

Pre-application briefing to Planning- Sub Committee

1. DETAILS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

Ref: PPA/2015/0002

Site Address: Apex House, Seven Sisters Road, London, N15 5PQ

Ward: Seven Sisters

Description of Development:

Redevelopment comprising the demolition of existing former Council office and erection of new buildings up to 21 storeys in height providing 152 residential units and 1,182 sqm of retail floor space.

Applicant: Grainger PLC

Agent: DP9

Ownership: Private/Council (See background below)

Case Officer: Neil McClellan

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Apex House is a Council office block on the junction of Seven Sisters Road with Tottenham High Road. It currently houses the South Tottenham Customer Service Centre. In July 2014 Cabinet approved the selling of Apex House to Grainger plc. The intention is to move the Customer Service Centre to Tottenham Green and a report on this will be presented to cabinet in due course. The agreement to sell the site is subject to Grainger plc obtaining planning for the redevelopment of the site.
- 2.2 The option to retain Apex House as a Council building was considered as part of the Strategic Property Review. The conclusion was that the building is no longer fit for purpose and is not needed for service delivery. The Customer Service Centre is better located in Tottenham Green to help consolidate that area as Tottenham's 'civic heart', complementing the environmental improvements currently underway there.
- 2.3 Grainger plc also owns part of the Wards Corner site opposite Apex House on the other side of the Seven Sisters Road. This site has planning permission granted in 2012 for a major redevelopment with new retail space and 196 new homes. The redevelopment of Apex House and Wards Corner, in the heart of Seven Sisters in Tottenham, is a key opportunity for Tottenham's regeneration. Providing new retail space, new homes & improved public realm, these sites can make a major contribution to uplifting the area. With land still to be acquired, it is unlikely that construction at Wards Corner will be able to start before 2017. Apex House, on the other hand, could be redeveloped much sooner (subject to planning permission).
- 2.4 The Apex House and Ward Corner sites are both identified as Housing Zone Priority Sites which between them could deliver over 290 new homes plus new retail space meeting the needs of both the existing market stallholders and new site for the existing Wards Corner market. Cabinet has agreed to support the Compulsory Purchase of the remaining land required to implement the Wards Corner development.

3. SITE AND SURROUNDS

- 3.1 Apex House is a 3-storey Council office building built in the late 1980s occupying a prominent

0.39 hectare site at the junction of Seven Sisters Road and Tottenham High Road, adjacent to the Seven Sisters underground and mainline station. The site includes the public toilets and clock tower located in front of the building.

- 3.2 Seacole Court a three storey block of flats managed by ***Housing Association adjoins the site fronting the High Road. The Stonebridge Road Estate is located to the rear.
- 3.3 Part of the site (the pavement along the High Road and the area in front of the existing building including the clock tower) are within the Seven Sisters/Page Green Conservation Area, which forms part of the Tottenham High Road Historic Corridor of six connected Conservation Areas.

4. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 Redevelopment comprising the demolition of existing former Council office and erection of new buildings up to 21 storeys in height providing 152 residential units and 1,182 sqm of commercial/community use floor space.

5. PLANNING HISTORY

- 5.1 No significant planning history since the Council offices and clock tower were erected in the late 1980s.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 Design Review Panel

- 6.2 The current proposal will be presented to DRP on Thursday 26 February 2014. Their comments will reported to the committee in the form of an addendum.
- 6.3 The proposal will be presented to a Development Management Forum prior to submission.

7. MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The main planning issues raised by the proposed development, with internal officer comment thereon, are:
1. Principle of the development – The site is located within the Seven Sisters Area of change as set out in Haringey’s Local Plan Strategic Policies. The Council’s strategic policies (SP1: Managing Growth, SP2: Housing) seek to maximise the supply of additional housing to meet and exceed 8,200 homes from 2011-2021 (820 per annum). The majority of these new homes will be accommodated in Haringey’s Growth Areas and Areas of Change. One of the Council’s aspirations for the Seven Sisters Area of Change is the redevelopment of the Apex House site as a strong district landmark building and gateway to Seven Sisters.

Apex House & Seacole Court have a site allocation (SS2) in the “preferred option” draft of the Tottenham Area Action Plan now out to consultation in February. The key objectives of this allocation are a residential led mixed use comprehensive development whose design will provide a tall landmark building marking the strategic Seven Sisters transport interchange along with public realm improvements.

Given the Council’s aspirations for the site, the principle of a largely residential development

incorporating a tall landmark building is considered broadly acceptable.

2. Design and appearance – As has already been stated the site has been identified as being a suitable location for a tall building, however in line with the Council's emerging policy on tall buildings, policy DM5 of the Haringey Development Management Policies (Preferred Options) Document, the proposed building will have to be of the highest quality. Further comments will be tabled at the pre-application Committee from the DRP following the scheme having been presented to them on 13 November 2014. Further, The Applicants are also carrying out their own consultation exercise with the local community before the pre-application committee meeting.

Not including Seacole Court within the development in line with the aspirations of the draft Tottenham AAP considerably weakens the scheme. It misses out an opportunity to significantly strengthen the High Road frontage. It also raises urban design concerns about the relationship, in terms of massing and scale, between the retained Seacole Court and the scheme as currently proposed.

3. Public Realm - The proposed 15m wide pavement on the High Road side would complement the generous pavement width outside of the Wards Corner development that continues towards Tottenham Green. A wide boulevard in this area would help to project the potential community/retail uses in Apex House onto the street and make it more of a distinctive place. This in turn would give the Wards Corner/Apex House area corner a more open, community/pedestrian feel. Better pedestrian connections over Seven Sisters Road would be desirable, however this requires dialogue with TfL and may be difficult to achieve. This approach would complement the AAP objective for the area which is to deliver streetscape and environmental improvements including an enhanced urban realm.

More thought is required on how to make the most of the public realm around the site.

4. Affordable housing – The scheme proposes 152 residential units of which 38% would be affordable (by habitable room).

In line with London Plan Policies 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12 and 3.13, Local Plan Policy SP2 aims to provide affordable housing.

Subject to viability, sites capable of delivering ten or more units will be required to meet a borough wide affordable housing target of 50%, based on habitable rooms.

There are currently high levels of social rented housing in the Tottenham constituency wards. In order to balance the levels and promote the area's regeneration, Council policy promotes higher proportions of market sale homes and intermediate housing in this part of the borough. The Council will seek 60% intermediate and 40% social/affordable rent housing.

The preferred affordable housing mix, in terms of unit size and type of dwellings on individual schemes will be determined through negotiation, scheme viability assessments and driven by up to date assessments of local housing need. The Council's Housing Enabling Officer's recommended mix for affordable housing on this scheme is 17% 1beds, 42% 2beds and 40% 3beds. The scheme's indicative schedule is broadly in line with this recommendation at 20% 1beds, 44% 2beds and 36% 3beds.

The Council is consulting upon a revision to Strategic Policy SP2. This will seek views on the reduction in the borough wide affordable housing target to 40%. Nevertheless, the adopted development plan policy contains a 50% target. Viability appraisals will therefore be required for affordable housing levels less than this policy target. Given the pending consultation on tenure split within the Tottenham Area Action Plan, further discussion on affordable housing is expected to be required. The initial view of the Council's Housing Enabling Officer is that 30% intermediate and 20% affordable rent would be acceptable to balance the mix of tenures in the area.

5. Private rented sector (PRS) housing - The Council is keen to explore with the developer and the GLA the potential for including a significant proportion of PRS housing in this scheme.
6. Density – The proposed 32 units over the entire site of 0.2 hectares would equate to 160 units per hectare and 535 habitable rooms per hectare at an average of 3.34 habitable rooms per unit. For a site with a PTAL of 3, in an Urban environment, the density would be higher than what is reflected in the guidelines under the London Plan Density Matrix. That being between 200-450 habitable rooms per hectare and between 55-145 units per hectare with the average habitable room per unit being between 3.1-3.7.
7. Impact on residential amenity – Any design proposal should consider the impact on the amenity of the surrounding properties. Any detailed submission should include an annotated site plan showing the distance between the proposal and dwellings on the neighbouring sites. A shadowing report would be expected with the submission of a planning application taking into account the proposed units and any sensitive surrounding uses.

There is particular concern about the relationship between Seacole Court and the proposed building. Habitable room windows are located in the flank elevation of Seacole Court and there are concerns about the impact of the scheme on light and outlook to these windows, as well as the impact of wrapping a building round the back of Seacole Court and the impact this has on the small external amenity spaces and balconies located to the rear.

8. Impact on the conservation area – Part of the site (the pavement along the High Road and the area in front of the existing building including the clock tower) are within the Seven Sisters/Page Green Conservation Area, which forms part of the Tottenham High Road Historic Corridor of six connected Conservation Areas. The Council has a duty under s72 of the Act to consider the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area. In working up more detailed proposals for the site the applicant will need to demonstrate that the scheme responds appropriately to the local and historic environment.
9. Quality of accommodation – All accommodation must accord with Haringey and London Plan standards. Currently, there are no floor plans of the proposed units and therefore this aspect cannot be formally commented on.
10. Parking and highway safety – Located on the junction of Seven Sisters Road with the Tottenham High Road both of which are part of Transport for London's strategic road network. Close proximity to Seven Sisters National Rail and London Underground Victoria line station.

Site has a high Public Transport Accessibility Level ("PTAL") rating of 6a.

The following Saved UDP and Local Plan Policies are relevant:

- 1) Saved UDP Policy M9 Car free developments
- 2) Saved UDP Policy M10 Parking requirements for New Developments
- 3) Local Plan Strategic Policy SP1 (Managing Growth), SP4 (working Towards a Low carbon) and SP7 transport.

Given its high PTAL rating the Council will support a fully car free scheme for this site. The provision of disabled parking and car-club spaces will need to be explored. The Council appreciates that given the sites constraints it may not be practicable to provide these within the development. The parking provision required will ultimately need to be balanced against the aspiration to provide a high quality design and public realm and this will need to be discussed in detail at further meetings.

Servicing arrangements for the commercial and residential elements of the scheme requires more thought. All servicing is likely to be from Stonebridge Road and its impact on road conditions and local amenity need to be understood and mitigated.

The proposed development will have to be supported by a transport assessment (TA); the applicant is required to conduct a joint TA scoping meeting with TfL and Haringey Transportation and Highways. It is highly recommended that before any surveys are conducted the applicant arrange the scoping meeting with the Transportation Officer.

11. Accessibility – All units would comply with Lifetime Homes standards and 10% of the number of residential units would be wheelchair accessible.
12. Sustainability - The applicant will be required to submit a sustainable design and construction statement to confirm that the proposed dwellings will meet Level 4 and any other sustainability measures which are incorporated into the proposal. All new non-residential development shall be built to at least BREEAM “very good” standard and should aim to achieve BREEAM “excellent”.

The scheme must meet the carbon reduction target and energy hierarchy set out in London Plan Policy 5.2.

The site has been identified as being in an area with potential for being part of a decentralised energy network. This may be as a decentralised energy hub, as a customer, or requiring part of the site to provide an easement for the network.

The applicant is advised to begin exploring the feasibility of all potential sustainability measures and documenting any measures which are ruled out and the reasons as this will be expected as part of any application submission.

13. Trees/Landscaping – There are existing trees located in front of the site which should be preserved. Opportunities for additional tree planting and enhancements to biodiversity such as green roofs should be considered.
14. Other Matters – The Council may wish to explore with the applicant the potential for re-providing the public toilets and clock tower currently located on the site.

Site Location Plan



Photograph of Apex House



Indicative Ground and Typical Upper Floor Plans



View of Proposal from High Road to the North



View of Proposal from High Road to the South

