

Pre-App Planning Sub-Committee – 14/11/2022

ADDRESS: Woodberry Down Masterplan - Phase 4	
WARD:	Woodberry Down
REFERENCE NUMBER:	2021/0211/PA
APPLICANT:	Berkeley Homes
ARCHITECT:	LDS
PROPOSAL: Erection of approximately 470 residential units and commercial/community floorspace together with associated landscaping, public realm, servicing and other development for Phase 4 of Woodberry Down Estate, N4	

ANALYSIS INFORMATION

ZONING DESIGNATION	YES	NO
CPZ	X	
CAZ		X
City Fringe Opportunity Area		X
Conservation Area		X
Listed Building (Statutory)		X - adjacent Grade II listed buildings St Olave's Church
Listed Building (Local)		X - adjacent St Olave's Vicarage
Priority Employment Area		X

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Members will be aware that Phase 4 of Woodberry Down, together with the later Phases 5-8 (inc) has previously been reported to the Pre-Application Planning Sub-Committee on 27th October 2021.
- 1.2 Collaborative work between the Local Planning Authority and the development partners has continued since then, however for reasons primarily relating to time constraints and the logistical requirements of progressing the next phase of development, a decision has been taken by the development partners (LBH, Notting Hill Genesis and Berkeley Homes) to split out Phase 4 to be dealt with as a standalone application for planning permission, with Phases 5-8 (inc) to be dealt with subsequently as an outline application masterplan for the remainder of the estate.
- 1.3 The proposals are currently at pre-application stage and have not been subject to formal public consultation through the planning process. However, due to the character of the proposed development and the history of the estate regeneration programme, some public consultation has been undertaken by the applicants with key stakeholders including WDCO (Woodberry Down Community Organisation) and the Design Committee (made up of representatives of the Council's Woodberry Down

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Regeneration Team and WDCO, along with other stakeholders), and there is general widespread local awareness of the forthcoming development. This consultation process is progressing in tandem with the formal pre-application process.

- 1.4 The proposals for Phase 4 have been presented to Design Review Panel twice, in October 2021 and July 2022, and have previously been presented to the Pre-Application Planning Sub-Committee (albeit at a very high level alongside proposals for the wider masterplan area) in October 2021.
- 1.5 The applicant team currently hope to be in a position to submit an application for planning permission before the end of 2022, with determination by early summer 2023.
- 1.6 The proposed development is being reported to the Planning Sub-Committee on a pre-application basis to enable Members to review the evolved proposals prior to submission of a formal application. Any comments made are of a provisional nature only and will not prejudice the final outcome of any planning application submitted for formal determination.
- 1.7 The Design Review Panel (DRP) has had the opportunity to comment on the design relatively early in the design process (in October 2021) and more recently (July 2022), however what is being presented to Members is an evolution of the scheme which was subject to a DRP on 28th July 2022. The outcomes of the DRP (where relevant) are incorporated into this report.
- 1.8 The proposals have also been presented to the GLA at Level 1 and 2 pre-application stage, and a TfL pre-application has also taken place, all during the course of 2022. Again, the outcomes of these discussions are included within this report where relevant.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 Phase 4 is located centrally within the wider estate, and is bounded by Seven Sisters Road to the north, Woodberry Down to the south, Woodberry Grove to the east, and land associated with the Grade II listed St Olave's Church to the west. It currently contains six blocks of flats with a height of five storeys providing 200 units of accommodation, together with associated landscaping and surface car parking.

3 DETAILS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The proposed scheme is the demolition and redevelopment of the existing buildings on Phase 4 to provide a residential led mixed use development comprising three main typologies. The buildings fronting Woodberry Down are proposed as two part 6 storey, part 9 storey blocks, between which will be single storey elements providing access to undercroft parking and a concierge service. The frontage to Seven Sisters

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Road will comprise a series of four 11 storey blocks linked and bookended by 5 smaller recessed blocks of 8 storeys. A taller tower of 24 storeys would be located in the south east of the site, whilst single storey units would be provided along the western and eastern boundaries of the site, connecting the larger forms. These buildings would be arranged around a first floor podium garden.

- 3.2 The development is expected to provide approximately 470 residential units and 1,100m² commercial/community floorspace, together with associated green infrastructure including a public “square” at the eastern end of the site (Central Square) and a green pedestrian throughway at the western end of the site connecting Woodberry Down and Seven Sisters Road, and servicing (including car and bicycle parking and refuse storage), as shown in LDS document 1182_Doc135_Sub committee meeting_221003.
- 3.3 There is an aspiration that the non-residential floorspace proposed at ground floor level adjacent to Central Square will provide a “civic hub” and library for the Woodberry Down Estate. This is supported in planning policy terms, and it is understood that a feasibility study into the deliverability of such a facility is currently underway. If the civic hub is not feasible, the space is expected to be made available for commercial uses.

4 PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 The planning history of the Woodberry Down Estate is long and complex, however Phase 4 is being submitted as a standalone planning application. Some phases of the estate have already been redeveloped (KSS1-5 and Phase 2), and Phase 3 is consented and currently under construction.

5 POLICY CONTEXT AND KEY MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The Development Plan comprises the Hackney Local Plan 2033 (LP33) and the London Plan 2021 (LP21).

Principle of the development (estate regeneration and provision of affordable housing)

- 5.2 The estate is entirely covered by LP33 strategic site allocation MH1 (Woodberry Down) which allows for comprehensive regeneration of the existing housing stock through mixed use redevelopment. Although this LP33 policy and allocation flows from previous iterations of the Development Plan, the current version of the London Plan introduces policy H8 (Loss of Existing Housing and Estate Redevelopment) which states that “*before considering the demolition and replacement of affordable homes, boroughs, housing associations and their partners should always consider alternative options first. They should balance the potential benefits of demolition and*

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rebuilding of homes against the wider social and environmental impacts and consider the availability of Mayoral funding and any conditions attached to that funding.”

- 5.3 This should be considered in full as part of the assessment to support comprehensive redevelopment
- 5.4 The GLA have advised that the baseline for re-provision of social rented accommodation is the total quantum of social rented accommodation that is currently located within Phase 4 the Woodberry Down Estate, although there may be some flexibility (for example using floor area rather than unit mix to determine level of re-provision, although this will be dependent on the information available to the applicant to evidence this position). The Hackney Local Plan sets out the evidenced local delivery requirements in relation to tenure and size mix for residential developments.
- 5.5 The quantum of affordable housing currently proposed is 206 units, or 43.8% of the total, of which 90 units (43.69% of the affordable housing) would be social rented accommodation (there is no London Affordable Rent accommodation proposed). It is unclear whether an equivalent amount of social rented accommodation to that being lost as a result of the development is being provided, or whether this is the maximum viable amount that can be delivered.
- 5.6 The unit size mix currently proposed delivers 50 larger dwellings suitable for family occupation (3 beds and larger) across all three tenures. The size mix proposed does not currently achieve this policy objective.

Design, including heights, massing, architecture, landscaping, public realm and quality of accommodation

- 5.7 LP33 recognises the role of Woodberry Down in delivering “new homes and active frontages at the street level” along Seven Sisters Road in order to “enhance this gateway to the borough” and recognises the importance of “corridors” in creating and enhancing local character, providing new homes, commercial and employment opportunities, and community infrastructure, whilst delivering healthy streets and public realm improvements including urban greening. Local, regional and national planning policy seek to achieve high standards of design in terms of both appearance and function.
- 5.8 Generally, the architectural approach taken seeks to respond to the existing historic fabric of the local area, particularly in respect of materiality and palette. The heights, massings and positioning of the main buildings likewise respond to the differing characters of the frontages of the site. However, careful consideration of how the design of the taller building is successful in achieving high design quality that enhances the skyline is critical to the acceptability of the proposed development.

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- 5.9 The stepping of development down to St Olave's Church (a Grade II listed building) and associated buildings, and the separation of built form from these heritage assets and afforded by the pedestrian throughway (which also allows the retention of existing trees in this area), is well considered.
- 5.10 Adopted planning policy requires design of the landscaping and public realm areas to be of high quality, whilst contributing to local amenity through the provision of play space, biodiversity, urban cooling, and opportunities for active travel and leisure.
- 5.11 The public spaces proposed include Central Square in the east of the site, the St Olave's green link in the west of the site, and the pocket park in the south. The design of each space seeks to provide opportunities for publicly accessible play space and contribute to pedestrian and cyclist permeability and sustainable drainage of the site.
- 5.12 A significant quantum of new planting is proposed, primarily in the courtyard podium garden. The proposals aim to maximise retention of trees, although no detailed information demonstrating that the building lines proposed can successfully achieve this has been provided to date.
- 5.13 There is some uncertainty over adoption responsibilities over the proposed public open spaces, and it is unclear to date whether this has been factored into the design of the spaces; this may have implications for longterm delivery.
- 5.14 The planning objectives in terms of quality of the residential accommodation in terms of space, accessibility, functioning and amenity are set out in Hackney Local Plan policies LP1 (design quality and local character), LP2 (development and amenity) and LP17 (housing design), as well as policy D6 (housing quality and standards) of the London Plan, supported by the National Planning Policy Framework, National Planning Policy Guidance and the Nationally Described Space Standards.
- 5.15 Whilst the layouts are legible and appear to meet the minimum space and accessibility standards, there is uncertainty as to whether the accommodation will, as a whole, provide an adequate standard of accommodation in relation to light, cross-ventilation and overheating. In addition, part of the site has limited separation distances, and it is unclear whether, even with proposed mitigation, this would give rise to units with an unacceptable quality of amenity.

Transportation

- 5.16 Car parking for returning residents with existing car parking privileges is required to be provided as well as blue badge provision. This space will be given over to alternative "uses" over time, however it is unclear how the attrition of the car parking

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use will be managed over time and whether this will accord with planning policies which seek to make efficient use of land and delivery of sustainable forms of development.

- 5.17 The preferred option of both the Local Planning Authority and TfL is that whilst some of the space could be given over to additional blue badge parking for residents, a better use of the space would be as a centralised last mile delivery hub for residents. Such a use would have multiple local planning benefits including improvement of highway safety and air quality, and increased reliance on sustainable and active modes of transport.

Sustainability

- 5.18 Development Plan policy seeks the delivery of zero carbon development in respect of major referable schemes, specifically in order to address the declared climate emergency. It is unclear from the information provided to date how the proposals take a fabric first approach which minimises the carbon footprint of the development over its lifetime.

6 SUMMARY

- 6.1 The scheme has evolved considerably over the last year, and largely in a positive direction. The overall architectural approach, which is mindful of the local surroundings, and the public realm and landscaping, in particular have the potential to deliver a high quality of residential development, and if it is determined that the proposed civic space is deliverable, this, together with the last mile delivery hub, will provide an important heart to the estate.
- 6.2 Notwithstanding the above, some elements of the scheme, including the principle of demolition over retention and refurbishment, the design of the tower, the proposed housing mix in terms of tenure and size, the quality of some accommodation, and matters pertaining to sustainability including the fabric first approach, whole life carbon and circular economy require further consideration.
- 6.3 Although the application is expected to be submitted before the end of the year, further revisions to the proposals are expected in due course.

No	BACKGROUND PAPERS	NAME/DESIGNATION AND TELEPHONE EXTENSION OF ORIGINAL COPY	LOCATION CONTACT OFFICER
1.	Hackney Local Plan 2033 (2020) and the London Plan (2021)	Catherine Slade, Principal Planning Officer Major Projects Team X 8056	2 Hillman Street, London E8 1FB



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