3 Alternatives

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 In accordance with the EIA Regulations, this chapter describes the reasonable alternatives to the Development considered by the Applicant, prior to the selection of the final design and provides a description of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects.

3.1.2 The alternatives that are discussed in this chapter include:

- Alternative sites;
- 'No Development Alternative';
- Development of extant permission; and
- Alternative layouts.

3.2 Alternative Sites

3.2.1 No alternative sites were considered by the Applicant as the development opportunity arose due to the Applicant's ownership of the Site. Given its location within the borough and potential for regeneration, the redevelopment of the Site would have significant impact on the implementation of the London Plan policies on affordable housing, achieving 41% affordable housing on site, and exceeding LB Barnet's borough-wide target of 40% affordable housing. Alternative sites have not been considered further in this ES.

3.2.2 The Site boundary has remained unchanged throughout the design evolution of the Development (Figure 1.2). Alternative Site boundaries have therefore not been considered further within this ES.

3.3 The No Development Scenario

3.3.1 In line with good practice, the consequences of no development taking place and the Site remaining in its present use is considered. This would be an unlikely scenario as it would likely result in the Applicant implementing one of the three retail planning permissions approved for the Site (see 'Extant Permissions' alternative below for further details). As a consequence of the investment in the Site and work undertaken to date, the likelihood of no further development taking place on the Site is considered to be unlikely.

3.3.2 The potential negative outcomes of no development at the Site when compared to the Development are summarised as follows:

- Deterioration of the remaining buildings and general environs over time;
- Housing objectives set out in the London Plan and LB Barnet Local Plan not being met, with the loss of the opportunity to provide a significant number of new homes, including affordable homes, within the borough;
- Loss of opportunity to introduce new buildings of architectural quality, which could potentially enhance the visual appearance of the Site and locality, and provide areas of open space and other facilities for local residents; and,
- Aspirations to improve pedestrian and cycle permeability to, from and through the Site.

3.3.3 In the absence of development, leaving the Site in its current state would avoid environmental effects associated with construction and operation, such as:

- The Kosher Outlet Store and Together Plan are likely to continue to operate in the short term from the Site, meaning that they may not be displaced or need to find new premises. The adopted Planning Brief for the Site and Extant Permissions, however, means that displacement is likely in any event;
- Temporary traffic, noise and air pollution associated with construction would not arise; and
- There would be no townscape and visual effects of the Development.

3.3.4 It can reasonably be expected that the Site would be re-developed in the short-term, even in the absence of the current Development proposals and the Extant Permissions.

3.4 Extant Permissions

3.4.1 In 2016, three retail planning applications were approved for the Site and the refurbishment of Pentavia Retail Park:

- Planning permission ref: 14/08075/FUL, date approved 05/08/16;
- Planning permission ref: 15/01820/FUL, date approved 05/08/16; and
- Planning Permission ref: 15/01825/FUL, date approved 05/08/16.

3.4.2 The approved retail applications propose to create seven unrestricted Open Class A1 retail units and two Class A3 restaurant units (Ref: 14/08075/FUL) in addition to a new single D2 unit (Ref: 15/01820/FUL and 15/01825/FUL) in a reconfigured arrangement. All three permissions proposed do not create any net additional floorspace, but reconfigure the Site layout and the arrangement of the retail and restaurant units. This would result in the demolition of the existing Class A3 unit and partial demolition of the existing Open Class A1 retail units. The demolition of the existing floorspace would be re-provided as part of the extant permissions through the reconfiguration of the Site layout.

3.4.3 The Site is not located in an existing identified town centre or an employment site and is considered out of centre. Core Strategy Policy[1] CS6 (Promoting Barnet's town centres) confirms that LB Barnet town centres are the economic, civic, retail, leisure and transport hubs of the borough. Development Management Policy[2] DM11 (Development principles for Barnet's town centres) sets out the LB Barnet detailed development principles in respect of its town centres and proposed town centre uses.

3.4.4 The 'Extant Permissions' alternative would likely result in the Applicant implementing one of the three planning permissions approved for the Site, which would refurbish the retail park and be in conflict with both CS6 and DM11 policies, as well as, the Planning Brief adopted by the LB Barnet. Implementation of the Extant Permissions would result in a reduction of beneficial effects when compared to the Development due to the following:

- Loss of opportunity to provide a significant number of new homes, quality open space, playspace and other facilities for local residents; and
- Regeneration of undesired 'out of centre' retail park which equates to a slightly loss in employment overall.

3.5 Alternative Layouts

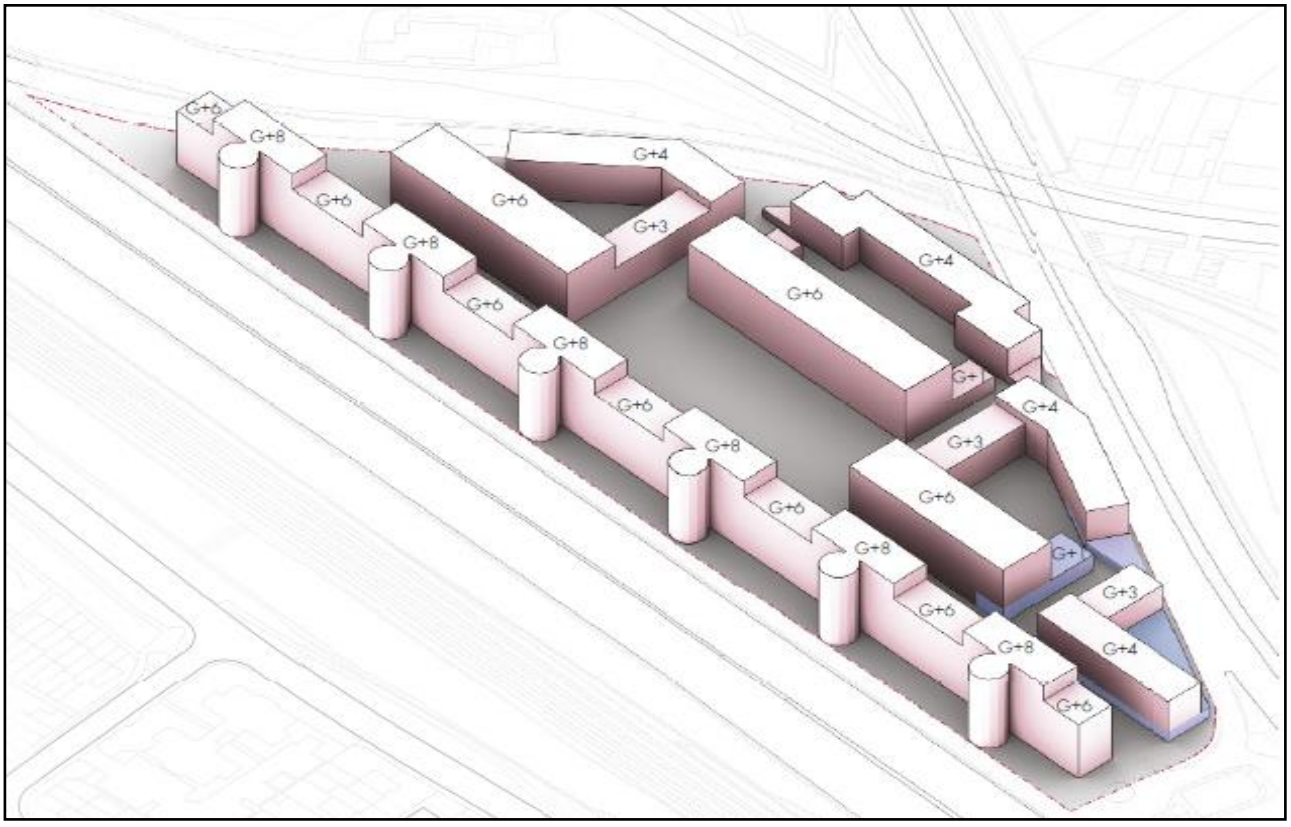
3.5.1 The Site boundary has remained unchanged throughout design development. There were limited options for the Site layout as the design needs to minimise the noise and vibration and air quality effects of the adjacent M1 and A1 to shield the inner spaces of the Development. A long building has remained in place along the frontage to the M1 motorway, while the remaining blocks have been positioned in a rough U-shape along the frontages to the A1 (Watford Way) and Bunns Lane throughout the design development for the Site. The following sections briefly describe the key stages of the design evolution.

2015 Concept Design

3.5.2 Initial designs, produced by Allies and Morrison in September 2015, proposed a high-density residential-led development consisting of 750 dwelling units, 2,000 – 3,000 m^2 (GIA) commercial (A1 – A3 Use) floorspace and 1,000 – 1,400 m^2 GIA basement floorspace for a cinema (D1 Use) across five blocks. As shown in Figure 3.1, the proposed blocks ranged in height from four to nine storeys and created an enclosed development which had one long building affronting the M1 and smaller blocks behind it.

3.5.3 The tall, long building affronting the M1 would act as a barrier to noise and air quality emissions from the motorway. The buildings stepped down towards the A1 to reduce the visual impact of the proposed development towards Mill Hill to the east, but were also designed to create a barrier around the internal amenity areas from noise and exhaust emissions from the A1. They also created a slightly more broken barrier to the A1 and Bunns Lane and allowed a degree of permeation within the development.

Figure 3.1: Concept Design, September 2015 (Allies and Morrison)

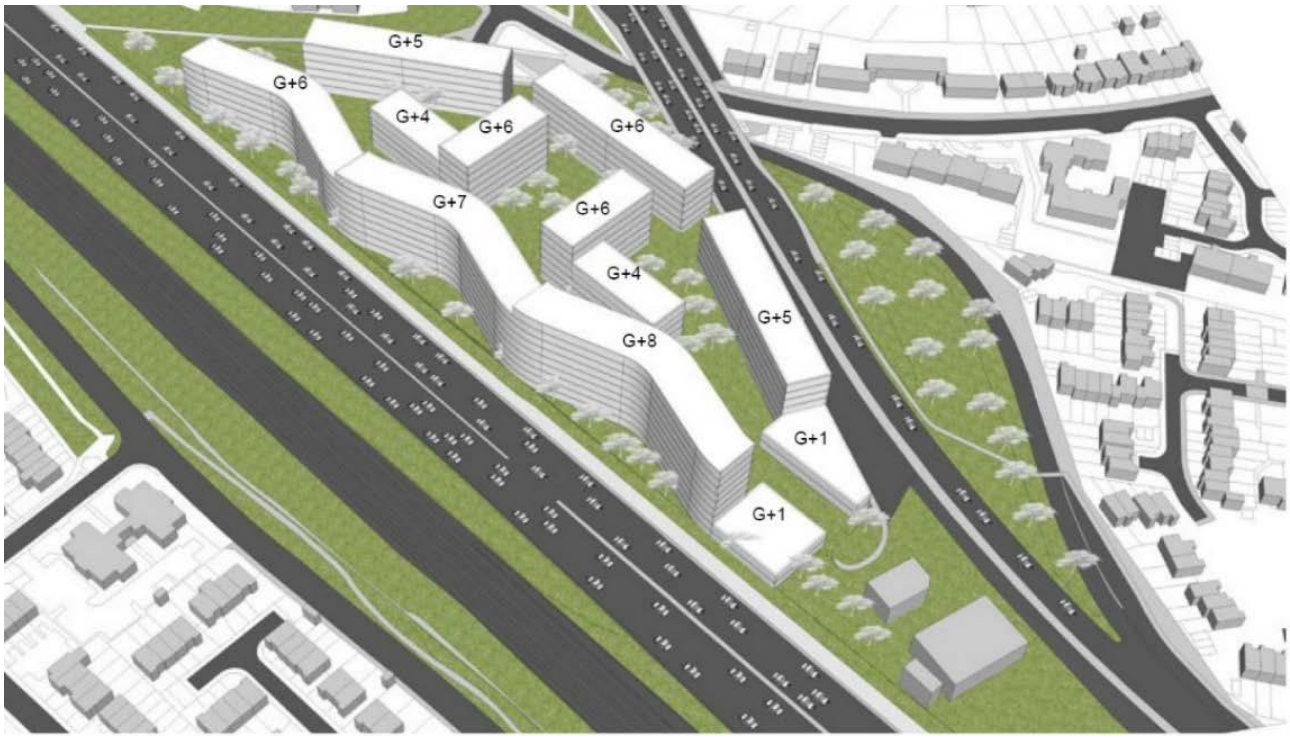


3.5.4 Due to viability considerations and design concerns, this scheme was not taken forward.

Design Development – Early 2016

3.5.5 New proposals provided by Arney Fender Katsalidis (AFK) in early 2016 (January – March) enhanced the principles laid out within the Allies and Morrison scheme but made some distinct design changes. Iterations of these proposals are provided in Figures 3.2 and 3.3.

Figure 3.2: First iteration – February 2016 (AFK)



3.5.6 The February 2016 iteration replaced the straight block along the M1 frontage with a curved 'wave' building which tapered down in height from G+8 storeys to G+6 storeys from south to north. This reduced the visual impact of this massing from the M1 and beyond while retaining the emissions and noise barrier to the motorway. It also allowed for the inclusion of tree planting at ground floor level between the building and the M1 to provide an element of visual screening, and car parking at grade which avoided basement excavation and reduced internal vehicle traffic (and associated emissions).

3.5.7 The remaining buildings were altered in size and locations adjusted within the Site, however the concept of three buildings positioned along boundary of the Site adjacent to the A1 and wrapping around towards Bunn's Lane was maintained. These buildings tapered in height from G+5 storeys to G+6 storeys to G+5 storeys. Similarly to the 'wave' building along the M1, these buildings formed an emissions and noise barrier to the A1 and Bunns Lane. Adjusting the location of buildings also resulted in the removal of a G+6 storey building situated within the centre of the Site that was originally proposed in September 2015 Concept Design, along with the repositioning of the two smaller buildings towards the centre of the Site. This opened the Site, increasing the areas of open space between the buildings and allowing more daylight to permeate the development.

3.5.8 The March 2016 iteration further accentuated the 'wave' effect in the building fronting the M1, while increasing the number of levels of the building from south to north resulting in a tapered building of G+7 storeys to G+10 storeys. The previously distinct 'block' layout was redefined throughout the Development within the introduction of a crescent shaped building towards the centre of the Site that created an enclosed area of public realm (referred to as the 'Circus') and increased permeability through the Site. This area also included provision of a small circular pond in this central courtyard

that provided a mechanism for surface water attenuation within the Site. This crescent building tapered from G+7 storeys to G+10 storeys. The 'wave' effect was also introduced into the buildings positioned along boundary of the Site adjacent to the A1 and Bunns Lane to tie the Development together and apply a common language across all buildings within the Development. The general block heights were also closer aligned, with a reduced stepping effect. These changes provided a greater area of public open space, more natural accessibility into the Site and increased daylight penetration to the Site.

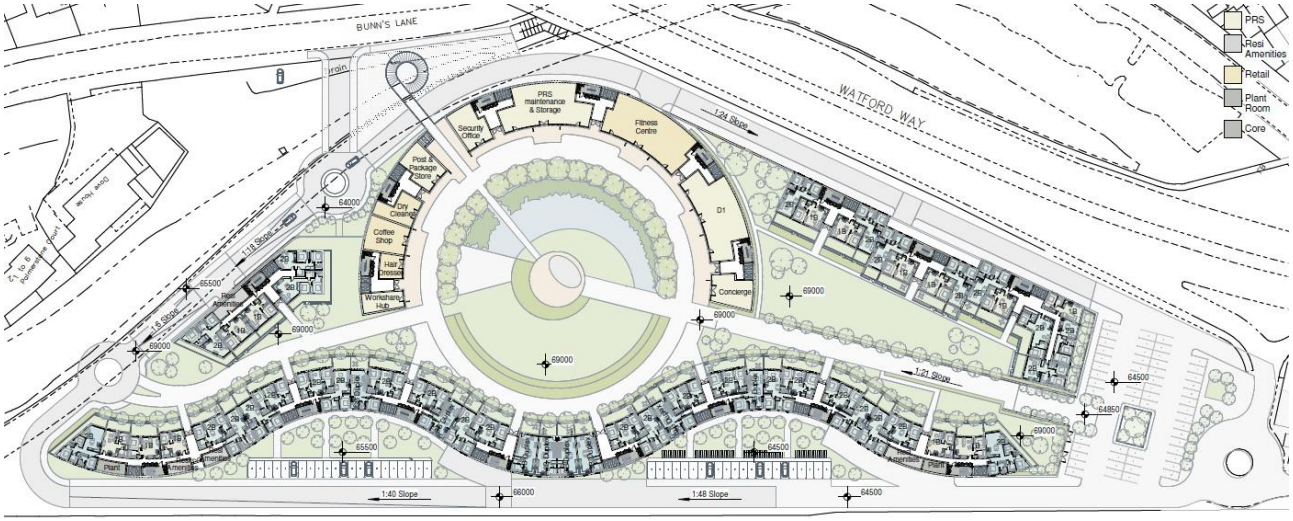
Figure 3.3: Second iteration – March 2016 (AFK)

3.5.9 A route of pedestrian and vehicular access was added connecting the Site to Bunns Lane along with a pedestrian access onto the A1 and upgrades to the pedestrian bridge at the southern end of the Site which connects to the M1. This was on recommendation of the Greater London Authority (GLA) in order to increase accessibility to the Site, links to nearby public transport links and improve the PTAL rating. This scheme provided 754 residential units, and 3,063sqm (GIA) for commercial uses, the provision for 524 car parking spaces and approximately 1,237 cycle spaces for residents.

Design Development – July 2016

3.5.10 Public consultation events were held in May 2016 and, along with further consultation with the LB Barnet and GLA over the subsequent months, resulted in further refinement in light of the comments raised, and an initial fixed design created at the end of July 2016. These consultations and meetings did not have any significant alterations in respect of Site layout, however block massing was altered so that all blocks were the same height at G+8 storeys across all buildings, and the buildings situated to the north and south of the crescent building were straightened out to remove the 'wave' effect. Figure 3.4 shows a plan of the July 2016 Scheme.

Figure 3.4: July 2016 Scheme

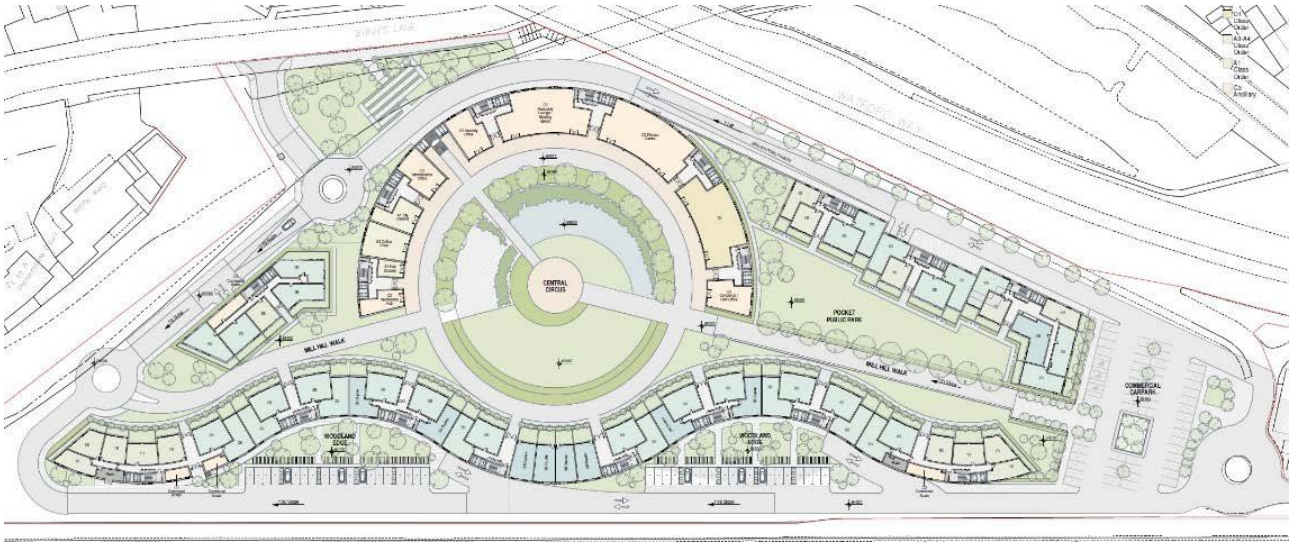


3.5.11 As a result, there was a reduction in the number of residential units to 722, an increase to 670 residential car parking spaces to get closer to LBB policy requirements, and 1,196 cycle spaces (in accordance with London Plan standards). A total of 10,653 m^2 Gross External Area (GEA) public open space and 9,869 m^2 GEA private amenity space was provided within the scheme. This included approximately 1,160 m^2 GEA of play space. Private amenity space and internal residential amenity within residential units is controlled through careful design consideration of unit layout, use of mechanical ventilation systems and high-performance glazing.

2016 Detailed Application – August 2016

3.5.12 The preferred design and uses of the 2016 Detailed Application as assessed within the 2016 ES is shown in Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5: 2016 Detailed Application, August 2016



3.5.13 The changes from the July 2016 to the 2016 Detailed Application reintroduced the stepped massing approach, with a reduction in height of the two standalone buildings situated either side of the centre crescent building. The building to the north east of the crescent building was decreased to G+6 storeys, while the building to the south west tapered from G+8 storeys to G+6 storeys. This was primarily to assist in breaking up the wider mass of the scheme. This resulted in the removal of 27 units from the scheme, and a reduction in the total number of units from 722 to 695.

3.5.14 The lower level of the undercroft basement was also removed which reduced the number of car parking spaces proposed by the development from 670 to 479 spaces. The removal of this parking area allowed for the redistribution of Site levels on the northern section of the Site. This resulted in the perimeter access road being raised, such that there was no need for the proposed pedestrian bridge over the perimeter access road to Bunns Lane. The perimeter access road was crossed by a standard crossing area, a new ramped walkway and two disabled lifts making the scheme more inclusive as it is more accessible and usable for people with disabilities.

3.5.15 The changes made to the 2016 Detailed Application in January 2017, as assessed by the 2017 ES Addendum, sought to refine the design of the building to create more articulation and provide more elegant proportions while maintaining the fundamental design principles set out in the 2016 Detailed Application. The changes comprise the loss of 10 units across the scheme to a total of 685 units, a reduction in the car parking ration to 0.5 for residential units equating to 343 residential car parking spaces, amendments to the southern entrance link off the A1 to Site roundabout to ensure enhanced pedestrian movements, the inclusion of architectural cuts inserted into the roof line of the Block A ('wave' building fronting M1) and Block C ('u-shape' building fronting A1), and the reduction of one floor in height to Block D (building fronting Bunns Lane).

2017 Detailed Application – December 2017

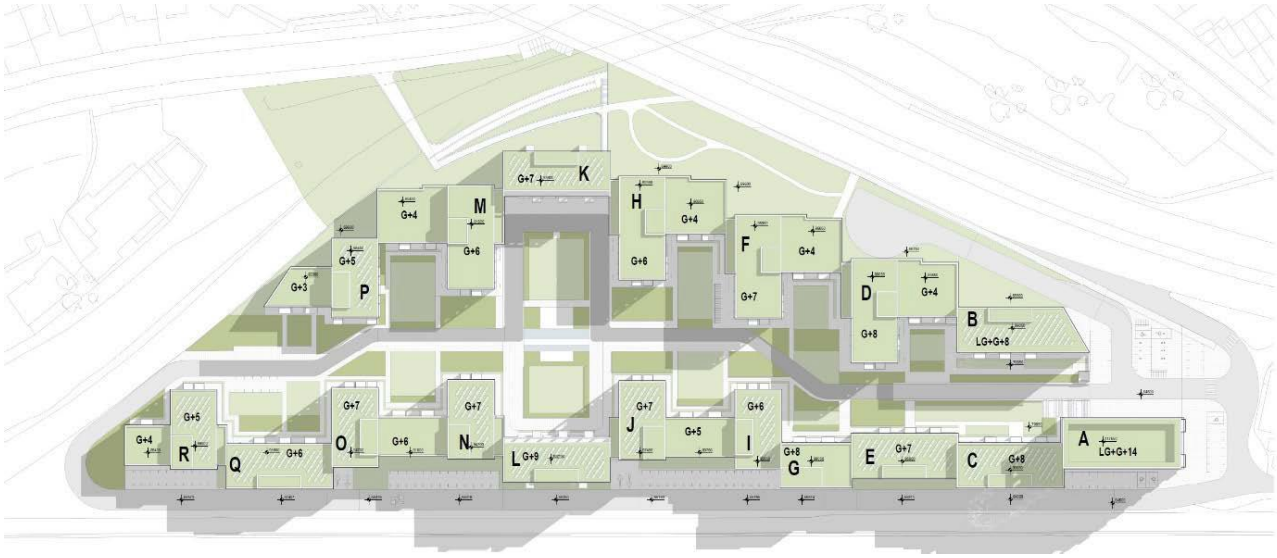
3.5.16 Following submission of the proposed design changes to the 2016 Detailed Application in January 2017, further consultation occurred with LB Barnet, the GLA and local stakeholders. The 2016 Detailed Application was subsequently 'withdrawn' in November 2017, and the Applicant redesigned the scheme to take account of the comment raised through this consultation.

3.5.17 Figure 3.6 shows the layout of the Development. For ease of comparison with that of the 2016 Detailed Application, the main design changes comprised:

- Increase in the number of building blocks to 18, over the four proposed by the 2016 Detailed Application;
- Fragmenting the massing of the scheme by variating the heights of the 18 blocks which range from G+3 to LG+G+14 storeys, over the G+6 to G+8 proposed by the 2016 Detailed Application;
- Reducing height at the north of the Site (G+3 storeys) and increasing height in the south of the Site (LG+G+14 storeys);
- Removal of secondary vehicle access onto Bunns Lane, proposed by the 2016 Detailed Application, to a pedestrian and cyclist only access;
- Change in the residential tenure mix with the overall number of units increasing to 717 units; and,
- The landscaping proposals have been changed to reflect the above changes which have led to an increase in amenity space.

3.5.18 On 2015 July 2018, LB Barnet resolved to refuse permission for this application. Having regard to the detail of the application, the Mayor of London considered that the development was of a nature or scale that it would have a significant impact on the implementation of the London Plan policies on housing and affordable housing. The Mayor of London subsequently issued a Direction pursuant to Article 7 of the Mayor of London Order 2008 ("the 2008 Order") that he should be the local planning authority and determine the application.

Figure 3.6: 2017 Detailed Application



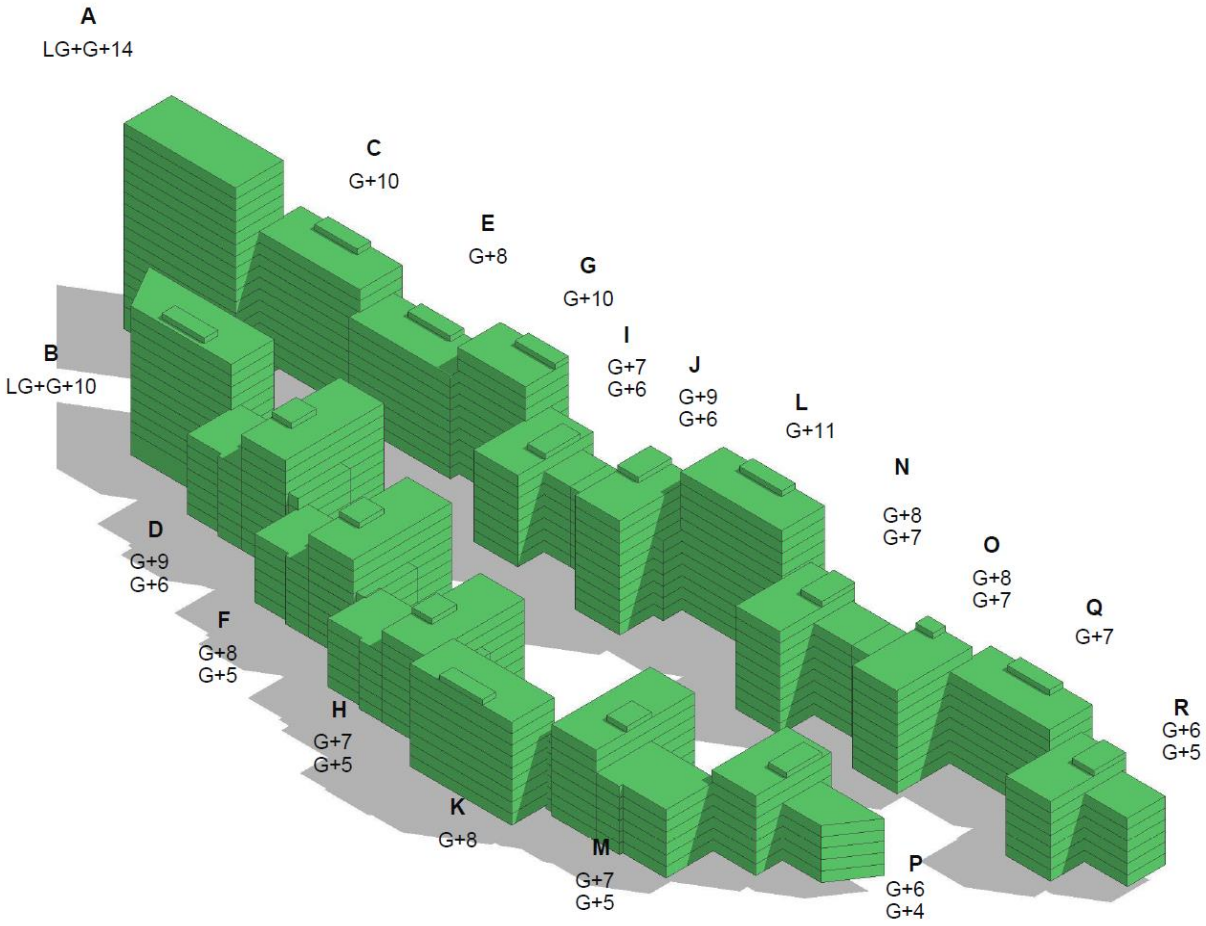
2019 Detailed Application Scheme

3.5.19 Further to the Mayor's decision to call in the application, the Applicant has taken the opportunity to review the Development with a view to increasing the delivery of on-site affordable housing. Scope was identified to increase/decrease building heights within the Development by one to three storeys, thereby retaining the accepted design principles which the Mayor supported in the 2017 Detailed Application and all of the benefits of the submitted application.

3.5.20 The main design changes comprise:

- An increase of 120 residential units, from 724 to 844 units.
- A 50:50 split between Built to Rent and conventional housing in order to increase the level of affordable housing. The scheme was a Build to Rent scheme, including 35% affordable housing, comprising Discount Market Rent (DMR) and London Living Rent (LLR) units. The Development's Build to Rent element comprises a similar mix of private rent, DMR and LLR to the 2017 Detailed Application. The conventional element comprises a mix of private sale, affordable rent and shared ownership.
- An increase or decrease in building heights by one to three storeys across all building blocks, apart from the 15-storey tower (consisting of LG+G+14 storeys) at the southern end of the Development. This is change was to optimise the density and affordable housing delivery, whilst bringing additional benefits to the visual effects of the Development.
- The reorientation and an increased in size of the pedestrian access on Bunns Lane, creating a direct visual link to the central courtyard from the bottom of the entrance steps.
- A decrease in the residential car-parking provision.
- An increase in private amenity space in line with the overall increase in unit numbers.

Figure 3.7: 2019 Detailed Application Scheme

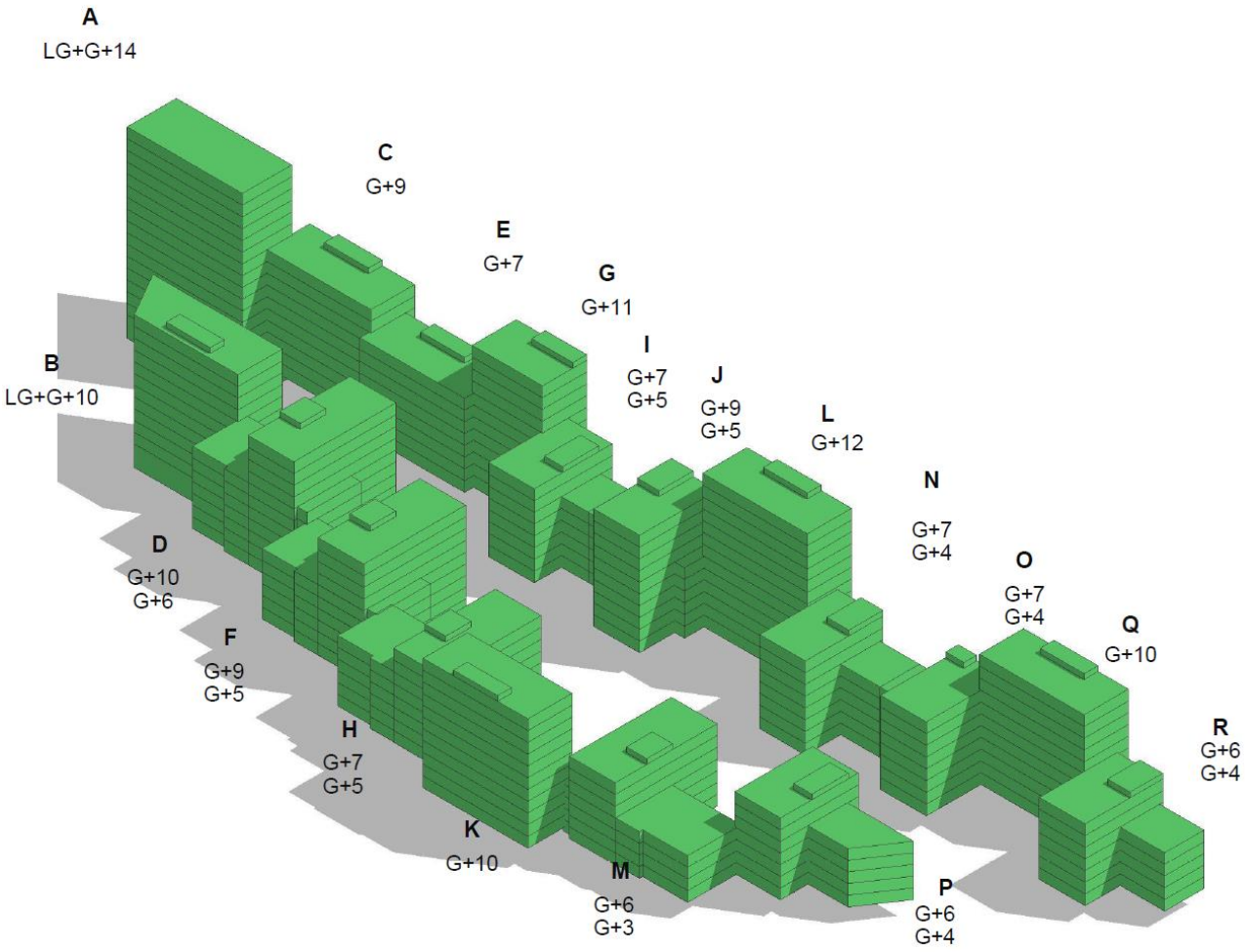


Preferred Option – February 2019

3.5.21 Following the Design Review Panel, the GLA elected to refine the design of the buildings to create more variation and articulation, while maintaining the number of units and fundamental design layout.

3.5.22 As shown in Figure 3.8, building heights have increased or decreased by one storey across building blocks, apart from the 15-storey tower (consisting of LG+G+14 storeys) at the southern end of the Development which remains the same height. The Development is designed to reduce, or eliminate where possible, adverse environmental effects and the design was informed by environmental and sustainability considerations.

Figure 3.8: Preferred Option (February 2019)



3.6 Conclusions

3.6.1 The design was developed considerably through pre-application meetings and consultation with the LB Barnet, the GLA and the public, as well as relevant specialist consultants. Further description of the Preferred Option is provided in Chapter 4: Description of Development of the ES.

REFERENCES

[1] London Borough of Barnet, 2012. Barnet's Local Plan (Core Strategy), Development Plan Document, September 2012.
[2] London Borough of Barnet, 2012. Barnet's Local Plan (Development Management Policies), Development Plan Document, September 2012.