



MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday 8th January 2019

8.00pm

The Pavilion 129 Grand Drive

Present

John Elvidge (Chairman) John Townsend (Treasurer)
Clare Townsend (Minutes Secretary) Andrew Barwick (Distribution Manager)
Jerry Cuthbert (Pavilion Management) David Freeman (Co-opted Member)
Michael Marks (Co-opted Member)

In Attendance: Councillor Eloise Bailey and Councillor Hina Bokhari

Also in attendance by invitation for Part One of the meeting:

Simon Bacon (T P Bennett, Architect)
Jonathan Crabb (Mott McDonald, Transport)
Ben Knock (Built Environment Communication Group)
Vicki Odili (T P Bennett, Architect)
Ricardo Rossetti (Redrow Homes)
Sarah Wardle (BECG)

PART ONE

John welcomed the representatives from Redrow to the meeting.

Sarah handed round A3 documents showing the intended development of the site at 265 Burlington Road/Tesco Car Park and clarified that the planning application had not yet been formally submitted.

The documents contained drawings of the existing site and proposed ground floor/podium layout plus computer generated images of:

the view East from the A3 and from Tesco, the view West from Burlington Road, the view North from Clarendon Avenue plus views along Pyl Brook and the realigned access road.

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Simon explained that the developers have been liaising with many advisers and consultants (regarding matters such as transport and light issues) and with structural and mechanical engineers. They have held two public consultations and have also held meetings with the local planning committee.

During the course of a long discussion it became clear that a great deal of thought had been put into aesthetic details. The Redrow representatives also endeavoured to assure the committee that concerns relating to the local infrastructure were unnecessary, but Hina pressed the group closely regarding school capacity and there appeared to be differing perceptions, particularly relating to Sacred Heart School.

Despite constant questioning regarding the desirability of a block fourteen storeys high, the representatives were adamant that issues such as deprivation of light for other dwellings had been robustly researched and that they needed to meet the capacity targets set by the council and government. When pressed by Michael, Sarah said that Merton's targets have been increasing and that the proposed specifications have to reflect this. Hina questioned the group's determination to have a block fourteen storeys high and asked why the proposed heights could not be reduced. When told that this would reduce affordability she pointed out that this would only occur if Redrow was determined to make a pre-specified profit. The visitors responded that developer's profit margins were set by the Greater London Authority.

In addition to the widespread concern amongst the committee members and councillors regarding the inappropriateness of the higher blocks, there were additional worries regarding safe play spaces for children and continuing maintenance. The Redrow representatives indicated small areas for play and activities on the CGIs but did not address the issue of safe supervision. With regard to maintenance and general wellbeing they indicated that a residents' room was a possibility and that there might be concierges for the seven proposed entrances.

In response to a question from John Townsend regarding maintenance costs for residents, the Redrow team were unable to be specific but, when pressed, said that fees for those in affordable accommodation would be monitored carefully and would not become unaffordable. They defended the proposed use of a separate entrance for those in affordable accommodation on the grounds that housing associations preferred this arrangement.

An additional concern for the committee members was the absence of any guarantee of money to be attached to the affected area. The Community Infrastructure Levy, some £7,000,000, may be earmarked for another area of the borough. This of course is beyond the control of the planners, but the number of proposed dwellings (446 flats) would bring huge pressure on the local health and education services.

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Despite the comprehensive presentation from the Redrow group it was clear that the RPWBRA committee and local councillors would be opposing the plans as presented, with the shared view that the proposed height of the blocks and unsupported influx of residents would be to the detriment of the local area. A more sympathetic development would involve lower blocks and financial support for local school, health and community services.

John Elvidge thanked the Redrow team for attending the meeting and there was a short interval before the second half.

PART TWO

The second part consisted of other RPWBRA matters.