

## **Pre-Application Briefing to Committee**

### **1. DETAILS OF THE DEVELOPMENT**

**Reference No:** PPA/2019/0015

**Ward:** Muswell Hill

**Address:** Cranwood House, 100 Woodside Avenue, Muswell Hill, London, N10 3JA

**Proposal:** Demolition of former Cranwood residential care home; and erection of 2 buildings, 1 of 4 storeys and 1 of 8 storeys, to deliver 42 homes. 36 homes (86%) would be affordable Council homes let at council social rent levels.

The drawings also identify indicative proposals for a potential further development to the south of the site. This satisfies the requirement to masterplan the entire site set out in the site allocation (SA51).

**Applicant:** London Borough of Haringey

**Ownership:** London Borough of Haringey

**Case Officer Contact:** Philip Elliott

### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1. The proposed development is being reported to Planning Sub-Committee to enable members to view it ahead of a full planning application submission. Any comments made are of a provisional nature only and will not prejudice the outcome of any formally submitted planning application.
- 2.2. It is anticipated that the planning application, once received, would be presented to the Planning Sub-Committee later in 2020. The applicant has engaged in pre-application discussions with Council Planning Officers over the last few months.

### **3. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

- 3.1. The application site is located within Site Allocation SA51: 'Cranwood Care Home' as indicated in the Site Allocations DPD. This adopted document allocates the site for housing. The site allocation includes a vacant building formerly used as a care home (located within the central/northern part of the red edge); and a row of homes (located within the southern part).
- 3.2. The red edge in the site allocation is approximately 0.39ha in size and is located on the southern side of Woodside Avenue, at the junction with Muswell Hill Road - which runs close to the eastern boundary. Highgate Wood adjoins the southern boundary and St James C of E Primary School and its playground adjoins the western boundary.
- 3.3. The application site itself only includes the central/northern part of the red edge in the site allocation which is currently occupied by a vacant building

formerly used as a care home. The application site excludes the southern section of the red edge which includes the existing row of 8 low-rise, and predominantly Council-owned, homes near to Highgate Wood.

- 3.4. The Parkland Walk and its underpass link that runs east to west under Muswell Hill Road sits immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site alongside the road itself. The southern boundary of the Muswell Hill Conservation Area (MHCA) is located on the opposite side of Woodside Avenue to the north and includes the houses on Muswell Hill Road to the north/northeast of the site.
- 3.5. Residential avenues of 2-3 storeys line Muswell Hill Road to the north/northeast and Cranley Gardens to the east of the site. To the north of Woodside Avenue, the St. Luke's Woodside Hospital development has a more open and landscaped quality. Its buildings (which include one that is statutorily listed and several that are listed locally) are set back from the road, which is lined by mature trees that filter views of the buildings from the street.
- 3.6. To the south of the site (beyond the existing row of homes) on the western side of Muswell Hill Road is a 4-storey terrace building with a parade of shops on the ground floor and homes above. Muswell Hill Road rises steeply from south to north creating a noticeable level change within the site from the highest point at the corner of Woodside Avenue and Muswell Hill Road to the rear (southern elevation) of the existing vacant building formerly used as a care home.
- 3.7. The site benefits from connections to the local bus network with two bus stops within 100m of the site. The stops serve route numbers 43 (to Friern Barnet / London Bridge) and 134 (to North Finchley / Warren Street). Highgate Underground Station is a 13-minute walk / 5-minute bus ride from the site; and Muswell Hill is a 6-minute walk / 2-minute bus ride away.

#### **4. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

- 4.1. Planning permission is sought for the demolition of the former residential care home and the redevelopment of the central and northern part of the site. 2 buildings, 1 of 4 storeys and 1 of 8 storeys, are proposed. The development would deliver 42 homes. 36 homes (86%) would be affordable Council houses let at social rent levels.
- 4.2. The proposal shows the redevelopment of the central and northern part of the site allocation that contains the vacant building formerly used as a care home.
- 4.3. The site allocation (SA51: 'Cranwood Care Home') includes the row of homes which are located outside of the site beyond its southern boundary. An indicative masterplan has been provided showing the potential redevelopment of this area in order to satisfy the requirement to masterplan the entire site set out in the site allocation (SA51). This other element of the site allocation may not come forward.

- 4.4. The scheme would be 'car capped' with 9 accessible parking spaces which would be prioritised for wheelchair users and families.

## 5. PLANNING HISTORY

- 5.1. The site has no recent relevant planning history. However, by way of background, it is noted that the site was previously occupied by Cranley Gardens railway station from 1902-1957. The station was on a branch line that connected Finsbury Park to Alexandra Palace. The station closed in 1957 and was demolished in the late 1960s.
- 5.2. In the early 1970s, Cranwood Care Home and St James' Primary School were constructed on the former railway line. The row of 8 terraced houses were subsequently built to the south of the application site. The former railway route to the east of Muswell Hill Road now forms part of the Parkland Walk Local Nature Reserve & Green Chain linking Finsbury Park with Alexandra Palace.

## 6. CONSULTATIONS

### Public Consultation

- 6.1. This scheme is currently at pre-application stage and therefore no formal consultation has yet been undertaken. A Development Management Forum will take place after the pre-election period. The applicant will also carry out its own pre-application consultation.

### Quality Review Panel

- 6.2. The proposal was assessed by the Quality Review Panel (QRP) on 05<sup>th</sup> February 2020. The QRP's full report is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 6.3. The panel's summary is as follows:

*"The Quality Review Panel welcomes the opportunity to consider the proposals for Cranwood House at an early stage. It recognises the level of thought shown in the design process so far but considers that the brief for the development is overambitious. The site sits on a key corner opposite the Muswell Hill Conservation Area and adjacent to Highgate Woods, so achieving an appropriate scale, massing and texture for the development must be given the highest priority if Policy DM1 of the Haringey Development Management DPD is to be met.*

*As the scheme continues to evolve, the panel considers that the massing of the buildings fronting onto Muswell Hill Road and Woodside Avenue should be reduced significantly in order to respond better to the neighbouring context. It would also encourage a rethink of the role and nature of the central space within the site, and of the location of the pedestrian route that will link the Parkland Walk to Highgate Wood.*

*The architectural expression of the scheme, which is currently generic and anonymous, must draw on the special character of Muswell Hill, which implies a varied roofscape, contrasting materials and rich detailing. The panel commends the aspiration to design the buildings to Passivhaus standards and feels that the scheme could be an exemplar in this regard.”*

- 6.4. Officers note that following the QRP the massing of the scheme has been significantly reduced and the route through the site has been removed. However, further changes in relation to the architecture and the detailed design will be made prior to the scheme moving forward.

## **7. MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.1. Planning Officers initial views on the development proposals are outlined below:

### *Principle of Development*

- 7.2. The proposed development is within a site identified for housing by Site Allocation SA51 of the Site Allocations DPD. Therefore, the proposed development would be acceptable in land use terms and would provide much needed housing in line with Local Plan requirements. The applicant has demonstrated, by the submission of the masterplan, that the development of the site will not prejudice the development of the remainder of the site allocation.

### *Affordable Housing*

- 7.3. The site has the potential to deliver a significant proportion of the 1000 Council homes Haringey has committed to build by 2022 through the Council Housing Delivery Programme.
- 7.4. 36 homes (86%) would be affordable Council homes let at Council social rent levels.

### *Design and Appearance and Impact on the setting of the Conservation Area*

- 7.5. The site is currently underutilised and offers an opportunity for an increase in built form due to its corner location, set back and separation from adjacent sites and buildings. The proposed development would comprise two contemporary buildings with an indicative masterplan for 2 further buildings shown.
- 7.6. The built form would be set back from the building line of the western side of Muswell Hill Road. Existing planting would be retained to the front of the buildings alongside Woodside Avenue and Muswell Hill Road and supplemented with the introduction of new trees and landscaping.
- 7.7. The intention is to finish the buildings with robust materials that would reflect aspects of neighbouring buildings and be sensitive to the context. The

detailed design of the facades is still under review and will be finessed throughout the pre-application process as it is informed by feedback from the QRP.

- 7.8. The main entrances to the homes would be from Woodside Avenue. The internal layout would provide clear and logical access routes, and good quality residential accommodation that meets or exceeds the internal space requirements of the Mayor's Housing SPG. The homes would all be dual aspect.
- 7.9. The proposed building to the Woodside Avenue/Muswell Hill Road corner would be taller than the surrounding buildings and its impact on the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area will need to be considered. Any harm identified will need to be carefully assessed and balanced against the public benefits of the proposal.

#### *Residential Mix*

- 7.10. 9 family-sized units would be included as part of the proposed provision of 42 homes which is considered appropriate given the location and site constraints.

#### *Impacts on Amenity of Surrounding Residents*

- 7.11. The adjacent roads and ample spacing between nearby buildings and the site provide a buffer between the proposed buildings and the existing homes and school nearby.
- 7.12. Given the distances & spacing between the site and neighbouring properties, as well as their orientation; adverse impacts on the amenity of neighbouring residents is unlikely. As the scheme progresses, further modelling will be required to ensure the impacts on neighbouring properties remain within acceptable levels.

#### *Transportation and Parking*

- 7.13. The proposed development would be 'car capped' with 9 accessible parking spaces prioritised for wheelchair users and the occupants of family sized units. The PTAL rating of the site is set to increase to 3 by 2021 due to slight increases in bus service frequency that are planned by TfL.
- 7.14. It is noted that PTAL assumes that people will only walk for up to 12 minutes to a Tube service. Highgate Underground Station is a 13-minute walk away, so in reality the site has a higher level of accessibility than its PTAL rating suggests.
- 7.15. The site is served by regular busses northbound (to Friern Barnet/North Finchley) & southbound (to London Bridge/Warren Street), providing easy access to Highgate Underground Station. It is also a short walk or bus ride to the amenities of Muswell Hill.

- 7.16. A low level of parking may therefore be acceptable in this instance; however, this would need to be robustly justified and suitable provision and support introduced to encourage walking and cycling, alongside possible parking control measures.

#### *Landscaping*

- 7.17. The proposal incorporates existing planting to the frontage of the buildings alongside the adjacent highways. To the centre of the site would be a landscaped amenity space for the residents of the development. Following concerns from the QRP and officers around security, a link directly into Highgate Wood, which is suggested in the site allocation, has been removed from the masterplan.

#### *Sustainability*

- 7.18. The proposal includes the ambition to design the development to Passivhaus standards. Passivhaus buildings reduce heat losses to ensure that very little energy is required for heating and cooling. The Passivhaus standard gives a robust method to help the Council achieve significant carbon reductions, whilst simultaneously saving money for residents who would see energy bills vastly reduced.