

22 March 2016

Garage North of 9 to 15 Elcho Street, Battersea

in the London Borough of Wandsworth

planning application no. 2016/0654

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

Demolition of existing garage and erection of a ten-storey building comprising 4 residential units (4 x two-bedrooms) and 108 sq.m of flexible commercial floorspace (Use Classes B1 (office)/A1 (retail)/A3 (restaurant/cafe)/D1 (non-residential institution) at ground and first floor levels, including associated balconies and roof terraces, cycle parking and refuse storage.

The applicant

The applicant is **Savills**, on behalf of **Curatus Trust Company (Mauritius) Limited** and the architect is **MSMR Architects**.

Strategic issues

Strategic issues with respect to **housing, urban design, inclusive access, climate change and transport** are all relevant to this application.

Recommendation

That Wandsworth Council be advised that the application complies with the London Plan, for the reasons set out in paragraph 45 of this report and does not need to be referred back to the Mayor. The Council should, however, take account of the comments made in paragraph 46 of this report.

Context

1 On 22 February 2016 the Mayor of London received documents from Wandsworth 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 April 2016 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 1C of the Schedule to the Order 2008:

- “a) the building is more than 25 metres high and is adjacent to the River Thames”.

3 Once Wandsworth 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. In this instance, the Council does not need to refer the application back to the Mayor.

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 The application site is located between Albert Bridge Road and the A3220 Battersea Bridge Road and covers an area of 0.0118 hectares. The site is located approximately 100 metres south of the southern bank of the River Thames and approximately 300 metres to the West of Battersea Park. It is bounded by Elcho Street to the east, Radstock Street to the west, 9-15 Elcho Street (part two, part five storey building with planning consent for a part four, part eight storey extension) to the south, and by 5 Hester Road (five storey office building) to the north. The site is currently occupied by a single storey garage building.

6 Elcho Street forms part of the Borough highway network and the A3220 Battersea Bridge Road is part of the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN). A number of bus routes are within walking distance of the site (19, 49, 170, 319, 345). There are no rail services within walking distance although Clapham Junction can be reached by bus in 10-15 minutes. River boat services to Embankment, Blackfriars, London Bridge and Canary Wharf are accessible from Cadogan Pier (approximately 650 metres from the site). This generates a public transport accessibility level (PTAL) of three (on a scale of 1 to 6b, where 6b is the most accessible).

7 The surrounding context comprises a mix of commercial uses and residential accommodation in buildings ranging from three to eleven storeys, the tallest being the Albion Riverside development to the north.

Details of the proposal

8 The proposal is to demolish the existing one-storey garage to the north of 9 – 15 Elcho Street and replace it with a ten-storey building comprising of 4 residential units (4 x 2-bed duplex) and 108 sq.m of flexible commercial floorspace at ground and first floor (Use Class B1 offices/ Class A1 retail/ Class A3 cafe/ Class D1 Non-residential institution), with associated amenity space, cycle parking and refuse storage.

Case history

9 There is no strategic planning history for this site, but it is noted that the applicant also brought forward the Ransome's Wharf proposal across Elcho Street (D&P Refs 1759/1759a).

Strategic planning issues and relevant policies and guidance

10 The relevant issues and corresponding policies are as follows:

- Land use principles *London Plan;*
- Housing *London Plan; Housing SPG; Housing Strategy; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation SPG; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Character and Context SPG*
- Density *London Plan; Housing SPG*

- Urban design *London Plan; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Character and Context SPG; Housing SPG; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation SPG*
- Transport *London Plan; the Mayor's Transport Strategy;*
- Crossrail *London Plan; Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy; Use of planning obligations in the funding of Crossrail and the Mayoral Community infrastructure levy SPG*
- Access *London Plan; Accessible London: achieving an inclusive environment SPG;*
- Sustainable development *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*

11 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 Wandsworth Core Strategy 2016, the Wandsworth Development Management Policies Document 2016, the Wandsworth Site Specific Allocations Document 2016 and the Wandsworth Policies Map 2016 and the London Plan (Consolidated with Alterations since 2011).

12 The following are also relevant material considerations:

- The National Planning Policy Framework, Technical Guide to the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance.

Principle of development

13 The existing site is a single storey garage used for storage, the principle of its demolition and residential-led, mixed-use redevelopment is supported.

Housing

14 This proposal will deliver 4 residential units (4 x 2-bed units) and this welcomed in line with London Plan policy 3.3 which seeks to increase housing delivery.

Affordable Housing

15 The proposal falls below the threshold of 10 units within Policy 3.13 of the London Plan. Wandsworth Council should assess the site against its relevant local plan policies.

Residential quality

16 London Plan Policy 3.5 promotes quality in new housing provision and sets out minimum space standards at Table 3.3. The proposed units would all exceed the standards set out within Table 3.3 and the units benefit from private amenity space, in the form of balconies which exceed the minimum standards (standard 26) set within the Housing SPG (March 2016). The minimum depth and width should be 1500mm in line with standard 27 of the SPG.

17 It is noted that the units are single aspect, due to the constraints of the site. Whilst the Planning Statement states that these are not north facing, in line with the Housing SPG 'north-facing' is defined as an orientation less than 45 degrees either side of due north, which is the case for this scheme. Therefore, the applicant should maximise floor to ceiling heights (minimum of 2600mm) to optimise daylight/sunlight penetration, and this should be secured by condition. Opportunities for the inclusion of roof lights to the top flat should also be explored.

Residential density

18 This site has a public transport accessibility level of 3, and GLA officers have classified the setting as central in character. The London Plan density matrix (Table 3.2), therefore, suggests a residential density of between 300 to 650 habitable rooms per hectare for this scheme. The planning statement confirms that the proposed density is 1,356 habitable rooms per hectare. Whilst this is above the ranges within the London Plan, it is acknowledged this is a very small infill site and the units have large open plan living/dining areas which somewhat skews the relevant density calculation. GLA officers consider the density to be appropriate in this location, making efficient use of the site.

Children's play space

19 Based on the proposed residential mix, and applying methodology within the Mayor's Play and Informal Recreation SPG, GLA officers have calculated an expected child yield for the scheme at less than 1 child. The SPG does not require developments with an estimated child yield of less than 10 children to provide play space on-site.

Urban design

20 Good design is central to all objectives of the London Plan (2011) and is specifically promoted by the policies contained within chapter seven which address both general design principles and specific design issues. London Plan Policy 7.1 sets out a series of overarching design principles for development in London. Other design policies in this chapter and elsewhere in the London Plan include specific design requirements relating to maximising the potential of sites, the quality of new housing provision, tall and large-scale buildings, built heritage and World Heritage Sites, views, the public realm and the Blue Ribbon Network. New development is also required to have regard to its context, and make a positive contribution to local character within its neighbourhood (policy 7.4).

21 The proposed commercial unit on the lower floors will create an active frontage to Elcho Street, representing a significant improvement to that offered by the current garage. The materials palette has been selected to respond to the emerging designs within the immediate context. The Council should secure key design details through conditions, including curtain walling, samples of facing materials and depths of window reveals, to secure the highest quality design.

22 The overall height of the scheme presents no strategic concern and is seen as being generally in keeping with the surrounding contextual height. However when considering the view from Hester Road within the design and access statement (Page 40, see Figure 1 below), the design of the 9th/10th storey looks bulky and could be improved. Further articulation may address this, and Wandsworth officers should consider this as part of its design assessment.



Figure 1: Extract from accompanying Design and Access Statement.

Inclusive Access

23 The aim of London Plan Policy 7.2 is to ensure that proposals achieve the highest standards of accessibility and inclusion, not just the minimum. Inclusive design principles help to ensure that all of us, including older people, disabled and deaf people, children and young people, can use the places and spaces proposed comfortably, safely and with dignity.

24 The design and access statement notes that level access is provided to all entrances, with level thresholds throughout and lifts access to upper floors. This is supported and should be secured through appropriate conditions.

25 The applicant states all dwellings will meet Lifetime Homes requirements, and this is welcomed, however, as of 1 October 2015 the Government's technical housing standards came into effect. These standards require that 90% of homes to be built to meet building regulations M4 (2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings' and 10% to be designed to be wheelchair accessible or easily adaptable for residents who are wheelchair users to meet building regulation M4(3) 'wheelchair user dwellings'. As a consequence Policy 3.8 of the London Plan has been updated accordingly (March 2016).

26 The applicant would be encouraged to provide at least one of the units as designed to be wheelchair accessible or easily adaptable for residents who are wheelchair users to meet building regulation M4(3) 'wheelchair user dwellings', with the remainder designed to meet building regulations M4 (2) 'accessible and adaptable dwellings'.

Climate Change

Energy

27 The London Plan energy policies are for major non-domestic buildings over 1,000 sq.m or developments of 10 or more residential dwellings, therefore this scheme is not considered of strategic importance with regard to energy.

28 A range of passive design features and demand reduction measures are proposed to reduce the carbon emissions of the proposed development. Both air permeability and heat loss parameters will be improved beyond the minimum backstop values required by building regulations. Other features include low energy lighting.

29 The applicant should ensure that the design addresses policy 5.9 to avoid overheating and minimise cooling demand.

30 The applicant has carried out an investigation and there are no existing or planned district heating networks within the vicinity of the proposed development. The applicant has also investigated the feasibility of CHP, however due to the intermittent nature of the heat load, CHP is not proposed and this is accepted.

31 The applicant has also investigated the feasibility of a range of renewable energy technologies. The applicant has determined that photovoltaics would be the most suitable for scheme and has identified that 50sq.m of PV panels could be accommodated on the roof. However, the applicant is not currently proposing to install PV due to limited access to the roof. When carefully designed the requirements of small PV systems for maintenance checks can be reduced. In addition, an access strategy could be developed in conjunction with other roof related maintenance requirements. The installation of PV would therefore be strongly supported to maximise carbon savings on site and meet London Plan policy 5.7.

32 Based on the energy assessment submitted, a reduction of 1 tonne of CO₂ per year in regulated emissions is expected, compared to a 2013 Building Regulations compliant development, equivalent to an overall saving of 4%.

33 The carbon dioxide savings would fall short of the 35% target set within Policy 5.2 of the London Plan, and the applicant is encouraged to further investigate the suitability of photovoltaics aimed at achieving further carbon reductions.

Climate change adaptation

34 The Flood Risk Assessment prepared by Manhire Associates confirms that this <1ha site is in Flood Zone 3, however no residential uses are proposed on the ground or first floor.

Transport

Trip Generation

35 Given the scale of development, Transport for London (TfL) considered that the impact on public transport and strategic highway networks will be negligible.

Car Parking

36 The car-free nature of the scheme is supported and is consistent with London Plan policy 6.13.

37 TfL requests that residents are excluded from applying for parking permits in the local CPZ and that this is secured through the section 106 agreement.

Cycle Parking

38 A total of 8 cycle parking spaces are proposed for the development with capacity for the commercial unit to store cycles within the development. This is considered acceptable in the context of London Plan policy 6.9.

Deliveries & Servicing

39 A safe and legal loading point for the development should be identified and provided for the development. This should cover both the servicing of the commercial unit and residential element. It should be reflective of local parking in the area and of the restricted access to Albion Riverside immediately north of the site. This should be secured by condition.

Construction Logistics

40 A construction logistics plan, in accordance with TfL guidance and London Plan policy 6.3, should be submitted and secured via condition. Guidance on the methodology and further information regarding construction routing has been sent to the council. Maintaining cycle safety during construction and ensuring construction vehicles avoid key strategic routes and peak hour movements is important.

Community Infrastructure Levy

41 In accordance with London Plan Policy 8.3 the Mayor commenced CIL charging for developments on 1 April 2012. Within Wandsworth, the charge is £50 per square metre. This is in addition to the local borough CIL.

Local planning authority's position

42 Wandsworth's position is currently unknown.

Legal considerations

43 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 and any connected 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

44 There are no financial considerations at this stage.

Conclusion

45 London Plan policies on housing, urban design, inclusive access, climate change and transport are relevant to this application. In general, the application complies with these policies, for the following reasons:

- **Principle of development:** The principle of redevelopment of the site and replacement with residential-led, mixed-use development is supported.
- **Housing:** The provision of new homes is supported. Given the constraints of the site and the single aspect units, the residential quality needs to be high and the Council should ensure best practice from the Housing SPG is followed and the floor to ceiling heights of the apartments is at least 2600mm to optimise daylight/sunlight penetration, roof lights could also be incorporated to improve conditions for future residents (see paragraph 17)
- **Urban design:** The overall approach to design is sound and a new active ground floor use in this location is welcomed. Key design details set out in paragraph 21 should be secured with conditions.
- **Inclusive access:** the overall approach is consistent with London Plan policy 7.2.
- **Climate change:** the energy policies of the London Plan do not apply to a development of this scale.
- **Transport:** A car-free development is supported. Parking permit exclusions, cycle parking, delivery/servicing and construction logistics should also be secured via conditions/s106, as appropriate.

46 Notwithstanding that the application complies with the London Plan, it would be improved by the following changes:

- **Urban design:** As set out in paragraph 22, the design of the upper storeys could be improved. Wandsworth Council should satisfy itself on the design.
- **Climate change:** The applicant is encouraged to explore the installation of photovoltaic panels on the roof to achieve further carbon reductions.

47 The Mayor does not need to be consulted again on this application.

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