

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Classification:</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>Meeting Name:</b>
6.1	OPEN	31 January 2012	Planning Committee
<b>Report title:</b>	<b>Development Management planning application:</b> Application 11-AP-3953 for: Full Planning Permission  <b>Address:</b> SYMINGTON HOUSE, LAWSON ESTATE DEVERELL STREET, LONDON SE1 4AA  <b>Proposal:</b> Proposed landscaping scheme incorporating a play area, planting, hardstanding, a refuse enclosure, a dog walking area, alterations to the main entrance to Symington House and associated works.		
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>	Chaucer		
<b>From:</b>	Head of Development Management		
<b>Application Start Date</b> 24/11/2011		<b>Application Expiry Date</b> 19/01/2012	

## RECOMMENDATION

- 1 That planning permission be granted subject to conditions.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Site location and description

- 2 The application site (0.7 hectares) contains Symington House, a 10 storey 1960's residential building containing 102 apartments above a 1-2 storey undercroft, surrounded by lawned open space to the north, south and west. There is an existing hard standing at the front of the building used for car parking accessed via Deverell Street with an additional twelve garages accessed from Falmouth Road.
- 3 There are two existing pedestrian routes running through the site, one linking Harper Road via Symington House to Deverell Street and the other extending from Falmouth Road, running between the Falmouth Road properties (though secured by a gate at this point to limit access to Falmouth Road residents only) and along the southern site boundary to intersect with the Harper Road/ Deverell Street link.
- 4 The site is surrounded by mixed residential development on three sides including a development currently under construction at 153-163 Harper Road adjacent to the rear (south west) boundary of the site. The new Globe Academy adjoins the south east flank boundary.
- 5 Symington House has recently undergone improvement works under the decent homes programme.

### Relevant planning history and background to current proposal

- 6 Planning permission has previously been granted for landscaping works at this site

concurrently with the separate granting of planning permission for the adjacent Harper Road residential scheme (comprises 72 flats in a development ranging from three to seven storeys).

- 7 Whilst permission was granted for the previous application, Symington House residents expressed reservations about the design of the landscaping scheme. The Planning Committee, whilst deciding to grant planning permission, suggested that the applicant reconsiders the design and enters into a detailed consultation process with the residents in order that a revised scheme can be submitted which received their support. This current planning application is a result of this fresh consultation and design process.

### **Details of proposal**

- 8 The current proposal seeks to create a coherent landscaping scheme for both Symington House and the adjacent Harper Road development currently under construction (the landscaping scheme for which has already been approved as part of the planning permission for that development).
- 9 The design proposals respond to the following aspirations which have been identified though the consultation process with residents in order to overcome their concerns with the previously approved scheme:
  - Improve the entrance sequence to Symington House and consider conflicts between residents and vehicles.
  - Provide amenity space for Symington House residents of different ages
  - Improve refuse storage
  - Provide a dedicated dog walking area
  - Incorporate security aspects for both existing residents from Symington House and new residents of the Harper Rd development.
- 10 The proposals include landscaped areas suitable for play and recreation, tree and shrub planting, grass mounds, outdoor fitness equipment, a refuse storage enclosure adjacent to the vehicular access to the parking area, benches, paving for pedestrian/cycle access ways, traffic barriers and a dog walking area.
- 11 It is also proposed to relocate the main entrance door into Symington House to the south west side of the entrance lobby facing Harper Road in order to allow passive surveillance of the entrance and reduce conflicts between residents and passing cyclists.
- 12 The proposed landscaping at Symington House is to be delivered as part of the Section 106 package for the Harper Road development planning permission. It is intended that the landscaping works across both sites would be delivered at the same time.

### **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

#### **Summary of main issues**

- 13 The main issues to be considered in respect of this application are:
  - Design of the scheme and its impact on the visual amenity of the area including opportunities for enhancement of the Symington House site and surrounds.
  - The relationship of the scheme with the adjacent Harper Road development.
  - Impact of the scheme upon the amenity of occupiers of Symington House and the occupiers of adjacent residential buildings.
  - Implications for pedestrian, cycle and vehicular access/parking.

- Acceptability of refuse provision.
- Ecological and biodiversity implications

### **Planning policy**

- 14 The site is located within the Central Activities Zone, is bordered by the Elephant and Castle Opportunity Area, and is in an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), an Archaeological Priority Zone and a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ). The site is not located within a Conservation Area but lies just south of the CA14 Trinity Church Square Conservation Area where it extends along Falmouth Road. The policies set out below are considered to be the most relevant in the determination of the application.

#### Core Strategy 2011

- 15 Strategic Policy 1 – Sustainable development  
 Strategic Policy 2 – Sustainable transport  
 Strategic Policy 4 – Places for learning, enjoyment and healthy lifestyles  
 Strategic Policy 11 – Open spaces and wildlife  
 Strategic Policy 12 – Design and conservation  
 Strategic Policy 13 – High environmental standards

#### Southwark Plan 2007 (July) - saved policies

- 16 Policy 3.1: Environmental Effects  
 Policy 3.2: Protection of Amenity  
 Policy 3.7: Waste Reduction  
 Policy 3.11: Efficient use of Land  
 Policy 3.12: Quality in Design  
 Policy 3.13: Urban Design  
 Policy 3.14: Designing Out Crime  
 Policy 3.19 Archaeology  
 Policy 3.28: Biodiversity  
 Policy 4.2: Quality of Residential Accommodation  
 Policy 5.2: Transport Impacts  
 Policy 5.3: Walking and Cycling  
 Policy 5.6: Car Parking

#### London Plan 2011

- 17 Policy 5.3 Sustainable Design And Construction  
 Policy 5.10 Urban Greening  
 Policy 5.11 Green Roofs And Development Site Environs  
 Policy 5.12 Flood Risk Management  
 Policy 5.13 Sustainable Drainage  
 Policy 6.9 Cycling  
 Policy 6.10 Walking  
 Policy 6.11 Smoothing Traffic Flow And Tackling Congestion  
 Policy 6.13 Parking  
 Policy 7.1 Building London's Neighbourhoods And Communities  
 Policy 7.2 An Inclusive Environment  
 Policy 7.3 Designing Out Crime  
 Policy 7.4 Local Character  
 Policy 7.5 Public Realm  
 Policy 7.6 Architecture  
 Policy 7.13 Safety, Security And Resilience To Emergency

18 Supplementary Planning Documents, Planning Policy Guidance [PPG] and Planning Policy Statements [PPS]

PPS 1: Planning for Sustainable Communities  
Residential Design Standards SPD (September 2008)  
Sustainable Design and Construction SPD (February 2009)  
Sustainability Assessment SPD (February 2009)  
Design and Access Statements SPD (September 2007)  
Draft National Planning Policy Framework (July 2011)

**Principle of development**

- 19 The proposal to redesign and enhance the landscaping at this existing residential development does not raise any issues of principle.

**Design and layout**

- 20 The existing curtilage areas around Symington House are largely devoid of landscape and do not provide either an attractive setting for the building or a quality space that can be used by residents for relaxation or recreation. There is consequently considerable scope for enhancement.
- 21 As described above, this application comprising a re-designed landscaping scheme around Symington House is proposed in response to the concerns raised by residents about that previously permitted scheme.
- 22 The area to the west (rear) and north west (side) of Symington House will be transformed into a residents' garden with opportunities for play and recreation. Informal path ways, seating and outdoor fitness equipment will also be provided. An area for relaxing is proposed at the rear in the southern most section of the site and a separate fenced 'dog walking' area is proposed adjacent to the south east side of the building. Several new Birch trees are proposed, both on the edges of and within the site. New areas of shrubs, flowers and plants will also be provided throughout the scheme including areas of wild flowers and grasses in order to create an attractive and ecologically diverse scheme. In addition to that proposed, there is scope for additional planting (to be required by condition) including on the section of land between Deverell Street and the proposed refuse store and parking area. Existing trees of amenity value are to be protected and retained. The applicant states that the precise details of planting specifications will be provided via a condition at the same time as the detailed planting proposals are submitted for Harper Road. The landscaping proposals, including the use of species, are intended to compliment those proposed in the landscaping scheme for the Harper Road development.
- 23 A bin store is proposed adjacent to the vehicular entrance onto Deverell Street to replace the existing unenclosed informal bin stores at the pedestrian entrance. The bin store will be constructed using the same concrete facing materials as the Harper Road development with attached planting trellises for climbing plants and an opportunity for residents' art on the side of the store. Whilst located in a prominent location at the front of the site, this is required for convenient access by refuse vehicles and it is proposed to be sensitively treated representing an enhancement over the existing refuse storage arrangement. Nine euro bins will be provided (5 for non-recycling and 4 for recycled waste) which, although less than the recommended size set out in the Sustainable Design and Construction SPD, represents a slightly increased provision in comparison to the existing situation for Symington House. The management of the refuse and recycling for the site is controlled by the management company for Symington House.

- 24 Enhanced pedestrian and cycle access will be provided through the site including new paved areas. Traffic barriers will be put in place to prevent motor cycles using the access route whilst still allowing for access with prams and cycles.
- 25 Minor alterations are proposed to the Symington House building itself through the provision of new main entrance doors at the rear of the building to replace the existing doors facing into the undercroft area allowing more convenient and safer access. No adverse impacts will result for the appearance of the building.
- 26 In conclusion on design, the proposals are considered to result in a significant improvement on the existing situation both for the general visual setting of the building along with the provision of usable amenity space for residents.

#### **Impact of proposed development on amenity of existing/adjoining occupiers and surrounding area**

- 27 In general the proposals will enhance the amenity of existing and adjacent residents. Whilst the provision of recreational areas to the side and rear of the building will inevitably result in some increase noise from users, this would not be such to result in harm to the living conditions of either adjacent residents or the users of the existing school adjacent to the south east boundary of the site. The school is separated from the site by existing fencing proposed to be retained as part of the scheme.

#### **Transportation issues**

- 28 The vehicular access to the site remains as existing from Deverell Street. Minor changes are proposed to the existing parking provision including the provision of a disabled parking space (there is currently no existing disabled parking provision or any disabled flats within Symington House). The overall number of parking spaces remains as per the existing situation (approximately 70 spaces). Additional motor cycle parking is also provided. The management company for Symington House are proposing that safe and secure cycle storage is provided in the large lobby areas within the development, hence it is not included as part of these landscaping proposals.
- 29 The location of the new bin store will allow a refuse vehicle to enter the site and perform a three point turn allowing it to exit in a forward gear. The Transport Team do not consider that the development will have any negative affect on the highway network and raise no objections to the development.

#### **Ecological Implications**

- 30 Taking account of the broad range of landscaping proposals, the scheme proposed will enhance the ecological value of the site. Conditions are recommended to control vegetation clearance, require the submission of an ecological management plan and ensure the enhancement of nature conservation interest of the site.

#### **Environmental impact assessment (EIA)**

- 31 The proposal does not amount to EIA development and no implications arise in relation to the EIA Regulations.

#### **Other planning issues**

- 32 The site is located within an Archaeological Priority Zone. However, as the proposed works are limited to landscaping, it is expected that any archaeological remains will remain in situ. A strategy has been developed by the applicant to avoid the need for excavation in the ground that could cause disturbance, including use of a protective

membrane below tree roots, and selection of tree species that are suitable for such a treatment. In order to monitor the site to ensure that any possible disturbance is able to be monitored, the Archaeologist has recommended that a condition be included to observe and record any archaeological remains impacted by the proposal (this is expected to be limited).

- 33 Whilst no Contamination Assessment was submitted with the landscaping application, an assessment has previously been made of the adjoining Harper Road housing site, where some contamination was found to exist. Provided that a minimum of 300mm of clean soil is placed over areas of soft landscaping as part of the redevelopment of the site, there is considered to be no risk to future occupiers and users of the site. The proposed landscaping will leave most of the land undisturbed, and the applicant has confirmed that where disturbance of soil occurs, 400mm of topsoil will be used.

### **Conclusion on planning issues**

- 34 This planning application follows extensive consultation and engagement with residents in order to arrive at a revised landscaping scheme which remedies the concerns raised by residents about the previously permitted scheme. The resulting landscaping proposals will result in a quality landscaping scheme that will serve to both significantly enhance the setting of the existing building and will result in attractive recreational and relaxation space for residents of the both Symington House and the Harper Road development. The proposals have been designed to assimilate with the adjacent landscaping proposals for Harper Road. Further benefits accrue from the new refuse store and the enhancement of public access routes through the site. The application has been considered against the relevant Development Plan policies and it is concluded that no adverse impacts would result that justify an objection to the scheme.

### **Community impact statement**

- 35 In line with the Council's Community Impact Statement the impact of this application has been assessed as part of the application process with regard to local people in respect of their age, disability, faith/religion, gender, race and ethnicity and sexual orientation. Consultation with the community has been undertaken as part of the application process. The impact on local people is set out above.

### **Consultations**

- 36 Details of the Council's consultation and any re-consultation undertaken in respect of this application are set out in Appendix 1.

### **Consultation replies**

- 37 Details of consultation responses received are set out in Appendix 2.

### **Summary of consultation responses**

- 38 Letters have been received in support of the proposal and noting the thoroughness of the pre-application engagement and consultation process with residents.

### **Human rights implications**

- 39 This planning application engages certain human rights under the Human Rights Act 2008 (the HRA). The HRA prohibits unlawful interference by public bodies with conventions rights. The term 'engage' simply means that human rights may be affected or relevant.

- 40 This application has the legitimate aim of providing an enhanced landscaping scheme at this site. The rights potentially engaged by this application, including the right to a fair trial and the right to respect for private and family life are not considered to be unlawfully interfered with by this proposal.

### SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

**Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance**

N/A

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Site history file: TP/H1012  Application file: 11-AP-3953  Southwark Local Development Framework and Development Plan Documents	Regeneration and Neighbourhoods Department 160 Tooley Street London SE1 2TZ	Planning enquiries telephone: 020 7525 5403 Planning enquiries email: <a href="mailto:planning.enquiries@southwark.gov.uk">planning.enquiries@southwark.gov.uk</a> Case officer telephone:: 020 7525 4351 Council website: <a href="http://www.southwark.gov.uk">www.southwark.gov.uk</a>

### APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Consultation undertaken
Appendix 2	Consultation responses received
Appendix 3	Images

### AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Lead Officer</b>	Gary Rice - Head of Development Management	
<b>Report Author</b>	David Cliff, Development Management	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	19 January 2012	
<b>Key Decision</b>	No	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments included</b>
Strategic Director of Communities, Law & Governance	No	No
Strategic Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods	No	No
Strategic Director of Environment and Housing	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>		20 January 2012

**Consultation Undertaken**

**Site notice date:** 19 December 2011

**Press notice date:** 22 December 2011

**Case officer site visit date:** 5 January 2012

**Neighbour consultation letters sent:** 14 December 2011

**Internal services consulted:**

Access Officer, Ecology Officer, Elephant and Castle Special Projects, Environment and Housing, Waste Management, Transportation.

**Statutory and non-statutory organisations consulted:**

Environment Agency

**Neighbours and local groups consulted:** Notification letters have been sent to neighbouring occupiers surrounding the site and residents of Symington House itself. A full list of those consulted is available on the case file.

**Re-consultation:** No re-consultation was required.



### Consultation Responses Received

#### Internal services

Ecology Officer: The development has a good opportunity to enhance this area for wildlife. Welcome the meadow areas in the landscaping. Conditions are recommended regarding the removal of existing vegetation, ecological management plan and biodiversity mitigation/enhancement.

Transportation Team: Existing parking to be amended however it does not appear that access will be changed. All parking spaces appear to conform to the minimum standards as set out in best practice guidance *Manual for Streets*. The disabled bay must comply with dimensions as stated in DfT's *Parking for Disabled People*. The application is not expected to have any negative impact on the highway network.

Arboricultural Officer: The proposed landscaping is of design merit and provides appropriate planting of Birch trees and other hard landscaping which will enhance the setting of Symington House.

The immediate vicinity of the development is notable for its visually harsh environment and built form which would be softened through the use of landscaping. The proposals should therefore seek to include enhancement to the front of Symington House, particularly fronting Deverall St and the entrance to the car park from Falmouth Road. A recently planted tree within the raised grass bed at the cul de sac is unsuitable for its location and should be transplanted or replaced with a larger species. Similarly, the blank wall adjacent to Alderney Mews could be improved with climbing plants.

Finally, the use of Birch trees is a welcome feature. However the species should be amended to a longer lived more drought tolerant species i.e. *Betula Jaquemontii*.

#### Statutory and non-statutory organisations

Environment Agency: No objections are raised. According to the information available the site lies outside the area of residual flooding.

#### Neighbours and local groups

Letter from Leatherhead JMB (managers of Symington House): Support the proposal. It is the best example of micro consultation that I have known. No resident opposes the plan. On 14.9.11 a public meeting attended by 33 residents, 2 ward councillors, and the two JMB directors for the estate voted unanimously to support.

Councillor Poddy Clark: Total support for this application. I have attended many consultation meetings regarding the preparation of this plan and the views of residents have been fully sought and taken into consideration. I am aware that the scheme is well supported by residents of Symington and other nearby blocks.