

PLANNING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE
Friday, 26 January 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the Planning Applications Sub-Committee held at Livery
Hall - Guildhall on Friday, 26 January 2024 at 10.30 am

Present

Members:

Deputy Shravan Joshi (Chairman)
Graham Packham (Deputy Chairman)
Brendan Barns
Ian Bishop-Laggett
Mary Durcan
John Edwards
Deputy Marianne Fredericks
Jaspreet Hodgson
Deputy Charles Edward Lord
Deputy Brian Mooney
Deputy Alastair Moss
Alderman Susan Pearson
Ian Seaton
Hugh Selka
Jacqui Webster

Officers:

Zoe Lewis	-	Town Clerk's Department
Baljit Bhandal	-	Comptroller and City Solicitor's Department
Mark Butler	-	Environment Department
James Hammond	-	Environment Department
David Horkan	-	Environment Department
Kerstin Kane	-	Environment Department
Tom Nancollas	-	Environment Department
Taluana Patricio	-	Environment Department
Joseph Penn	-	Environment Department
Gwyn Richards	-	Environment Department
Anna Tastsoglou	-	Environment Department
Alex Thwaites	-	Environment Department
Robin Whitehouse	-	Environment Department
Morgan Wild	-	Environment Department
Peter Wilson	-	Environment Department

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Deputy Randall Anderson, Anthony Fitzpatrick, John Fletcher, Dawn Frampton, Alderman Hughes-Penney, Judith Pleasance, Deputy Henry Pollard, Shailendra Umradia and William Upton.

Deputy John Fletcher requested that it be noted that he was not in attendance on the advice of the City Solicitors as he lived close to the proposed scheme.

2. **MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

Ian Seaton declared that in relation to Agenda Item 4, a member of his immediate family was an employee of Patrizia.

3. **MINUTES**

The Sub-Committee considered the public minutes of the last meeting held on 8 December 2023 and approved them as a correct record.

4. **30-33 MINORIES AND WRITERS HOUSE, 13 HAYDON STREET, LONDON, EC3N 1PE**

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Planning and Development Director concerning the demolition of existing building at 30-33 Minories and partial demolition of The Writers House and erection of a building comprising lower ground, one basement level and ground floor (with mezzanine) and 12 storeys above (69.005m AOD) for office use (Class E) and town centre uses (Classes E and Sui Generis). Refurbishment of Writers House, 13 Haydon Street for office use (Class E) and cultural/community uses (Classes F1, F2 and Sui Generis). Provision of new public realm, dedicated servicing bay, ancillary cycle parking and plant and other associated highway works.

The Town Clerk referred to those papers set out within the main agenda pack as well as the Officer presentation slides and an addendum that had been separately circulated and published.

Officers presented the application, highlighting that the application site was located on the eastern edge of the City of London, near the boundary with the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. It was located to the east of Minories, to the north of Haydon Street, to the south of St. Clare's and to the west of the Guinness Estate. An Officer stated that the site was not located within a conservation area, but was located within the backdrop views of the Tower of London. The site comprised St. Clare's House, which was a t-shaped 1950s building with a 5-storey block to the front and a 13-storey element to the rear.

Members were shown the view of the building from IbeX House with taller buildings to the north and also the view from St. Clare Street.

The Sub-Committee were informed that the development included Writers House, which was a Victorian former warehouse building which had been identified as a non-designated heritage asset due to its architectural, historic and archaeological interest.

Members were shown a view from the eastern elevation of the building from within the open space of the Guinness Estate. They were also shown a view from the east, showing the application site within the eclectic mix of the buildings along Minories.

The Officer stated that the proposed development comprised the demolition of the existing building at 30 to 33 Minories and the erection of a building comprising lower ground, one basement level and ground floor with 12 storeys above for office use to the upper floors and town centre uses including retail, cafe, restaurant, bar and fitness centre at ground and lower ground floor levels. The Officer stated that the proposal would also involve the refurbishment of Writers House for office use to the upper floors and cultural and community uses at ground and lower ground levels.

Members were shown an axonometric plan, showing the different uses proposed. They were informed that the entrance to the offices would be on Minories with retail and leisure uses on either side. The Officer outlined the space that would provide flexible town centre and office uses and also the entrances to the cycle parking for the Minories Building. Cycle access for the Minories building would be from Hayden Street and for Writers House it would be from St. Clare Street. There would be a total of 305 long stay and 41 short stay spaces. Policy compliance cycle spaces would be provided along with showers and locker facilities.

Two off-site servicing bays were proposed south of St. Clare Street. It was expected that up to 30 consolidated vehicle trips a day would be generated by the development, and this was considered acceptable.

Members were informed that following public engagements the proposal for Writers House was to utilise the ground floor for a combination of quiet working and studying space and space for social interaction activities whilst the lower ground would be used for knowledge sharing and skills development. There would be community and cultural uses at ground and lower ground levels. Members were also informed that archaeology would play an important role in Writers House as a cultural destination, through the potential exposure and display of the archaeological remains surviving on the west wall of Writers House and also the display of a curated exhibition of artifacts recovered from the site. This would be in association with the Museum of London archaeology. Writers House would include affordable workspace to the upper floors, which would fulfil the City's vision for providing inclusive workspace.

The Officer stated that the proposal would introduce a new public open space, Sheppy Place, to the north of Writers House. This would provide seating, greening, landscaping, new surface materials and spill-out space from the ground floor. It would be accessed from both Writers House and 30 Minories. The proposed development would involve some alterations in the building alignment, resulting in a gain of public highway on the corner of Minories and Hayden Street of just under 31 square metres. There would be a minor loss on St. Clare Street.

Members were shown floor plans of the lower ground and basement of the proposed development and typical floor plan of Levels 1-6, Level 7, 8,9, 10 and 11. The Officer stated that the building stepped back from Minories and Hayden Street. Members were shown the roof plan and Level 12 floor plan as well as a

cross section of the building, and the east elevation of the building, which would be the view from the Guinness Estate. They were also shown the north elevation from St. Clare Street, the elevation from Minories, stepping away and down towards Ibex House to the right-hand side and the elevation from Haydon Street with the building stepping backwards from Minories.

The Sub-Committee were shown an image of the view of the proposed building from Minories. The Officer stated that in terms of massing, height and colouration, the development would appear as a complete city block, broken down to match the existing urban grain of Minories. The development would also be stepped down towards Ibex house with a taller element retained to the north, adjacent to the hotel Motel One.

Members were shown an image of a closer view of the building. The Officer highlighted the high-quality design and the level of landscaping proposed through terraces and balconies. They were also shown a view of the building from a pedestrian point of view, with the southwestern corner chamfered to reveal the characteristic corner of the curved corners of Ibex House.

The Officer stated that whilst the highest option in terms of whole life carbon emissions, the redevelopment options would have the opportunity for greater floor to ceiling heights, would provide greater operational efficiency, higher quality of grade A office space, substantial uplift and greening, biodiversity and greater climate resilience. The development would also receive excellent BRE AAM assessment and it would reach the GLA embodied carbon emissions admission targets. In terms of urban greening, the development would achieve an urban greening factor score of 0.34, using the City of London factors which was 8.5 times more than the existing conditions.

Members were informed that extensive assessment was carried out in terms of daylight and sunlight and this had been updated in the addendum. Members were shown images outlining the adverse impacts to Fenchurch House and 27 Minories. The Officer stated that it should be noted that the effects would be to rooms that were bedrooms and a kitchen which according to the BRE standards, required less light. The Officer further stated that the overall daylight and sunlight available to the flats would be sufficient and acceptable living standards would be able to be achieved.

Members were shown the Guinness Estate open space, which would still be able to receive at least two hours of sunlight, which accorded with the overshadowing requirements. Members were informed that the development would provide appropriate wind and thermal comfort conditions for the intended users.

The Officer showed Members local townscape views illustrating that the development would sit quite comfortably with the massing and the eclectic mix of architectural style of the buildings in the vicinity and in particular, Ibex House. They were shown a view from the north towards the south with the building to the left. They were also shown a view towards the north with Ibex House to the right and a view from Mansell Street. They were shown existing, proposed and

cumulative scenario images of the development within the townscape views from Queen's Walk and Tower Bridge, North Bastion.

The Officer stated that the proposal would occupy approximately the same amount of sky space as the existing St. Clare's House and Haydon buildings. Officers considered that the proposal would not have an effect on the clear sky backdrop of Writers House, and it would have a neutral impact to the world heritage asset.

In conclusion, the Officer stated that the proposal would create a high-quality office-led commercial development with new community use, affordable workspace and an archaeological cultural destination within Writers House. The development would provide a significant uplift in flexible Grade A office floorspace (over 12,000 square metres) and a significant increase in the number of full-time jobs (over 1900). The proposal would support the regeneration of the Aldgate area, which had recent schemes addressing primarily residential and hotel needs. The proposal would provide a high-quality development which would significantly enhance the wider street block. It would provide extensive urban greening, active space with retail, leisure and community cultural uses, which would result in a positive contribution to the vibrancy of the area offering social and economic benefits and a new destination for the City. Officers considered that the development would have an acceptable impact on the living conditions of the nearby occupiers. To preserve residential amenity, robust conditions had been imposed in relation to demolition and construction. The Officer stated that the development would be acceptable in principle in terms of its transport, sustainability, townscape, design and environmental impacts, and it would provide significant public benefits. Officers recommended the approval of the application subject to the conditions in the agenda and as amended in the addendum, and also subject to the execution of planning obligations.

The Chairman invited the registered objector to address the meeting but he was not in attendance.

The Chairman invited the applicant to speak.

Mr Richard Scutt, Development Director at Patrizia stated that he was presenting the plans for the future of 30-33 Minories and Writers House on behalf of Morgan Capital and the wider development team. He informed Members that the existing site was significantly under-optimised. It comprised a vacant car park on Hayden Street, an outdated tower and a podium structure provided low-quality office accommodation. He stated that the applicants were committed to opening up the site, delivering a new destination which would act as a genuine gateway between the City and its communities to the east, whilst also respecting the immediate context. He stated that an extensive carbon optioneering exercise had been undertaken and this had been endorsed by independent third-party review. The review had concluded that whilst there were additional carbon costs at the outset for the redevelopment option, there were significant improvements to the operational energy performance through the replacement of the buildings. Mr Scutt stated that the assessment

concluded therefore, that there was little value, in carbon terms, of retaining the existing buildings when compared to the redevelopment option across the building's lifespan. Furthermore, significant long-lasting benefits could be provided by replacing the existing buildings with new ones with leading sustainability credentials and which were targeting leading industry accreditations.

Mr Scutt stated that a key element of the benefits package would see the refurbishment and opening up of the historic Writers House, a non-designated heritage asset on Haydon Street. Following a series of public and stakeholder engagements, sessions and discussions with local representatives, there had been positive dialogue with three delivery partners to create the future of Writers House - Poplar HARCA, Arbeit Studios and Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA). Poplar HARCA was an award-winning housing and regeneration community association founded in East London, which was committed to realising the community potential through creating thriving places. Mr Scutt explained that they were voted into existence by residents 25 years ago and had grown to now be leading on a £2.5 billion place shaping programme, which included new education, healthcare, business and community spaces. They had proposed to create a long-term community offer at Writers House, offering a new creative programme for younger people and initiatives to improve health and wellbeing events and networking and this was set out in the Cultural Strategy.

Members were informed that the upper floors of Writers House would be designated as affordable workspace, targeting creative and cultural users, including start-ups and small businesses. The income from the affordable workspace would in turn provide core funding to the community use areas at lower levels. Arbeit Studios had been identified as an appropriate affordable workspace provider with extensive experience in creating attractive and interesting space for a wide-ranging mix of cultural and creative tenants.

Acknowledging the archaeological interest of the site, MOLA had been identified to provide a unique cultural offer through the provisions of an education engagement programme during the course of the construction programme. In addition, they would provide a permanent display and hold talks following completion.

Mr Scutt stated that in line with the commitment to reanimate the site, the applicant would deliver an active ground floor, a reinstated Haydon Street frontage, extensive new urban greening and landscaping. Sheppy Place would be transformed into a new hidden gem pocket park activated by the new development and Writers House would be transformed. To meet the City's demands for new high-quality, wellbeing-led office space, and by optimising the site, a significant uplift in premium workspace would be delivered to meet occupiers' latest demands. In addition, the floor plates would also be flexible and capable of subdivision to be future proofed and capable of accommodating a range and mix of tenants for generations to come.

Mr Scutt stated that the applicant had been open and transparent with local communities throughout the process as ideas and plans for the site had been developed over the past two years. The City's adopted engagement guidance had been exceeded with the applicant proactively undertaking door knocking on the neighbouring Mansell Street Estate as well as hosting community days and exhibitions in Writers House to open up the site and test ideas.

Ms Amy Holtz, a Director at PLP Architecture stated that she was speaking on behalf of the design team about the scheme to deliver over 25,000 square metres of new office space for the City of London.

She stated that the applicant aspired to support the ambitions of Destination City by providing meaningful and welcoming community benefits, creating high-quality and active public realm, improving biodiversity and wellbeing through meaningful urban greening, and by delivering a flexible and sustainable new workplace. A holistic approach had been taken to sustainability and reducing carbon emissions with circular economy principles embedded in design decisions.

Ms Holtz stated that the team had engaged in a rigorous assessment of the opportunities to best maximise the sustainable development potential of the site. This included design optioneering and whole life carbon analysis. Ms Holtz added that Writers House was identified early on as an asset warranting retention, celebration and opening up to neighbouring communities, whereas the qualitative benefits and future flexibility of the full redevelopment of the rest of the site far outweighed the refurbishment alternatives.

Members were informed that the design team had worked closely with Officers to craft an architecture that minimised impacts to daylight, sunlight and overshadowing of nearby properties, was sensitive to its residential neighbours as well as the Grade 2 listed Ibex House, was responsive to the eclectic and varied context and was sculpted in response to local and distant townscape views.

Members were informed that the design team had worked closely with Kim Wilkie and Gillespie's to bring nature back to this area of the City and significantly improve the quality of the urban environment through accessible urban greening in the form of pocket green spaces that wrapped the site and culminated in the new Sheppy Place pocket park. A widened foot path along Minories would be created by pushing the new ground floor one metre on the north and up to three metres on the south, as compared to the existing building.

Ms Holtz stated that there would be an allocation of nearly 14% of the GIA to the amenities that provided active yet sensitive uses on all street frontages, a reduction in vehicular traffic through the use of a consolidation centre and a discretely located and enclosed servicing bay with reduced hours of operation on the corner of St. Clare Street. The landscape typologies would also help carve the architectural forms into a terrace massing with green spaces on every floor that could easily be enjoyed by both the tenants of the building and passers-by. Ms Holtz stated that the green balconies and terraces were framed

by carefully articulated high-quality architecture with rounded corners and glazing set into deep self-shading brick reveals. She stated that the development would deliver a flexible and sustainable workplace environment with all electric systems. There would be zero emissions from fossil fuels, using heat recovery and air source heat pumps. There would be flexible and efficient floor plates with floor-by-floor ventilation that accessed fresh air drawn through the facades. There would be high floor to ceiling heights with exposed thermal mass and sustainable and maintainable green terraces on each floor.

The Chairman asked Members if they had any questions of the applicant.

A Member asked for clarification on who could use the balconies and terraces. The applicant stated that the terraces were just for the tenants, but the greening increased the amount of biodiversity in the area and connecting the biodiversity throughout the City of London so that there would be greenery all the way down to the street level in the pocket parks which could be enjoyed by passers-by.

A Member asked why a lift to the workspace area in Writers House had not been included in the planning application drawings. The applicant stated that the original proposals for Writers House were for a change of use to the lower floors only and access was developed to the lower ground and ground floor. Now there would not be a change of use, but discussions had taken place with Officers and the applicants were committed to bringing access to all the floors. They would develop the detail of that to try to meet the access requirements up to the top of the building in the conditions discharge.

A Member asked for clarification on the blue badge parking space which would need to be on site. The applicant stated that there was a central area in the service yard which would be designated for blue badge parking.

A Member asked about the capacity and speed of the cycle lift. The applicant stated it was a single cycle lift which would be fully compliant with the London Cycling Design Standards in terms of its size and was fully accessible. It could either accommodate a single adaptable bike, or a minimum of two standard bikes flat at any given time. She added that the distance between the ground floor and the lower ground floor was very shallow, so the travel time for the cycles would be short and the single lift would have sufficient capacity to accommodate peak arrivals and departures. There were also stairs as an alternative for able-bodied cyclists to move their cycles the shallow distance very easily.

A Member asked about servicing and raised concern about the turning circle drawings. She stated that it appeared that some trucks reversing into one of the spaces would have to go over the pavement and she asked why a turntable had not been included. The applicant stated that in relation to the vehicle movements on St. Clare Street the space that would be provided for the vehicles to turn was a shared flat surface and there was not a defined foot way along that frontage as it currently stood. There was a large crossover area that currently accommodated for the turning movements of third parties along St. Clare Street as well as the turning movements into and out of the at the parking

spaces that were provided along the St. Clare Street frontage. In relation to the use of a turntable, the applicant stated they had sought throughout the design development of the scheme to actively remove on-street servicing activity which currently took place on Haydon Street so that it would be moved to the area within the site to the north. She stated that St. Clare Street was traditionally used as a servicing route for the hotel to the north and also the St. Clare building. The service yard had been designed to accommodate a maximum of an 8 metre rigid vehicle. The area that has been allocated was large enough to accommodate the turning movements of a vehicle and unloading and loading activity within the space.

The applicant stated that that space did not allow for the provision of a turntable. If one was included, there would only be space for one vehicle, whereas at the moment there were two loading bays. A turntable would remove the flexibility and the efficiency of the loading bays. Members were informed that within the Delivery Servicing Plan there would be a condition for a suitably trained member of staff to either act as a banksman or a traffic marshal to monitor the movement in and out of that service yard and the movements themselves would be restricted to outside peak activity period.

A Member raised concern that the pocket park was not large enough to accommodate all those occupants of the building who would want to use it so there would be increased pressure on other local open space. She suggested some funding could be put towards improving existing open space to cater for higher footfall. The applicant stated that there was no existing green space on the site and the pocket park would be fully accessible through St Clare's House and Writers House.

In response to a Member's suggestion that further consideration should be given to reducing the times the terraces and balconies could be used, the applicant stated that they were willing to reduce timings.

A Member requested that the leisure and fitness centre could be made accessible to local residents at affordable prices. The applicant stated that an operator had not yet been appointed but this could be explored with the operator when they were appointed.

A Member stated that there was a lack of community space for arts and crafts in the vicinity and that community space should be kept for community benefit so there were long-term community benefits. The applicant stated that consultation would take place of the surrounding area to understand the needs and requirements of local residents and ascertain what they would want to see within this building.

The Chairman suggested that the Sub-Committee now move to any questions that they might have of Officers at this stage.

The Chairman asked for clarification on Condition 36 of the addendum. The Officer stated that the access time had been reduced and would end at 9pm rather than 11pm.

A Member stated that there had been numerous representations from residents concerned about disruption during demolition and construction.

He asked what steps would be taken to minimise this and control weekend working. An Officer stated that Conditions 25 and 26 would offer protection in terms of noise, dust and other environmental effects. There would also be acoustic insulation at the periphery of the site, which would further reduce noise levels and dust. In addition, included into the section 106, was the provision of an amenity space/respice area for the nearby occupiers to access offsite during demolition and construction. The Member asked if a working party could be set up between residents and the developers, in contact with environmental health officers. Officers stated that this could be included within the Section 106.

A Member asked for clarification on the whole life carbon optioneering and the reasons Officers recommended Option 2. An Officer stated that the major refurbishment and redevelopment options were recommendable in terms of their sustainability benefits but the applicant had elected to pursue the redevelopment option, which would provide the greater quantum of the best in class office space, including improved floor to ceiling heights, improved daylighting, greater efficiency and flexibility of the floor space and it allowed for improved greening and biodiversity.

A Member asked for clarification on the difference in floor to ceiling heights between the existing and proposed building. An Officer stated that the existing floor to the underside of the slab was 3035mm and the redevelopment offered slab heights between 3050mm and 3550mm. There was a difference of 500mm for the majority of the floors.

A Member requested that the hours in Condition 22 should be reduced to reduced disturbance to nearby residents. An Officer stated that vehicle servicing was already restricted and this condition related to people walking in and out of the building e.g. to use the gym rather than vehicle servicing. The Officer stated that there were conditions on the closing of doors and windows within the retail units there. Officers did not consider that people walking into and out of the building would impact unduly on residents given that this would be a limited number of people.

A Member raised concern that people could buy food and drink and the reference to the word mostly. An Officer stated this word was included in legislation. This was a separate use class from takeaway.

Seeing no further questions, the Chairman asked that Members now move to debate the application.

A Member commented on the importance of having enforceable conditions.

A Member commended the architect on the appearance of the proposed development. Another Member also commended the appearance.

A Member stated that in relation to urban greening, plants should be replaced if they died.

A Member stated that the developer and construction team should recognise the impact on residents and work with the local community and liaise on noisy hours.

Having fully debated the application, the Committee proceeded to vote on the recommendations before them.

Votes were cast as follows: IN FAVOUR – 14 votes
OPPOSED – None
There was 1 abstention.

The recommendations were therefore carried.

RESOLVED – That Members of the Sub-Committee

1. Authorise the Planning and Development Director, subject to the execution of a planning obligation or obligations in respect of the matters set out under the heading 'Planning Obligations', to issue a decision notice granting planning permission for the above proposal in accordance with the details set out in the schedule in the officer report as amended by the addendum; and
2. Instruct Officers to negotiate and execute obligations in respect of those matters set out in "Planning Obligations" under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and any necessary agreements under Sections 278 and 38 of the Highway Act 1980 in respect of those matters set out in the report.

5. *** VALID PLANNING APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY DEPARTMENT OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

The Committee received a report of the Chief Planning Officer and Development Director detailing development applications received by the Department of the Built Environment since the report to the last meeting.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

6. *** DELEGATED DECISIONS OF THE CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Chief Planning Officer and Development Director detailing development and advertisement applications determined by the Chief Planning Officer and Development Director or those so authorised under their delegated powers since the report to the last meeting.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. **QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**

There were no questions.

8. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**
There were no additional, urgent items of business for consideration.

The meeting ended at 11.25 am

Chairman

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