

Item No. 6	Classification OPEN	Decision Level PLANNING COMMITTEE	Date 09/11/04
From Interim Development & Building Control Manager		Title of Report DEVELOPMENT CONTROL	
Proposal (04-CO-0071) Erection and installation of six colour projection lights including brackets, wiring and associated works in connection with the illumination of the northern face of the building		Address Draper House, 20 Elephant & Castle SE1 Ward Newington	

1. REASONS FOR URGENCY AND LATENESS

- 1.1 An urgent determination is required for this application for the following reasons, should approval be given.

This capital spend must be made by the end of this financial year. If the application is successful, it would take a further 6 weeks to order the projection lights. If this matter is delayed until the next committee in December it would make it very difficult to deliver the project in accordance with the agreed timescale set by London Development Agency, and risk losing funding.

- 1.2 The report is late because officers were awaiting important information on the design details to submit the final drawing.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 To determine the above application which is for the consideration of Planning Committee due to resident objections.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Grant planning permission.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Draper House is a 24 storey tower block owned by the London Borough of Southwark, located within the Draper Estate, bordered by Newington Butts, Howell Walk, Hampton Street and Walworth Road. The building has a mixture of commercial uses at ground floor level and 141 self-contained residential units above.

- 4.2 The northern face of the tower, which overlooks the south roundabout, is an imposing vertical surface and is a dominant feature of the skyline. The immediate surroundings include pedestrian walkways, parking areas, bin-storage features and a basketball court. The building is accessed from internal estate roads which spur from Hampton Street.

- 4.3 The Elephant Links Partnership Regeneration Programme is comprised of five strategic objectives that combined would ensure the delivery of a social inclusion programme and major infrastructure investment that, it is hoped, will result in a sustainable and inclusive community living and working in a well-functioning environment.
- 4.4 As part of the first phase of the E-Impacts programme in 2003, Equation Lighting Design Ltd undertook a lighting masterplan and feasibility study in the area. From this a number of key feature buildings were identified as they presented an opportunity to create a series of landmark buildings in the area through high profile, dynamic lighting designs. Draper House was identified as one such building.
- 4.5 It is proposed that six bespoke colour wheel projection lights be located at the roof level of the building's north elevation. These lights would flood the concrete face of the building with lighting, creating a colourful backdrop during the evening hours.
- 4.6 The lighting will be fixed on specifically designed brackets, which are in turn fixed to the floor of the top level that is accessed by a narrow corridor that runs the length of the building's north side.
- 4.7 There is no relevant planning history at the site.

5. FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION

5.1 Main Issues

The main issues in this case are the impact of the proposal on the streetscene, the amenity of the residents of the block and the traffic impact.

5.2 Planning Policy

Southwark Unitary Development Plan 1995 [UDP]:

E.2.3 Aesthetic Control - complies

E.3.1 Protection of Amenity - complies

The Southwark Plan [Revised Deposit Unitary Development Plan] March 2004

Policy 3.1 Environmental Effects - complies

Policy 3.2 Protection of Amenity - complies

Policy 3.11 Quality in Design - complies

Policy 5.2 Traffic Impacts - complies

Supplementary Planning Guidance, 'A Development Framework for Elephant & Castle'

The site borders the 'Core Area of Opportunity'

IPG7 HR: Refurbishment of existing Council stock - Complies, as it is essential to the regeneration process.

IPG5.1, 5.2 and 5.3: Public realm and open spaces - Complies, as it meets the

principles by providing an improved public realm with Draper House becoming a significant landmark.

IPG7.2: Gateway Zones - Complies, improving Draper House will reinforce the transition between existing development and proposed larger scale development within the core area.

5.3 Consultations

Site Notice: 29/07/04

Press Notice: N/A

Consultees:

Conservation

Traffic Group

TfL

1-141 (incl) Draper House, Walworth Road, Elephant and Castle, London, SE1 6SX

1-20 (incl) Castle House, Walworth Road, London, SE1 - *Consultation letters were sent to this block on two occasions however as the unit is vacant the letters were returned by Royal Mail on both occasions.*

Replies from:

37 Draper House

'I think this sign will look terrible.'

53 Draper House

'How will the development affect the building's features? Is there any specific reasons why the project is being carried out? Will it lead to noise pollution in the area?'

119 Draper House

'I don't want the Council to spend money on silly lights when we, who live in Draper House, suffer high volumes of noise. I think the money should be put towards double-glazing.'

132 Draper House

'Draper House is an eyesore, a dirty grey building which is in need of refurbishment, particularly in light of the regeneration in the surrounding area. Why draw attention to this building by having projection lights? Refurbish the building first. Who does the light benefit, not the tenants who have to put with noise and inconvenience.'

134 Draper House

'The front of Draper House is in very poor condition with off-colour walls and water staining. As a result of this, the placing of lights on the front of the building would do nothing to enhance the building or the estate, and would only highlight the poor condition of Draper House.'

'I also feel that the amount of light pollution in this very central area is already more than should really be permissible, and the proposal would exacerbate the problem. Should the project go ahead money would not be forthcoming from the Council budget to continue this project and the lights would fall into disrepair or, if it was, it would drain money from the budget at the expense of other essential works.'

'At some time in the future, once the proposed regeneration has been completed and the Draper Estate upgraded, this project may be worth considering, but at this time I feel that it should not go ahead.'

The Chair of the Draper Estate Tenants Association has also written to the Council, enclosing 27 identical letters of objection signed by residents of Draper House. The letter states that at a recent meeting of DETA the tenants stated their opposition to the erection of any lighting. The tenants consider that the money would be better spent 'by cleaning the building rather than showing the disintegration of the block.'

Traffic

It is a TfL road so they must be consulted as highway authority

Conservation

No objections

Transport for London

TfL would not wish to see a speed of colour change that may be considered to cause a distraction and would wish to have this clarified.

6. PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 It is considered that the three main issues relate to design, protecting the amenities of existing residents, traffic implications and the proposals contribution to the Elephant & Castle regeneration programme.

Design

- 6.2 Draper House is a concrete building which is quite dominant in the streetscene but visually unattractive. The installation of a colourwash at this site is considered to enhance this building and the streetscene creating visual interest. By such enhancement and drawing focus to the immediate area, the proposed lighting would contribute towards creating a more desirable place to live.

- 6.3 The proposed design of the feature lighting would be such that only the minimum number of lights are used to achieve the desired effect. All light fittings are full cut-off lanterns, being enclosed on three sides with which greatly reduces the upward light distribution above the horizontal. The design will ensure that no light is directed towards the sky, and that all main light beams are directed towards the building's north face and the footpaths below.

Amenity

- 6.4 The bespoke colour wheel projection lights are to be installed on the twenty fourth floor. The beam angle of the projectors is very narrow (some 4 degrees) so the amount of light projected horizontally will be minimal.
- 6.5 The light ingress into the building will be minimal due to the majority of the building's northern face being a blank facade, with only a central shaft of windows running up the tower. It is proposed that the lighting would be time-controlled so that it operates only during peak circulation times. It is

recommended that the lighting be switched-off at midnight, certainly as an initial trial period.

- 6.6 The issue of noise disturbance raised by Draper House residents is unfounded as such problems would not occur.
- 6.7 As regards maintenance fears, the contract will include for a minimum of a twelve months' maintenance and concurrent defects liability period after practical completion of the lighting works. The contractor shall replace any lights/fittings that fail through damage during this period. It is also proposed that the SRB programme, which ends in March 2006, will cover running costs during this period after which time all costs will transfer to the property owners.

Traffic Impact

- 6.8 Transport for London, although not objecting in principle to the proposal, expressed concerns as to the speed with which the colours of the lights change which could distract drivers on the Elephant and Castle roundabout and have requested that this be clarified prior to approval being given. Equation Lighting has since confirmed that such hazards would not arise as the colours would only change fully every fifteen minutes.

Regeneration Programme

- 6.9 It is considered that the proposed lighting meets two of the five strategic objectives of the Elephant Links Partnership regeneration programme. SO1 (Sustainable City Links) and SO5 (individual Links) are both considered to be met due to the proposed improvement to the building and its focus representing a forward project and a hoped for catalyst to a fuller refurbishment of Draper House and contributing also to the wider area's regeneration.

7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None direct

8. LOCAL AGENDA 21 [Sustainable Development] IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The use of solar power or other alternative power sources were not considered feasible. The cost to install the necessary infrastructure was outside the SRB funding strategic aims and was considered too high a cost for the SRB budget.

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