

Adopted policy: London Plan

The London Plan's (2021) Policy D9 provides strategic guidance for tall buildings in London. The policy states that boroughs should determine if there are locations where tall buildings may be an appropriate form of development, subject to meeting the other requirements of the Plan.

Tower Hamlets Local Plan Policy D.DH6 directs tall buildings to designated Tall Building Zones (Aldgate, Canary Wharf, Millwall Inner Dock, Blackwall and Leamouth). Outside of these zones, Part 3 of the policy makes clear that tall building proposals will be supported provided they meet the general criteria set out in Part 1 of the policy and the four specific criteria set out in Part 3 of the policy. An assessment of the proposal against Tower Hamlets policy on tall buildings is provided within this document from page 22 onwards. The conclusion of this assessment is that the Site is suitable for tall buildings in line with LBTH's Local Plan policy. Thus it is recognised as a suitable location for tall buildings in a Development Plan and is in accordance with London Plan Policy D9.

The London Plan (2021) in its supporting text for Policy D9 notes that in large areas of extensive change, such as Opportunity Areas, the threshold for what constitutes a tall building should relate to the evolving, not just the existing, context. The evolving context is detailed on page 12 of this document. The adjacent diagram shows the maximum parameter building heights for the Outline Proposals and the proposed building heights for the detailed proposals. The AODs of the illustrative scheme for the Outline Proposals are also provided in brackets. Refer to parameter drawings for further detail.

- + 59.9m ()** AOD of the Proposed Development
- ▲** Maximum Parameter AOD (Illustrative Scheme AOD)
- + 59.9m** AOD of surrounding tall buildings (existing and proposed)
- ▼**



Fig.23 Diagram showing the Proposed Development, emerging context and associated AODs

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Policy D9 of the London Plan requires that long-range, mid-range and immediate views are given careful consideration in the design of tall buildings. The testing of views has formed a key part of the pre-application process and influenced the heights strategy. These views are illustrated on this page.

The London Plan (2021) Policy D9 also sets out criteria against which development proposals should be assessed and these include visual, functional and environmental impacts. For the avoidance of repetition these will be dealt with in response to Tower Hamlets Local Plan Policy D.DH6 on page 22 onwards.



Fig.24 View looking west along Dee Street towards Locally Designated Landmark Balforn Tower



Fig.25 LBTH Borough view 6: View from East India Dock Road to Balforn Tower and Canary Wharf in the background



Fig.26 LBTH Borough view 5: View from Langdon Park to Balforn Tower and Canary Wharf in the background

Adopted policy: LBTH D.DH6 Part 1

Introduction

The assessment of the acceptability of tall buildings on the Site should be grounded in planning policy terms and, as such, is to be based on the criteria established in Policy D.DH6.

Policy D.DH6 establishes two sets of criteria applicable to this Site, Part 1 and Part 3. Part 1 comprises a series of 12 criteria, a number of which relate to the detailed design of buildings. The criteria, and an assessment of the Proposed Development, are provided across the following pages.

a. Be of a height and scale, mass and volume that are proportionate to their role, function and importance of the location in the local, borough-wide and London context; and take account of the character of the immediate context and of their surroundings.

Located within the Site is a Neighbourhood Centre as defined in the Council's Town Centre Hierarchy. A fundamental part of the Proposed Development will be the delivery of a new Neighbourhood Centre and a new employment district, Enterprise Yard, which will be vibrant and have high levels of pedestrian activity, encouraged through the density provided by tall buildings.

The Site is located within the Poplar Riverside Opportunity Area, an area already characterised by tall buildings, and as noted in the London Plan (2021) what constitutes a tall building should thus relate to the evolving context.

The tall buildings respond directly to the townscape, respecting both the existing hierarchy and the evolving context. They will enhance the legibility of the area at a new key east-west route, delivered as part of the Aberfeldy Village Masterplan as well as signalling the significant regeneration of Aberfeldy, a major estate regeneration scheme.

The buildings are of a height and scale proportionate to the importance of the area undergoing transformation and the extent of the regeneration proposal. They are reflective of both their existing and evolving context.

b. Achieve exceptional architectural quality and have innovative and sustainable building design, using robust and durable materials throughout the building.

Buildings will be of the highest architectural quality. The Aberfeldy Village Masterplan will build upon the positive change already instigated in the early phases of the Extant Permission which show the Applicant's clear commitment to delivering high quality design and placemaking. The quality of design, including the use appropriate high quality materials, is secured through the Design Code which forms part of this application. Sustainability has been considered throughout the design process and will be central to the development of detailed design proposals.

The design quality is demonstrated within the Design and Access Statement: The Masterplan prepared by Levitt Bernstein and the Design and Access Statement: Detailed Proposals prepared by Morris + Company, and the principles outlined within the Design Code and Parameter Plans prepared by Levitt Bernstein which have all been submitted as part of this hybrid planning application.



Fig.27 Plinth incorporating new workspace defines character of Enterprise Yard and activates public realm

c. Enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area without adversely affecting designated townscapes and landscapes (including building/roof lines) or detracting from important landmarks, heritage assets, key views and other historic skylines, and their settings.

The Proposed Development has been designed to respond to the historic context, particularly Balfron Tower and the Balfron Tower Conservation Area. Decisions on massing, architectural approach, and the preservation of key views have been informed through collaboration with officers.

A Built Heritage Assessment and a Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment have been undertaken to demonstrate that the proposed tall buildings do not harm the settings of any designated or non-designated heritage assets. These are submitted in support of this hybrid planning application.



Fig.28 View west along Dee Street towards Balfron Tower

d. Provide a positive contribution to the skyline during both the day and night time.

The Proposed Development will provide variety, interest, and architectural quality to a skyline already characterised by tall buildings. Proposed tall buildings will be designed to be responsive to the local context and mark a dramatically improved pedestrian connection from Abbott Road to the west of the A12.

The contribution of the scheme to the skyline is demonstrated as part of the Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment, prepared by The Townscape Consultancy which has been submitted as part of this hybrid planning application. The baseline photography was taken during daylight hours. It is considered that the appearance of the Proposed Development at night would be consistent with that of other existing developments in the local area, and separate night time AVRs are not provided.



Fig.29 View along Abbott Road showing the tall building cluster, and its skyline, marking the transformed vehicular underpass

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e. Not prejudice future development potential of adjacent/neighbouring buildings or plots.

The Proposed Development has been carefully designed to consider its relationship with its existing context, not least

adjoining sites. The Applicant has explored how underutilised adjacent land can be integrated through comprehensive land assembly discussions. Where this has not been feasible, the Proposed Development has been designed to facilitate the future redevelopment of this land.



Fig.30 Aerial sketch of the illustrative masterplan in its surroundings

f. Maintain adequate distance between buildings to ensure a high-quality ground floor experience and enhanced residential environment.

The tallest elements in the Proposed Development are located away from the edges of the Site to preserve the residential quality of the neighbouring homes. Proposed tall buildings are positioned a minimum of 25 metres from one another and orientated to minimise overlooking to ensure that internal spaces in the new homes are of the highest quality.

The ground floor is activated by a mix of non-residential uses, predominantly workspace and retail, and the landscape and public realm design is of the highest standard.

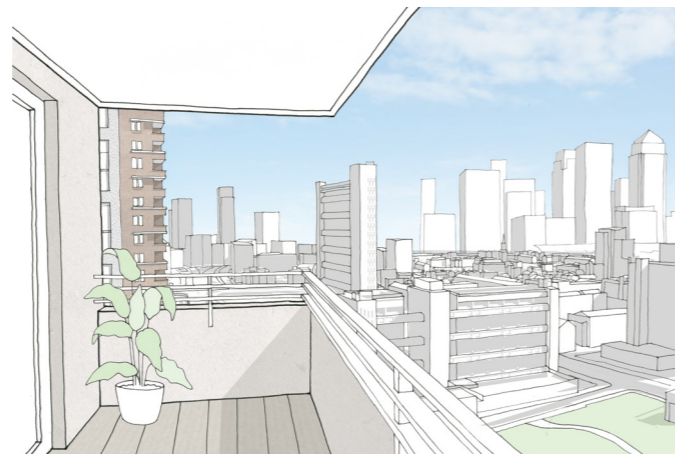


Fig.31 View from the balcony of a proposed tall building

g. Demonstrate consideration of public safety requirements as part of the overall design, including the provision of evacuation routes.

The Proposed Development has been designed in line with relevant planning policies and building regulations, and with the advice of specialist consultants to ensure that consideration has been given to public safety.

The fire engineers, Elementa, have been part of the design team from an early stage and provided Fire Statements in accordance with London Plan Policy D12. The Phase A and illustrative schemes have now been updated to include second stairs to all buildings over 18m, reflecting the most recent draft guidance (Draft BS:9991), the latest GLA requirements and the government's Long Term Plan for Housing.

h. Present a human scale of development at street level and comprise an attractive and legible streetscape that takes into account the use of the public realm for a variety of users and includes active uses at ground floor level.

Plinths are proposed at the bases of buildings on Enterprise Yard and the High Street. Setting back the residential buildings above will reduce the perception of height at street level. Through changes in material and architectural expression, these plinths will define an active ground floor.

Existing trees have been retained where possible, and new tree planting will also contribute to a human scale at street level.

Careful consideration has been given to maximising active frontages. Through the provision of new high quality spaces, Aberfeldy Street will be rejuvenated as a retail street appropriate to a Neighbourhood Centre, as is its designation. The Proposed Development will provide a new 'Enterprise Yard' running parallel to the A12. Characterised by small and medium sized commercial and maker-spaces, this area will build on the success of Poplar Works at the north of the Site.

Fire statements for both the Detailed and Outline Proposals have been updated as part of this submission, these conclude that adequate measures are provided to meet the functional requirements of the Building Regulations.

All outline phases will be subject to future Reserved Matters Applications, which will respond to the relevant fire safety legislation and guidance in place at that time

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Fig.32 Active uses at the ground floor of residential buildings



Fig.33 Section through Enterprise Yard showing the continuation of Poplar Works maker-spaces opposite a residential building with a plinth activating the ground floor and homes set back above

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i. Provide high quality private and communal open space and play areas (where residential uses are proposed) which local residents can use and that encourage social cohesion.

The Proposed Development includes a comprehensive landscape and play strategy. This includes up to 4,574 sqm of communal amenity space and up to 3,573 sqm of open space, including Highland Place which is a piece of strategic infrastructure for the local community.

To encourage social cohesion, play spaces of a variety of scales, from doorstep to local and neighbourhood offers, are carefully designed to sit within the public realm, providing high quality routes and spaces for new residents and the wider community. The thresholds between public and private spaces are carefully considered and balanced to offer a variety of usable spaces for people of all ages. Improvements to the existing open spaces of Leven Road Open Space and Braithwaite Park are also proposed in collaboration with Aberfeldy Big Local, who led on community engagement and the design brief for these spaces.



Fig.34 Illustration of private amenity space outside homes along Community Lane, which open onto a communal play street

j. Demonstrate that the development does not adversely impact on the microclimate and amenity of the Site and the surrounding area.

Careful consideration has been given to microclimate and amenity and the design has developed in response to the recommendations of specialist consultants to ensure that a pleasant environment can be provided within the Site and to minimise impact on the surrounding area.

The hybrid planning application is supported by an Environmental Statement, prepared by Trium, which assesses the Development's impact on microclimate.

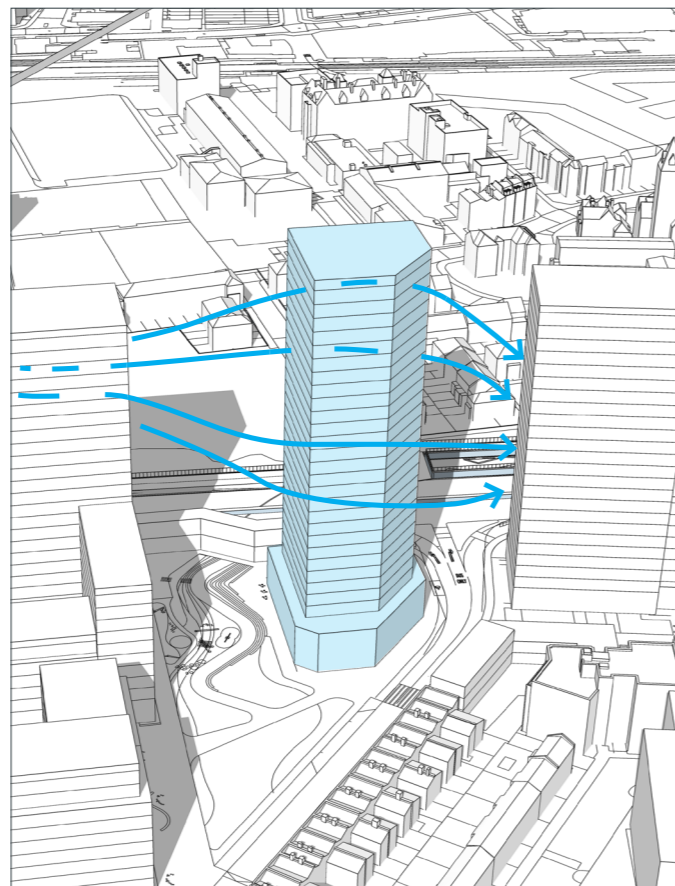


Fig.35 Building form maximises distances to adjacent buildings and mitigates effects of wind channelling

k. Demonstrate that the development does not adversely impact on biodiversity and open spaces, including watercourses and water bodies and their hydrology.

The Proposed Development and landscape proposals have been designed to integrate and improve existing open space, to avoid adverse impacts on biodiversity and, where possible, to enhance it. Further information is provided in the Biodiversity Impact Assessment carried out by Greengage.

A proposed surface water drainage strategy for each phase has been developed to utilise sustainable drainage techniques (SuDS) to attenuate surface water at source and reduce the risk of downstream flooding of the Thames Water sewer network in the local area. Further information is provided in the Below Ground Drainage Strategy prepared by Meinhardt.



Fig.36 A landscape strategy which considers sustainable urban drainage and promotes biodiversity

l. Comply with Civil Aviation requirements and not interfere to an unacceptable degree with telecommunications television and radio transmission networks and river radar equipment.

The Environmental Scoping Opinion written by LBTH and dated 08.09.2021 notes that the Site is approximately 3km to the north west of London City Airport, and due to the proposed height it is not anticipated to affect the current use of approach

and/or departure procedures for London City Airport and it was agreed that aviation could be scoped out of the Environmental Assessment.

Both London City Airport and National Air Traffic Services (NATS) will be consulted on during the determination of the hybrid application.

Furthermore, conditions will likely be attached to the Decision Notice to ensure compliance with Civil Aviation requirements.

Summary

As has been set out across these pages, the tall buildings in the Proposed Development positively respond to the criteria set out in Part 1 of Policy D.DH6, against which all proposals for tall buildings within the London Borough of Tower Hamlets must be assessed.

To compliment the above design policies, LBTH produced the High Density Living SPD (2021), and whilst it would be too much detail for this document to address how the Proposed Development meets this guidance, the Applicant's Design Team are ensuring close compliance and have demonstrated this as part of the hybrid planning application, notably within the Design Code prepared by Levitt Bernstein and submitted as part of this application.