

London Borough of Islington

Planning Sub Committee B - 18 June 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Sub Committee B held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 18 June 2024 at 7.30 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** Hayes (Chair), North and Hamdache

Councillor Ruth Hayes in the Chair

28 INTRODUCTIONS (Item A1)

Cllr Hayes welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members of the Committee and officers introduced themselves and the Chair outlined the procedures for the meeting.

29 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item A2)

Apologies were received from Cllrs Clarke, Spall and Klute

30 DECLARATIONS OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (Item A3)

Cllr North was a substitute member

31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item A4)

No declarations were made.

32 ORDER OF BUSINESS (Item A5)

The order of business changed so that Item B2 33-37 Corsica Street, London, N5 1JT, was taken first.

33 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item A6)

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting be signed by the Chair as a correct record

34 33-37 CORSICA STREET, LONDON, N5 1JT (Item B2)

Demolition of the existing dwellinghouse and erection of a replacement two-storey (plus basement) dwellinghouse with rooftop PV panels and Air Source Heat Pumps and associated boundary treatment and landscaping works

(Planning Application Number: P2023/3394/FUL)

The planning officer introduced the report to the committee. The project involved demolishing the existing house and building a replacement. Four new objections were received from residents who had previously objected. The site had a large central house, with significant features including a tree in the front garden. The proposed new house had a similar depth to the existing one but a different form. It met space standards and provided good quality accommodation. Landscaping plans included removing five trees (one already dead) and retaining one, with 12 new trees to be planted, resulting in 13 trees on site. The

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highway layout proposed setting the building back, widening the pavement, and removing one vehicle crossover. The project achieved high sustainability standards with features like a green roof, air source heat pumps, and solar panels. Planning permission was recommended with conditions, including a £9,000 contribution for planting three new trees locally and a £1,500 fee for Net Zero carbon offsetting.

In response to concerns, the planning officer confirmed the development would not achieve Net Zero carbon. Instead, it would offset remaining emissions through a financial contribution. Although it wouldn't meet Net Zero carbon, the project committed to achieving a 4-star rating under the BREEAM Home Quality Mark and demonstrated an 83% reduction in carbon emissions over the notional dwelling as per Part L of the Building Regulations, indicating high sustainability standards overall.

They further explained, the property had always been used as a single dwelling and no subdivision evidence existed. Therefore, the redevelopment would not result in a net loss of housing stock. Regarding the tree in the front garden, it is maintained through heavy pruning, which impacts its long-term health, but no specific forecast on potential structural damage was provided.

An objector expressed significant concerns regarding the proposed property height, the sense of enclosure, and the loss of light. They disputed statements in the planning report, arguing that the current roof is not enclosing, and the new building would increase enclosure and reduce light by 37%, exceeding the acceptable 20% loss. They highlighted inaccuracies in the planning report and presented photographs to support their objections.

Another objector emphasised how the new building's height and mass would block light, particularly to a unique diagonal bay window, reducing light by a third. They also raised concerns about subsidence, noting the area's history and existing cracks in their property and neighbouring ones. They sought assurances about safeguarding during basement excavation.

The final objector pointed out missed opportunities to improve the street frontage. They suggested that setting the building back would align it with neighbouring houses, alleviate the narrow pavement issue, and improve the street, particularly for disabled residents. They argued for a design that prioritises human aspects over just fitting into the existing layout, criticising the current proposal for maintaining a cramped feel.

The applicant bought the property in May 2021 and began work in August of that year. Significant effort was put into the project, following due process with two pre-planning applications and consultations with neighbours, leading to multiple modifications to address their concerns.

The Indian Bean tree, which had caused major damage to the existing building, was recommended for removal by three arboriculturists. The new design prioritised garden space, reducing the house size and increasing the number of trees from seven to thirteen. Addressing the neighbours' concerns, the building was moved 4 metres back from the party wall to minimise impact. The daylight assessment indicated no significant loss of daylight for neighbouring properties, and the new house's height was not expected to increase the sense of enclosure.

Regarding the pavement, the property aligned with others on the street, many of which projected further into the road. The applicant agreed to curve the façade, giving part of the property to the public footway to widen it.

In terms of sustainability, the project incorporated air source heat pumps, solar panels, water collection, and triple glazing, achieving high standards despite budget constraints. A

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structural method statement and construction management plan were submitted to address excavation concerns. The design received support from several experts, who emphasised its alignment with the historic surroundings while being contemporary. The use of soft brick with a water slurry finish was chosen to blend with the area. Additionally, a £9,000 donation was agreed upon for planting three trees elsewhere.

In response to questions from the committee the applicant addressed concerns about the environmental impact of demolishing a 40-year-old building and the potential for retrofitting. They highlighted their track record of reusing existing structures, having won the Royal Institute of British Architects House of the Year 2022 and the Manser Medal in 2023 for such projects. Despite their commitment to sustainable construction practices, they determined that the current building on the site was of poor construction quality and not suitable for reuse. The developer emphasised that the applicant has no interest in building new structures unnecessarily and would have preferred to retrofit if it had been feasible.

Regarding the proposed features of the new development, the applicant confirmed that the outdoor swimming pool would be heated by an air source heat pump, which also provided energy for the building's other systems. They acknowledged the efforts made to design a green and sustainable building, including super-insulation and solar panels, and reiterated the applicant's commitment to minimising the environmental impact of the project.

During the discussion, the legal officer clarified the limitations of imposing conditions related to the dedication of private property to the public realm, stating that such a requirement might be considered overly onerous and unreasonable within the context of the development, thus failing to meet policy tests for condition imposition.

Concerns were raised about the impact on a neighbouring garden that does not meet BRE (Building Research Establishment) guidelines. The planning officer acknowledged that there would be a noticeable reduction in sunlight to that garden, which is the one aspect of non-compliance in the proposal. Despite this, the overall benefits of the development, including tree planting, public highway improvements, and setbacks from neighbouring boundaries, were deemed to outweigh this negative impact. The BRE test measures how much sunlight hits the ground, particularly in winter, indicating that there would be more shadow in the garden during that time. Nonetheless, the proposal was found to be compliant with BRE guidelines for all internal windows and other neighbouring gardens.

The planning committee debated the proposal to demolish an existing building and construct a new dwelling with a basement swimming pool. One councillor opposed the application, citing the negative impact on neighbours, the failure to meet net-zero carbon goals, and minimal community benefits. They argued that demolishing a relatively new building for a high-end development did not justify the drawbacks for local residents.

Concerns were raised about net-zero carbon requirements and the feasibility of higher-density housing. The planning officer clarified that while the development did not fully meet net-zero carbon targets, it complied with existing policy guidelines and did not result in a net loss of dwellings. The officer confirmed that, despite the concerns, the proposal adhered to planning regulations. After considering all points the committee majority supported the recommendation to approve the application.

RESOLVED:

That following consideration of the case officer's report (the assessment and recommendations therein), the presentation to Committee, submitted representations at this meeting, planning permission be granted subject to the conditions and informatives set out in Appendix 1 of the officer report and subject to the prior completion of a Deed of Planning Obligation made under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 securing the head of terms as set out in Appendix 1 of the officer report.

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48 GREAT SUTTON STREET, LONDON, EC1V 0DE (Item B1)

Change of use of existing residential unit (Class C3) and restoration of a commercial unit on the lower ground and ground floors (Class E) with associated remodelling of internal space and replacement of glazing on the front façade.

(Planning Application Number: P2024/0153/FUL)

The planning officer introduced the application. The proposal for 48 Great Sutton Street involves converting the existing lower ground and ground floor flat into office space. The site is located on the northern side of the street. Currently, although there is no formal planning permission or lawful development certificate for its use as a flat, council tax records indicate that it has been used as a two-bedroom flat since at least 2005. The existing flat is characterised by poor daylight quality, particularly in the basement, leading to a substandard residential accommodation.

The application seeks to change the use to office space over both floors, including internal cycle parking. The building's front elevation would see a minor alteration to the glazing arrangement. Given that the site is within the Bunhill and Clerkenwell Area Action Plan area, which supports commercial, and office uses on ground floors, the proposal aligns with local policies. The recommendation is to approve the application, subject to the conditions outlined in the report.

The Planning Officer updated the committee on discussions about off-site cycle parking provision. The existing building lacks outside space and had a step into the premises, limiting the feasibility of installing Sheffield stands directly in front. However, there was potential to replace a bollard on the opposite side of the pavement with a Sheffield stand, providing space for two cycles. Despite this, the current proposal included indoor cycle storage, with cupboards for fold-up bikes.

The applicant addressed the committee. They explained that although the premises had been used as a residential flat, this was done without planning permission and did not benefit from lawful development status. The flat was substandard due to poor lighting, lack of outlook, and no outdoor space. The application seeks to revert the building to its original commercial use, aligning with the character of Great Sutton Street, which featured commercial uses at ground floor level. This change was expected to activate the street, contribute to the conservation area's character, and provide office space for SMEs and startups. The new shopfront would enhance the street appearance and thermal performance while using recycled materials.

The applicant indicated a willingness to make a financial contribution to replace the bollard with a Sheffield stand to address the limitations of the on-site cycle parking provision. Although there were initial considerations about adapting motorcycle bays for cycle parking, this was deemed unfeasible. The applicant agreed to support the installation of a Sheffield stand in a suitable location to mitigate the lack of on-site provision.

A motion was proposed by Cllr North to add a planning obligation for this financial contribution, secured through a unilateral undertaking. This motion was seconded by Cllr Hayes with precise wording to be delegated to officers.

The committee acknowledged that the location is more suitable for business use and supports the proposal to return the premises to commercial use. The application, with the added condition, was approved unanimously.

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The meeting ended at 8.30 pm

CHAIR