

Catford Green

in the London Borough of Lewisham

planning application no. DC/15/93128

Strategic planning application stage 1 referral

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended); Greater London Authority Acts 1999 and 2007; Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008

The proposal

Erection of a 7 storey building and an 8 storey building (Blocks T & U) to provide 179 residential units together with landscaping, public realm, car and cycle parking, refuse storage and associated works at the former Catford Greyhound Stadium (amended scheme to approved masterplan to include 47 extra units).

The applicant

The applicant is **Barratt London Aldgate** and the architect is **Glenn Howells Architects**.

Strategic issues

The **principle of development** has previously been agreed, and the **amendments** to the scheme meet current standards and increase the number of units is welcomed. The **design approach** is supported however in order to confirm full compliance with the London Plan, further information on strategic issues including **affordable housing, energy and transport** is required.

Recommendation

That Lewisham Council be advised that while the application is generally acceptable in strategic planning terms the application does not fully comply with the London Plan, with the reasons and remedies set out in paragraph 53 of this report.

Context

1 On 24 September 2015 the Mayor of London received documents from Lewisham Council notifying him of a planning application of potential strategic importance to develop the above site for the above uses. Under the provisions of The Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 the Mayor has until 4 November 2015 to provide the Council with a statement setting out whether he considers that the application complies with the London Plan, and his reasons for taking that view. The Mayor may also provide other comments. This report sets out information for the Mayor's use in deciding what decision to make.

2 The application is referable under Category 1A of the Schedule to the Order 2008: *Development which comprises or includes the provision of more than 150 houses, flats, or houses and flats.*

3 Once Lewisham Council has resolved to determine the application, it is required to refer it back to the Mayor for his decision as to whether to direct refusal; take it over for his own determination; or allow the Council to determine it itself.

4 The Mayor of London's statement on this case will be made available on the GLA website www.london.gov.uk.

Site description

5 Blocks T and U of the former Catford Green Greyhound Stadium site form part of a wider 4.26 hectare development site located to the west of Catford town centre. Catford Green has planning permission for thirteen blocks of up to eight storeys in height, comprising 589 residential units, a community centre and approximately 500 sq.m. of commercial floorspace. The development area between blocks A and blocks T and U is currently under construction, with development scheduled to be completed in late 2016.

6 These particular sites sit to the north of the site, adjacent to Ladywell Fields, and currently have consent for 132 units in buildings of six and seven storeys. With the exception of the land the subject of the current application and that allocated to Block A, Catford Green is currently being built out for housing under previously granted consents.

7 The wider site is bounded to the south by the A205 South Circular (which forms part of the Transport for London Road Network), Catford Bridge Station and Catford Station, to the north by Ladywell Fields, a public park, and to the east and west by railway tracks, which are elevated on the western boundary. The land beyond the railway tracks to the west and east is residential in character, with a section of Ladywell Fields to the northwest. Ravensbourne River enters the south of the site and runs north for approximately 40 metres before entering into Ladywell Fields.

8 Catford and Catford Bridge railway stations and stops for a number of bus services lie at the opposite end of Catford Green. Due to the distance of the site from these services its public transport accessibility level (PTAL) is generally 2 which is classified as 'poor' on a scale of 1 to 6b where 6b is considered as excellent.

9 Waterlink Way, a spine route for pedestrians and cyclists linking the southern end of the borough with the north, runs through the southern part of Catford Green.

10 Residents of Blocks T and U as well as those living in the rest of the Catford Green development will benefit from the new footbridge over the railway line linking with Catford town centre. This bridge is currently being delivered as s106 obligation from the original consent.

Details of the proposal

11 This application proposes buildings of seven (block T) and eight (block U) storeys, comprising 179 residential units. The buildings would have frontages on to Ladywell Fields to the north and to the planting and car parking to the south. There would be a route leading from the fields, between the two buildings and into the wider site.

Case history

12 On 2 April 2008, the former Mayor considered a report on the wider development site at the former Catford Green greyhound stadium for:

The construction of 589 residential units, commercial floorspace and a community centre in 13 blocks, rising to a maximum of eight storeys in height, on the site of the former Catford Greyhound

Stadium, including the land in between the railway line and the South Circular (A205) comprising 216 one bedroom and 311 two bedroom self-contained flats; 39 three bedroom and 23 four bedroom houses/maisonettes, as well as use classes A1/A2/B1 retail/commercial floorspace (508 sq.m.) and a use class D1 community centre (298 sq.m.) together with associated landscaping, including river naturalisation and creation of a public plaza between Catford and Catford Bridge Stations, provision of a footbridge to Doggett Road, an electricity sub-station, bin stores, 649 cycle spaces and 248 car parking spaces.

13 The former Mayor advised that the principle of the proposals was supported but that the proposals raised a number of strategic planning issues. On 25 June 2008 the Deputy Mayor, Government Relations, considered an updated report and subsequently advised Lewisham Council that the applicants had responded positively to a number of concerns raised previously, however the energy strategy raised serious strategic concerns and further information was required on other strategic issues. On November 2008 the current Mayor considered a further report on the proposals and advised Lewisham Council that the Mayor was content for the Council to determine the case itself, subject to any action that the Secretary of State may take. Planning permission was subsequently granted in January 2009.

14 A section 73 application to vary this planning permission was granted in January 2014, which amended the site layout, appearance, massing and layout of the individual blocks. This was not seen by the Mayor because the original application was submitted prior to 2008. There have been various other s73 applications to vary conditions, and in relation other blocks.

15 A pre-application meeting was held between the applicant and GLA officers, and attended by Lewisham Council officers. The applicant was advised that the proposed amendments were generally acceptable, subject to clarification and further details on aspects of the scheme, including viability, detailed design, transport and energy.

Strategic planning issues and relevant policies and guidance

16 The relevant issues and corresponding policies are as follows:

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| • Land use principles | <i>London Plan;</i> |
| • Housing, affordable housing | <i>London Plan; Housing SPG; draft interim Housing SPG; Housing Strategy; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation SPG; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Character and Context, draft SPG</i> |
| • Density | <i>London Plan; Housing SPG</i> |
| • Urban design | <i>London Plan; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Character and Context, draft SPG; Housing SPG; draft interim Housing SPG; London Housing Design Guide; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation SPG</i> |
| • Inclusive design | <i>London Plan; Accessible London: achieving an inclusive environment SPG;</i> |
| • Sustainable development | <i>London Plan; Sustainable Design and Construction SPG; Mayor's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy; Mayor's Climate Change Mitigation and Energy Strategy; Mayor's Water Strategy</i> |
| • Transport and Parking | <i>London Plan; the Mayor's Transport Strategy</i> |
| • CIL | <i>London Plan; Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy</i> |

17 For the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the development plan in force for the area is: the Lewisham Core Strategy (2011); Lewisham Site

Allocations Local Plan (2013); Lewisham Town Centre Local Plan (2014); Lewisham Development Management Local Plan (2014) and the 2015 London Plan (consolidated with Alterations since 2011).

18 The following are also relevant material considerations:

- National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance;
- Minor Alterations to the London Plan;

Housing and affordable housing

19 The existing planning consent establishes the principle of the development. London Plan policies 3.3 and 3.4 of the London Plan recognise the need for housing in London and table 3.1 of the London Plan sets an annual target of 1,385 new homes for Lewisham in the period 2015 – 2025. The approved and proposed residential tenure mix is as follows:

	2009 permission (as amended) Blocks T and U	%	Proposed Blocks T and U	%
Studio	0	0	4	2.2
1 bed	33	25	63	35.2
2 bed	93	70.5	96	53.6
3 bed	6	4.5	15	8.4
4 bed	0	0	1	0.6
Total	132	100	179	100

20 The increase in units in blocks T and U by 47 would optimise housing on this site, in line with London Plan Policy 3.4 and is welcomed.

21 In terms of affordable housing, the approved masterplan (as amended in 2014) secured 29.4% of units as affordable, split 65:35 between affordable rent and shared ownership (113 affordable rent and 60 shared ownership units). None of the approved affordable units were located in Blocks T and U but these blocks did contribute towards the wider viability case at the time. In the current scheme, the applicant is proposing 14 affordable housing units, made up of 10 affordable rent and 4 intermediate units. This is equivalent to 29.4% of the uplift in unit numbers (47). The applicant has submitted a viability appraisal to support its assertions that this is the maximum reasonable amount that is viable.

22 Given that this block is part of a wider masterplan scheme that has already been the subject of a recent viability review as part of the s73 application, the approach being taken in terms of looking at the uplift only may be acceptable in this instance. This is subject to confirmation via an independent review of the viability appraisal that this is the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing is being delivered. The assessment should verify the inputs and costs assumed by the applicant, including uplift in values since the last review and how viable this scheme may be as a stand alone development. Further discussion following the independent review would be appropriate and a draft of the s106 should be made available to the GLA at stage II.

23 The split of 65:35 between affordable rent and shared ownership based on habitable rooms is in line with the approved masterplan, and there are no strategic concerns with this provision. This is noting that over a quarter of the additional units are 3 plus bedroom units and may raise issues around affordability if they were switched to intermediate homes

Housing choice

24 The scheme is made of a range of unit sizes, from studios through to 3-bed flats with one 4-bed unit. Whilst the overall provision of family units is low, at 9%, of the affordable rented units, 6 would be 3-bed plus (60%), which is welcomed. The applicant should confirm how the revised mix has been arrived at and the Council should confirm that it reflects its own housing requirements and its understanding of local demand.

Children's play space

25 Based on the Mayor's playspace SPG, 26 children are predicted to live in Blocks T & U development, of which 13 would be under the age of 5. This is an increase from 12 predicted in the approved scheme (of which 8 would be under 5). The current scheme gives rise to a total child playspace requirement of 260 sq.m, of which 130sq.m. is expected to be provided as door-step play for under 5's. As previously, the applicant is proposing to make use of the site's frontage and links to Ladywell Fields and also notes that the ground floor units benefit from private gardens. Given the uplift in child yield compared to that approved, together with the open space within the scheme, routes and proximity to the park, this is acceptable. The Council should determine whether any additional contributions are required towards the improvement or maintenance of this open space as a result of the proposed development.

Density

26 This part of the site has a public transport accessibility level (PTAL) of 2 to 3, and the London Plan density matrix would suggest a range of between 300- 650 habitable rooms per hectare, due to its a central setting. The Catford Green scheme as approved has a density of 391 habitable rooms per hectare (hrha), which falls within the density range.

27 The current scheme for Blocks T & U, as a stand alone site (6,700 sq.m. with 488 habitable rooms) would have a density in excess of 700 hrha. However, when considered as part of the wider masterplan, the overall density would be 417 hrha, just a slight increase from the approved scheme generated by the 47 additional units. Whilst on its own, it would be higher than the range in the London Plan, in the context of the extant scheme, it is in line with guidance and is acceptable. This is further reinforced by the improvements that this scheme would see in relation to the residential quality of the scheme in particular, as well as new routes and connections to Ladywell Fields.

Urban design

28 The form and massing strategy underpinning both blocks is supported and the seven/eight storey massing with set back roof provides sufficient enclosure and definition to the park edge, while remaining recessive in relation to the taller element of block A in views on the approach from the park. This is also helped by the simple and ordered architecture, brick materials, and pavilion style that have been adopted.

29 As discussed at pre-application stage, the introduction of individual entrances to the park edge, with well-defined zones of defensible space is welcomed, and will contribute towards pedestrian activity and passive surveillance along the northern frontages of both blocks. Similarly, the inclusion of entrances to cores either side of the entrance into the north-south route from the park is a welcomed introduction to the scheme and will assist in drawing footfall into the site.

30 The proposed amendments to the consented scheme are welcomed and result in a much improved standard of residential accommodation, including the removal of all north facing single aspect units, 100% compliance with the Mayor's minimum space standards and an increase in the

number of dual aspect units. The mansion block typology that is proposed enables an efficient core to unit ratio, with significant setbacks along the northern frontages enabling east/west daylight penetration into living spaces. It is noted that the internal layout of the upper levels of block T results in up to nine units per floor and sharing one core, but is recognised that this is difficult to avoid, whilst working within the general approved parameters and also whilst seeking to improve internal layouts of the flats. On balance, this is therefore acceptable.

31 The applicant has worked to improve the south facing ground floor edges of both blocks to provide individual entrances to units, while reducing the amount of car parking, which is welcomed. As requested at pre-application stage, the applicant has extended the areas of residential amenity space within the south facing courtyard, which improves the balance of soft and hard landscaping and more private amenity provision for residents.

Inclusive Design

The applicant has submitted an access statement, setting out that 18 units (10%) would be provided as wheelchair accessible, indicated on the floor plans and comprising a mix of tenure and unit sizes, which is welcomed. All wheelchair units have access to two lifts. The applicant should note that Building Regulation requirement M4(3) applies to these units, and they should be secured by condition. Typical floor layouts have been provided, demonstrating how each of the 16 Lifetime Homes criteria have been addressed. The Council should note that the London Plan now requires that 90% of homes should meet building regulation M4 (2) – ‘accessible and adaptable dwellings’, and these should be secured by condition.

32 The site is relatively flat, and level access is provided across the public realm and into buildings. The proposal identifies 20 car parking spaces as spaces suitable for wheelchair users, which matches the number of units, in accordance with the London Plan and Housing SPG. Mechanisms should be set out in the parking management plan will be required, to enforce and monitor the supply and future demand of the blue badge bays and their allocations (including sale and leases), to ensure that the development is accessible to those disabled people who rely on a car. This should be secured by condition.

Climate change mitigation

33 In relation to energy efficiency measures, both air permeability and heat loss parameters will be improved beyond the minimum backstop values required by building regulations. A range of passive design features and demand reduction measures are proposed to reduce the carbon emissions of the proposed development. Other features include energy efficient lighting and mechanical ventilation with heat recovery (MVHR). The demand for cooling will be minimised through a series of measures including openable windows, balconies and overhangs providing external shading and solar control glazing where necessary. The development is estimated to achieve a reduction of 12 tonnes per annum (6%) in regulated carbon dioxide emissions compared to a 2013 Building Regulations compliant development.

34 In terms of district heating, applicant should confirm that Blocks T & U are to be connected to an existing operational heat network at the development served from a single energy centre with a CHP unit and heating boilers.

35 For combined heat and power, it is understood that a 210 kW_e gas fired CHP unit is already providing the lead heat source for the site heat network comprising other blocks at the development. The CHP is sized to provide the domestic hot water load, as well as a proportion of the space heating. It is estimated that a reduction in regulated carbon dioxide emissions of 48 tonnes per annum (23%) will be achieved through this second part of the energy hierarchy. The applicant should provide further detail on the sizing of the CHP element of the scheme so that the applicable projected carbon savings can be checked. Graph 3 shows the lowest daily heat demand as 3,057 kWh which would permit only 8 – 9 hours operation per day of a CHP with thermal output of 337 kW.

36 The applicant has investigated the feasibility of a range of renewable energy technologies and is proposing to install 16.2 kW_p of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels on the roof of the buildings. A reduction in regulated carbon dioxide emissions of 7 tonnes per annum (3%) will be achieved through this third element of the energy hierarchy. A layout showing the proposed location of the installation has been provided, and this should be secured by condition.

37 In summary, based on the energy assessment submitted, a reduction of 67 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year in regulated emissions is expected compared to a 2010 Building Regulations compliant development, equivalent to an overall saving of 31%. The carbon dioxide savings fall short of the target within Policy 5.2 of the London Plan. The applicant should consider the scope for additional measures aimed at achieving further carbon reductions.

Climate change adaptation and flooding

38 The applicant has submitted a sustainability statement, and although Code for Sustainable Homes requirements have now fallen away, the proposals will be designed to achieve compliance with the relevant best practice guidance including Part L 2013 of the Building Regulations. Water conservation measures to reduce consumption to below 105 litres per person per day are proposed and approximately 1,100 sq.m. of green roof areas are proposed, which should be secured by condition.

39 The Flood Risk Assessment and Drainage Strategy confirms that the majority (80%) of the site is in Flood Zone 1, with the remaining area in Flood Zone 2. However, it is notable that the site is generally surrounded by extensive areas within Flood Zone 3, which is likely to mean that during a significant flood event this site may be cut off from the local area and flood water may encroach into the site. A number of measures are suggested to manage the residual flood risk for the development, including setting of finished floor levels. The applicant should consider how entrances and openings to the basement would be designed to ensure that there is a safe means of access/egress to upper levels in the event of a flood. Commitments should be secured by condition.

40 Given the potential for the site to contribute to surface water flooding to these adjacent areas, the applicant has set out that the development will provide a betterment of current surface water run-off through the installation of 0.08ha of sedum green roofs (compliant with London Plan policy 5.11). It also proposes restricting all surface water discharges to the public sewer to the greenfield runoff rate (5l/s/ha). This will be achieved through a combination of permeable paving sub grade storage, underground attenuation tanks and oversized pipes. These will be capable of storing sufficient surface water for up to the 1 in 100 year (plus climate change) event. This approach is considered to be compliant with London Plan policy 5.13. These aspects of the proposals should be secured via an appropriate planning condition.

Transport

Car parking

41 The application proposes a reduced car parking ratio compared to existing (proposed car parking ratio 0.18), which is welcomed. This will, however mean that walking, cycling and public transport will be more important modes of transport – and as such, improvement to these modes and access thereto will be necessary to support the development.

42 The scheme includes blue badge parking spaces and electrical vehicle charging points (EVCPs) in line with the London Plan minimum standards, which is welcomed and should be secured by condition.

43 This site is close to existing controlled parking zones (CPZ) and as such, the section 106 (s106) agreement should restrict new residents from obtaining CPZ permits. In addition, a car parking management plan should be required to ensure that the private highways and parking within the whole Catford Green development are appropriately managed and not subject to unauthorised parking especially given the reduced parking for Blocks T and U.

Walking and Cycling

44 For this scheme, it is considered that a pedestrian environment review system (PERS) audit should be carried out in respect of the routes across Ladywell Fields towards Ladywell station and onwards to Lewisham itself. This should be provided prior to Stage II in order to assess any likely mitigation requirements. To further enhance pedestrian permeability, public access through the application site to/from Ladywell Fields should be secured in the s106 agreement – this should least match the hours of opening of the open space. Legible London or an alternative wayfinding scheme should also be considered.

45 In line with London Plan policy, the full amount of cycle parking should be provided from the outset as opposed to the current intention of only partial meeting of the minimum standards with space identified for future additional provision. This provision should be secured by condition. In addition cycle routes within the whole development should be secured by condition/s106 agreement together with any necessary improvements of routes within Ladywell Fields and Waterlink Way.

Trip generation and impact

46 It is not expected that the application proposals will have a significant impact on the capacity of the rail or bus network or the strategic highway network over and above that associated with the consented scheme.

Construction, Servicing and Travel Plans

47 A construction and logistics plan (CLP) has been submitted. Considering the only route to the site is via the rest of Catford Green, TfL would request the final plan considers mitigation of impacts upon the rest of Catford Green, which (with the exception of Block A) will be fully occupied by the time construction commences. The final CLP should be secured via a condition.

48 A revised and updated Travel Plan should be secured for this part of the Catford Green development.

Community Infrastructure Levy

49 In accordance with London Plan Policy 8.3, Community Infrastructure Levy, the Mayor agreed to commence CIL charging for developments permitted on or after 1 April 2012. It is noted that the proposed development is within Lewisham, where the Mayoral charge is £35 per square metre Gross Internal Area (GIA).

Local planning authority's position

50 The Council is due to report the application to Planning Committee in early December.

Legal considerations

51 Under the arrangements set out in Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 the Mayor is required to provide the local planning authority with a statement setting out whether he considers that the application complies with the London Plan, and his reasons for taking that view. Unless notified otherwise by the Mayor, the Council must consult the Mayor again under Article 5 of the Order if it subsequently resolves to make a draft decision on the application, in order that the Mayor may decide whether to allow the draft decision to proceed unchanged, or direct the Council under Article 6 of the Order to refuse the application, or issue a direction under Article 7 of the Order that he is to act as the local planning authority for the purpose of determining the application. There is no obligation at this present stage for the Mayor to indicate his intentions regarding a possible direction, and no such decision should be inferred from the Mayor's statement and comments.

Financial considerations

52 There are no financial considerations at this stage.

Conclusion

53 London Plan policies on opportunity areas, housing, design, tall buildings, World Heritage Sites, climate change and transport are relevant to this application. The application broadly complies with the London Plan however, further information and/or confirmation, as detailed below is required to comply fully.

- **Housing:** The increase in housing provision is welcomed in principle, and the increased residential quality compared to the approved scheme is strongly supported. The scheme is proposing 14 affordable units, which equates to 29.4% of the uplift. This is in line with the approved scheme, and could be acceptable, subject to demonstrating that this is the maximum reasonable amount that can be achieved.
- **Design:** The design is of a high quality with appropriate layout that improves on the extant scheme.
- **Inclusive design:** The inclusive design provisions are welcomed. The 100% Lifetime Homes and 10% wheelchair flats should be secured by condition.
- **Climate change:** The approach to energy is acceptable however, further information is required in order to verify the carbon dioxide savings proposed and ensure compliance with the London Plan. The approach to surface water drainage is acceptable, and appropriate sustainability measures should be secured by way of condition.

- **Transport:** Whilst acceptable in principle, to ensure full conformity with relevant London Plan transport policies, a number of matters will need to be addressed and secured by condition/s106 agreement, including increased cycle parking, car park management plan, Blue Badge and electric vehicle parking, construction and logistics plan, Legible London. Further discussion regarding improvements to Ladywell Fields, Waterlink Way and public access within Catford Green will be necessary to promote walking and cycling.

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