

## **Appendix 3 QRP Notes**

### **London Borough of Haringey Quality Review Panel**

#### **Report of Formal Review Meeting: Apex House**

Wednesday 13 May 2015

639 High Street, Tottenham, N17 8AA

#### **Panel**

Peter Studdert (chair)

Phyllida Mills

David Birkbeck

Esther Kurland

Charles Wagner

Chris Twinn

#### **Attendees**

Neil McClellan

London Borough of Haringey

Robbie McNaugher

London Borough of Haringey

Sarah Coutts

Greater London Authority

Deborah Denner

Frame Projects

Ella Thorne

Frame Projects

#### **Apologies / report copied to**

Stephen Kelly

London Borough of Haringey

Emma Williamson

London Borough of Haringey

Richard Truscott

London Borough of Haringey

Nairita Chakraborty

London Borough of Haringey

Matthew Patterson

London Borough of Haringey

## **1. Project name and site address**

Apex House, Seven Sisters

## **2. Presenting team**

Jonny Kiddle	Grainger Plc
Aidan Potter	John McAslan + Partners
Thomas Deckker	John McAslan + Partners
Joe Travers-Jones	John McAslan + Partners
Geoff Noble	Geoff Noble
Pippa Edwards	DP9 Ltd

## **3. Planning authority's views**

Haringey officers have attended several pre-application meetings to discuss the proposed development at Apex House. The scheme was also previously reviewed by the Haringey Design Panel. In broad terms, planning officers support the development proposals. Given the high accessibility, prominence of the location and width of surrounding streets, the Council's Urban Characterisation Study (which forms part of the evidence base for the Preferred Options Tottenham Area Action Plan consultation draft) identifies the site as "an opportunity to mark the important node with an elegant, slim tower that can successfully mark this activity node. This tower could rise to circa 20 storeys but would need to form part of a lower rise (4-6 storeys) perimeter block and care taken to ensure wind vortexes are not created around its base, negatively impacting upon the public space".

## **4. Quality Review Panel's views**

### *Summary*

The Quality Review Panel broadly supports the development proposals for Apex House, but thinks further work is needed to refine the scale and massing proposed. The panel would encourage the design team to explore the creation of a podium block, to mediate between the scale of the tall building and the street context. This could also help improve the microclimate around the building, deflecting downdraughts from the tall building, to reduce wind speeds at pavement level. Greater consideration also needs to be given to the impact of the building on Seven Sisters Road. The panel also recommends further work to consider the impact of the commercial space in the courtyard on the quality of residential accommodation. More detailed comments are provided below on: scale and massing; microclimate; commercial space; architectural expression; landscape and street design; and residential accommodation.

### *Scale and massing*

- Whilst the panel supports the principle of a tall building on this site, it recommends further work to explore different approaches to the development of this prominent site so that their impact can be assessed and compared.
- The draft Tottenham Area Action Plan identifies this site as an appropriate location for a tall building – but does not specify a height. In the panel's view, any building above 7 or 8 storeys should be considered tall in this context.
- The panel is not convinced that it is appropriate for a tall building of this scale to come directly to the ground on the High Road frontage, both in terms of townscape and microclimate.
- A podium block, with a set back tall building, would be preferable, to respond to the scale of existing buildings along the High Road, creating a more human-scaled base to the development.
- A podium block could also be effective in reducing wind speeds at pavement level resulting from the downdraughts associated with tall buildings.
- Although the proposed building has a slender and elegant proportion when viewed from the north and south on the High Road, its appearance from Seven Sisters Road is of a wide and oppressive slab block. This could be mitigated by significantly reducing the height of the southern part of the tower and giving it greater articulation.
- The panel thinks that bringing the Seacole Court site into the development may provide an opportunity for some redistribution of height and mass.
- Further work will be needed to demonstrate how the development will preserve and enhance the character of the Seven Sisters Conservation Area.

### *Microclimate*

- The panel has a number of concerns about the development, in terms of wind, sunlight and daylight.
- Wind testing has been carried out, which highlights areas in which the tall building will generate high speeds at ground level, due to downdraughts as wind hits the tall building.
- The design team propose further modelling to the façade of the tall building, to slow downdraughts.

- Creating a podium block would also make a significant contribution to improving ground level wind conditions.
- It will be essential that the development goes beyond the standards of wind safety assessments to ensure that there will be a pleasant, comfortable environment for people walking or sitting at street level.
- The density of the proposed development also presents challenges in terms of sunlight and daylight.
- For example, where a row of terraced houses with sunken gardens are proposed to the southwest of the site, these will be heavily overshadowed by the proposed commercial space occupying the courtyard.
- This arrangement will significantly compromise the quality of living space in the terraced homes – and requires further consideration as discussed below.

#### *Commercial space*

- A single storey, double height commercial space is proposed, stretching back into the centre of the Apex House site.
- The impact of this building on the quality of the adjoining residential accommodation needs further thought.
- Whilst the aspiration to create a mixed-use development is positive, the potential value of this space at the heart of the site as a garden for residents should be considered.
- If the commercial space were omitted, it would allow for the creation of a south facing courtyard garden for residents, as well as reducing overshadowing of the terraced homes.
- If it is decided that the value of the commercial space outweighs the potential value of the courtyard to residents, the panel recommends reducing the height of this accommodation, to minimise overshadowing the terraced homes.
- It would also be important to create a prominent entrance from the street so that this is visible from across Seven Sisters Road.

#### *Architectural expression*

- The architectural expression of the development was not discussed in detail at this review – which focused on more strategic issues of scale and massing and environmental quality.

## **London Borough of Haringey Quality Review Panel**

### **Report of Formal Review Meeting: Apex House**

Wednesday 19 August 2015

Civic Centre, High Road, London, N22 8LE

#### **Panel**

Esther Kurland (chair)

David Birkbeck

Tim Pitman

Deborah Nagan

#### **Attendees**

Emma Williamson	London Borough of Haringey
Robbie McNaugher	London Borough of Haringey
Nairita Chakraborty	London Borough of Haringey
Richard Truscott	London Borough of Haringey
Deborah Denner	Frame Projects

#### **Apologies / report copied to**

Stephen Kelly	London Borough of Haringey
Neil McClellan	London Borough of Haringey
Peter Studdert	Chair of the Quality Review Panel

#### **Confidentiality**

This is a pre-application review, and therefore confidential. As a public organisation Haringey Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOI), and in the case of an FOI request may be obliged to release project information submitted for review.

## **1. Project name and site address**

Apex House, Seven Sisters

## **2. Presenting team**

Jonny Kiddle	Grainger Plc
Aidan Potter	John McAslan + Partners
Thomas Deckker	John McAslan + Partners
Pippa Edwards	DP9 Ltd

## **3. Planning authority's views**

Pre-application consultation has continued with Haringey officers since the previous Quality Review Panel meeting to discuss Apex House. Given the high accessibility, prominence of the location and width of surrounding streets, the Council's Urban Characterisation Study (which forms part of the evidence base for the Preferred Options Tottenham Area Action Plan consultation draft) identifies the site as "an opportunity to mark the important node with an elegant, slim tower that can successfully mark this activity node. This tower could rise to circa 20 storeys but would need to form part of a lower rise (4-6 storeys) perimeter block and care taken to ensure wind vortexes are not created around its base, negatively impacting upon the public space.

## **4. Quality Review Panel's views**

### *Summary*

A significant number of strategic issues raised at the previous Quality Review Panel meeting to discuss this scheme remain to be addressed. Whilst progress has been made in terms of materials and construction, internal layout and wind analysis, the panel continues to have concerns about fundamental aspects of the scheme, including its scale and massing, microclimate, quality of residential and commercial accommodation, and landscape design. These issues will need to be addressed before the panel would support a planning application for this development. More detailed comments are provided below, and comments made at the previous review that remain relevant are repeated for clarity.

### *Scale and massing*

- At the previous review, the panel expressed concerns that the development would appear as a slab block in views from Seven Sisters Road. This aspect of the scheme remains unchanged.
- Whilst the panel supports the principle of a tall building on this site, it thinks that the scheme as a whole represents overdevelopment of the site.
- For example, the panel's previous concerns about creating a human-scaled base to the development have not been addressed. In particular the panel is concerned about the 'wall like' appearance of the building from surrounding streets due to the length and height of the facades.
- In addition, the panel is also concerned that the 7 to 8 storey height of the lower portions of the building may set an unfortunate precedent for Seacole House.
- The panel also notes that the quality of environment on the terrace facing Tottenham High Road would be improved if this were one floor lower, allowing views into the canopy of existing trees, rather than above them.
- Whilst the panel was told that views analysis has been carried out to demonstrate the impact of the development in wider views, this information was not presented.
- There was also a lack of information to demonstrate how the development will preserve and enhance the character of the Seven Sisters Conservation Area.

### *Microclimate*

- Wind analysis has informed detailed design development since the previous review – for example using projecting balconies and canopies at first floor level to mitigate draughts.
- A 'wind screen' is also proposed between the tower and lower block on Seven Sisters Road.
- This screen would block views from single aspect units facing towards it, and the panel think other means of mitigating wind conditions associated with the tall building should be explored.
- For example, a less narrow gap between the tall building and 8 storey block on Seven Sisters Road, may create less of a wind tunnel effect.
- It would also be helpful to show analysis of wind conditions on balconies, to demonstrate that these will provide genuinely usable outdoor space.

- It will be essential that the development goes beyond the standards of wind safety assessments to ensure that there will be a pleasant, comfortable environment for people walking or sitting at street level.
- The panel recommends that the planning authority should obtain an independent expert assessment of wind conditions for Apex House, to advise on the issues above.

#### *Residential accommodation*

- The scheme includes a relatively high proportion of east or west facing single aspect flats, and overheating may be a problem for these, as they will not benefit from cross ventilation.
- Whilst recognising that Haringey's policies do not demand dual aspect for east or west facing flats – the panel notes its view that single aspect flats should be avoided.
- Additional modelling could help to shade the facades, but high performance glazing may also be required.

#### *Commercial space*

- A single storey, double height commercial space is proposed, stretching back into the centre of the Apex House site.
- Whilst the aspiration to create a mixed-use development is positive, the panel continues to think this would be at the expense of maximising the quality of the development for residents.
- For example, if the commercial space was omitted, it would allow for the creation of a shared private garden for residents.
- The commercial space also continues to lack a prominent street entrance.
- If the commercial space could be accommodated at the base of the residential buildings, this could address both the prominence of its entrances, and free the courtyard for use by residents.
- However, if this is not possible, because of the demands of tall buildings on ground level accommodation, the panel think it would be preferable to omit the commercial space.

#### *Architectural expression*

- Design development in terms of architectural expression has taken place since the previous review, and the panel supports the choice of brick and some aspects of the detailed façade design.



- However, this work has primarily focused on the upper storeys of the building, and the panel think the lower storeys deserve equal consideration – determining the quality of the development at street level.
- Metal cladding to the north and south elevations may look flat and featureless.
- The panel also thinks that the stack of projecting balconies now proposed, is less successful in articulating the east and west slab block elevations.
- Involving an artist could bring fresh thinking to decisions about materials and colour.

#### *Landscape and street design*

- Some further information was provided at this review on landscape design, however the panel continue to think that further information on this should be provided.
- The quality of environment created at street level will be essential to the success of the scheme, as a focal point for Seven Sisters, next to the underground station.
- Landscape design for this scheme should include improvements to the pedestrian crossing towards the station – as part of a generosity towards that wider area that should be expected of any tall building proposal.
- The mature trees on the High Road are a valuable asset but the panel is not convinced the scheme is makes the best use of these. For example the tree top level terrace could sit lower to enjoy the trees around, rather an above as now proposed.
- Planning officers should also assure themselves that adequate root protection area will be achieved, to ensure the trees survive construction of the scheme.
- Seating is proposed towards the High Road, but this location next to a busy road, east facing so shady in the afternoon and evening, may not be a pleasant place to sit.
- Where planted roofs are proposed, more detailed information will be needed to demonstrate the extent to which planting will be feasible.
- Further detail is also needed on the design of the ground level courtyard, provision of play space, and residential amenity space at all levels of the scheme.
- In terms of soft landscape, the panel would encourage abundant floriferous planting.

*Next steps*

- The Quality Review Panel will not support a planning application for Apex House until the fundamental concerns outlined above have been addressed.