (with new seating, lighting and CCTV) along with provision for cycle parking, accessible car parking, and an internal vehicular access route with vehicular drop off.

RECOMMENDATION

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That the Committee resolved to GRANT planning permission subject to the conditions and informatives as detailed in the main and updated within the supplementary committee report, together with an amendment to the wording of condition 10 to remove reference to "Plot 01".

Jasmin Tailor (Career Grade Planning Officer) introduced the report, advising members that the application sought full planning permission for the temporary planning permission for the meanwhile use of the land comprising of an outdoor sports facility (Use Class F2) to provide five 5-a-side floodlit all weather football pitches with a 133sqm single-storey pavilion building and an ancillary support area, a temporary building (3600sqm) for use as a leisure, entertainment and events venue with storage buildings and external plant equipment in an ancillary support area, alterations to the boundary treatment, a central shared informal public realm (with new seating, lighting and CCTV) along with provision for cycle parking, accessible car parking, and an internal vehicular access route with vehicular drop off area. The meanwhile uses would be for a period of 3 years, after which time it is envisaged that these parts of the wider Quintain Wembley Park development could be delivered. Attention was also drawn to the supplementary report circulated in advance of the meeting, which outlined amendments to the hours of operation and lighting for Plot 01 and the type of cycle parking spaces. The recommendation remained to grant planning permission subject to the conditions and informatives as set out within the main and updated within the supplementary committee report. Officers then presented slides taken from the drawing pack to illustrate the proposed plans.

The Chair thanked Jasmin Tailor for introducing the report. As there were no Committee questions raised at this point, the Chair then moved on to consider a request which had been received to speak on the application and invited Brett Harbutt (who had registered to speak as the applicant's representative) to address the Committee in relation to the application, who highlighted the following points:

- Brett Harbutt began by highlighting that the application sought permission for the temporary and meanwhile use of land within the North Eastern Lands area of the Wembley Park Masterplan, pending the delivery of the permanent development envisaged for the site. The Committee were informed that the proposal introduced two high-quality interim land uses, each situated on its own defined plot.
- It was stated that Plot 1 would accommodate a total of 5 five-a-side football pitches together with a pavilion building providing changing room facilities. Plot 2 would contain a temporary building intended to house a family friendly indoor immersive exhibition. The Committee were advised that both uses would be supported by a shared area of public realm incorporating lighting, closed circuit television, cycle parking, accessible visitor parking and an internally managed access road with provision for vehicular drop off.
- The applicant's representative stated that the purpose of the application was to transform an underused area of hardstanding into an active, welcoming

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and beneficial space. Members were informed that both the London Plan and the Brent Local Plan encouraged the use of vacant or underutilised land for temporary purposes where such uses could introduce vitality and social value. Brett Harbutt emphasised that the proposal aligned directly with those policy objectives by creating a vibrant destination for sport, activity and family entertainment during the period before the long-term residential development of the land advanced under the Wembley Park Masterplan.

- In outlining the benefits of the scheme, Brett Harbutt highlighted that the outdoor pitches would provide accessible and affordable local sports provision, which Brent's planning policies specifically supported. One of the pitches would be made available free of charge to charities, community groups, youth organisations and local schools for the duration of the temporary use. This benefit would be secured by condition and was intended to increase participation in sport and support wellbeing within the local area.
- Turning to Plot 2, the applicant's representative stated that the immersive exhibition venue would host the Mundo Pixar exhibition, which was internationally recognised and would broaden Wembley's cultural offer. It was anticipated that the exhibition would reinforce Wembley's position as a national and international visitor destination. The Committee were informed that job opportunities arising from the venue would be advertised to local residents through Brent Works. In addition, discounted tickets would be offered to local residents and free tickets would be allocated to local schools and charities to promote engagement with the exhibition.
- The representative further advised that the shared public realm supporting the temporary uses had been designed to be safe and inclusive, featuring lighting, landscaping and closed-circuit television, and would be managed and maintained by the Quintain Wembley Park Estate Team.
- In respect of amenity considerations, it was noted that the committee report confirmed that lighting and noise impacts were acceptable, subject to controls secured through the proposed planning conditions.
- Regarding transport matters, Brett Harbutt stated that the site benefitted from strong public transport connections, including bus, rail and Underground services, and that cycle access had been prioritised. Transport impacts had been robustly assessed and, during the application process, the proposed drop-off provision had been reduced to five spaces. This provision was not intended to encourage car use but was a practical response to operational issues locally, designed to prevent unsafe stopping and congestion on the public highway through clear time limits and enforcement. Whilst the development would be promoted as car free, those who needed to travel by car would be directed to existing Pink and Red car parks.
- In concluding his address to the Committee, Brett Harbutt stated that the proposal was a well-designed, policy-compliant, time limited and community focused scheme that would enhance Wembley Park during a transitional

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period and contribute to Brent's cultural, leisure and economic objectives. For these reasons, and in line with the officer recommendation, the applicant representative requested that the Committee approve the planning application.

The Chair thanked Brett Harbutt for addressing the Committee and then invited members to ask any questions they had in relation to the information presented, with the following being noted:

- Members noted that there appeared to be limited detail regarding the nature of the public realm elements within the proposal and requested a summary of what was being added, what changes were being made and how it would be ensured that the space would be usable. In addition, members sought information regarding the accessibility of the 5 five-a-side pitches, including the ease of access for bookings and how it would be ensured that residents from different backgrounds across the estate would be able to access the facilities fairly. In response, a member from the applicant's team explained that the landscaping details for the public realm would be secured through a planning condition requiring the submission of further information within three months of opening. Should planning consent be granted, the applicant would submit the required information within the forthcoming months. It was stated that the public realm would include a central space with seating and areas where individuals could wait prior to attending either the football pitches or the Mundo experience. This area would therefore allow people to congregate and wait for their allocated time slots. It was added that the public realm would include cycle parking and that the internal access road would be clearly marked to ensure that the site was safe and accessible. Visitors would be able to identify where to park and how to navigate the one-way route through the site and back onto the highway.

Brett Harbutt addressed the Member's second question regarding accessibility to the football pitches and stated that a planning condition had been agreed requiring free of charge access to one of the pitches during specified time limited slots for charities, community groups, youth groups and local schools for the lifetime of the development. This secured the community benefit through the planning process. It was noted that the precise booking system would depend on the operator. However, members were advised that the prospective operator was an established provider of football pitch facilities and would have an online booking platform. It was further added that the operator had expressed a willingness to work with the local community and that discussions were already taking place with the Football Association (FA) regarding opportunities for community activity, including engagement with organisations such as Middlesex Football Association. It was additionally noted that these matters remained subject to contractual agreement.

- Members sought details on which pitch would be offered for community use and what the plans were for the operation of the pitches. In response, a member from the applicant's team stated that this detail had not yet been finalised, as discussions with the prospective operator were ongoing. It was confirmed that although one pitch would be made available for community

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use, it did not mean that the same pitch would always be allocated. Depending on bookings and the sizes of groups attending, a different pitch could be provided at different times. The arrangement would therefore be managed flexibly.

- Members then asked whether consideration had been given to restricting the hours of use of the pitch closest to nearby residential developments, in order to reduce noise. In response, a member from the applicant's team indicated that no such restriction had been proposed. It was confirmed that a noise assessment and lighting assessment had been submitted and reviewed by the Council's Environmental Health Officer, who had concluded that the impacts were not significant and that use of the pitches up to 22:30pm was acceptable. It was also noted that the previous use of the football pitches operated until 23:00pm, and that no objections had been received at that time.
- Members sought clarification regarding the meaning of 'time limited access' in relation to the free community pitch. In response, a member from the applicant's team clarified that a planning condition, set out in the committee papers, identified the specific hours during which the free pitch would be available to the community and local schools. These time slots were aligned with the hours of the former football pitch use on the site and had therefore been replicated in the new application.
- Concerns were expressed that, in the event of a maintenance or repair issue affecting the pitch allocated for community use, the operator might delay repairs because the pitch would not be generating revenue. Members were therefore keen to seek details on what measures were in place to ensure that the community benefit would still be delivered. In response, a member from the applicant's team clarified that there would be no single designated pitch for community use. Instead, community access would apply to one of the five pitches at any given time. Therefore, if one pitch was unavailable due to maintenance or repair, another pitch would be offered in its place for the time slot allocated to community groups.
- The Chair queried how the site would transition at the end of the three year temporary permission period, specifically whether the structures would be recycled or reused elsewhere and how the scheme would connect to the long term masterplan. In response, Brett Harbutt stated that, in relation to the football pitches, there were two principal structures. The pavilion structure was typical of the pavilions used across the operator's other venues. It was explained that a similar structure previously used by Power League on the site in 2020 had been demounted and transported to Northumberland for reuse, demonstrating that the pavilion could be recycled. It was further stated that the astro turf may have a limited lifespan but that the sand and hardcore used to form the level base would be reused. In relation to Plot 2, it was highlighted that the leisure venue structure was designed to be demounted and used internationally for a range of purposes including events, sports arenas and exhibitions. The applicant concluded that, with the exception of

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the astro turf, the majority of materials would be reused at other venues upon the conclusion of the temporary permission.

- As a final query to the applicant's representative, the Chair questioned what plans were in place to enforce against informal parking. In response, Brett Harbutt stated that the opportunity had been used to implement good estate management practices that were already in place across the wider estate. These included improved lighting and the installation of closed circuit television. It was confirmed that there were 6 accessible parking bays and 5 drop-off bays within the site. It was explained that the closed circuit television cameras operated automatic number plate recognition technology, which would be used to enforce the 3 hour maximum waiting period for accessible bays and the 20 minute maximum waiting period for pick-up and drop-off locations. It was further confirmed that facilities management staff and estate security officers were present throughout the estate and enforced these measures at all times. It was also stated that the estate had full coverage over 24 hours.

The Chair thanked Brett Harbutt and members of the applicant's team for responding to the Committee's queries and then moved on to offer the Committee the opportunity to ask the officers any remaining questions or points of clarity in relation to the application, with the following being noted:

- As an initial query, members referred to paragraph 22 of the committee report and the proposed timetable and hours of operation for community groups. It was questioned whether this would be a stipulated condition, given that any period in which the pitches might be unusable could restrict community access. In response, Jasmin Tailor (Career Grade Planning Officer) confirmed that the timetable referred to formed part of Condition 10 of the draft decision notice and that the table had been taken directly from the Operational Management Plan.
- Further clarification was sought on the wording and the drawing referenced within Condition 10, as members observed that the condition stated that a specific pitch was identified on the drawing, while the applicant had earlier suggested that any 1 of the 4 pitches could be used. Officers presented slides from the drawing pack. In response, Victoria McDonagh (Development Management Service Manager) explained that the site comprised 2 plots. Plot 1 showed 5 five-a-side football pitches. Plot 2 contained the Pixar building. It was clarified that Plot 1 did not refer to any single pitch but to the full set of pitches as shown on the plans.
- Members raised three supplementary questions, with the first question concerning whether the community space would be affordable for the most disadvantaged community groups within Wembley Park, the surrounding neighbourhood and local social housing estates. The second question related to whether the public realm space, once detailed plans had been submitted, would be assessed to ensure that it was usable, accessible and would not encourage antisocial behaviour, particularly in potentially dark or enclosed

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spaces. The third question concerned the likely increase in demand for loading and unloading created by the two new plots. Members noted that this could lead to a greater number of vehicles stopping on double yellow lines, thereby causing increased traffic and additional related issues, potentially tripling existing pressures on the eastern stretch of Fulton Road. Details were sought on what measures were being taken to ensure that this situation did not arise. In addressing the final question, Jehan Weerasinghe (Corporate Director Neighbourhoods and Regeneration) stated that parking fell within public realm responsibilities and highways enforcement and advised that such matters did not form part of planning considerations and therefore could not be considered by members when determining the application. It was acknowledged that the issue was valid but reiterated that it fell within public highways enforcement rather than the planning process.

John Fletcher (Team Leader Development Control) additionally noted that the site included a dedicated drop off area containing 6 disabled bays and 5 drop off bays, which would reduce pressure on Fulton Road. It was further highlighted that the wider Wembley Estate was a public transport destination and referred to survey findings indicating that only 3% of visitors travelled by car. It was also stated that planning policy did not seek to promote car use.

In addressing the first question, Sean Newton (Development Management Planning Manager) confirmed that Condition 19, as set out on page 104 of the committee report, required the applicant to submit a detailed landscaping plan within 3 months and noted that officers would consider and review the plan on receipt.

- Details were sought on whether local residents living in the Wembley area could be offered a discounted scheme for booking the pitches, to improve accessibility for the wider community. In response, David Glover (Head of Planning and Development Services) explained that there was no policy basis to require discounted access for general residents. It was confirmed that while planning policy could secure community access to facilities, this did not extend to residents in the immediate vicinity. It was further stated that the Council could not request such a discount through planning conditions, although the applicant was free to offer it voluntarily. The Committee, therefore, recommended that the applicant consider offering a discount scheme for Brent residents for at least 1 of the football pitches to provide a meaningful benefit for Brent residents and expressed the hope that the applicant would engage with ward councillors and other stakeholders to identify an appropriate mechanism for implementing such a scheme.

DECISION

Having considered the application, the Committee **RESOLVED:**

- (1) to grant planning permission subject to the conditions and informatives, as detailed in the main and updated within the supplementary committee report, together with an amendment to the wording of condition 10 to remove reference to "Plot 01".

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- (2) that as an additional recommendation the applicant be encouraged to consider the introduction of a discount scheme for Brent residents for at least one of the football pitches, in order to provide a meaningful benefit for the local community. The Committee expressed the hope that the applicant would engage with ward councillors and other relevant stakeholders to identify an appropriate mechanism for the implementation of such a scheme

(Voting on the above decision was unanimous).

6. **25/1029 - 7 Randall Avenue, London, NW2 7RL**

PROPOSAL

Proposed demolition of garage and x3 sheds and, erection of dwellinghouse with basement level, addition of new fence to south side of the site, provision of 2 car parking spaces, cycle and refuse storage, landscaping and associated access to land rear of 7 Randall Avenue.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee resolved to GRANT planning permission subject to the conditions and informatives as detailed in the main committee report and removal of the conditions as set out within the supplementary report.

Sarah Dilley (Principal Planning Officer) introduced the report, advising members that the application sought full planning permission for the proposed demolition of garage and x3 sheds and, erection of dwellinghouse with basement level, provision of 2 car parking spaces, cycle, and refuse storage, landscaping and associated access to land rear of 7 Randall Avenue. Attention was also drawn to the supplementary report circulated in advance of the meeting, which outlined an error that had been identified within the Summary of Key Issues section of the committee report. It was explained that the error appeared within the Flood Risk and Drainage subsection, where reference had been made to the need for a condition requiring the submission of a drainage strategy. It was confirmed that such a condition was not considered necessary and that no drainage condition had therefore been included. Sarah Dilley (Principal Planning Officer) further reported that an additional objection had been submitted, which raised concerns primarily relating to biodiversity net gain and the status of the proposed self-build exemption. It was stated that officers had undertaken a further review of these matters, including an assessment of relevant appeal decisions. It was noted that although the supplementary report had suggested the use of conditions to secure both the self-build exemption and any biodiversity net gain requirements, subsequent legal advice had been sought and additional research undertaken. It was confirmed that officers now considered it more appropriate for these matters to be secured through a legal agreement in order to ensure compliance with the self-build definition or, alternatively, to secure biodiversity net gain should that be required. Sarah Dilley (Principal Planning Officer) further advised that an email had been received earlier that day which contained several attachments, including a petition with 251 signatures, a copy of the Brent Council Article 4 Direction for

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the Homestead Park Conservation Area, the character appraisal for the conservation area, and a photograph that depicted enforcement officers outside 7 Randall Avenue. The Committee were advised that much of the content contained within the email and the petition had already been addressed within the consultation section of the committee report. It was further noted that the email referred to a Home Office investigation at 7 Randall Avenue. It was confirmed that although the use of 7 Randall Avenue had been considered within the officer report, the referenced investigation was not a material planning consideration. It was also explained that the email made reference to covenants affecting the land, but it was reiterated that covenants were likewise not material planning considerations for the purposes of determining the application.

The recommendation remained to grant planning permission subject to the conditions and informatives as detailed in the committee report, removal of the conditions as set out within the supplementary report and additional requirement for a Section 106 Agreement to secure the following Heads of Terms:

- A requirement to submit the Statutory Biodiversity Metric to identify the pre-development biodiversity value of the site prior to commencement of development.
- In the event that the house is not construction as a self-build in line with the legal definition of Self Build and Custom Build Housing or subsequently sold or occupied for persons other than the applicant within 3 years after the house is completed to notify the Council in writing. The owner would then be required to secure off-site BNG units either through registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits to secure the 10% net gain in biodiversity, with such evidence submitted to the Council.

The Chair thanked Sarah Dilley (Principal Planning Officer) for introducing the report. As there were no Committee questions raised at this point, the Chair then moved on to consider a request which had been received to speak on the application and invited Tim Waters (who had registered to speak as an objector online) to address the Committee in relation to the application.

While audio technical issues were being resolved with the online speaker, the Chair proceeded to invite Murtaza Poptani (who had registered to speak as the Agent) to address the Committee in relation to the application, who highlighted the following points:

- Murtaza Poptani began by highlighting that the proposal concerned a backland site for a single-family dwelling and acknowledged the planning history, including the previously dismissed appeal. Members were advised that in the applicants view the key issue before the Committee was that officers had undertaken a detailed assessment of the revised scheme in the context of that history and were satisfied that the amended proposal had addressed and overcome the earlier reasons for refusal, particularly those relating to scale, bulk, height and design.

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- It was clarified that the proposal was materially lower and smaller than the scheme dismissed at appeal. The Agent stated that the current maximum height was approximately 6.65 metres, representing a reduction of around 1.6 metres compared with the appeal scheme and being lower than the height permitted under the earlier outline consent. It was noted that officers had concluded that, when considered alongside the amended roof form and the revised siting of the building, the development would not appear visually dominant or harmful to the prevailing character of the area, including views from the adjacent Homestead Park Conservation Area.
- In relation to the amenity of neighbouring occupiers, Murtaza Poptani noted that the officer report confirmed full compliance with the Council's adopted guidance. It was highlighted that the development sat below the 30 degree and 45-degree lines, that appropriate separation distances had been maintained, and that privacy would be secured, where necessary, through conditions. This included the requirement for obscure glazing to the dormer window facing Dollis Hill Lane. It was also noted that officers had concluded that the proposal would not cause unacceptable harm by way of loss of light, outlook or privacy.
- In acknowledging that concerns had been raised regarding the proposed basement the Agent reported that officers had confirmed that the site lay within Flood Zone 1, that the Basement Impact Assessment was acceptable for planning purposes, and that matters relating to construction methodology, drainage and safety were appropriately controlled through pre commencement conditions and through compliance with Building Regulations.
- On the matter of parking and access, Murtaza Poptani stated that the proposal provided 2 off street parking spaces, which was consistent with the previous outline approval and compliant with the maximum parking standards. The scheme also included provision for cycle storage, electric vehicle charging, and a turning area to allow vehicles to exit the site in a forward gear. It was additionally noted that Transport Officers had raised no objection, subject to conditions.
- In concluding his address to the Committee, Murtaza Poptani highlighted that the proposal would deliver a high quality, family sized dwelling that met all space standards, accessibility requirements and water efficiency standards, and would contribute in a modest but meaningful way to the delivery of housing within the Borough. For these reasons and having regard to the detailed and balanced assessment presented within the officer report, the Agent confirmed support for the recommendation and requested that the Committee grant planning permission.

The Chair thanked Murtaza Poptani for addressing the Committee and then invited members to ask any questions they had in relation to the information presented, with the following being noted:

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- As an initial query, the Chair questioned why the proposal included 2 parking spaces for what had been defined as a modest garden development, and why only 2 spaces had been provided rather than 1. In response, Murtaza Poptani explained that 1 parking space had been allocated to the existing dwelling and 1 parking space had been allocated to the proposed dwelling.
- The Chair then queried what consideration had been given within the design to the turning area and the refuse store. In response, Murtaza Poptani stated that the refuse store had been positioned in its proposed location because it was required to be within a specified distance of the highway. It was explained that, in relation to the previous application, it had been determined that the refuse store must be situated in that location in order to allow for collection by refuse operatives. It was confirmed that the design had therefore deliberately placed the refuse store in that position.

As there were no further Committee questions raised at this point, and following the resolution of the technical difficulties, the Chair returned to the request which had been received to speak on the application and invited Tim Waters (who had registered to speak as an objector) to address the Committee in relation to the application, who highlighted the following points:

- Tim Waters began by noting that the application followed 2 previous applications that had been refused by the Council, including one that had been dismissed on appeal in March 2024. It was also noted that, in dismissing that appeal, the Inspector had concluded that a dwelling of a similar size would not relate positively to the existing context and character of the area and would therefore be contrary to planning policy. It was stated that the current proposal was no better and contained multiple shortcomings that equally justified refusal.
- That there appeared to be no legal mechanism proposed to secure the dwelling as a self-build development, despite appeal precedent and case law determining that such a mechanism was necessary. It was noted that the applicant was a company specialising in the letting of owned or leased real estate, including the operation of No. 7 Randall Avenue as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO), and therefore the claim that the dwelling would be occupied by the company owner appeared unlikely. It was highlighted that officers were recommending the imposition of a condition to secure the self-build and occupancy restriction on what the objector described as the spurious basis that it would be too costly for the applicant to enter into a section 106 agreement. The speaker further maintained that the use of a condition was wholly inappropriate, could not be legally enforced, and would not prevent the property from being sold to an unrelated individual within the defined self-build period. The objector considered this completely unacceptable and contrary to the primary purpose of the legislation relating to self-build housing.

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- Tim Waters stated that without a legally enforceable self-build mechanism, the development could not be exempt from the mandatory requirement for a 10% biodiversity net gain, contrary to the applicant's claim.
- It was further highlighted that the proposal incorporated a 60sqm basement, comprising nearly 40% of the overall gross internal area of the dwelling, which had been predominantly allocated as an entertainment and games room. The objector contended that the Basement Impact Assessment submitted by the applicant was wholly inadequate. It was noted that it had not been prepared by a certified or qualified engineer and failed to assess likely impacts on groundwater, surface water run off and land or structural stability, all of which should properly be assessed as part of the application.
- In addition, the proposed means of access to the new dwelling was felt to be entirely inadequate, including for construction purposes. It was noted that the access was only 2.8 metres wide and was shared with No. 9. which it was felt created an obvious risk of pedestrian and vehicular conflict, which the application and the officer report had failed to address.
- Tim Waters observed that no urban greening factor calculation had been undertaken, contrary to planning policy.
- Concern was also expressed that the proposal included an additional parking space intended to serve the adjoining House in Multiple Occupation at No. 7 Randall Avenue. It was felt that this raised clear privacy concerns and indicated that the new dwelling may similarly be operated as a House in Multiple Occupation.
- In concluding his presentation to the Committee, Tim Waters respectfully requested that the Committee refuse planning permission.

The Chair thanked Tim Waters for addressing the Committee and then invited members to ask any questions they had in relation to the information presented. As there were no Committee questions raised at this point, the Chair then moved on to offer the Committee the opportunity to ask the officers any remaining questions or points of clarity in relation to the application, with the following being noted:

- Members questioned, with reference to the supplementary report, whether confidence could be maintained in the wider construction method and associated mitigation measures, given the identification of an error in the Basement Impact Assessment. It was further queried whether the proposed drainage arrangements remained sound in light of this error. In response, Sarah Dilley (Principal Planning Officer) highlighted that, in respect of drainage, the site was located within Flood Zone 1, which was categorised as being at low risk of flooding. It was confirmed that, taking into account the scale of the proposed development and the extent of landscaping, officers were satisfied that the arrangements were acceptable and that there was no requirement for a drainage condition. In relation to the Basement Impact

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Assessment, members were advised that matters concerning structural integrity would also be addressed through compliance with Building Regulations.

- The Chair then sought clarification regarding the proposed driveway, which measured 2.9 metres in width. The Chair noted that vehicle sizes were increasing on average and added that refuse bins were occasionally brought along the side of the property. The Chair expressed concern that pedestrians would also be required to use this access route, including during hours of darkness, and queried whether the arrangement provided a safe means of access to the dwelling. The Chair questioned what assessment had been undertaken and whether restrictions on parking could be considered in order to reduce risk. In response, John Fletcher (Team Leader Development Control) noted that the dwelling would be served by a driveway measuring slightly under 3 metres in width, which currently provided access to garages at the rear of No. 7 and No. 9 Randall Avenue. It was confirmed that this would be the sole point of access for the new dwelling. Members were further advised that the width aligned with British Standards for a driveway serving a single house, and this was the basis upon which officers had assessed its suitability. It was explained that a separate footway would not normally be expected for access to a single dwelling and that the driveway was intended solely for cars. It was emphasised that refuse vehicles would not use the driveway and confirmed that the proposed bin store was situated within 20 metres of the highway, which complied with the standards for refuse collection. It was also noted that the applicant proposed improvements to the surface and lighting of the driveway, which would enhance safety.
- Turning to the question of whether a reduction in parking provision could be considered, John Fletcher (Team Leader Development Control) stated that this was challenging because the proposal concerned a family dwelling, where car ownership was typically higher, particularly for households with children. He noted that the site had a Public Transport Accessibility Level of 2, which indicated relatively limited transport accessibility. He further observed that the surrounding street already experienced high parking demand, had little spare capacity, and was not subject to a Controlled Parking Zone. For these reasons, he considered that off-street parking was necessary to avoid additional parking pressures on the street.
- Clarification was sought by members on whether it was appropriate for concerns regarding alleged issues of fly tipping or antisocial behaviour associated with the current landlord to influence the Committee's judgement in the determination of the planning application. In response, the Chair explained in general terms, when an application was presented to the Committee, it was considered neutrally irrespective of the identity of the applicant. The Chair stated that members were required to assess the planning merits of the proposal itself rather than any allegations relating to individuals. The Chair advised that the relevant question was whether the proposed development would be likely to create or exacerbate such issues due to its design, rather than any matters associated with the applicant.

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- Details were sought on what other changes, aside from the reduction in height, had been made to render the proposal acceptable when compared with previous schemes. In response, Sarah Dilley directed members to paragraph 38 of the committee report, which contained a table outlining the principal changes. It was explained that the planning history included an appeal scheme from 2023, as well as an earlier outline planning permission with reserved matters that had lapsed before implementation. It was stated that the table provided a useful comparison between the outline consent and the current proposal. It was noted that the height had been reduced by approximately 55cm. It was confirmed that the dwelling remained broadly within the same position as the outline scheme in terms of site layout, parking arrangements and roof form. It was also noted that, unlike the outline scheme, the current proposal included a basement. It was explained that the footprint of the dwelling was marginally larger, and that excluding the lightwells, the subterranean element increased by less than 4sqm, while the overall height had been reduced.
- In response to further queries relating to the drawing pack, officers presented slides illustrating what had been approved under the outline consent, the proposed site plan, and the layout of Bedroom 3, including the southwest facing dormer and the window to the first-floor ensuite.

DECISION

Having consider the application, the Committee **RESOLVED** to grant planning permission subject to:

- (1) The conditions and informatives, as set out in the main committee report, removal of the conditions as set out within the supplementary report and additional requirement for a Section 106 Agreement to secure the following Heads of Terms:
 - A requirement to submit the Statutory Biodiversity Metric to identify the pre-development biodiversity value of the site prior to commencement of development.
 - In the event that the house was not constructed as a self-build in line with the legal definition of Self Build and Custom Build Housing or subsequently sold or occupied for persons other than the applicant within 3 years after the house was completed to notify the Council in writing. The owner would then be required to secure off site BNG units either through registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits to secure the 10% net gain in biodiversity, with such evidence submitted to the Council.

(Voting on the above decision was unanimous).

7. Any Other Urgent Business

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There was no other urgent business.

The meeting closed at 8:48pm

COUNCILLOR KELCHER

Chair