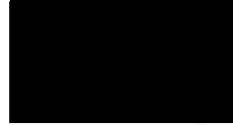


Harry Gerard



15 DMR 17

Sadiq Khan
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
SE1 2AA

12th December 2017

Re: SME developer challenges in obtaining planning permission for developable London sites.

Dear Mr Khan,

I am writing to you in light of the recent budget announcement and your accompanied comments, specifically with regards to the 'Policy H2 Small sites' and acute housing challenges the city of London is facing and has faced for some time.

I am an SME property developer, with the goal of providing high quality, design-led family housing for real people, for Londoners and wider domestic buyers.

For the past two years I have worked tirelessly to secure planning permission for 4 x 3 bed family homes, [planning ref no: **DC/16/096329**] on a well-connected site in Lewisham, that currently comprises of low grade garages and hard standing. The land has a street frontage and building precedent directly to the South. A concrete wall fronts the site and without question makes a deadening and negative contribution to the street scene.

Having vehemently followed the planning process, including extremely close work with Lewisham council through multiple pre applications where support for the development was consistent throughout, as well as two public consultations with local residents, we received a recommendation for approval by the council. To our surprise this was overturned by the committee, who were intimidated by a local QC planning lawyer, by profession well practiced and determined in delaying and throwing out any local development to his residence.

That committee decision happened 12 months ago, we of course appealed the decision, but to our great disappoint have since had to deal with a local council simply unwilling to move at an equitable pace to have this application decided.

Even taken in isolation (before the issuance of the new draft London plan particularly re small sites), our site is crying out for development. Legally and physically split with no ancillary usage for over a decade, from an oversized historic back garden. Sole access from a street the site fronts, currently consisting of poor quality garages with proposed window to window distances that meet the London plan, accompanied by a daylight and sunlight assessment that verifies no loss of light to neighbouring properties.

Given the now critical macro housing situation and your view on releasing 'small sites' across the city, this is an excellent example of a small developer with a prime development site, trying to provide a small but important contribution to London's family housing. The drawn out, inequitable planning system has cost tens of thousands of pounds and more importantly delayed the construction of much need accommodation designed specifically for domestic buyers within the borough of Lewisham. I have been unable to move on other neglected sites and in turn lost opportunities to invest and provide further family housing for the city. As it stands the lack of any kind of urgency and engagement from the local council is at complete odds with the ambitions and targets of government.

I write this letter in the hope it will further highlight the flaws in the current planning system, and the challenges SME developers face to build high quality accommodation on suitable development sites, despite the national calls to increase the rate at which we build homes.

I am sure we are just one of a host of cases, but any weight you could add to help us provide this much needed housing would be greatly appreciated.

Kindest Regards,



Harry Gerard

