

25-55 North Street, Romford

in the London Borough of Havering

planning application no P1292.15

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

Redevelopment of 23-55 North Street, including the retention of the part built structure to provide a mixed use development comprising full planning permission for a building (of 6 and 19 storeys) which includes 100 dwellings (Use Class C3), 842 sq.m of flexible uses at ground floor including retail, offices and community uses (Uses Classes A1, A4,B1,D1), associated basement car parking, cycle parking, storage and servicing.

The applicant

The applicant is **Regency Homes Ltd**, the architect is **gml achitects** and the agent is **Rolfe Judd**.

Strategic issues

The principle of a **high density** residential scheme on this town centre site is supported; however, issues with respect to **affordable housing**, **child play space**, **energy** and **transport** should be addressed before the application is referred back to the Mayor.

Recommendation

That Havering Council be advised that while the application is generally acceptable in strategic planning terms, the application does not yet comply with the London Plan, for the reasons set out in paragraph 53; but that the possible remedies set out in that paragraph could address these deficiencies.

Context

1 On 16 September 2015 the Mayor of London received documents from Havering Council notifying him of a planning application of potential strategic importance to develop the above site for the above uses. The Mayor must 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: “development of a building more than 30m high”.

3 Once Havering 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 The site currently comprises a building site with a part built concrete frame.

6 On the east side of North Street opposite the application site the buildings are of 20th century origin and predominantly retail frontages. A prominent 11 storey office tower, North house extends above a podium at the northern end. To the south of the site is the Angel Way development, which comprises 350 units, a hotel and a ground plus 16 storey tower. This scheme is currently under construction.

7 Directly south of the site is the Rubicon building, which has a flank elevation to the north and will abut them proposed scheme for this site. The eastern boundary of the site abuts the Romford Town Centre Conservation Area boundary. To the west of the site is the Angel Way development site, which when completed will deliver 350 units, a hotel and retail/commercial units.

8 The site is located at the northern end of Romford Town Centre between Angel Way and North Street. Romford station is approximately 650m south of the site and there are 6 bus routes within 100m. The site records an excellent public transport accessibility level (PTAL) of 6a on a scale of 1-6b, where 6b is the highest, and will also benefit from Crossrail when it opens in 2017.

9 The nearest part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) – St. Edward’s Way - borders the north part of the site. The A12, about 850m away, is the nearest part of the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN).

Details of the proposal

10 The redevelopment of 23-55 North Street, including the retention of the part built structure to provide a mixed use development comprising full planning permission for a building (of 6 and 19 storeys) which includes 100 dwellings (Use Class C3), 842 sq.m of flexible uses at ground floor including retail, offices and community uses (Uses Classes A1, A4, B1, D1), associated basement car parking, cycle parking, storage and servicing.

Case history

11 The most relevant planning history relates to an appeal decision issued in October 2006 for demolition of existing buildings and erection of 86 apartments over ground floor retail. Both Planning and Conservation Area appeal applications were allowed by the Inspector who granted planning permission subject to conditions for a 16 Storey tower, stepping down to 8 storeys, which would have been situated to the northern end of the site adjacent to the roundabout with an entrance lobby located in a curved element of the elevation. The remainder of the accommodation would have been at 4 storeys, with enlarged retail units at ground floor.

12 That application and a subsequent proposal with a 14-storey building were supported by the previous Mayor PDU/0970/O1 and PDU/0970a/O1.

13 Subsequent to the granting of permission the previous owner demolished all buildings on site and progressed building works. The building work ceased and the site has been effectively derelict for several years although the consent has been implemented.

Strategic planning issues and relevant policies and guidance

14 The relevant issues and corresponding policies are as follows:

- Housing *London Plan; Housing SPG; draft Interim Housing SPG; Housing Strategy; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation SPG; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Character and Context SPG*
- Affordable housing *London Plan; Housing SPG; draft Interim Housing SPG; Housing Strategy;*
- Density *London Plan; Housing SPG*
- Urban design *London Plan; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Character and Context SPG; Housing 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*
- Parking *London Plan; the Mayor's Transport Strategy*
- Retail/town centre uses *London Plan; Town Centres SPG*
- Access *London Plan; Accessible London: achieving an inclusive environment SPG;*
- Tall buildings/views *London Plan,*
- Historic Environment *London Plan;*
- 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*

15 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 2008 Havering Core Strategy, 2008 Site Allocations Development Plan Document, 2008 Romford Town Centre Area Action Plan and the London Plan Consolidated with Alterations Since 2011 (March 2015).

16 The following are also relevant material considerations:

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Draft Minor Alterations to the London Plan (2015)

Principle of land use

17 The principle of a residential led mixed use redevelopment of the site was supported at appeal. The more recent London Plan Policy 2.15 and Town Centres SPG continue to support intensification of town centre sites and recognise the contribution they can make towards meeting London's housing needs. The imminent arrival of Crossrail nearby adds impetus to this. The further intensification of this is for residential use is therefore supported.

Housing mix

18 London Plan Policy 3.8 encourages a full range of housing choice. This is supported by the London Plan Housing SPG, which seeks to secure family accommodation within residential schemes, particularly within the social rented sector, and sets strategic guidance for councils in assessing their local needs. Policy 3.11 of the London Plan states that within affordable housing provision, priority should be accorded to family housing.

Table 1: housing mix

Housing type	Number	%
1 Bed	23	23
2 Bed	66	66
3 Bed	10	10
4 Bed	1	1
Total	100	100

19 The applicant is proposing 100 dwellings and the housing mix incorporates 11% three/four bed units. The previous scheme had no family units. Given the site's location and the previous position this housing mix is reasonable and offers a range of housing choices which is compliant with London Plan policy 3.8.

Affordable housing

20 London Plan Policy 3.12 requires borough councils to seek the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing when negotiating on individual private residential and mixed-use schemes. In doing so each council should have regard to its own overall target for the amount of affordable housing provision. This target should take account of the requirements of London Plan Policy 3.11, which include the strategic target that 60% of new affordable housing should be for social rent and 40% for intermediate rent or sale. With regard to tenure split the Mayor's position is that both social rent and affordable rent should be included within the 60%.

21 While the Mayor has set a strategic investment benchmark that across the affordable rent programme as a whole rents should average 65% of market rents, this is an average investment output benchmark for this spending round and not a planning policy target to be applied to negotiations on individual schemes.

22 Policy 3.12 is supported by paragraph 3.71, which urges borough councils to take account of economic viability when estimating the appropriate amount of affordable provision. The 'Three Dragons' development control toolkit or other recognised appraisal methodology is recommended for this purpose. The results of a toolkit appraisal might need to be independently verified. Paragraph 3.75 highlights the potential need for re-appraising the viability of schemes prior to implementation.

23 Where borough councils have not yet set overall targets as required by Policy 3.11, they should have regard to the overall London Plan targets. It may be appropriate to consider emerging policies, but the weight that can be attached to these will depend on the extent to which they have been consulted on or tested by public examination.

24 Havering Council's affordable housing requirement set by its Core Strategy policy CP1 is for 50% as a starting point for negotiations in all developments.

25 The applicant's planning statement states that the proportion and tenure split of the affordable housing to be provided as part of this development will be subject of a financial viability appraisal and agreement with the Council during the consideration of the application. Havering Council should have the applicant's viability assessment independently reviewed and the findings should be shared with GLA officers before stage 2 submission.

Housing density

26 The applicant has stated that the density is 684 units/hectare. This exceeds the London Plan density range of 215 – 405 units/hectare for central sites with a PTAL of 4 to 6. However, the density matrix should not be applied mechanistically and should have regard to context and other factors. In this instance the scale of development is appropriate to its context and the proposed density is not a concern.

Children & young person's play

27 Policy 3.6 of the London Plan sets out that "development proposals that include housing should make provision for play and informal recreation, based on the expected child population generated by the scheme and an assessment of future needs." Using the methodology within the Mayor's supplementary planning guidance 'Providing for Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation' it is anticipated that there will be approximately 10 children within the development (based on current housing mix). The guidance sets a benchmark of 10 sq.m. of useable child playspace to be provided per child, with under-5 child play space provided on-site.

28 While the applicant has not completed the child yield calculation or set out a specific play space strategy it has provided a roof level door step playspace on the horizontal block, which is an improvement on the consented scheme. The applicant should confirm that this is at least 60sq.m. (to meet the under 5s requirement).

Urban Design and housing quality

29 The applicant has responded positively to pre-application comments made by the Council and Urban Design London. The increase in the height of the tower is supported from a strategic perspective; it is more slender and enables a greater proportion of dual aspect units. The introduction of scissor units within the lower block enables the creation of family units and increase the number of dual aspect units, which is welcomed. The applicant has demonstrated that all of the units meet the minimum space standards, which is also welcome. The lower block does include floors which have a large proportion of single aspect units and a large number of units per core. This is symptomatic of such a high density scheme and would normally be unacceptable. However, it is accepted that the parameters of this block make it difficult to overcome this. As stated above the introduction of the scissor units does go some way to addressing this and is a welcome addition.

Sustainable energy

30 The applicant has broadly followed the energy hierarchy and sufficient information has been provided to understand the proposals as a whole. Further revisions and information are required before the proposals can be considered acceptable and the carbon dioxide savings verified.

31 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 and mechanical ventilation with heat recovery.

32 The applicant should provide evidence of how policy 5.9 has been addressed to avoid overheating and minimise cooling demand.

33 The applicant has assessed the using the Part L 2010 methodology. As the application was submitted after the 5th of July 2014, the carbon emissions and savings should be calculated following Part L 2013 methodology and targeting a 35% carbon reduction, in line with latest GLA Guidance: (http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/GLA%20guidance%20on%20preparing%20energy%20assessments%20April%202014%20final_2.pdf).

34 The applicant should also provide the carbon emission figure in tonnes per annum for each stage of the energy hierarchy (see Table 1 and Table 2 in the latest GLA assessment guidance for the required format). The energy statement should be resubmitted following the latest guidance. It should be noted that this is required to demonstrate compliance with the latest carbon emission target of Policy 5.2 and does not require any changes to the current arrangements with the Building Control officer. Sample SAP full calculation worksheets (both DER and TER sheets) and BRUKL sheets including efficiency measures alone should be provided to support the savings claimed.

35 The applicant should carry out an investigation into whether there are any existing or planned district heating networks within the vicinity of the proposed development. According to the London Heat Map the development is within a district heating opportunity area. The applicant should therefore contact the local borough energy office to determine the current situation of this opportunity area, evidence of any correspondence should be provided to demonstrate that this has been investigated.

36 The applicant is proposing to install a site heat network. However, the applicant should confirm that all apartments and non-domestic building uses will be connected to the site heat network. [A drawing showing the route of the heat network linking all buildings on the site should be provided.]

37 The applicant should provide further information on the heating system proposed, for instance whether a communal system is proposed. The applicant should note that a communal heating system must ordinarily be adopted with all apartments and non-domestic uses within the development connected into a single site wide heat network suitable for connection to a district heating network in the future. Further information on the floor area and location of the energy centre should also be provided.

38 The applicant has not investigated the feasibility of CHP and is therefore not proposed. Given the scale of the development and the intermittent nature of the heat load, this is accepted in this instance.

39 The applicant has investigated the feasibility of a range of renewable energy technologies and is proposing to install 28kWp of Photovoltaic Panels (PV) on the roof of the development. A roof layout plan should be provided to demonstrate that there is sufficient space to accommodate the proposed array.

40 Based on the energy assessment submitted at stage I a reduction of 16 tonnes of CO₂ per year in regulated emissions compared to a 2010 Building Regulations compliant development is expected, equivalent to an overall saving of 10%. 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. The applicant should also reassess the development against Part L 2013 and commit to the development exceeding 2013 Building Regulations compliance through energy efficiency alone.

Transport

Transport Impact

41 TfL does not consider that additional trips generated by this revised development will have a significant impact on the public transport or strategic highway network or the bus services that serve the site. However, TfL would want to ensure the access routes to the nearby bus stops are made fully accessible to pedestrians.

Cycle Parking

42 The number of cycle parking spaces (67) proposed does not comply with London Plan (2015) standards and TfL would advise increasing the number of spaces to help meet the 188 spaces a development this size would require. Given that consent was granted previously under earlier London Plan Standards and that build has already commenced, it may be difficult to meet current standards, however the applicant should demonstrate how they intend to address this shortfall. This should be secured by condition together with cyclist facilities (showers, lockers and changing areas) for the non-residential uses.

Car Parking

43 There are 35 car parking spaces proposed at a ratio of 0.35 of which 4 are designated blue badge spaces. TfL requires that blue badge parking and electric vehicle charging points are provided in accordance with London Plan standards and also a car parking management plan. In addition commercial tenants and residents should be exempt from securing CPZ parking permits. This should be secured as part of the S106 agreement.

Travel, Construction, and Delivery and Servicing Plans

44 TfL welcomes the submission of a framework Travel Plan. The travel plan should be secured, enforced, monitored and reviewed as part of the S106 agreement. A Delivery and Servicing Plan (DSP) (or inclusion in the Travel Plan) and a Construction and Logistics Plan (CLP) will need to be secured via condition.

Community Infrastructure Levy

45 The Mayor has introduced a London-wide Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to help implement the London Plan, particularly policies 6.5 and 8.3. The Mayoral CIL formally came into effect on 1 April 2012, and it will be paid on commencement of most new development in Greater London that was granted planning permission on or after that date. The Mayor's CIL will contribute towards the funding of Crossrail

46 The Mayor has arranged boroughs into three charging bands. The rate for is £x/sq.m. The required CIL should be confirmed by the applicant and Council once the components of the development or phase thereof have themselves been finalised. See the 2010 regulations: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2010/9780111492390/contents> as amended by the 2011 regulations: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2011/987/made>

47 London borough councils are also able to introduce CIL charges which are payable **in addition** to the Mayor's CIL. has yet to adopt a scheme has adopted a scheme. See the Council's website for more details.

48 The site is within the area where section 106 contributions for Crossrail will be sought in accordance with London Plan policy 6.5 and the associated Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 'Use of planning obligations in the funding of Crossrail and Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy' (April 2013).

49 In these situations, the Mayor's CIL charge (but not the borough's) will be treated as a credit towards the S106 liability. The practical effect of this will be that only the larger of the two amounts will normally be sought. As the CIL charge will not be confirmed until development is about to commence, the s106 agreement will need to be worded so that if the s106 contribution based on the assumed CIL proves incorrect the contribution is adjusted accordingly (assuming it is still more than the CIL). Other contributions towards the mitigation of transport impacts may also be sought in accordance with London Plan policy and with relevant legislation.

Local planning authority's position

50 Currently unknown

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 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

52 There are no financial considerations at this stage.

Conclusion

53 London Plan policies on housing, housing mix, affordable housing, housing density, children and young person's play, urban design, sustainable energy, access and transport are relevant to this application. The application complies with some of these policies but not with others, for the following reasons:

- **Principle of development:** The principle of residential intensification of this town centre site is supported.
- **Housing:** The affordable housing offer has not been given and is subject to viability negotiations with the Council. The outcome of this should be shared with the GLA before the application is referred back to the Mayor. The size of the proposed playspace should be confirmed.
- **Design:** The design of the proposal is an improvement on the consented scheme. It does not fully comply with the Mayor's standards, however, this is accepted given the constraints of the part built structure.

- **Energy:** Based on the energy assessment submitted at stage I a reduction of 16 tonnes of CO2 per year in regulated emissions compared to a 2010 Building Regulations compliant development is expected, equivalent to an overall saving of 10%. 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. The applicant should also reassess the development against Part L 2013 and commit to the development exceeding 2013 Building Regulations compliance through energy efficiency alone.
- **Transport:** The level of cycle parking should be increased and cycle facilities provided for the non-residential uses. Blue badge and electric vehicle charging points should be secured, along with a car park management plan and CPZ exemption. A travel plan, delivery and servicing plan and construction and logistics plan should be secured.

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