

Pre-Application Planning Sub-Committee – 13/11/2023

ADDRESS: Phases 5-8 inclusive of Woodberry Down Estate, N4	
WARD:	Woodberry Down
REFERENCE NUMBER:	2023/0170/PA
APPLICANT:	Berkeley Homes (North East London) Limited
ARCHITECT:	Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands
PROPOSAL: Outline planning application for a residential-led mixed-use redevelopment of Phases 5-8 (inclusive) of Woodberry Down Estate, N4 together with associated landscaping, public realm, servicing and other development, with all matters other than access to be reserved	

ANALYSIS INFORMATION

ZONING DESIGNATION	YES	NO
CPZ	X, Zone G	
Central Activities Zone		X
City Fringe Opportunity Area		X
Conservation Area		Adjacent to Stoke Newington reservoirs, filter beds and New River CA
Listed Building (Statutory)		Adjacent to St Olave's Church, Woodberry Down Community JMI School, Ivy House Sluice, Finsbury Park Registered Park and Garden - All Grade II
Listed Building (Local)		Adjacent to Manor House station, The Finsbury, 336 Green Lanes, the Manor House, 316 Green Lanes, the Ivy House Hotel, 279 Green Lanes and St Olave's Vicarage,
Priority Office Area		X

1. PROPOSAL

- 1.1. The proposal is to submit an application for an outline planning permission with all matters reserved apart from access. The application will cover the four remaining phases of the Woodberry Down redevelopment - phases 5 to 8 as set out in the image below.

EXISTING SITE PLAN - PHASES 5-8



- 1.2. At this stage in the design the development proposes 3,199 units. This scheme has provided detail on the anticipated housing yield for each phase:
Phase 5: 774-833 dwellings
Phase 6: 993-1067 dwellings
Phase 7: 422-453 dwellings
Phase 8: 787-846 dwellings
TOTAL: 2976-3199 dwellings
- 1.3. Phase 5 in the south-east corner of Woodberry Down proposes two U-shaped blocks facing the reservoirs similar to earlier phases but at a greater height. A tower of 18-storeys is proposed adjacent to the one in phase 5, a second tower of 18-storeys is proposed in the north-east corner of the site and a third of 14 storeys in the south-west of the site.
- 1.4. Phase 6, located on Seven Sisters Road, proposes a public open space and two main perimeter blocks of 10-12 storeys. Two towers of 18 storeys are proposed on Seven Sisters Road towards the eastern and western ends of the phase.
- 1.5. Phase 7, located in the north-east of Woodberry Down, proposes a perimeter block and buildings facing Seven Sisters Road of 9 storeys with a 13 storey setback. A tower of 17/15 storeys is located to the rear of the phase adjacent to the listed school.
- 1.6. Phase 8 is located on Green Lanes in the north-west opposite Finsbury Park. It proposes two main perimeter blocks of up to 14 storeys on Green Lanes. Two adjacent buildings of up to 11 storeys are also proposed. A 21 storey tower is located

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in the middle of the site in the southern perimeter block. Rowley Gardens will be enlarged as part of the proposal.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. 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 longstanding estate regeneration scheme the proposals have been discussed with Woodberry Down Community Organisation, and with key stakeholders including the Greater London Authority. There is general local awareness of the forthcoming proposal. The applicants are planning a consultation process in November 2023 which is intended to have commenced by the date of the committee.
- 2.2. The development has not yet been presented to a Design Review Panel (DRP). The scheme is aiming for a DRP in December.
- 2.3. The proposed development is being reported to the Planning Sub-Committee on a pre-application basis to enable members to view it at an early stage.

3. SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1. The wider Woodberry Down Estate, located in the north of the borough adjacent to London Borough of Haringey, comprises a roughly triangular parcel of land of approximately 64 hectares (24 acres). The New River, within the control of Thames Water, forms the north, south and eastern boundaries of the wider estate. Green Lanes (the A105), beyond which lies Finsbury Park, forms the western boundary of the wider estate.
- 3.2. The estate is entirely covered by LP33 strategic site allocation MH1 which allows for comprehensive regeneration of the existing housing stock.
- 3.3. The New River falls within the Stoke Newington Reservoirs, Filter Beds and New River Conservation Area, and is also recognised as having archaeological interest. There are a number of listed buildings and structures within the conservation area, including the Ivy House Sluice, Bridge Over New River and the Gas House to the west of the reservoir, which are all Grade II listed. There are also other listed buildings within the wider Woodberry Down Estate, including Woodberry Down Infants School, St Olave's Church and the John Scott Health Centre, which are also Grade II listed. Manor House station, The Finsbury, 336 Green Lanes, the Manor House, 316 Green Lanes, the Ivy House Hotel, 279 Green Lanes and St Olave's Vicarage, Woodberry Down, all within or in close proximity to the wider estate, are locally listed buildings. In addition, the estate is visible in long views from Lordship Park Conservation Area, Clissold Park Conservation Area and St Ann's Conservation Area (in Haringey).
- 3.4. The New River is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation and Metropolitan Open Land (together with the East and West Reservoirs to the

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immediate south of the estate), and is a green corridor. The New River is also designated as being a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation and green corridor within the London Borough of Haringey Development Plan.

- 3.5. As a result of its topography, the site is potentially visible in LP21 strategic view 1 (London Panoramas - Alexandra Palace to Central London), the implications of which will be required to be considered in detail in due course (LP21 policies D9 and HC3 apply).
- 3.6. The estate is cut across by a number of existing highways, including Seven Sisters Road (the A503 and part of the TLRN) running east to west, effectively severing the estate into northern and southern halves. The remainder of the streets are under the control of London Borough of Hackney, including Woodberry Grove, the northern part of which is currently a school street and low traffic neighbourhood. Seven Sisters Road in particular, due to its high traffic volumes, low levels of active frontage and general unattractiveness as a pedestrian environment, has a detrimental severance impact on the estate. However the Phase 3 planning permission (2019/2514) secures funding and puts in place a delivery mechanism for an improvement scheme (led by Transport for London) which will result in a reduction in width of Seven Sisters Road together with improvements for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users and increased urban greening.

4. PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1. The planning history of the Woodberry Down Estate is long and complex, however the key planning permissions relating to earlier phases of redevelopment (those within the main estate which have been implemented) are summarised below.

Extent	Applications	Notes
Entirety of site	2008/1050 - To demolish all existing buildings on the Woodberry Down Estate, with the exception of St. Olaves Church, the Beis Chinuch Lebonos Girls School, Reservoir Centre, Primary school and Health Centre. Redevelop the site with 4,684 homes (including 41% affordable), comprising 1-bed, 2-bed, 3-bed, 4-bed flats, and 5-bed flats, 5-bed and 6-bed houses with associated car parking at an overall site provision rate of 50%; approximately 38,500m ² of non-residential buildings and associated car parking, including 5194m ² of retail buildings within classes A1-A5, 3144m ² of class B1 Business use, 30,000m ² of class C1, D1 and D2 use including education, health centre, children's centre, community centres, youth centre; provision of new civic space, public parks, open space, landscaping of the edges of the New River and the East and West Reservoirs, construction of bridges across the New river; reduce width of Seven Sisters Road from 6 to 4 lanes and related improvements to the public realm; formation of new access points to the new Woodberry Down Neighbourhood, the creation of new and improvement of existing cycle and pedestrian routes to and within the estate (Outline Application matters for determination siting, design and means of access). Revisions include increase in education floor space; repositioning of cycle/pedestrian bridge between west reservoir and Haringey; re configuration of Woodberry Circus; relocation of two bridges over New River; increase in footprints and heights of various buildings; provision of a new Health Centre and increase in residential units from 4664 to 4684.	

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<p>Phase 2 Blocks B, D and F (full); Phases 3-8 (outline)</p>	<p>2013/3223 - Outline planning permission (all matters reserved) for demolition of existing buildings and structures at Woodberry Down Estate to provide up to 275,604sqm floorspace GEA (excluding car parking); comprising up to 3,242 residential units and a maximum of 10,921sqm non-residential floorspace within Classes A1 (Retail), A2 (Financial Services), A3 (Restaurants and Cafes), A4 (Drinking Establishments), Class B1 (Offices), Class D1(Non Residential Institutions), and D2 use and Energy Centres; along with provision of new open space and public realm and associated car parking and highway improvement works to Seven Sisters Road including a narrowing from six carriageways to four carriageways. Full details submitted for the redevelopment of the land bounded by Towncourt Path, Kayani Avenue, Green Lanes, West Reservoir/Springpark Drive and Woodberry Down (Phase 2) for the erection of four buildings between 3 and 20 storeys to provide 670 new homes (comprising 30 studios, 310 one bed, 271 two bed and 59 three bed units), 550sqm of non residential floorspace GEA within Classes A1-A4, Class B1, Class D1 and D2 use and new open space and public realm with 241 car parking spaces and 740 cycle spaces at ground and basement level.</p>	<p>Supersedes 2008/1050</p>
<p>Phase 3</p>	<p>2019/2514 - Demolition of the existing buildings, and construction of 4 residential blocks, ranging in height from 6 to 20 storeys, to provide 584 residential units and 1,045 sqm (GEA) of flexible floorspace (Use Class A1, A2, A3, D1, D2), a new energy centre (sui generis) and a new public park; together with ancillary hard and soft landscaping, public realm, cycle and associated car parking, highway works including access road and all other works associated with the development.</p>	<p>Supersedes reserved matters planning permission 2015/2967 pertaining to 2013/3223</p>
<p>Phase 4</p>	<p>2023/2371: Demolition of existing structures and the construction of a residential led, mixed use development comprising 511 residential units and 1215sqm GIA commercial or community floor space (Use Class E(a,b,c) / Use Class F1) in buildings of between 1 and 26 storeys, together with public realm, landscaping, play space, servicing facilities, car and cycle parking, plant space, and associated works. (THIS APPLICATION IS ACCOMPANIED BY AN ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT).</p>	<p>Registered</p>

5. KEY MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1. The current scheme raises the following material considerations in particular which will need to be addressed. Not all policies are outlined below as the scheme is still being developed.

Land use

Estate regeneration

5.2. The regeneration of Woodberry Down has been a corporate and political objective of the Council for a number of years. The process is underway, as set out in policies PP9 (Manor House) and MH1 (Woodberry Down) of LP33. The policies generally seek to deliver a successful, well designed development that serves the needs of the local community and complies with other Development Plan policies.

5.3. The wording of MH1 reflects the proposals as approved under 2013/3223, particularly in terms of quantum of development, which is specified as “4045 (gross) 2915 (net) to 2033 and beyond”. It is noted that under the provisions of 2013/3223, 2735 units

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were expected to be delivered within the KSSs and Phases 2 and 3, and that 2874 (+5%) have actually been delivered (including those consented on Phase 3, leaving aside 256 Green Lanes). Phase 4, as submitted proposes 511 units.

- 5.4. In relation to the remaining four phases, the masterplan (2013/3223) anticipated a yield of 2,399 gross homes. This was split between phase 5 (489 units), phase 6 (745 units), phase 7 (362 units) and phase 8 (803 units). As stated above the proposals are now for 774-833 units (phase 5), 993-1067 units (phase 6), 422-453 units (phase 7) and 787-846 units (phase 8).
- 5.5. In previous pre-application discussions the remaining five phases were proposed to deliver in the region of 2458-2786 dwellings. Taking off the 511 units proposed in Phase 4, 1,947-2275 units would have been remaining across phases 5-8 (albeit with only half of phase 6). The proposed scheme in 2023 for up to 3199 units therefore represents a significant uplift from the consented masterplan and previous pre-application discussions even accounting for the increased size of Phase 6.
- 5.6. Policy H8 (Loss of Existing Housing and Estate Redevelopment) of the London Plan 2021 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 rebuilding of homes against the wider social and environmental impacts and consider the availability of Mayoral funding and any conditions attached to that funding.”* In this context, proceeding with a wholesale approach of demolition and rebuild without a thorough review of the structural condition of the existing buildings cannot be supported at the current time. More information on the existing buildings is required in order to assess the proposals against this policy.
- 5.7. The housing policies of the development plan require that an equal number and mix of units by size for social rented units will need to be re-provided, i.e. the development shall result in net re-provision in terms of numbers and unit mix.
- 5.8. It is noted that the applicants are not proposing any additional land uses other than residential and have indicated that a commercial strategy is forthcoming setting out the need for other uses in the masterplan. To date this has not been provided and in accordance with the policies outlined above a mix of uses should be provided within the masterplan area. The Edge Youth Centre in phase 6 is proposed to be reprovided as part of the redevelopment of that phase.

Design and conservation

Overall design

- 5.9. To date the redevelopment at Woodberry Down has delivered perimeter blocks in existing and under construction phases is a maximum of 10 storeys (with a maximum 9 storey frontage on limited locations) away from the waterside. Closer to the reservoirs development steps down to 7 and 5 storeys. There are occasional taller

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buildings largely concentrated around the central square; a 20 storey tower in phase 3 is also being delivered. These have local impact and are located at arrival points into the wider redevelopment. At the centre of the scheme, the tallest buildings range from above 20 to around 30 storeys and indicate the public focal point of the site (a community square, supermarket and cafe). These towers have a long distance wayfinding role although the area is generally legible regardless of them given clear views and straight streets. The proposals for this masterplan are taller than the surrounding context and taller than the height of the estate buildings which are being replaced.

- 5.10. Proposed future phases increase perimeter blocks to 12 storeys with a 10 storey shoulder or 13 stores with a nine storey shoulder. This is up from generally 10 storeys on earlier phases. Extensive use of these heights may be acceptable in limited and carefully chosen locations but risks significant townscape harm in this context with such extensive use, particularly when this height defines a street creating overbearing and deep enclosure.
- 5.11. The perimeter blocks have 6 or 7 storey linking blocks. Streets shown defined by 7 storey blocks are likely to be comfortable (for example on phase 6). However, some streets, for example in phases 7 and 8, are lined by 11 and 12 storey frontages (and some with 12, 14 and 20 storey frontages) which risks creating an unacceptably overbearing enclosure and character. Officers have suggested that more instances of 7 storey elements would help reduce this enclosure.

Podiums

- 5.12. The plans provided to date show the provision of podiums throughout the phases. It is recognised that podiums have been delivered to date and will likely be required in phase 5 due to providing car parking. However, phases 6-8 will be car free except for blue badge parking. The use of podiums should be minimised with alternative means for providing cycle storage and servicing should be proposed.
- 5.13. The advantages of omitting podiums include possible retention of trees, creation of permeable ground level gardens capable of supporting larger trees, and allowing glimpses from street into or through courtyard gardens. Courtyard gardens can also be publicly accessible which would be a benefit to the area.

Listed buildings

- 5.14. There are a number of listed buildings adjacent to the phases. St Olave's Church is across Seven Sisters Road from Phase 6 and Woodberry Down JMI Community School is adjacent to Phase 7. Phase 8 is likely to affect the setting of Finsbury Park, a Grade II registered park.

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- 5.15. The development is also considered to affect a number of locally listed buildings, particularly those around Manor House station. These include Ivy House, the old Manor House and St Olave's vicarage.
- 5.16. Particular attention will need to be paid to the impact of the development on these statutory and locally listed buildings. Any harm identified will need to be balanced against the public benefits of the scheme.

Phase 5

- 5.17. Phase 5 creates a new access point from Seven Sisters Road to provide vehicular access to the residential units on Newton Close. These units currently have access through Phase 3 which will be removed and incorporated into the phase 3 park when this access is created. As discussed below, the access is further west than originally planned which is necessary to reduce impacts on highway safety located further from the junction with Amhurst Park. However, this has resulted in the phase 5 tower being on the site of a large Lime tree which has been assessed by the applicant team as a Category B tree but as Category A by the Council's landscape officers. Alternative layouts have been requested showing the retention of the tree.
- 5.18. Development on the reservoir edge is taller than earlier phases with an 8-storey height, compared to the 5/6 storeys of previous phases. The conservation area is defined by a relatively consistent height edge and a substantial increase to that height in Phase 5 would appear uncharacteristic and jarring.
- 5.19. The 14-storey building located on the reservoir in the south-east of the phase has a relationship to taller buildings to the east but may be better located away from the junction of the MOL and green finger and away from the waterside.

Phase 6

- 5.20. The phase 6 layout is defined by streets and open spaces. A route is introduced which connects visually from St Olave's Church through to Rowley Gardens.
- 5.21. Careful consideration will need to be made to how the new western elements of this phase adjoin, and sit in the backdrop of the older development within Manor House, particularly adjacent to Ivy House, a locally listed building. The specific location of the western tower is not agreed or finalised and Hackney are recommending a location where impacts are minimised. We are also recommending that the tower is set back from the public realm behind a street-scale element.
- 5.22. The tower at the eastern end is located on a junction and near the central cluster. Proposals to incorporate a setback behind a shoulder/street-scale element at the base of this tower and the adjacent perimeter block are encouraged in order to

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minimise impacts on the adjacent open space. A tower in this location may be acceptable, but has the potential to affect microclimate, the health of trees and create an overbearing presence above people using this space, so impacts should be minimised as far as possible.

Phase 7

- 5.23. This phase proposes significant height without the benefit of a consolidated green space. The 16 storey building to the rear in the north-west of the phase is shown within the middle of the and is one of the last remaining standalone tall buildings in all phases. The others have been more successfully integrated into perimeter blocks.
- 5.24. In this phase the open spaces are tight and overshadowed by tall buildings. The phase retains the green space to the west where a number of mature trees are located and creates a parallel green finger further to the east in the middle of the phase. Both are oversailed by a standalone tower up to 16 storeys. Some areas of landscape are proposed to be lost to a podium.
- 5.25. Officers have recommended another option is explored where a taller building is located on Seven Sisters Road creating a small secondary cluster with the towers in phase 3 and 5.

Phase 8

- 5.26. Phase 8 open space will be generous and combine with adjacent space while being open to the New River. It is noted that the gradient of the land in this location will affect any open spaces proposed which will need to be addressed at the earliest opportunity. The setting back of the eastern building line of Phase 8 resulting from removal of the north west block has opened up a clear view from Seven Sisters Road through the parkland. The enclosure of the space on the Phase 8 side is shown as a uniform 9 shoulder and 11 storey full height in the revised massing, which is a significant improvement on earlier iterations which showed a 21 storey tower adjacent to the New River.
- 5.27. Phase 8 has one tower of 21 storeys integrated into a perimeter block at the central cross road of the site. Officers support the movement of height away from the northern and eastern boundaries as shown in earlier design iterations. The two blocks of 14 storeys on Green Lanes frontage have an impact on Green Lanes and Finsbury Park which should be addressed.

Microclimate issues

- 5.28. Proposals for tall buildings have the ability to cause microclimate impacts to surrounding areas particularly in relation to wind and overshadowing of public spaces. Best practice in tower design suggests that towers can be designed to minimise negative impacts. Curved or softened corners can generate less pressure

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difference and wind pinch points. Towers integrated into perimeter blocks sit more comfortably in the townscape and have less impact than towers which come to ground directly on the street or open space. This is particularly important and relevant where towers are part of a residential development. Stepping towers as they get taller helps minimise overshadowing impacts, wind generation and the sense of overbearing height. Towers which have uncomfortable proportions or which are too broad or wide have negative impacts. The development will be required to minimise impacts on microclimate. This detail is expected during the later reserved matters applications. However, information will be included to this effect in the design code.

Climate change considerations

- 5.29. The proposal involves the demolition of all of the existing buildings on site. Existing building surveys will be required in order to justify demolition in line with policy H8 of the London Plan (2021).
- 5.30. In line with the GLA's Whole Life Cycle carbon assessment guidance, retrofit of the existing buildings must be considered prior to demolition. A thorough optioneering must be prepared exploring the benefits and constraints of retention and extension over new build alternatives with embodied carbon estimates for each. In line with the GLA Circular Economy guidance, any existing elements which are proposed to be demolished should be reused and recycled where it has been demonstrated those elements are not suitable for the proposed development. A pre-demolition audit as well as a pre-redevelopment audit should be prepared at pre-application stage and the GLA CE reporting spreadsheet pre application information completed.

Daylight and sunlight impacts

- 5.31. Daylight and sunlight impacts on open spaces and existing and future residents will need to be considered during this process. At this stage information on impacts on residents has not been provided. Daylight and sunlight studies of open spaces have been provided and will be assessed as part of the proposals.

Transport impacts

- 5.32. The scheme includes the addition of some access points off Seven Sisters Road and Green Lanes. The development largely makes use of existing access points but it is noted that these would likely have increased usage. Road safety suits will be needed as soon as possible to justify the use of access routes off Seven Sisters Road and Green Lanes.
- 5.33. The repositioning of the vehicular access to Phase 5 helps to provide a more functional relationship to Seven Sisters Road. Concerns have been raised about road danger reduction and how the access route will function with the TLRN and public highway - including vehicular restrictions from School Streets and new and existing

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Low Traffic Neighbourhoods.

- 5.34. Details regarding how vehicles will turn and manoeuvre on the access road to protect vulnerable road users at all times will be required for phase 7. In Phase 8, concerns have been raised about road danger reduction and how the access route will function with the TLRN and public highway. Transport colleagues had previously expressed concern about the addition of a junction on Green Lanes and the possibility of rat-running to Woodberry Grove.
- 5.35. Therefore more information is required in relation to how the proposals would affect highway safety due to the proximity of junctions, filter lanes and other parts of the highway. As such, before work on these elements of the proposal are continued, road safety audits are required in order to confirm whether the proposed arrangements are deliverable. Confirmation that the proposed arrangements will be acceptable to the Council / Transport for London and can be accommodated including within the evolving Seven Sisters Road Improvement Scheme are required before they can be supported.

6.3 Summary

- 5.36. The pre-application process is ongoing and the scheme represents a significant increase in unit numbers above those previously considered under the 2014 masterplan. This has resulted in bulk and height much larger than previously consented.
- 5.37. Officers recognise that improvements have been made to the scheme in line with officers comments over the course of the pre-application process. However, there are outstanding matters which require further consideration to ensure the development is acceptable in relation to design and conservation, sustainability and transport in particular as the development progresses.

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)	Louise Prew, X 8613	2 Hillman Street, London E8 1FB