

SUPPLEMENTARY 3

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Thursday, 25 March 2021

Agenda Item 3. Town Quay (Pages 1 - 3)

Contact Officer: John Dawe
Telephone: 020 8227 2135
E-mail: John.dawe@lbbd.gov.uk

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**Barking &
Dagenham**

ADDENDUM REPORT

Barking and Dagenham Council Planning Committee addendum report		Date: 25/03/2021
Application No:	20/02089/FUL	Ward: Gascoigne
Address:	Town Quay, Abbey Road, Barking, Barking and Dagenham	
Development:	<p><i>Redevelopment of the site via clearance of the existing structures and the erection of 3 No. new buildings ranging from 7 to 11 storeys in height to provide 147 residential dwellings comprising a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom flats and associated private amenity space with child play space, cycle and refuse stores and car park with new vehicular access point from Abbey Road; and 980 sqm (GIA) flexible commercial floorspace (Use Class E(a) – (g) inclusive) with commercial refuse stores, together with ancillary management facilities and plant rooms. Re-alignment of Town Quay/Highbridge Road and all associated highways alterations. Formation of public realm with hard and soft landscaping including pedestrian plaza and riverside walk with other associated work</i></p>	
<p>Summary: ADDENDUM 2</p> <p><u>Additional Neighbour Representations</u></p> <p>14 Additional neighbour representations have been received this week from interested neighbours, parties and the River Roding Trust. The main areas of concern/interest are summarised below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More large buildings will destroy the character of the area creating a distressing skyline and will be an eye sore • The River Roding is important to Barking, giving the borough its character and opportunities to experience urban countryside and open space. • The River Roding is important to wildlife • Appreciate the need for hopes but had hoped to see a better connection with the renewal of the waterway itself and attendant biodiversity • Want to see a better connection between the Quay and the Abbey site, which is absent from the proposal. There is a poor interaction with the river at the historic and important site of Town Quay with little thought for interaction. The applicant mentions the provision of moorings but with no commitment to this. • Lack of green space, trees and nature in the development. The Government announced that new developments should have an increase in biodiversity net gain. The site is already green which will be replaced by large areas of hard landscaping with a few planted saplings and shrubs which will result in a loss of green space and natural features. • The site blocks the open space, view and connection between two most important historic sites in Barking, the Abbey Grounds and St Margaret's Church and Town Quay. 		

- There is a need for open green space and open spaces and a need to feel connected to the river
- Agree that more bars and cafes along the River Roding is needed but this is too big and should be cut by two thirds
- Nature is important to mental and physical health
- The new square is a 'developer style square'
- Loss of east to west views, and will overshadow Abbey Green
- Object to the loss of access from Abbey Road to A406 for cars via Highbridge Road, which allows cars not to queue up at busy junctions.
- Welcome the diversion of the Town Quay road, though the resultant loss of trees/shrubs is regrettable as this will make for a much more useable, less car dominated space. The restriction of traffic past the Mill Pool is entirely appropriate
- Acknowledge the use of S106 money to mitigate the speed if not the volume of motor traffic
- Like the look of the buildings and recognise the pressure for housing in LBBB.
- Agree that the prominent heritage of the site is industrial, and that is an important reference for the design, but the opportunity to increase biodiversity at/near the site has not been enhanced.
- The treatment of the Town Quay and River Roding as a blue asset is light touch.
- This site has great scope for an interface between land and water that could be a genuine attraction in the town but this doesn't voice vision or aspirations with any vision or boldness.
- Concerns regarding incremental impact on heritage.
- The diverted busy Highbridge Road would become a dangerous T junction with Abbey Road.
- Weston Homes plan appears to be that firstly the Council enacts a 'swap' of land, the considerable area alongside the east side of quay, including the public road and the heritage green commemorating the Town's fishing history, for the small patch it owns adjacent to Highbridge Road.
- This would amount to privatising the quayside, cutting it off from the public, from the town and Abbey Green, for Weston Homes to profit by the selling 'waterside flats'.
- Town Quay belongs to the people of Barking and it is vital that they steer any development that happens at the site. It is disappointing to note that there has been little to no consultation with local people or local groups before this application was made. The River Roding Trust was not consulted.
- LBBB have recently canvassed on how to green up the borough, but this will be destroying yet another of the borough's 'lungs' – green spaces are already few and far between.
- Concerns with regards to cumulative impact of the developments in the area.
- The River Roding Trust exists to restore and bring back to life the River Roding for the benefit of local people and the river wildlife. Generally supportive of new development in the town which will provide much-needed new homes, but Town Quay is one of the most important and sensitive sites on the Roding. The River Roding were successful in a Barking Innovation Fund application to plant more trees in the area, being granted £20,000 and have established an Abbey Road resident group.
- The natural spaces are somewhat cut off by the road layout and the diversion is welcomed in this regard but the plans appear to replace significant greenery with large areas of hard landscaping and paving with some planting and shrubs. There is a clear loss of greenspace contrary to the NPPF.

Officer's response

Officers wish to highlight that design, scale and massing, heritage, biodiversity, landscaping, transport, principle of development and other material considerations are all assessed within the Committee Report.

In respect of public consultation, the applicant engaged in pre-application engagement prior to the submission of the application, contacting key stakeholders, interested parties and distributed letters in the local area. The applicant published a website inviting comments, no in person consultation events could be held due to COVID. Officers are informed that The River Roding Trust were engaged as part of these discussions. The LPA has undertaken statutory consultation through the planning application, which has included the distribution of over 5,000 neighbour letters, and a press advertisement.

With regards to biodiversity, it is acknowledged that there will be a loss of green space, trees and shrubbery as part of the planning application. However the application will also involve the redevelopment of an un-used area of hardstanding, the direct re-alignment of the Town Quay road, and opening up a more direct interface with the River through the removal of the road, and introduction of a more level public space. The proposal would include the provision of an area of greenspace at the podium level, the planting of native trees and species, rain garden (SuDs) and bat and bird boxes, details of which are set out in the Ecological Assessment submitted alongside the application and measures secured by planning condition. Officers engaged in discussions with the application with regards to securing a 'pontoon' however this would become unfeasible for the applicant and is likely to render the site undevelopable. Due to the pitched roofs, green roofs are not possible, and the flat roof section of Block A will include PV-panels to improve the energy credentials of the development. Sensitive lighting will be introduced having regard to the ecology of the River Roding. Officers consider the application seeks to minimise impacts on biodiversity and include net gains where possible, in accordance with the NPPF (para 170).

The 'land swap' highlighted above would enable land-assembly a joined-up approach to two key sites. The potential 'land swap' deal itself would not be a material planning consideration, however there would be no privatisation of public open space, as there is a Section 106 obligation proposed which would require 24-hour open access to the public realm and would therefore remain open to all.

Recommendation:

1. The Officer recommendation remains unchanged.

Contact Officer Olivia St-Amour	Title: Principal Development Management Officer	Contact Details: Tel: 07925357088 Email: Olivia.St-Amour@befirst.london
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