

Plans 1 – 1st October 2020

Item 4.3 - Selwood House, Kemnal Road, Chislehurst BR7 6LT (20/01718/FULL1)

Transcript

Cllr Alexa Michael: ...and that brings us to the third and final item for this evening, item 4.3 on page 37 for Selwood House, Kemnal Road Chislehurst and I would like to call Mr Bob McQuillan to speak in support. Mr McQuillan, good evening, three minutes starting as soon as you are ready please.

Bob McQuillan: Thank you Madame Chairman for this opportunity to speak. The application proposes sympathetic extensions to Selwood House. The report lists the many acceptable features of all parts of the application, some twelve in number. Nevertheless, and despite these twelve acceptable features two reasons for refusal are put forward relating only to one part of the application, namely the proposed two storey rear extension. Please refer to the effect on the locally listed building and 20 Pickwick Way which in my opinion are justified. (?) approaches heritage-led on this site and follows and adopts pre-application discussions with the Council. The conclusions of Heritage Collective a widely acknowledged and respected firm of heritage architects who have done much work in Bromley are that quote the development serves to reinforce and reveal the heritage values of the locally listed building. This positive comment applies to all parts of the proposal. The planning officer's report doesn't explain why this considered conclusion is set aside in favour of the first reason for refusal. The officer report also fails to include the fact that APCA support the application. APCA said that the proposed treatment of the west and south elevations suggest an enhanced appearance while reflecting the design of the original building. On this basis APCA would be prepared to support the proposal on conservation and design grounds. I would like to make a quick comment in passing on the comments of the Chislehurst Society in paragraph 5.2.1, simply to point out that the eight bullet points there come from two separate letters. The first six come from a letter dated the 21st of July this year which support the application and the last two come from a second letter dated the 1st September. The letters come from different authors. Paragraph 7.12.4 of the officer report deals with the relationship with 20 Pickwick Way. Only one critical comment is made and that is that although the proposal may not lead to direct overshadowing its proximity would detract from the Outlook of number 20. Loss of outlook, as members will be well aware, is in national guidance found on the Planning Portal and elsewhere, not a material consideration in planning matters. In any event this comment fails to acknowledge that the extension is set 1.4 metres from the boundary with the garden of 20 Pickwick Way, sits partly within the slope of the land, is 15 metres away and that in that 15 metres distance there is the garage number 20 and the planting on the boundary between number 20 and the application site. There is simply no planning justification for this second reason for refusal. (?) would agree that planning permission should be granted subject of course to the appropriate conditions and I'm

very happy to answer any questions members may have. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Cllr Alexa Michael: Thank you very much at Mr McQuillan. Members, any questions for Mr McQuillan? Councillor Harris.

Cllr Christine Harris: Should there have been a heritage report as part of the report we have here? Should, should we have more information from a heritage report?

(Several voices....)

Bob McQuillan: Go ahead?

Cllr Alexa Michael: Yes please.

Bob McQuillan: ...(?) The application is accompanied by a heritage report which is on the application file. My comment simply referred to the fact that I felt that some parts of the heritage report should have been given more paragraph space in the report. For example, the I said the application was heritage-led in terms of design, and just to give you a quick flavour of the report, 5.2 says it is proposed to reconfigure and redevelop Selwood House to provide additional accommodation... This includes an extension to the western wing..., which previously served as a service wing and has undergone alterations. The replacement of the unsympathetic steel frame Crittall windows to the former service wing with hardwood timber casements with leaded panes...would result in a notable enhancement... The proposal has been carefully designed to reference the existing built form of Selwood House and the conservation area and more widely. And the report goes on to say that the significance of Chislehurst Conservation Area will be preserved and enhanced as part of this application, which is part of the decision maker's duty under section 72. There will be no harm to the designated assets; subparagraphs 195, 196 at the NPPF are therefore not engaged. The development serves to reinforce and reveal the heritage value to the locally listed building. My comment simply reflected the fact, Madam Chairman, that the report I felt could have benefitted from a little bit more quotation from the actual heritage report bearing in mind that that was where the application began with a heritage assessment. Thank you.

Cllr Christine Harris: I thank you for that - thank you

Cllr Alexa Michael: Thank you, Mr McQuillan. Councillor Sharma.

Cllr Suraj Sharma: I thank you, Madame Chairman. Mr McQuillan, would you mind briefing members of this committee about APCA - who are they what their role was and their conclusions please?

Bob McQuillan: APCA are the advisory panel for conservation areas which. I don't know their present set up but what they used to be is contain representatives from the various professional bodies who advise on conservation matters together with representatives from conservation areas in turn as applications come before them. I I've always known them by the name, by the shortened name of APCA so apologies for using that shortened form of name, but it is the Advisory Panel for Conservation

Areas and as the name implies they give advice to the local planning authority to yourselves in this case.

Cllr Alexa Michael: Thank you, I would say that is the correct - that sums up the organisation correctly. If there are no other questions from members we will move on. Mr Khanna, I can see you on the screen - have you been able to login, can you hear me? If not I'd like...

Vinod Khanna: Yes, I can.

Cllr Alexa Michael: Excellent. Okay, well you've got, in that case you may make your presentation and you have 3 minutes, starting from now.

Vinod Khanna: Right, my name is Vinod Khanna, I live at number 20, Pickwick Way. And thank you for allowing me to speak on behalf of the objectors, as well as myself. There are forty of them. I wholeheartedly agree with the Planning Department recommendation to refuse this planning application. Planning permission for this parcel of land has been refused and subsequently appeals dismissed on no less than three occasions. There can be no doubt that this land is simply not suitable to be built on, nor was it ever intended to be built on when Pickwick Way was developed and it was meant for a garden or amenities land. It has been presented as a unified, presented as unified (?) of land with Selwood House, however it is an ill-fitting, absurd, self-contained duplex planned development on the garden land. It is bolted uncomfortably and creating a new, harmful front elevation on the rear of this heritage site. This is what the officers have said. It is in the far corner of the defined plot, on a steep incline and will be totally at odds with the street scene Pickwick Way, sitting awkwardly and unbalanced among six detached houses in the cul-de-sac. The duplex plan will cause significant harm to the character and appearance of locally listed building as the extension is inconsistent, incoherent with the existing building and the conservation area. In previous both dismissed appeals the inspector noted the building on either side of the floor would lead to unbalanced being and out of keeping with the social grain of Pickwick Way. I, if not improve, it will not improve the locally listed building, it would in fact significantly harm it. And as regards impact on 20 Pickwick Way, myself, if you look at the distance between our house and the other it is about, our front boundary is about 20 in about 15, 15 metres altogether and standing in the bedroom upstairs I think you know the applicant and I both sides getting changed in the morning, can you imagine. The ladies trying to change, or men trying to change, or young girls. I think it is absolutely, you know, a loss of privacy, which is our human right. And, and I think that is really, really (?) On that basis, I think, you know, we have been suggesting, you know, we have given these comments. So I hope the Committee will actually take that on board. It is like having a duplex flat in the middle edge of the garden, that's what it is going to look like. And and and and I really thank you for listening to me and I hope it will, you know, it will be a fair decision made because I have heard that most of the councillors as councillors you you know the person and let us I'm an unknown quantity work living in this in this area moved from Kent wanting to live in an area which was open but just imagine that it will have a you know but at about 15 metre instead of about 50 metres at the moment where

Selwood House is and we will be stressed all day long. Our kitchen, bedroom, front room, everywhere we will have that you know that visibility and I think it is you know it's it's not it should not be approved because previous two appeals are being turned down which were actually better designs. So, I hope that, you know, the the fairness will prevail. Thank you very much for listening to me.

Cllr Alexa Michael: Thank you very much Mr Khanna. Members, do any of you have any questions for Mr Khanna? Councillor Sharma.

Cllr Suraj Sharma: Thank you. Thank you, Mr Khanna for your representation this evening. You mentioned that the other two sites which were declined permission were better designed - did you did you object to both of those decisions? Did you object to both of those applications, sorry.

Vinod Khanna: Well we objected on the grounds of the conservation area and again it was an imbalance imbalance totally again it would have did there were privacy issues between both sides. We did.

Cllr Alexa Michael: Thank you. If there are no other questions we will move on to the officer. Miss Wood, could you please give us an update before this is open to the committee

Victoria Wood: Thank you, Madam Chairman. As said before, members are advised that the following of the publication of this report an updated five year housing land supply position was agreed at Development Control Committee on the 24th September. The current position is that the Council can demonstrate a supply of 3.31 years which represents a significant undersupply. Members are therefore advised to consider the weight that can be afforded to the additional housing proposed in this application in the overall planning balance having regard to the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in paragraph 11 of the NPPF. The officer recommendation given all of the above still remains as set out in the report. Additionally, as said by Bob McQuillan earlier, we have had some late comments from APCA which have been circulated to members prior to this evening's meeting. In summary, I think also Mr McQuillan has already covered this but the application is, APCA stated that the application is for a rear extension to the locally listed building and in their view the proposed treatment of the west and south elevations suggest an enhanced appearance whilst reflecting the design of the original building and us such support the proposal on conservation and design grounds however raise serious concerns regarding trees and parking. Thank you

Cllr Alexa Michael: Thank you very much Miss Wood. Okay, members we have two Ward members for Chislehurst present - which one of you is going first?

Cllr Katy Boughey: Thank you very much, chairman. I think Cllr Sharma is being very gentlemanly and he is letting me go first, so I will start, thank you very much. I would just like to ask, have, because, I understand, due to the coronavirus situation we are in, that site visits have not been taking place. Can I ask whether the case officer has actually visited the site and whether he's also looked at the adjoining property 20 Pickwick Way and been inside it and viewed from front rooms, the upstairs and the downstairs?

Cllr Alexa Michael: Miss Wood, could you answer that, please?

Victoria Wood: Thank you, Madame Chairman. Yes, the case officer has visited the site but this wasso he has been on site. I don't actually know if he has been inside the property, but he has been to site. I myself have been to site as well, from from the road and do know the site well, thank you.

Cllr Katy Boughey: Thank you. I didn't quite catch the very beginning of what you were saying, I'm afraid, Miss Wood.

Victoria Wood: Sorry, the case officer has been to site but this was prior to the Covid-19 lockdown with the previous application at number 20 Pickwick Way.

Cllr Katy Boughey: Are you saying, then, that his view has been formed not by looking at this application but previous applications and I must be honest though previous applications were considerably different in theme and scale to the one we are looking at this evening.

Victoria Wood: No, this was a different application. This was an application at 20 Pickwick Way, where he had visited the site. He knew the site well. The previous applications which called land adjacent to three Pickwick Way were dealt by a different case officer – I hope that clarifies.

Cllr Katy Boughey: Thank you very much. The reason I labour the point is that the reasons given for refusal are very visual reasons and I think without really having very good knowledge of the site and visiting both the properties it's quite difficult to come to the conclusion that the report has come to and also to give the reasons for refusal. I think it's quite important that the case officer has visited the site and visited that site prior to writing the report. I'm a little bit concerned that it's based on previous knowledge, but, anyway, we'll let that...

Victoria Wood: Madame Chairman, just to clarify, the case officer did visit the site prior to the report being written so he does have extensive knowledge of the site.

Cllr Alexa Michael: So, are you saying prior to the report being written was he able to go inside the neighbouring house in particular number 20 Pickwick Way? Would you know that?

Victoria Wood: I'm sorry I don't know that, so I can't confirm if he's been inside 20 Pickwick Way.

Cllr Alexa Michael: Okay, you said you had visited the site. Have you been inside any of the properties as well as seeing it from the outside?

Victoria Wood: No, I have not been inside the properties - I've just visited from the road.

Cllr Alexa Michael: Thank you, Councillor Boughey, do you wish to continue?

Cllr Katy Boughey: Thank you very much indeed, Chairman. This application as is noted is for internal works and a rear extension. This will mean there will be internal alterations to provide one additional one bedroom flat in place the former communal

lounge kitchen, two storey rear extension on the western elevation enable four existing flats to be enlarged with modern facilities and their rear extensions on the far western corner would be extended further provide to a duplex unit with a separate vehicle access from Pickwick Way. Selwood House is a locally listed building in the Chislehurst Conservation Area converted into flats. Planning history of the site is outlined on pages 42 and 43 of the planning report. Two previous applications to build a detached property were refused - one upheld on appeal. In his summary the appeal inspector did not state the site could not be developed. There are no objections raised from highways, the principle of development, affordable housing, density, unit mix, standard of accommodation, accessible adaptable homes, sustainability, drainage and environmental health and, more very importantly, trees and landscaping are all acceptable. The Oak tree is protected by TPO and the application is supported by an arboricultural impact assessment method statement compared. Compared to previous schemes the Council Tree Officer states "The current application would provide a more open area of amenity space around the tree and the proposed building." And his conclusion is that the proposal would not have a significant adverse impact on the tree and other vegetation on the site. Para 5.2 of the planning report, local groups, Chislehurst Society comments, which Mr McQuillan has actually alluded to, I found them quite contradictory because I've also seen those two letters and the first letter was actually quite supportive so I found the last two bullet points quite baffling to be truthful. Referring to the trees on the boundary in this letter they state that the impact of the works and extension of the house will be largely softened by mature trees. They do not raise concerns about their future health. In reference to the input on the adjoining property 20 Pickwick Way, they question the 3D visual presentation submitted by the neighbour so I think the Chislehurst Society by and large are quite supportive of this application. The main considerations are design, heritage and conservation and the impact on neighbouring amenities. The applicant acknowledges the steep sloping nature of the site and has incorporated that into the design of the two-storey duplex. If members look at the plans they will see the building is set into the ground to minimise the height. The 1st floor windows are in line with the ground floor windows of Selwood House, and the ridge roof only reaches the bottom sill of the first floor windows of Selwood House. Again, if members refer to the design and access statement provided, the site photographs of the front of Selwood House show a prominent three-storey wing on the eastern corner. Whilst it is not intended for the design to mimic the front elevation, it demonstrates that the proposal will complement the historic core of the building. The density is in keeping with the existing architectural style of Selwood House. The two-storey extension across the rear would give the opportunity to replace the unsympathetic steel framed Crittall Windows with hardwood timber casements with leaded panes to match those of the main part of the building. Decorative red brickwork is to be incorporated into the rear façade, again to complement the original building. The gable end will feature tile hanging to match the existing building. If members have taken the opportunity to view the rear of Selwood House from Pickwick Way they will realise this scheme will vastly improve the external appearance of the building whilst not compromising or reducing the ability appreciate the significance of Selwood House. Whilst detailing of the

extensions derived from the locally listed building it will remain subservient in mass, scale and height to ensure it does not undermine the hierarchy of the existing building. Regarding the impact on joining neighbours, number 20 Pickwick Way is the nearest property to the south of Selwood House, I have visited with my Ward colleague, Councillor Sharma. We have visited Mr Khanna, the owner, to discuss the objections he has raised. The proposed duplex will sit to the side of his house and I don't believe will have a detrimental impact. You would only be aware of the duplex if you were standing very close to the windows, looked an angle to your right and I think the photographs the Mr, the objector has actually sent in actually illustrate that. They appear to have been taken very close to the windows and at an angle. The outlook straight forwards down Pickwick Way would be uninterrupted. Between his side garden and the duplex stands his garage. The main part of the garden is to the rear of his property which faces south. So, there will be no overshadowing or loss of sunlight to either his garden or the front of his property. The only windows in the south flank facing 20 Pickwick Way are to service non-habitable secondary rooms. If permission is granted it could be conditional on them being obscure glazed with restricted opening. The application is supported strongly by heritage assessment under undertaken by a reputable practise who conclude the proposed extension would not detract from the locally listed building and preserve and enhance the Chislehurst Conservation Area. I don't like disagreeing with planning officers – they are the professionals - but I believe in this instance their recommendation is the wrong one. Of the reasons I have outlined I would like to move permission be granted. I would also just like to add something that has been alluded to again. This proposal will add another two units to our housing supply which may seem insignificant but it is by devvteloping these smaller sites we are going to meet the targets that have been set for the Borough. So I would again urge members to grant permission for this application with suitable conditions attached. Thank you very much, Chairman.

Cllr Alexa Michael: Thank you Councillor Boughey. Councillor Sharma, over to you.

Cllr Suraj Sharma: Thank you, Madam Chairman. For the interest of expedience I'll try not to duplicate what Councillor Boughey has just told you, but us as ward members we received a lot of correspondence about this from residents and it was only right that this item come before committee this evening. I've visited the site together with Councillor Boughey twice - once when we were shown around the applicant's site and on another occasion where we visited the property at number 20 Pickwick Way. I would like to say thank you to both Mr Lawrence and Mr Khanna for the courtesy extended. We felt that visiting the site was most advantageous as it is impossible to gain a clear perspective and context using out of date images from Google Maps. So, it's a bit of a surprise to learn that the case officer has not visited in recent, recent months on the basis of this application. The officers recommended refusal based on three grounds – design, heritage and on the impact on residential amenity. In terms of design, I take a contrary view to the officer - a site visit would make that clear enough as existing rear elevation is quite an eye-sore which you couldn't see unless you visited the site because the images on Google at the moment show a densely vegetated site and you can't see the rear elevation of the

building. The applicant is seeking to use materials that are in keeping with and sympathetic to the host property and I see this as quite an improvement on what is there currently. On heritage, I note the officer has taken a different view to that of the Council Conservation Officer, APCA, the consultants Heritage Collective who submitted a substantial report as part of the application and the Chislehurst Society. In terms of the officer's comments in the reports, the extension will improve the appearance of the rear building and (?) enhance the conservation area. The Chislehurst Society noted the proposal would be in keeping with the characteristics of the Conservation Area and locally listed building and would restore the historic relationship with this form of part of grounds of Selwood House. Heritage Collective, in their conclusion have noted the development serves to reinforce and reveal the heritage values of the locally listed building, the significance of the Chislehurst Conservation Area and would in turn be enhanced. APCA as we heard earlier from Bob McQuillan, also mentioned the same thing, that it would be enhancement to the conservation area. So, think in terms of objections based on the conservation area would be it would be quite, quite a far cry based on the expert opinion. On the neighbourhood amenity, in particular number 20 Pickwick Way, although we sympathise with the, with the owners of that property, the extension will be visible when standing right up to the front windows of the property, so if you are halfway or further on in the property you have no visibility of the proposed extension. So I don't see it causing any loss of privacy. Bearing in mind that the windows proposed face west and not south onto number 20 the bay windows again would have stand right up against the window and look south to get a view into number 20 and that could be dealt with with conditions such as opaque windows or a louvre, indeed. So, on balance, I agree with my colleague Councillor Boughey and I would second the motion for consent.

Cllr Alexa Michael: Thank you very much. It has, the motion has been this item has been moved and seconded for permission. Before I go on, Councillor Stevens you wish to ask a question?

Cllr Gary Stevens: Thank you very much, Chair. Just a quick question, if I may, to Ms Wood. Just to clarify, it wasn't 100% clear, when the officer visited, the planning officer visited the site, you said (?) very familiar with the site due to the previous applications, was the site visited specifically for this application? The view of, the planning, the siting of this application in particular? I think it is something of a key point, it makes a bit of a difference, if you see what I mean.

Cllr Alexa Michael: Miss Wood, can you respond to that?

Victoria Wood: Thank you, Madame Chairman. So, the case officer didn't visit when this first application came in because he had recently visited the application at 20 Pickwick Way. However, it was relatively recently and obviously we were in Covid-19 lockdown where we restricted all visits as you know. I have visited the site and I had previously visited the site prior to the application being submitted just with other applications in the area and the case officer was familiar with the site. Obviously, this was a very difficult situation. When the application came in, due to the coronavirus

pandemic applications site visits were stopped at the time but I have visited the site and previously the case officer had visited. I hope that makes that clearer.

Cllr Alexa Michael: Thank you for that Miss Wood. Any other member wish to comment before we move on. Councillor Harris

Cllr Christine Harris: Thank you Chair. I also visited the site and by mistake actually went to the front of the house and then was a bit lost because no one else was there. I thought it was a beautiful building and then when I found where it should be and Pickwick Way I was quite shocked by what an unattractive, ugly building this was from the back compared to the front which made me think, why is anyone complaining about this? I thought the proposal was not only going to save the building for the future - you know I think at some stage developers could have wanted to knock the whole building down and I think that will prevent this happening. I was put under pressure to go into number 20, which I did, and the view from their kitchen is their garage and the landscaping on their own side garden and beyond that a glimpse of a very ugly building, so I couldn't quite see what the issue was there either. I think this is going to enhance the building, I think from certain parts of the report here. There is no issues to do with highways, parking. When I visited number 20 the illustration that he showed me on his laptop, to me was completely out of scale and was nothing like the intended application. I agree with everything that Councillor Boughey and Sharma said and that's already been put forward and seconded but I do agree with all their comments.

Cllr Alexa Michael: Okay, thank you very much Councillor Harris, and I take a slightly different view. I have no problem whatsoever with the enlargement of the existing flats and the creation of an additional flat to make flat 14, and I have I think that is that is good and would like to see that happen, but I do have some problems with the proposed new duplex flat. I appreciate it is smaller than the houses that were previously refused and dismissed on appeal and taken out of context the design is not unattractive, but I do think it's in the wrong place. I've had I've been to the site I've looked at it from the outside, I've been to inside number 20 and I've read the report thoroughly and I have to say the comments on paragraph 7.11.13 on page 61, sum up entirely. But it would look uncomfortable, it looks out of keeping, this is a spacious part of the the conservation area. It would be contrived and incongruous, it, I just don't think a stand-alone duplex would really fit into the street scene and Pickwick Way is a group of houses very similar in style with uniform site spacing and I just don't think the new duplex relates to to that to that scene. I do have some concerns about some, the effect on number 20 and if you look at the paragraph on page 62 it does say there would be some at some harm at to number 20. I'm not happy with this - I'm inclined to agree with the with the planning officer's recommendations for refusal as set out on pages 65 but will be very happy to entertain this application if it didn't contain the duplex aspect. Okay this item has been moved and seconded for permission, could I see all those in favour of permission please show now. And those against? I think that's... Councillor Rowlands, I can't ...which way are you voting for against?

Councillor Will Rowland: For – in favour.

Cllr Alexa Michael: So, that is carried. Thank you very much, members, and that brings us to the end of this meeting.

Jake Hamilton: Madame Chairman, sorry to interrupt you could sorry to interrupt could have obviously as that's been approved could we clarify the officers would have delegated authority for conditions please

Cllr Alexa Michael: Yes, I'd be happy for you to have delegated authority on conditions.

Jake Hamilton: Thank you very much.