

# Vinegar Yard

Southwark, SE1 3QR

## 21. Environmental Statement Volume 01 - Main Environmental Statement

GLA/6913/S2 (LBS 18/AP/4171)

October 2021

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# **Chapter 0: Preface**

## INTRODUCTION

- 0.1** St Thomas Bermondsey Limited (the 'Applicant') submitted an application for Full Planning Permission for the redevelopment of a site in the London Borough of Southwark (LBS) on 21 December 2018 under reference 18/AP/4171 (the 'December 2018 Application').
- 0.2** The December 2018 Application sought approval for the following in terms of the 'Proposed Development':  
*"the demolition of the existing structures on-site, including the buildings in the south west portion of the site (known as 1-7 Fenning Street and No. 9 Fenning Street) and construction of a multi storey building, with a maximum height of ground + 19 stories (the 'Main Building', located within the west portion of the site), and a separate smaller building (the Pavilion) on the east side of the site comprising ground + 2 stories in height (referred to as 'the Proposed Development'). The Proposed Development will also provide a basement, of up to 3 levels, which extends across the majority of the site, and provides a link between the Main Building and the Pavilion. The Proposed Development will also provide public realm improvements, in the form of hard and soft landscaping around the Main Building, and public amenity space between the multi storey building and the Pavilion".*
- 0.3** The December 2018 Application was supported by an Environmental Statement (ES) (herein referred to as the 'December 2018 ES') which was prepared in accordance with the statutory procedures set out in the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017<sup>1</sup> ('the EIA Regulations').
- 0.4** The Application was considered by the LBS's Planning Committee on 29 June 2020. Officers recommended the Application for approval subject to conditions and S106, but LBS resolved to refuse the Application.
- 0.5** On 24 August 2020, the Mayor of London notified the LBS and the Applicant of his intention to recover the Application for his own determination (GLA ref. GLA/6208/S2). Between September and December 2020, the Applicant worked with officers at the GLA to amend the Proposed Development, seeking, amongst other changes, to address LBS' heritage concerns that had led to the local refusal.
- 0.6** Scheme revisions were submitted to the GLA in December 2020, and Trium Environmental Consulting LLP (Trium) on behalf of the Applicant undertook an EIA of the Proposed Development as amended ('December 2020 scheme') and prepared an updated ES (December 2020 ES).
- 0.7** In consultation with the GLA, the Deputy Mayor again reviewed whether he wished to remain the Local Planning Authority for the purposes of determining the application. This was confirmed in a subsequent letter from the Deputy Mayor to Terence McLellan at Southwark Council, dated 21st December 2020 (GLA ref. GLA/6913/S2). Since the submission of the December 2020 ES, there remained a few elements of the design that the GLA wanted to further consider and discuss and, therefore, the scheme has continued to evolve between January and September 2021 in response to ongoing feedback from both LBS and the GLA.
- 0.8** The Applicant has itself taken the opportunity to keep the public up to date as to the scheme revisions through the community updates initiatives (see the Community Update Report for further details), but the GLA will conduct a full statutory consultation exercise on the revised scheme proposals following this formal submission of the materials for determination by the Mayor. Given the time period since the scheme was before the LBS Planning Committee, the suite of submission material has been comprehensively reviewed, updated and refreshed as necessary to take account of the scheme revisions and to ensure that the application materials are fully up to date with any changes to the adopted and emerging legislation and policy framework.
- 0.9** The December 2020 ES has, therefore, been updated to reflect the further amendments to the Proposed Development (October 2021 scheme).
- 0.10** As such, this ES has been prepared as part of a package of materials for submission to the GLA for the purposes of public consultation and consideration of the October 2021 scheme (hereinafter referred to throughout this ES as the revised Proposed Development<sup>2</sup> by the Mayor. Under the re-submission of the planning application, the Applicant seeks approval for:  
*"Redevelopment of the site to include the demolition of existing buildings, retention and refurbishment of the warehouse and the erection of a ground, mezzanine and 18 storey building (with plant at roof) and 3 basement levels, comprising of café and community space within the warehouse and within the new building office, flexible medical and research and development, and flexible retail and affordable workspace, alongside cycle and disabled car parking, servicing, refuse and plant areas, public garden (including soft and hard landscaping), highway improvements and all other associated works."*

<sup>1</sup> Her Majesty's Stationery Office (2017); The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 (amended 2019 and 2020)

## DESIGN RESPONSE 2018 - 2020

- 0.11** A summary of the key design responses to address the reason for refusal and leading to the December 2020 scheme is provided below. The summary is focussed on the key design changes which are of relevance to the technical assessments of the EIA:
- Removal of massing (bulk) from within the conservation area and retention of the existing Warehouse at 9 Fenning Street;
  - Use of the Warehouse as a community-focused use with ground floor retail and first floor community hall space. This replaces the music venue with a more flexible and diverse offer that can work in conjunction with the affordable work space;
  - Creation of a new public garden at the east end of the site, replacing the music venue entrance pavilion and reduction in the extent of the basement so that there is no basement underneath the new public garden. No reduction in public open space is proposed;
  - Provision of a policy compliant on-site affordable work space offer set at 10% of the Proposed Development;
  - Development of a more articulated treatment in the evolved massing and external architectural treatment to respond more sensitively to the adjacent context;
  - Adjustment of the design to allow for flexibility in the final end uses: whether research and development (B1b) or medical (D1) use to facilitate Guy's and St. Thomas' Hospital occupation of the building or, if not, offering lab-enabled research and development space. The changes are primarily an increase in floor-to-floor heights, a more rigid structure (to control vibration, which is an important criterion for medical equipment) and spatial provision for more systems to support the proposed uses within the criteria for healthy and flexible buildings established by the NHS, for instance.
  - Respond to the GLA's agenda that the development should address requirements with regard to Sustainability - Carbon Emissions, Embodied Carbon and Life Cycle Commitments; and
  - Moving the servicing route from along Fenning Street to a loading bay served by the re-routed Vinegar Yard accessed from Snowfields.

## DESIGN RESPONSE 2021

- 0.12** As discussed at paragraph 0.7, the scheme continued to evolve since the December 2020 scheme and the following design changes were made as part of the October 2021 scheme:
- A reduction in massing to the eastern part of the Main Building resulting in the introduction of a terrace at Level 13;
  - The relocation of affordable workspace entrance to align with the masterplan east – west route;
  - An additional entrance along the northern elevation on ground level to the retail hall and two additional entrances along the southern elevation on ground level to the retail hall;
  - The relocation of gas storage to increase retail frontage at the eastern retail unit;
  - The relocation of one accessible parking space to be provided off-site;
  - Structural and drainage related updates to account for the amended massing; and
  - Minor amendments to the landscaping and urban greening factor as a result of the addition terrace at Level 13.
- 0.13** To ensure a robust assessment has been made when considering the potential effects of the flexible nature of the end uses as discussed at paragraph 0.11, two versions of the scheme have been assessed in this ES (as relevant) and set out below as follows:
- Option 1: Where levels 1 - 10 of the Main Building are provided as D1 Use Class (medical use); and
  - Option 2: Whereby levels 1 - 10 of the Main Building are provided as B1b Use Class (research and development use).

<sup>2</sup> In some instances where comparisons are being made between this 2021 ES and the December 2018 ES, reference is made to these as 'the 2018 Proposed Development' or '2018 ES' and 'the 2021 Proposed Development' and 'the 2021 ES'.

- 0.14** In both options the remaining levels of the Main Building and Warehouse are provided as B1(a) Office, affordable workspace (B1 / D1), D1 (community) and A1-A4 (retail).
- 0.15** A description of the Proposed Development as assessed within the technical chapters of this ES is presented within **ES Chapter 4 – The Proposed Development (Volume 1)**.

### PURPOSE OF THE OCTOBER 2021 ES

- 0.16** In accordance with the requirements of the EIA Regulations<sup>3</sup> and related case law, a comprehensive revision and update to the December 2018 ES has been undertaken (presented herein) which considers the revised Proposed Development now before the GLA for determination..
- 0.17** Each technical assessment of this ES has been reviewed and updated in consideration of the following:
- Changes to the ‘baseline’ position since December 2018 ES;
  - Changes to planning policy and EIA methodology, where applicable since the December 2018 ES;
  - Changes to the surrounding development context (or ‘cumulative schemes’) since the December 2018 ES (including additional schemes subject to planning applications in the last 2 years, not previously considered);
  - The Land Use Consultants Review of the December 2018 ES and March 2019 ES Addendum (Review Report dated October 2019) and points identified requiring clarification or further environmental information;
  - The December 2020 scheme (where necessary and appropriate); and
  - The revised Proposed Development (October 2021 scheme).
- 0.18** For clarity and completeness and to avoid a ‘paper trail’, rather than prepare an addendum to the December 2018 ES, a full update to the December 2018 ES (and subsequent 2019 ES Addendum) and December 2020 ES has been undertaken and which comprises the October 2021 ES (this document being Volume 1 of the October 2021 ES). The October 2021 ES replaces the December 2018 ES, the 2019 ES Addendum and the December 2020 ES in its entirety. This ensures that adequate information is available (and before the GLA) to assess the potential for likely significant environmental effects as a result of the Proposed Development, to be taken into consideration in determination of the planning application by the GLA (in accordance with Regulation 9 of the EIA Regulations).
- 0.19** This October 2021 ES meets the requirements of Schedule 4 of the EIA Regulations (see **Table 1.3 of ES Chapter 1 – Introduction (Volume 1)**). In addition, each technical chapter includes a review of the findings and conclusions of the updated assessment against that of the December 2018 ES, so it is clear whether or not the Proposed Development results in any additional or different likely significant effects to the likely significant environmental effects identified in the December 2018 ES.

<sup>3</sup> Further environmental information provided under Regulation 25.