

WOODBERRY DOWN COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

Board Meeting

MINUTES

Thursday 16th November 2023
7:15 pm Redmond Community Centre

Attendance

Kalu Amogu, Andrea Anderson, Geoff Bell, Hilary Britton, Euphemia Chukwu, Phil Cooke, Adrian Essex, Mina Faragalla, Oonagh Gormley, Elaine Gosnell, Jackie Myers, Barbara Panuzzo, William Sheehy, Omar Villalba, Leonora Williams, Ekaterina Andreeva, Dulce Laluces, Doreen Cox, Gloria Obiliana

Guests Included

Sarah Fabes, Tom Anthony, Isobel Pierce, Carol Boye, Anthony Green, Caroline Selman, Rico Prince, Roda Hassan, Ameera Hassan

Section 0 - Introduction

1. Welcome / Apologies for absence

1.1. Donna Fakes, Jacquie Knowles, Cllr Sarah Young, Maggie Lewis, Tina Parrott,

2. Acceptance of minutes:

2.1 There were two points raised on the accuracy of the September minutes: A discussion followed about the accuracy of paragraph 1.4 related to the benefits of the 2024 masterplan. Tom confirmed that the details, including improving tree retention from 30% to 60%, were indeed accurate.

2.2 Elaine highlighted that her point was not accurately reflected in paragraph 0.22. She proposed an amendment to include, "Elaine considered the design of the single aspect dwelling as being inferior," specifying that there are 77 dwellings out of 511 that are single aspect and, in her opinion, are inferior. This clarification addresses Elaine's preference for figures rather than percentages.

2.3 The Board approved the minutes from the meeting on 21st September.

2.4 In the minutes of the 19th October Board meeting, Hilary pointed out a typo in Paragraph 1.15, suggesting an amendment to: "William also raised that the corridor is single aspect with no windows and that the corridors are pitch-black without the emergency lighting working."

2.5 The Board corrected the second-to-last line of Paragraph 1.16 to read: "Unfortunately, finding alternative temporary accommodation for Phase 4

temporary tenants would be more challenging due to a shortage of properties across Hackney."

- 2.6 Geoff raised a concern about Paragraph 1.3, noting that he has not seen the tenure split proposal. Tom clarified that the tenure split proposal was not part of the Masterplan presentation but assured that an update on this matter would be provided during the presentation.

3. Matters Arising / Action Tracker

- 3.1 An action item for Jaime was to confirm that Section 13 of the Hackney Plan, would be incorporated into the November presentation by Tom. This pertained to the car parking discussion. Tom confirmed that this will be covered as part of the presentation.
- 3.2 Roda has scheduled a meeting on 23rd November, for Omar, Geoff, and Mina to discuss the Public Forum.
- 3.3 Anthony Green affirmed that the presentation on the affordability model is scheduled for delivery to the Board in December. He committed to distributing the presentation ahead of the Board meeting to allow members ample time for review.

ACTION: Antony will issue the affordability model presentation 7 days in advance before the December Board.

- 3.4 Anthony updated that the timeline for Birchwood residents eligible for a refund of surplus payments from the 2020/21 accounts is currently with Jada, and she indicated that a timeline would be available next week. A new dedicated service charge business partner is now addressing the service charge issue.
- 3.5 Omar emphasised that this is a refund for overcharging, not surplus payments, and residents have been waiting for 18 months. Omar suggested arranging an offline meeting with Anthony to discuss this matter further.

ACTION: Anthony will arrange a meeting with Omar will be meeting to discuss the Birchwood 2020/21 accounts.

- 3.6 Operational meeting with WDCO and NHG agreed to reinstate estate walkabout until M&E issues improve.
- 3.7 Independent survey on TV aerials commissioned by Berkeley; no faults found, but issues persist.

ACTION: Tom to address William's concern regarding reception in Rowan and Hornbeam with Trevor.

- 3.8 No update from Jaime on the feasibility of including buyer demographic information in Berkeley report.

ACTION: Berkeley to provide information by the next Liaison meeting ahead of December Board.

- 3.9 NHG's update on emergency lights and fobs received; Roda provided copies of the ECG compliance tracker.
- 3.10 Chair's follow-up with Deputy Mayor Guy Nicholson awaits response.

ACTION: Isobel to send a reminder to Deputy Mayor Guy Nicholson

- 3.11 Board members' requests emailed to partners by the Chair.
- 3.12 Window report awaited from Berkeley's legal team; interim remedial works on KSS1 windows completed. Further updates pending consultants' advice.
- 3.13 Public Forum meeting booked for Thursday, 23rd November.
- 3.14 Joint site visit by NHG, Hackney and Berkeley for rodent and pest control strategy; NHG continues pest control work. Data on pest control issues to be provided by all partners for WDCO Board rep.
- 3.15 Tom will provide car park and podium updates during Masterplan presentations.
- 3.16 Viability information and Social Life presentation moved to January Board; Affordability presentation in December.

Section 4 - Presentation:

Masterplan Update (including an update on tenure split and information on podiums/parking):

- 4.1. Berkeley presented an overview of the Masterplan progress and discussions with the Design Committee during September and October.
- 4.2. The September presentation emphasised the transition from setting movement, routes, and open spaces to shaping building form. The outline application represents an illustrative scheme, still subject to change. The current count stands at 3364 homes, surpassing the 2014 masterplan's approval for 2399 homes.
- 4.3. The tenure split outlined is 41.7% affordable, split between 57% shared ownership and 43% social rented. Tom clarified that the actual split may vary during the outline application, with the goal of reaching 41.7% upon Masterplan completion.
- 4.4. Regarding illustrative massing, the plan aims to maintain the centre of Woodberry Down as the highest point. Five 'green fingers' connect the new river from north to south.
- 4.5. The presentation covered changes to massing, their impact on housing numbers, and the rationale for including podiums. Berkeley has also initiated work on Design Coding, Parameter Plans, and Public Consultation.
- 4.6. Since the September presentation, Berkeley has had regular meetings with the Design Committee and Hackney Planning, as well as stakeholders like the GLA and TFL. Notable changes include reducing Phase 5 from 22 to 18 storeys, standardising Phase 7 at 16 storeys, and a substantial reduction in homes for Phase 8.

- 4.7. The revised scheme targets up to 3199 homes with a 100% efficiency rate. Adhering to nationally proscribed space standards, Berkeley anticipates a range between 2976 and 3199 homes, considering factors like play space capacity for around 3200 homes.
- 4.8. Key adjustments in Phases 5, 7, and 8 significantly impact the development. Changes include the reduction of a 21-story tower in Phase 8 and an emphasis on uninterrupted views of Finsbury Park to the north.
- 4.9. These changes result in up to 3200 homes, 41.7% affordable housing, 15,500 square metres of open space, retention of the majority of trees with a target of 60, and adjusted height ranges from 3 to 21 storeys.
- 4.10. **Drivers for Podiums:** There is reference to the fact that there will be podiums as part of the future Masterplan. In the 2014 Masterplan, there is around 260000 square metres of podium space. One of the big changes in the new Masterplan is a change in policy for car parking. Berkeley is now being pushed by the GLA and Hackney to be 'car light', which refers to being car free, with a 3% allowance for Blue Badges. This means that the number of podiums can be reduced as part of this Masterplan. As podiums are expensive to build, they would not be built if it was not the best solution. There is also sufficient flexibility in the latter phases of the Masterplan to get rid of podiums. Currently, podiums are the best solution as they allow for active frontage.
- 4.11. Tom emphasised that for vibrant Ground Floor activity, active frontage thrives with podiums, providing 65% dynamic ground-level space. Without podiums, alternatives yield limited exterior movement, only 17%.
- 4.12. Berkeley shared Phase 6 as an example on the rationale for podiums. The integration of necessary elements such as cycle storage, refuse storage and car parking spaces leaves a small, active area around the exterior.
- 4.13. Ground-level placement of bins and plants is practical, avoiding expensive additions like extra lifts for elevated bike storage. Practicality extends to safety concerns, with individual lockers addressing theft and safety concerns for scooters.
- 4.14. Geoff questioned the alignment of Berkeley's parking statement with Section 13 of the Hackney Plan. Tom explained the benefits of podiums for public space, greenery, and street trees. He clarified the Hackney Plan's stance on on-street parking, emphasising council interpretation and advice from Transport Officers.

ACTION: Tom will clarify Section 13 of the Hackney Plan with Hackney's Transport Officers.

- 4.15. Berkeley also noted it discontinued basements due to environmental concerns and cost.
- 4.16. Elaine contrasted podiums with 'green roofs' in terms of green space. Tom highlighted the richness of podiums, surpassing 'green roofs' in providing fully planted trees, bay areas, and water features.

- 4.17. Elaine queried ground floor space as an alternative to podiums for bike sheds. Tom indicated it was possible contingent on bike storage needs.
- 4.18. The Board inquired about organising bike storage space. Tom mentions the policy allowed for 50% double levels, and expressed a willingness to accommodate more if the policy changes.
- 4.19. **Public Open Spaces and Design Coding:** Berkeley has started to look at a Design Code over the last two months. The Parameter Plans sets height and massing, the Development Schedule sets floor areas and the Design Code sets the number of ways the building form and streets could come forward.
- 4.20. Berkeley conducted several community workshops to explore how these elements contribute to the creation of accessible spaces. They focused on optimising movement around Woodberry Down to ensure the central area thrives, considering travel times for future phases. For instance, it takes 5 minutes from Phase 5 to reach the heart of Woodberry Down, offering options like the scenic route along the new river or a direct path.
- 4.21. Considering community input, Berkeley identified preferences for a connection to heritage, increased playfulness, educational elements, enhanced biodiversity, spaces for teenagers, cost-effective community facilities, and diverse play equipment. This feedback will inform the Design Coding and principles.
- 4.22. Berkeley is approaching this holistically, exploring interventions like heritage trails, sensory planting, and enhanced connections to the reservoir.
- 4.23. Collaborating with DPQ, Berkeley is working on incorporating subtle interventions for earlier phases, including heritage trails, sensory planting, and biodiversity trails, considering local timelines and community growth.
- 4.24. Berkeley's public consultation will run for the next three weeks, featuring four events across Woodberry Down. Further engagements are planned for early next year. Berkeley will return in January with the Viability Explanation and an exploration of why this translates to more homes. Another Masterplan update is scheduled for the February Board meeting, followed by a Public Consultation in February. The Planning Application is set to be submitted at the end of March.
- 4.25. During the meeting, Board members inquired about public access to the podiums. Tom confirmed that these podiums will not be accessible to the public. Adrian questioned why public access is restricted, and Tom clarified that it's due to service charge and security concerns.
- 4.26. Elaine emphasised the significance of both private and public access, expressing concern that constructing anything might compromise the open aspect. She highlighted that good design goes beyond play areas, emphasising that this is not just a walkway to tall buildings but about maintaining an open aspect.
- 4.27. The Board also inquired about the possibility of securing funding to enhance existing spaces.

5 Ground Floor Strategy Presentation:

- 5.1 This Berkeley's presentation focused on the research conducted as part of the Ground Floor Strategy, covering the 'Health' of Woodberry Down, changes in Planning Policy since the 2014 Masterplan, evolving shopping trends over the past decade, the Socio-Economic Profile of Woodberry Down, the Baseline Assessment, the Demand Assessment, opportunities at Woodberry Down, and the Next Steps.
- 5.2 The Baseline Assessment offered an overview of the current state, while the Demand Assessment examines the need for future community and commercial facilities across Woodberry Down. Berkeley manages some existing shops, with several facing challenges, influenced by factors like Covid and reduced business rent reliefs. The presentation touched on how Berkeley is supporting struggling independent shops.
- 5.3 Shopping trends have shifted since 2014, including the decline of the high street due to the rise of online shopping. Changes in lifestyle, such as remote work due to Covid, have also been observed. Berkeley's research indicates that for core shoppers at Woodberry Down, convenience, particularly everyday goods, is an essential item that residents would like to see expanded.
- 5.4 For Phases 2, 3, and 4, where community and commercial space are being developed, Berkeley is prioritising these phases to meet the local needs of both future and existing residents.
- 5.5 In their research, Berkeley has found it crucial to encourage footfall and increase dwell time. The Social Life survey revealed positive resident views on the parks and green spaces Berkeley has delivered so far. Residents have noted shortages in nursery places, a lack of restaurant choices, and a limited variety of shops. Younger residents have highlighted a scarcity of study spaces in Woodberry Down. Berkeley will be conducting consultations to gather more views from residents on how to shape and curate the upcoming space.
- 5.6 The Ground Floor Strategy (GFS) unfolds in three stages: Stage 1 encompasses Baseline and Demand assessments. Stage 2 involves shaping Woodberry Down, while Stage 3 entails engagement in future phases. Berkeley will concurrently execute Stages 2 & 3.
- 5.7 In Stage 1a & 1b, the Baseline Assessment aims to understand the current and future demographic at Woodberry Down and assess the potential of future commercial and community spaces. Berkeley collaborated with CF Commercial for research on existing and future commercial spaces and with Social Life on community facilities. The research explored two distinct study areas: the commercial study area, focusing on key retail areas in and around Woodberry Down, and the community analysis. Residents are found to prioritise travel for community facilities over day-to-day goods.
- 5.8 The Stage 1a Baseline Assessment research involved site visits by CF Commercial and Social Life, coupled with map searches. Berkeley used census data to understand the current resident demographics. CF Commercial conducted comparative analysis in other areas and centres around Woodberry Down. Mobile geolocation data and Acorn profiling

were employed to establish how residents use existing facilities and identify key trends.

- 5.9 In Stage 1b, the Demand Assessment research involved Social Life sharing survey data with Berkeley for inclusion in the Ground Floor Strategy. Social Life conducted three youth workshops with My Place and The Edge, along with ten walking interviews to gather perspectives from residents across different tenures. Berkeley also delved into mixed-use developments and analysed data from CACI research.
- 5.10 Berkeley reported that unfortunately, some existing shops at Woodberry Down are underperforming. Berkeley's rent collection from these units is down at 67%, contrasting with the 86% figure across London. Woodberry Down falls below the London average. The KSS5 shops are currently struggling. Berkeley offers a rent-free period or a capital contribution to all occupants and tenants. After the rent-free period, the rent reduces to half and typically returns to full rent at 15 months post-signing the lease. Berkeley negotiates rents collaboratively with occupiers and tenants. Despite marketing efforts, including withholding rents to encourage bids, there has been little interest in the former project office since late 2020. National retailers approached by Berkeley have expressed disinterest in Woodberry Down, even with future data on current and future residents.
- 5.11 The Board inquired about the possibility of short-term meanwhile uses. Sarah responded that Berkeley currently has no vacant units, but as part of the cultural strategy, this could support MHDT and the Woodberry Blooms vacant shop.
- 5.12 Adrian raised concerns about efforts to enhance footfall and enquired about plans to improve the street outside Woodberry Blooms. Sarah responded that Phase 4 will feature a new square with plans for public art. DPQ is exploring art installations to mitigate wind conditions. The proposed tower in Phase 4 has a canopy designed to break up the wind, and wind tunnel test results are available in the Planning Application online.
- 5.13 Geoff noted the success of Dobar, Greggs, the Haringey shopping area, and Sainsbury's, attributing their achievements to relatively lower prices compared to those at Woodberry Down.
- 5.14 William mentioned that teachers in schools prefer going to Costa Coffee over the coffee shops in Woodberry Down. Sarah responded that Berkeley's commercial asset management team aims to attract national operators, but Woodberry Down is not a designated retail area and competes with various district centres.
- 5.15 The Hackney Planning Policy map indicates that Woodberry Down is not designated for retail. Local, regional, and national policies advocate concentrating retail into local, district, and major town centres. Major planning applications at Woodberry Down must submit a Retail Impact Assessment to demonstrate no direct competition or adverse impact on allocated district, local, or major town centres.
- 5.16 The Hackney Core Strategy (2010) served as the primary planning document during the design phase of the 2014 Masterplan. It aimed to renew and extend existing retail floorspace between Manor House and

Woodberry Down, as reflected in the 2014 Masterplan. The 2014 Masterplan envisioned abundant retail, business, community, and leisure floor space. The Hackney Local Plan 2033 allocates sites, specifying that Berkeley will provide new retail and community uses to meet the needs of existing and future residents.

- 5.17 Since the Local Plan was adopted (in 2020), a total of approx. 46,130 sq ft of commercial / community spaces are coming forward across Phases 2, 3 & 4
- 5.18 The 2014 Masterplan aimed to incorporate a significant amount of non-residential floor space along Seven Sisters Road, aligning with the aspirations of the Hackney Core Strategy. The strategy emphasised connecting Manor House to Woodberry Down along Seven Sisters Road, but the central square orientation shifted from north to south. Notably, Phase 4 has deviated from the initial plan by eliminating retail or commercial spaces along the Seven Sisters Road frontage. This decision stemmed from surveys conducted post-2014 Masterplan, which highlighted low footfall along Seven Sisters Road. Residents departing from the tube tended to use the southern part of Woodberry Down, influencing the re-evaluation of the Masterplan.
- 5.19 Berkeley reported that observations indicate that locals leaving Manor House often opt for shortcuts like Woodberry Grove, favouring more scenic routes near Rowley Gardens. These patterns have played a pivotal role in Berkeley's reconsideration of the Masterplan. Berkeley's current objective is to establish a vibrant hub or heart of activity, strategically designed to attract residents to the existing shops along Woodberry Grove and Seven Sisters Road.
- 5.20 The 2014 Masterplan also envisioned incorporating non-residential floor space within Phase 8. Understanding the significance of parks as community magnets, Berkeley studied the Battersea Park case, revealing challenges faced by the Berkeley St Williams Scheme. Cafes in specific locations had struggled due to low footfall, with units lasting no more than a year and a half. Learning from this, Berkeley has reconsidered the approach in Phase 8, given its existing features like the new river path, cut through Rowley Gardens, Park View Cafe, and Finsbury Park cafe. The strategy now focuses on leveraging these established areas within Woodberry Down to promote thriving communities and generate activity.
- 5.21 Berkeley noted that trends that have developed since 2014 include: the high street decline is attributed to online shopping, while bank closures result from the rise of online banking. Post-COVID, remote work fuels demand for coffee shops and workspaces. The cost-of-living crisis shifts spending towards essentials. Berkeley recognises varied shopping patterns, noting younger reliance on online shopping.
- 5.22 Moving within Woodberry Down, residents' proximity to Central Square ranges from 2-8 minutes, excluding Phase 3 retail plans. Concerns arise about sustainable retail and community space, prompting assurance from Berkeley about no more commercial space in the 2023 Masterplan. The focus is on community space synergy in Stage 2. Berkeley works with the commercial asset team on marketing for Phase 3, emphasizing flexibility in Phases 3 and 4.

- 5.23 Geoff discussed the challenge of shops and noted Phase 8's orientation toward Haringey shopping centre. He inquired about Berkeley exploring diverse usage options like office space, campuses, or educational partners. Tom clarified that CF Commercial took an open-book approach, conducting a comprehensive study beyond town centres and shops. Berkeley sought to identify missing elements and determine viable solutions.
- 5.24 CF Commercial and Social Life advised providing community and commercial facilities catering to both low-income and higher-spending groups at Woodberry Down. Residents and CF Commercial suggest enhancing food and beverage options for increased local spending, with a focus on a Community Cafe. Centralising facilities is recommended to boost footfall and spending. Additional considerations include health services, such as counselling and physiotherapy, and addressing the need for nursery and tutoring facilities. Berkeley aims for synergy with existing shops.
- 5.25 Next Steps: Stage 2 and Stage 3 will run concurrently. Berkeley plans to incorporate resident feedback into Woodberry Down's development, conducting market tests. Discussions with Millco on Block D's space and unit allocation, in conjunction with the Redmond Centre, are ongoing. Collaboration with NHG and Millco, as well as Hackney Council on the Library options proposal, is underway. The next phase involves an options proposal for Phase 4. For commercial facilities, Berkeley and CF Commercial will engage with potential occupiers' post-consultation.
- 5.26 In Stage 3 Engagement, the November Masterplan outlines Berkeley's proposal for 950 square metres of community space. Ground Floor Strategy consultation is slated for spring 2024. A follow-up with the WDCO Board is planned for early 2024, including workshops with My Place to understand younger community members' aspirations. A further update to the WDCO Board in Spring 2024 will present Stage 2 and the consultation findings.

6 Board Discussion without partners:

- 6.1 Adrian updated on the Insite issue and mentioned that he spoke to Michael Pamment on Wednesday 15th November, concentrating on the the emotions that residents have been through such as helplessness and anger. Adrian explained the impact of Berkeley's bad decisions and Insite's poor communication and that this has knocked residents confidence towards them. Berkeley are holding surgeries and Michael Pamment would provide organograms so that people understand who is responsible for what and how to escalate an issue. Adrian suggested that Berkeley should concentrate on rebuilding the confidence they have lost.
- 6.2 Adrian also raised that Oonagh informed him about her concerns regarding the requirement to purchase heating from Berkeley namely one line in their lease rather than a comprehensive agreement. So there might be a time period after which it wasn't possible to retrospectively charge

for energy. Adrian asked the Board members for approval if he could express the Board's dismay on the situation and the Board agreed.

ACTION: Adrian will chase this up with Michael Pamment and will update the Board.

6.3 Roda had a meeting with the NHG heat manager who deals with the new company Vital who will be billing NHG run blocks and raised the questions from the TRA. Roda asked for the minutes to reflect the discussion from the meeting. Maplewood and Birchwood will be doing a review and will feedback to the Board.

ACTION: Roda will circulate the minutes from this meeting to WDCO members in NHG blocks.

6.4 Ekaterina Andreeva asked who is paying the service charge for Block D in Hartington Court? Roda responded that the vacant space in Block D should not be included in the resident service charges.

ACTION: Roda will get clarification on the resident service charges from Berkeley and R&R.

6.5 Elaine mentioned that the young people from the My Place project are currently looking for study spaces and raised that part of the deal with the school was that this would be open to the community.