
MEETING NOTES
HEREFORD ESTATE SATURDAY 25 MARCH 2017

ATTENDANCE.

Mayor John Biggs	London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH)
Councillor John Pierce	Weavers Ward, LBTH
Councillor Abdul Chunu Mukit MBE	Weavers Ward LBTH
John Coker	Acting Divisional Manager Regeneration, LBTH
Ann Sutcliffe	Divisional Director, Property & Major Programmes, LBTH
Yasmin Ali	Project Manager, LBTH
Imelda Burke	Housing Regeneration Officer LBTH
Mohammed Shelim Uddin	Housing Regeneration Officer LBTH
Laura Duncan	New Build Project Officer, Tower Hamlets Homes
Sean Kitchen	Bell Phillips Architects
Clarissa Yee	Bell Phillips Architects
Damian Tissier	Microfish Communications Ltd.

Fifteen residents attended the meeting.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the consultation event was to present the final design proposals for the in-fill development scheme for the Hereford Estate. It was the ninth of a series of consultation events on the scheme that have taken place since August 2015.

The consultation event had three parts: an initial briefing session with the Hereford Estate Residents' Association (TRA) between 10.00 a.m., followed by a public drop-in session between 10.30 a.m. and 1:00pm., and a concluding discussion with the Mayor of Tower Hamlets.

The display set out the design details of the final scheme the Council intended to submit to the local planning authority in April 2017.



2.0 REVISED PROPOSAL

The revised design was introduced to the Hereford TRA by John Coker (Acting Divisional Manager Regeneration) and presented by Sean Kitchen (Bell Phillips Architects).

The current proposals had first been introduced to residents at the last consultation event on 28.10.2016 in a response to residents' concerns over the L shape scheme, After extensive consultation, the final scheme has been modified significantly to address the concerns of residents. But design parameters still had to be respected. In particular ensuring that the number of homes are maximised to maintain viability, helping to decrease the housing waiting list whilst designing in line with planning requirements.

The headlines of the revised designs are as follows:

- The number of new properties has been reduced from 48 homes from January 2016 proposals down to 38 new homes in the April 2016 L- shape and maintaining 38 Homes in the current scheme.
- As presented at the previous meeting on 29th October, the two new blocks will be positioned at the east ends of Kinsham House and Westhope House. Each of the proposed blocks extends to the north and south, accommodating wheelchair flats on the ground and first floors.
- Each of the new blocks will be ten storeys high to accommodate the 38 homes.
- The 38 new homes will be a mix of one, two, three and four bedroom homes in two new blocks.
- Four of the homes on will be wheelchair accessible 2 of which will be on the ground floors
- The footprint of the two new blocks proposed for has been reduced to approximately half of the previous footprint.
- The distance between the two new buildings has been increased, lessening the impact of overshadowing, daylight/sunlight and views.
- No windows in the new blocks will overlook existing homes.
- The proposed roof terraces in the L-shape blocks have been removed.
- The impact upon existing green space on the estate has been mitigated by reducing the footprint used by the new blocks, and converting a series of spaces including the underused pram store and garages to open landscaped areas.
- The proposals enhance the exiting play spaces and public realm on the estate with the revised design also retaining more existing trees.

3.0 RESIDENT RESPONSES

The resident's present expressed concerns about the scheme. These were:

- The height of the two proposed blocks
 - There were mixed views on this, some felt that an increase in height was acceptable if the was the southern wing was eliminated. Others felt the existing height was acceptable and some stated a reduction in height would be preferred.

- The design of the new blocks in relation to extending beyond the southern building lines of Kinsham House and Westhope House.
 - The Architects explained that the perceived negative impact on the corner properties was assessed and the 45° angle views were maintained. Daylight Sunlight (DLSL) analysis concluded that proposal is compliant with BRE guidance.
- The impact of more homes on anti-social behaviour in the area.
 - The Project team and Architect explained the scheme had been consulted with the designing out crime officer and ~~an~~ advice was incorporated in to the current designs.
- Loss of daylight and sunlight in neighbouring properties, occupants of those homes were not visited by daylight consultants to assess impact.
 - The Project team explained that the homes were assessed by an independent DLSL consultant who uses approved industry standard methodologies and practices and is able to create models of the homes and run multiple scenarios to calculate the effect of DLSL and does not need to visit individual homes.
- The noise and nuisance caused by the planned building works.
- Loss of the pram sheds and garages.
 - The Project Team advised that there are 52 Pram stores of which currently 15 are recoded to be occupied.
 - The garages will be replaced by car parking bays.
 - LBTH are exploring alternative storage solutions.
- New homes were luxury flats.
 - The Project team advised these are all proposed to be 100% affordable rented homes with the mix intended to be 50% social rent and 50% Tower Hamlets living Rent.
 - The Architects showed that the flat sizes have been designed to meet the modern standards for any new homes across London according to the London Housing Design Guide.
 - The homes will be advertised via the choice based letting system and will be occupied by applicant from this waiting list, therefore primarily homes for local residents in Tower Hamlets.
- New tenants would be given the Right to Buy and potentially sublet and become absentee landlords.
 - The Project Team stated that the tenant of the new council homes will have secure tenancies and as such are able to exercise the Right to Buy subject to meeting the required criteria as is the current policy.

The general feeling that the local community would be adversely affected by and gain no benefit from the scheme.

.4.0 MEETING WITH MAYOR

The Mayor of Tower Hamlets, John Biggs came to the community consultation to hear the views of residents. He explained that there is a massive shortage of affordable housing in the borough, with around 20,000 people on the council's waiting list. A new housing strategy is being drawn up to

tackle the situation and it includes building over 1,000 new council homes on various sites across the borough.

Residents were concerned with the lack of investment on the blocks and that Leaseholders would be asked to pay for future planned works that had been discussed by THH recently. The Mayor recognised that there had been some historical issue with investment and assured the meeting that Tower Hamlets Homes was being absorbed back into the Council in 2020 and that would lead to marked improvements in housing management, maintenance and repairs services.

He had come along to the community consultation event at the request of Councillor John Pierce to listen to residents and he invited the Chair of the Hereford TRA to speak.

The Chair of the TRA responded, saying that residents were suffering from consultation fatigue. They feel that they haven't been listened to, residents have signed a petition opposing the scheme. He said that the estate has a strong community spirit, which he believes could be damaged by the development. Whilst everyone recognises the need for more council housing in Tower Hamlets but the local community was not deriving any benefit from the project. He was particularly disappointed with the current proposal because at the previous consultation meeting he thought considerable progress had been made with the Council to establish a good basis on which the scheme could move forwards.

Various other important points were made residents:

- The proposed new buildings are too high and too wide.
- They will hide the estate from Weavers Fields.
- It takes away green space.
- Will add to and exacerbate existing problems with anti-social behaviour and drug-taking.
- Leaseholders have been neglected for years in relation to repairs and maintenance (e.g. there has not been "a lick of paint in 20 years").
- Leaseholders expect bills on the new major works programme.
- The Council is building new homes without investing in its current stock.
- Concerns were expressed about the disruption, noise and nuisance that will be caused by the construction works.
- Residents in the new blocks will be given secure storage but this is being taken away from existing residents.
- Similarly disabled parking spaces will be provided in the new blocks but this has been taken away from existing residents.
- Worries about over-development.
- The impact upon neighbouring properties in terms of overshadowing, loss of sunlight/daylight and loss of views.

Mayor John Biggs asked if residents would consider any form of in-fill development on the estate. The consensus was that development would be acceptable if it was done sympathetically (i.e. the building kept within the existing building lines of Kinsham House and Westhope House, and the heights were comparable), the construction was project managed properly and that there were demonstrable community benefits for the existing community.

Councillor Pierce said that he would like to see a local offer for the community. He thought that the garages and sheds should be retained. And that a local lettings scheme should be developed for the Hereford Estate.

Mayor John Biggs thanked everyone for their contributions. He said that he took the issues raised very seriously and will be considering them in depth.

Damian Tissier
29/03/2017