

Agenda item

150 Holborn, London EC1N 2NS

- [Meeting of Planning Committee, Thursday, 14th December, 2017 7.00 pm \(Item 6\(4\)\)](#)

**Application No:** 2016/2094/P      **Officer:** Elaine Quigley

**Proposal:** Demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment for mixed use development up to nine storeys in height comprising 12,862 sqm GIA office floorspace (Use Class B1), 1,480 sqm GIA retail floorspace (Use Class A1-A3), 13 residential units (Use Class C3), improvements to the public realm and all other necessary enabling works.

**RECOMMENDATION: Grant conditional planning permission subject to a Section 106 legal agreement and referral to the Mayor of London for his direction.**

**Minutes:**

Consideration was also given to the information contained in the supplementary agenda. The Planning Officer advised that the maximum payment in lieu for a deferred affordable housing contribution would be £1,743,233 – taking into account the £500,000 already offered – not £1,833,576 as set out in the supplementary agenda.

The Committee then considered a model of the site and was advised on the orientation of the building, the location of local roads and other neighbouring buildings as well as the pedestrian walkways. They were also advised on the materials, particularly the colours, as well as how the building would look at night.

Committee Members expressed concern about the lack of affordable housing on-site. The Head of Development Management outlined that the viability assessment had to be given consideration and that while a £500,000 payment in lieu had been offered, the applicant had satisfied the requirements of the policy. Andrew Jones of BPS, the independent viability assessor, then made the following points:

- The viability had to consider both the existing use value and the alternative use value achievable through the existing planning consent;
- Designing a second core with affordable housing would reduce the floor area and introduce significant additional costs, leaving a small amount of affordable housing that would not be likely to interest affordable housing providers;

- Experts had been engaged to look at the market and assess the potential value of letting the office space as well as the likely planning and engineering cost of the development; and
- In conclusion, the cost of the development and high existing value of the site equated to no affordable housing being viable on the site.

Responding to a question, the Transport Officer informed the Committee that the electric vehicle charging point would have to be onsite and therefore likely in one of the two disabled parking spaces.

Regarding lighting, officers advised that no lighting plan was secured by condition and how the development would look with the lights on was part of the design. Movement sensitive lighting would be used internally and no external lighting was planned. The columns in the building façade were quite deep and thick to give the building a solid appearance in response to the Prudential building, so that when viewed obliquely the glass would not be prominent. As such there was unlikely to be much glare when the lights were on from views up and down the street. If external lighting was sought in future then an application for planning permission would need to be made.

Committee Members raised concerns about the setting and appearance of the building in relationship to other buildings in the vicinity. The Conservation Officer noted that there were many listed buildings in the area and the site was surrounded by three conservations areas, albeit it was not in one. The immediate context of the site was one of being very urban and diverse in architectural design, noting the adjacent black and white timber frame and red brick buildings. On the Holborn side, there were a number of 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings, and towards the City of London the thoroughfare was characterised by more commercial and glass buildings. The design of the scheme fitted within this varied setting and defined the other neighbouring buildings more prominently.

Committee Members welcomed the design of the building and remarked that it appeared to be an improvement on the design approved in 2012. The organisation would be a welcome addition to the area and the support from the Business Improvement District was noted. There were however concerns on the destruction of a relatively young building and whether the design would be compromised by visibility of office furniture. The applicant advised that the ground floor would be almost entirely double-height shop frontage with signage for those largely obscuring the mezzanines behind. As such office furniture would not be visible to the passing public.

The proposed pedestrian access way was welcome and the Committee asked that the historic name of Fox Court be displayed appropriately in the courtyard. Officers advised that no specific signage to direct the public to the walkway was proposed, but the updated legible London signage would encourage usage.

On being put to the vote, it was, with 8 votes in favour, 1 against and no abstentions:

**RESOLVED –**

THAT planning permission be granted subject to conditions and a Section 106 legal agreement as set out in the report and supplementary agenda.

**ACTION BY:                    Director of Regeneration and Planning  
   Borough Solicitor**

**Supporting documents:**

- [150 Holborn, London EC1N 2NS, item 6\(4\) !\[\]\(79de0df6c6ddd2d4eb74f1cc5f48ec50\_img.jpg\) PDF 8 MB](#)