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PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE

9 FEBRUARY 2023

(7.15 pm - 8.35 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Aidan Mundy (in the Chair),
Councillor Simon McGrath, Councillor Sheri-Ann Bhim,
Councillor Michael Butcher, Councillor Edward Foley,
Councillor Susie Hicks, Councillor Dan Johnston,
Councillor Gill Manly, Councillor Martin Whelton and
Councillor Thomas Barlow

ALSO

PRESENT: Jonathan Berry (Head of Development Management and Building
Control), Stuart Adams (Area Manager - Development Management –
South), Jayde Watts (Democratic Services Officer)

IN

ATTENDANCE

REMOTELY: Raymond Yeung (Principal Planning Officer),
Amy Dumitrescu (Democracy Services Manager)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

There were no apologies for absence.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2023 are agreed as an accurate record.

4 TOWN PLANNING APPLICATIONS (Agenda Item 4)

The Committee noted the amendments and modifications to the officer's report. The Chair advised that the agenda would be taken in the published agenda order.

Please note that members of the public, including the applicant or anyone speaking on their behalf, are expressing their own opinions and the Council does not take any responsibility for the accuracy of statements made by them.

5 19 ARRAS AVENUE, MORDEN SM4 6DG (Agenda Item 5)

The Planning Officer presented the report.

The Committee received presentations from two objectors who stated:

- If the Transport Officer did not check and verify the parking survey data prepared by Alpha Parking Limited then they would request that the application be postponed until this was authenticated by the Head of Planning.
- The case officers have recommended approval of the application due to external targets for new housing but there was a greater demand for large family homes.
- The overdevelopment would have a severe detrimental effect on amenities which has led to 41 households that have objected to the proposal.
- Six flats would result in overlooking from two living rooms, additional parking required for 14 cars, additional heat pumps, additional noise and disturbance as well as a 300% increase in traffic and pedestrian movement.
- Room sizes barely met the internal space standards and would offer poor quality accommodation.
- The case officer did not provide a nonbiased report nor provide credible evidence.
- The development would be out of character of and contrary to the National Planning Framework, paragraph 124.
- As the flats were small, communal areas would be more intensely inhabited.
- There was no planning condition to restrict the number of residents to 14.
- The various parking surveys were inaccurate and did not reflect the actual circumstances.
- With 14 people entertaining on the other side of the boundary fence, 1A Ravensbury Avenue would experience a greater impact to amenities as the boundary fence would be less than one meter away. There would also be six heat pumps within a meter of their child's bedroom.
- The proposed three general refuse wheely bins would be too large for Veolia to collect and inadequate for the number of residents. This could lead to pavement hazards and overflowing bins.
- The developer misrepresented himself and did not display the required planning notice on the site boundary as required in law.

The committee received presentations from Ward Councillor Caroline Charles and Councillor Peter McCabe who raised points including:

- Agreed with the original application for two family homes but not with the new application.
- There would be no social housing.

- There are only three of each type of refuse bin which was of concern.
- Concerned that the bicycle hanger would only fit three bikes.
- As some heat pumps would be sited behind the bicycle hanger, it would make access difficult to access for repairs.
- Although the wildflower meadow sounded great, the garden would not be big enough for it.
- The application stated that if there was too much water usage, measures such as water efficient low flow showers could happen which may result in not enough water for residents.
- Despite the planning officer's recommendation to approve, 41 residents have said this application would have a detrimental impact.
- Overlooking from the first floor, loss of amenities and out of character were of concern.
- If this application were approved, it could lead to additional applications of the same nature in the future.

The committee received presentations from the representative of the applicant, Simon Yuen and the agent Joe Purcell, who raised points including:

- The proposed size, mass, bulk and design was approved by the planning department a year prior with only one objection from neighbours. The only difference to this application would be refuse, cycling storage and the garden division.
- Merton Council have not met the housing criteria. Policy H2 of the London Plan has stated that boroughs should support well designed new homes on small sites such as this application and should recognise that local character would evolve over time.
- This application received 41 objections due to internal reconfiguration from the approved design last year.
- They have proposed two family size units and to further improve the housing mix, have proposed three one-bedroom starter homes as well as a single two-bedroom unit.
- Having taken feedback from planning officers, steps to improve the scheme had taken place such as greater biodiversity, the introduction of air source heat pumps, a green seed roof, bird nest boxes, bat roofs, hedgehog run and a meadow flower garden.
- Two independent parking surveys and one non-independent parking survey all concluded that the application was within the required threshold.
- The development would be well located and within reach of local schools, hospital, a police station as well as other civic services.
- Concerns raised by local residents have been taken on board and they are committed to create an appropriate and considerate development.
- This application would be a meaningful contribution towards the housing needs of the borough.
- Due to the social economic issues many will face in 2023, not everyone could afford a large family home.

In response to questions raised by the committee, Planning Officers advised:

- Houses were the predominant housing type in the area. If the application were to be approved this would continue to be the case.
- Policy CS14 of the local plan would prevent a high volume of house conversions. Due to the requirement to have at least one 3-bedroom flat, it would prevent houses that were not big enough to have such conversions.
- The size of the proposed units was checked again and do comply with space standards.
- To address concerns raised about the location of the air pumps, a planning condition would be recommended for the relocation of the air pumps following consultation with a noise consultant
- Increased housing targets would be a planning consideration.
- Officers acknowledged that houses would be overlooked but concluded that it would not be any more than they are at present. This application would not make this any worse and therefor would not justify as a reason for refusal.
- A condition to soundproof the area where the chimney breast was to be removed could be considered.
- In terms of the air source heat pumps, a conversation took place with the Councils Environmental Health Officer who confirmed that the pumps would run when turned on. As there would be six air source heat pumps, it could mean that they are turned on all the time but, in the evening and night time this may not be the case. Consultation with an acoustic consultant may result in a reduction of air pumps or for them to be removed as they do not form an integral part of the planning application.
- The approval of six units would be based on a number of key factors and not just on the results of the parking survey. Lambeth Council developed the Lambeth Council Parking Survey Methodology to provide guidance on how to approach parking surveys. Individual Councils would then consider this alongside other environmental factors. The parking surveys cannot be used as a qualifying factor to refuse a planning application.
- The Council did not accept the first two parking surveys but have accepted the third survey.
- If the application was approved, it would generate a small number of additional vehicles which would not be considered severe enough to refuse on highway grounds.
- If there were safety problems such as obstructive parking, the Council could consider low-cost mitigation measures.

The Chair invited the applicant to respond to clarify details raised within questions from the committee.

The representative of the applicant informed the committee of the following:

- Sounds enclosures could be placed around the air source heat pumps. The reason for using air source heat pumps was to improve sustainability. Air source heat pumps would be more biodiverse and quieter than the current gas

boilers that some use. This could be checked via sound tests as part of a proposed condition.

- Acoustic walls could be added to help with any additional noise due to the removal of the chimney breast.
- The wildflower meadow could be moved to the perimeter of the site.

The Chair moved to the vote on the Officers' recommendation with the following additional conditions:

- Acoustic installation and sound proofing
- Landscaping and boundary treatment
- Air source heat pumps may be relocated following the consultation with a noise consultant

RESOLVED: That the Committee GRANTED Planning Permission Subject to Conditions

6 PLANNING APPEAL DECISIONS (Agenda Item 6)

The report was noted.

7 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT - SUMMARY OF CURRENT CASES (Agenda Item 7)

The report was noted.

8 GLOSSARY OF TERMS (Agenda Item 8)

9 MODIFICATION DOCUMENT (Agenda Item 9)