



# Brixton Neighbourhood Construction Forum (BNCF) meeting note

Public

**Friday 24 April, 10am – 12.30pm – Zoom online meeting**

## **Attendees**

Councillor Adrian Garden (AG) – Co-chair

### YNTH Project Team

- Andrew Boyle (AB) - Muse Developments
- Jo Sintern (JS) – GL Hearn – Co-Chair
- Asha Saroy (AS) – GL Hearn
- Sandra Roebuck (SR) – Lambeth Council
- Brian Brady (BB) – Lambeth Council
- Declan Kelly (DK) – O’Keefe

Councillor Martin Tiedemann (MT) - ward councillor

Councillor Maria Kay (MK) - ward councillor

Total number of local residents: Nine

## **1. Introductions**

AG opened the meeting and introduced the project team. He explained that he was co-chairing the meeting as an independent party, and that JS was co-chairing with him to help manage the Zoom technology part of the call and resident questions. JS explained that the online meeting was to be recorded and asked attendees if they were comfortable with this, and to turn off their videos if they were not.

A resident requested to address the panel and attendees, which was accepted by AG. The resident explained how the recent communications were received and how the current situation with COVID-19 was impacting neighbours and residents. The resident asked why there was a need to press on with the works now given COVID-19.

## **2. Running this BNCF Session**

AG explained that the meeting would cover such questions as were raised by the resident. He explained his role and how the meeting was to be conducted, given it was not a face-to-face public



meeting but was online. He also explained the “rules of engagement” for the meeting and listed the rules as outlined in the Terms of Reference for the Forum.

JS explained the technical aspects of the meeting; she would note all questions being asked on the “chat” function, and that should anyone want to speak, they could signal to her by selecting the “hand wave” function or waving on screen.

### **3 & 4) Recent Comms Issues & “Why Now?” Community Questions and About this Brixton Neighbourhood Construction Forum (BNCF)**

JS explained that there were two key issues that the team wanted to cover before the main part of the meeting: the recent communications and why works were starting now. JS apologised for the upset recent communications have caused and explained the:

- delay in issuing the newsletter and flyer, as it was reliant on Lambeth Council and Muse making decisions in light of government advice in relation to COVID-19
- distribution issues with the third-party supplier and our concerns with inaccurate post-drop reports
- language used in the newsletter - the first six weeks of work are “enabling works” not demolition works, and we acknowledged we should have described this in recent communications
- email and written communications and our plan of action

AB accepted there were mistakes in the communications, apologised for the delays and communication shortcomings and explained that the team were working hard to rectify this.

- ***Two residents and MK raised their concerns regarding the communications; how there were now trust issues between the community and residents; and asked why the works were beginning now given the lockdown and COVID-19 pandemic.***

SR and AB explained that there have been delays and various negotiations between Lambeth Council and Muse. AB explained that there is a culvert (i.e. a Thames Water storm relief channel) under the building and that negotiations and discussions with them led to further delay in starting.

AG suggested to report on the history of the delays and that there needed to be lessons learnt on the poor communications. AB acknowledged this, and that team were listening to the community and apologised on behalf of the Council, Muse, and GL Hearn for the upset.

- ***A resident raised a concern about the noisy works beginning in September for those over 70 and asked if the works would be delayed if the lockdown was extended.***

AB explained that the team will evaluate and mitigate the situation if it arose.

AB also explained about project delays and timescales, working with the contractor to identify a suitable start date to ensure guidelines and advice by the Government was followed and how they



can help meet the need for housing in London. SR commented that Lambeth Council is being “contractor-led” on certain construction contracts – a decision taken by CEO – and that Olive Morris House was no different. The contractors have shown they can comply with regulations and guidelines so they can continue.

Questions (listed below in bold) were then taken and addressed by the team.

- ***“There will be different operative numbers on site during the works, but residents will be impacted by noise, especially those that are complying with government advice to work from home where possible. There needs to be a balance in relation to the noisy works to help residents and businesses.”***

AB and DK explained that there will be relevant noise and dust monitoring stations around the site which will be monitored daily. Also, that the works over the w/c 20 April had been to set up the site. It was explained that the noise will not be continuous throughout the day and will not start early in the morning. A commitment was made that the works will be intermittent.

- ***“When in the office, you can have air con on. If we are to continue working from home over summer, we will have to open windows, and schedule calls for when noisy works are not happening. Can there be a schedule of the noisy works to minimise the impact on businesses and residents?”***

AB agreed and said the team can provide information on the noisy works to help residents schedule their work. *(Post-meeting note: Information on the type of works that O’Keefe will undertake will be shared with residents who have signed up to regular update emails. This includes a breakdown of activities over a two-week period to provide residents advance notice of the works. Details of the noisy works schedule will be explained in the upcoming Forums and placed on the website following the Forum meeting.)*

- ***“Will there be condition surveys for local residents as part of the mitigation works?”***

AG said this question would be covered later in the presentation.

- ***“I asked this question “why now” via email but did not get a response. Is it appropriate that the works are taking place now when there is no noise enforcement in place i.e. no-one from the council is coming out to respond to noise complaints?”***

AB advised residents that there will be noise monitoring stations around the site to help the contractors keep in line with guidelines. If residents have concerns, they can contact the Environment Agency as they will pick up these concerns, if the council’s Environmental Office didn’t respond. With regards to emails, there will be daily calls with the team to monitor this. AB offered to share his email for residents to contact and discuss construction issues.



- ***This project has been delayed for years; the council can look at building new homes in different ways – why now?***

SR explained that the council needs to deliver new homes, some of which are under construction. The council is satisfied that the contractor meets the relevant guidelines for the low intensity works and given the building has been decommissioned from council services, there is no reason to delay the finish of this last part of the *Your New Town Hall* project.

### **5. Olive Morris House – Part of your New Town Hall**

JS explained that we have information on this in the presentation which participants had a copy of. It was felt it was not needed to go over this item given the history and past resident participation.

### **6. Olive Morris House – Commencement of Works**

JS explained for housekeeping purposes that the team will take questions from residents and the Zoom chatroom at the end of the presentation.

DK and AB presented on this item and mentioned the following in addition to the slide information:

- The programme is subject to change given the current COVID-19 pandemic. The demolition works are to the ground floor of the building excluding the basement. As the building is gradually demolished floor-by-floor, the sheeted scaffold envelope will be reduced in height.
- The current works onsite over the past week are to set up the welfare facilities for the staff and some logistics such as hoarding.
- DK has been able to select family members (e.g. fathers and sons, and brothers) as part of his team. This helps in the number of people driving to site, and those that can work close together. Workers can park in the basement of the site.
- No commercial vehicles are to be parked on adjacent streets or left idling; vehicle access will be booked in advance and managed by a banksman. There are to be no vehicles allowed onto site or site activities before 8am or after 6pm. Vehicles will come in via Sudbourne Road, drop materials to site, and leave via Hayter Road, with traffic marshals either side.
- Hoarding is due to start 27 April, but this has been pushed back. As part of planning conditions, the hoarding will have a community section. Muse with Lambeth to go out to consultation (e.g. with local schools) to agree a design that will go on part of the hoarding.
- The building materials will be broken down and pushed down the existing lift shafts and taken away from the site in covered lorries.

### **7. Questions**

JS explained there were a number of questions and AG agreed to deal with the questions as issued by each resident. The following questions were asked:

- ***Where will delivery vehicles park? And how effective is dust suppression? Will there be air quality sensors in place?***



No commercial vehicles are to be parked on adjacent streets or left idling; vehicle access will be booked in advance and managed by a permanent on-site banksman. Vehicles will come in via Sudbourne Road, drop materials to site, and leave via Hayter Road, with traffic marshals either side.

Dust suppression is effective with good water supply, which the site has. Air quality sensors will be placed around the site and monitored by O'Keefe and Muse's environmental consultants.

- ***With regards to the operative numbers, there are discrepancies in the numbers in the presentation and what was said. How can risk assessment be done properly if the numbers are different/vary over time?***

Risk assessments are carried out daily to reflect any changes to the programme. Risk assessments and method statements are adapted, and the team are fully briefed.

- ***With regards to national government policy on COVID-19 - how will you guarantee workers don't come within 2m of one another? Will you be installing hand-sanitisers? What measures are in place already? Has the council signed off the risk assessments?***

Construction Leadership Council guidelines have recently been revised in light of COVID-19, and the Olive Morris House site-specific operating procedures policy are online. These documents outline that the Government has relaxed the 2m rule on construction site. If the workers have to do a task, they can be within 2m of one another, which is restricted to 15 minutes. We have workers on site that are from the same family and they can be close to one another if they have to carry out certain jobs. The work carried out w/c 20 April is to set up the welfare facilities. The team have a health and safety consultant on site to review this w/c 27 April.

- ***Has the council validated the risk assessment/approved the measures? Can we have access to the docs?***

The Council is satisfied with the conditions that are being met by the contractor. The relevant documents are online.

- ***In relation to the culvert, what additional impact assessments have been carried out in respect of neighbouring buildings/those on the back of the site? It is expected that a condition survey of local homes is carried out. Can you not carry out the surveys now to document how the homes are now?***

We knew about the culvert i.e. the storm relief channel before planning, but the design works for OMH were delayed. Investigation surveys were carried out to help with the design of building in conjunction with Thames Water.



The approach chosen to carry out the demolition of Olive Morris House, and the fact that the building will only be taken down to ground floor at this point, mean that this is not a 'vibration heavy' stage of works. We have carried out pre-condition surveys for the neighbouring properties to Olive Morris House. However, we will be monitoring the vibration levels of the works via installed vibration monitors. (Post-meeting note: it has been requested that the pre-condition surveys be shared with residents. However, these cannot be shared due to being private to individual properties).

We cannot offer to do this for all properties in the immediate area. However, if a resident does notice any changes to their home and believes it to be in relation to the Olive Morris House demolition works, we encourage them to get in contact with us and if so, a surveyor will be appointed. If the resident has any issues with the results, they can employ their own surveyor (paid for by Muse) and if damages are found to be in connection specifically with these works, the appropriate action will be taken and dealt with via the project's insurance. This is a firm commitment offered by Muse.

- ***What does dust suppression look like, as I have a concern about hanging my clothes to dry in the garden and ensuring my children are not impacted – can I still hang my clothes to dry?***

There will be a number of dust-monitoring stations around the site. Dust suppression uses water to eliminate and restrict dust particles from becoming airborne, so involved hosing and machines connected to water. Dust will be minimised, and it is safe to continue hanging clothes to dry. DK explained that if dust from the site is found to be on local residents' washing, then the works would be paused to investigate and rectify this.

- ***There are some contradictions in the papers online and the presentation e.g. the start and finish times – some suggest 8:30am and others 8am, some suggest 5:30pm finish and some suggest 6pm. We have concerns about the starting times as some turned up at 7am earlier in the week. Also, when does the demolition end – is it end of August or does it continue into September? Finally, some documents suggest there is no weekend working but I understand there could be some working at the weekends.***

Under the planning permission the team *could* work between 8am-6pm Monday-Friday, and also Saturdays 8am-1pm but not on Sundays or Bank Holidays (approval is needed by the council). The site will open at 8am and close at 6pm Monday-Friday and those are the working hours (meaning no demolition work will take place on Saturdays). No noisy works will take place before 9am and after 5.30pm. (Post-meeting note: During the session, it was stated that no noisy works will take place before 9am. This was incorrect and Muse have confirmed that no noisy works will take place before 8.30am.)

The demolition works are in three phases. The first was to remove the link to neighbouring properties (with one half having been completed last year and the other to be completed in due course). The second is to take down the building to the ground floor, which is the work O'Keefe is currently doing.



The third involves the demolition of the basement as well as the main construction of the building. The programme has been extended to reflect current COVID-19 conditions.

There will be no demolition or noisy works taking place on weekends. If work is needed to be carried out at weekends, this will involve emergency, safety, or preparatory works on a Saturday, e.g. alterations to accommodation, electrical or pipework.

- **I have concerns about the programme and the differing information about the site opening hours. There should not be any weekend work. What will happen to the junction of Sudbourne Road and Brixton Hill as the pavement width is narrow and will be made worse with the hoarding - what will the width of the pavement be?**

The programme is subject to change and can change daily. With regards to this particular junction, there will be no pavement boarding the site on Sudbourne and Hayter Road and it will be set up so that pedestrians etc will be asked to cross over the road. This is normal practice around building sites.

- **This has not been communicated and is a key concern for safety for the local schools. Health and wellbeing are very important especially due to the pandemic – misinformation is not helpful and there needs to be more empathy for residents.**

We apologise if this has not been communicated. Safety is very important especially on site. The footpath will be closed and pedestrians etc will be asked to cross over the road to protect them.

Muse will look into the temporary suspension of parking bays to allow space/security.

## **8. Ongoing Community Engagement and next BNCF**

JS outlined that the team are committed to working with the local community. With regards to the next Forum, we will arrange one in a few months' time. In the meantime, we have a community telephone number, and we will be more responsive on emails. AS explained with regards to emails that if we are not able to answer straightway, we will acknowledge the email and respond once we have the answers from the team.

Due to the delivery issues with Effra Court and Brixton Hill Court, we will be issuing another leaflet to these two residential blocks to outline information about the project, promote the website and provide our contact details.

Key documents, including the CEMP (Community Engagement Management Plan) and CEMP Summary, are online.

If any work is to be carried out that impacts certain residents, O'Keefe will be in contact.



A section of the hoarding on Brixton Hill will be dedicated to community art projects. Stakeholder consultation to determine the scope of this will commence in summer 2020.

AB apologised again on behalf of Muse. Residents can email the GL Hearn team to request AB's mobile number.

- **A question was asked about the plans/drawings/dimensions and for them to be shared to remind residents.**

These plans will be posted on the project website, as well as the Design and Access Statement. AB explained very minor changes had been made to accommodate the Lambeth Archives. Materials of building had changed to following the Grenfell fire disaster, and so there were no combustible materials used in the façade and the building has sprinklers on every floor. It was also explained that the relevant plans and documents to the OMH development would be added to the project website.

AG thanked everyone for their time and closed the meeting.

#### **Post meeting note**

This meeting note details the key points raised on the online Q&A online session held on Friday 24 April 2020. The meeting was conducted on Zoom rather than Microsoft Teams, as originally advertised, as Zoom was specifically requested as the platform to be used by several residents as they were more accustomed to it.

We have issued a first set of FAQs on our website: <http://yournewtownhall.org/> and will be issuing another set of FAQs in due course. We will be responding to the questions that were sent in as a separate list by some residents early next week.

We have also been updating our website and will continue to add documents as requested.

We recorded the meeting once it had been agreed to by all participants. We are reviewing the video to ensure we comply with GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) May 2018. We do need written consent from all participants before we can issue the recording of the meeting – this will be requested.