
Assessor's Report

by R Sabu BA(Hons), MA, BArch, PgDip, RIBA, ARB

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Appeal Ref: APP/Y5420/W/21/3289690

Architecture and Design Assessment

The site

1. The site consists of two adjoining parcels of land, The Goods Yard Site and The Depot Site, which lie north of White Hart Lane and west of High Road. It is located a short distance north of White Hart Lane Station and northwest of Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.
2. The Goods Yard site has largely been cleared. The remaining buildings include the locally listed No 52 White Hart Lane, known as the Stationmaster's House, and modest two-storey industrial units at the south of the site. The site is bound to the west by a railway line, and to the east by the Peacock Industrial Estate.
3. The Depot site comprises a large retail building at the western part of the site and a number of small retail units at the southern part. In addition, the Grade II listed Nos 867 - 869 High Road lie on the southeast corner of the site.

Extant permissions

4. The two parts of the site benefit from separate hybrid planning permissions. The planning permission for the Goods Yard site was decided at appeal in 2019 and the planning permission for The Depot was decided by the Council in 2020. Both planning permissions are hybrid with only the works to the listed buildings being in detail. Other parts of the proposals are defined by parameter plans.
5. These extant permissions together include three towers at 29 storeys on The Depot site, 21 storeys at the northern part of the Goods Yard site and 18 storeys to the south. The Council are of the view that the likelihood of those consented schemes ever being constructed is purely theoretical. It was also noted that, in the view of the Council, the permissions could not be implemented before they expire in June and September 2023. However, the appellant confirmed that should this appeal fail and in the absence of other planning permissions for the site, they would implement the extant consents. I see no reason to disagree and therefore, there is a greater than theoretical possibility that the schemes would be implemented. As such, in my view, the extant permissions constitute a fall-back position to be afforded significant weight.

Lendlease scheme

6. A resolution to grant planning permission for a scheme covering an area wider than the site, including six towers, three north and three south of White Hart Lane, was made by the Council shortly before the Inquiry closed. A resolution to grant planning permission, subject to a Section 106 Agreement does not constitute a planning permission.
7. The appellant submitted comparison images of the Lendlease scheme with the appeal proposal. However, the comparison images are based on maximum parameters and there is no certainty regarding time frames for the grant of planning permission, implementation of the scheme or that the scheme would be implemented with massing as shown. As such, while the Lendlease scheme is a material consideration, I attribute limited weight to the comparison images provided by the appellant.

The surroundings

8. The Haringey Urban Character Study February 2015 identifies the area as being within the North Tottenham/Northumberland Park neighbourhood. The Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA) and its Addendum includes an assessment of the area surrounding the site in terms of three character areas. This is in line with the character areas established for the consented schemes.
9. The character areas are North Tottenham/Angel Edmonton, High Road/Fore Street and Bruce Castle/Tottenham Cemetery. While the character of smaller parts within these areas do differ, such as around the stadium, the differences are generally subtle and localised, such that I consider the use of the three character areas to be appropriate for the purposes of this appeal.
10. The North Tottenham/Angel Edmonton character area generally consists of low-rise buildings that gives the area a spacious feel while the areas with commercial and industrial uses provide a vibrant character. The stadium is a large mass and the presence of which is felt in a number of views in the area, including from High Road and Northumberland Park.
11. The roads in this character area from which the proposal would be most viewed include Northumberland Park and Brantwood Road which are largely characterised by two storey dwellings. The industrial and commercial uses have larger footprints but have a low height which result in the area having a varied and spacious character. Likewise, the area to the west of the site and railway line is characterised by low rise residential buildings such as on Pretoria Road with commercial uses particularly along White Hart Lane. There are also buildings with larger massing such as Haringey Sixth Form

College that also have a low height which results in a similar spacious character.

12. The townscape of the North Tottenham/Angel Edmonton character area is, however, punctuated by tall buildings. Most relevant to the site is Brook House to the north of the site which is 22-23 storeys high and is part of the Rivers Apartments complex consisting otherwise of six to nine storey tall residential units and a school. To the northeast of the site lies Stellar House on High Road which is around 20 storeys high and the Love Lane estate south of White Hart Lane, which comprises residential buildings that are up to ten storeys in height.
13. The High Road/Fore Street character area primarily consists of High Road and a short section of White Hart Lane to which the site and proposal would form a backdrop.
14. High Road is a busy urban thoroughfare with relatively complete historic frontages. The buildings are generally two and three storeys high with groups of historic buildings largely of brick with stone detailing. Together with the mix of uses along High Road, this gives the area a varied but largely traditional and modest character with a range of uses that result in a vibrant community feel.
15. The Bruce Castle/Tottenham Cemetery character area is some distance from the site and is dominated by Tottenham Cemetery and Bruce Castle Park. The buildings are between two and four storeys in height with clusters of historic buildings. Despite a number of modern blocks of flats, the area has an open green feel with a modest domestic character.
16. Overall, given the largely two and three storey heights of the buildings along High Road and White Hart Lane along with the interspersed tall buildings, the area surrounding the site has a pleasant spacious and modest character and appearance that has a vibrant feel given the mix of commercial uses and nearby residential properties.

Policy background

17. The development plan for the area consists of the London Plan, 2021 (the London Plan), the Development Management Development Plan Document (DPD), 2017 (the DM DPD), the Strategic Policies with Alterations, 2017 (the Strategic Policies) and the North Tottenham Area Action Plan, 2017 (the AAP).
18. Policy SP11 of the Strategic Policies sets out the criteria for the assessment of tall buildings while DM DPD Policy DM6 identifies North Tottenham as a potential location appropriate for tall buildings. In addition, AAP Policy AAP6 identifies North Tottenham as a Growth

Area. Furthermore, Policy NT5 of the AAP sets out details of the site allocation NT5: High Road West which includes the site and covers the Rivers Apartments development to the north and the Love Lane estate to the south of the site. The site allocation also states that development should accord with the principles set out in the most up-to-date Council approved masterplan.

19. Currently, that masterplan is the Tottenham High Road West Masterplan Framework, 2014 (the HRWMF). As set out within, the main role of this masterplan is to establish key principles to guide future development proposals.
20. Key principles include building massing falling towards White Hart Lane to create an appropriate heritage setting for statutorily listed and locally listed assets. The HRWMF goes further to state that taller building elements should be located adjacent to the rail corridor away from the High Road and towers should descend in equal steps down from 18 storeys at the north to 10 storeys towards White Hart Lane.
21. With respect to building heights, DM DPD Policy DM6 states that tall buildings should represent a landmark building. However, the Policy goes on to provide criteria for tall buildings within close proximity to each other. Moreover, the London Plan states that not all tall buildings need to be iconic landmarks.

Proposal

22. The scheme comprises a residential led mixed-use development with commercial, business and service uses and a mix of market and affordable homes.
23. The proposal includes three tall buildings, one with 29 storeys at The Depot part of the site, one with 32 storeys at the north of the Goods Yard site and the southernmost tower having 27 storeys.

Long, mid-range and immediate views from the surrounding area

24. The proposed towers would be aligned on an approximately north south axis along the western side of the site as set out in the HRWMF. However, in terms of height, the towers would be significantly taller than the heights set out in the HRWMF. Moreover, they would not descend in equal steps from the north towards White Hart Lane. Accordingly, the proposal would not accord with AAP site allocation NT5 in this particular respect which requires development to accord with the principles set out in the most up-to-date Council-approved masterplan.
25. However, the towers of the extant permissions are also significantly taller than the heights suggested in the HRWMF and taller than Brook House. As such, the principle of descending building heights from north to south may not be implemented in any event.

26. The consented schemes propose a rise in height from Brook House to The Depot tower. The towers would then step down a similar distance to the Goods Yard North tower. However, there would be a smaller height difference between the two towers of the Goods Yard. In addition, the siting of the two towers of the Goods Yard would have a smaller distance between them compared with the distance between the tower at The Depot and the tower at Goods Yard North. This inconsistency in the difference in tower heights and spacing between them would result in a lack of harmony and legibility of the towers as a group in terms of height and massing.
27. The design principle driving the heights of the proposed towers in this case, is based on an arc taken from the top of Brook House, passing the top of The Depot tower, rising to an apex at the top of the proposed Goods Yard North tower then descending to the top of the Goods Yard South tower. The towers have also been relocated closer to Brook House and the distances between them made more consistent. Furthermore, the heights of the middle portion of the towers, or the 'jacket' as described in the evidence, also roughly follow the line of an arc taken from Brook House.
28. The approximate height of The Depot tower is proposed as 29 storeys in both the extant permissions and the appeal proposal. However, the tallest tower of the consented schemes would be at The Depot whereas in the proposed scheme the tallest tower would be at Goods Yard North.
29. The heights and siting of the proposed towers would result in a gentler and more symmetrical rise and fall of the tops of the towers and would therefore appear to be in greater harmony with each other and with Brook House compared with the extant permissions albeit particularly when viewed from the west and east.
30. In View 7 of the TVIA on Northumberland Park, the towers would have a significant effect on the skyline given that the existing long view is primarily of sky above the trees in the distance albeit there may be glimpses of Stellar House.
31. Brook House is seen in View 13 projecting above the roofs of the two storey terraced dwellings on Brantwood Road. The proposed towers would be viewed alongside Brook House and given their relative heights and spacing, the legibility of the towers as a group would be apparent in this view. The proposed towers would step up from The Depot tall building, which would be seen roughly centrally in this view, then down to the south. The towers of the extant permission, on the other hand, would step down to the south from The Depot tall building.
32. In View 27 from Durban Road to the west of the site, the impact on the skyline would also be significant. The articulation of the massing

of the jackets of the proposed towers would temper this impact by drawing the eye to a lower set of heights defining the tops of the middle portion of the towers. The harmony in height and massing between the towers would also be seen in this view.

33. The change in height between the proposed towers and the surrounding predominantly two storey scale to the east and west of the site would be significant and clearly apparent in long views. This sudden change in height would have an incongruous effect in these views and an adverse effect on the spacious modest character of these areas.
34. However, in a number of long views, the skyline is already punctuated by the height of Brook House and the extant permissions would be likely to result in a significant change in height between the towers and the surrounding area in any event, albeit to a smaller degree.
35. Although not all equivalent views exist for the consented schemes, it is clear that the towers of the extant permissions would be lower in height and would therefore have a less significant effect on the skyline. However, it is likely, given the height of the towers of the consented schemes, that the awkward relationship between the siting and heights of the towers would be apparent.
36. In terms of plan form, the towers would have a greater width in the north south direction than in the east west direction. The width would also be greater than that indicated for the towers of the extant schemes. This would result in the appearance of comparatively increased massing when viewed from the east and west.
37. However, in order to visually break down the massing of the building, a tripartite approach has been employed. The top of the buildings would be stepped back, and the lower part of the towers would rise from podium blocks that would create a top, middle and base breaking down the height of the buildings while roughly following the line of arc taken from Rivers Apartments and Brook House. In order to break down the width of the building, as well as the faceting of the east and west facades, the cladding around the middle of the tower would create a jacket feature that would partially wrap around the building breaking down the vertical massing of the towers into three parts.
38. Given the tripartite motif employed in the design of the massing of the buildings, the towers would not appear to be slab blocks and the articulation of the massing would be apparent in long views. Therefore, while the increased width of the towers compared with the parameters of the extant permissions would be likely to result in a greater loss of spaciousness, this effect would be partially mitigated by the design of the massing.

39. In mid-range views, such as View 4 from High Road outside the stadium, the towers would project a significant distance above the prevailing roofscape of the two and three storey buildings that line High Road. Whereas currently the low-rise townscape is punctuated by the single tower of Brook House which appears in the backdrop of many views in the area, the skyline in this view would be significantly altered by the three proposed towers.
40. The massing of the towers would have the greatest effect on the character of local areas when seen from immediate views such as View 6 and View 10 of the TVIA. The towers would be taller and wider than Brook House and the parameters of the tall buildings of the extant schemes. The significant change in scale would appear incongruous when viewed against the low-rise buildings of High Road. Since the proposed tall buildings would occupy a greater amount of space above the prevailing roofline of the buildings along High Road compared with the consented schemes, it would diminish the spacious modest character of the High Road area.
41. However, the tripartite motif and articulation of the massing would also be most visible in these immediate views. In addition, while the towers would greatly alter the backdrop of High Road, they would be set back from the street and would appear to be part of a different character area. The HRWMF envisages a new character area to be created and the landmark buildings as set out within would be likely to project above the prevailing roofscape in any event.
42. With respect to coalescence, the towers would appear to overlap each other in views from the north and south such as View 24 of the TVIA. However, given the slender proportions of the north and south elevations of the towers and the distance between the buildings, this effect would not result in an unduly bulky massing in these views.
43. The towers may also appear to overlap in distant views from the west such as View 18 from within Tottenham Cemetery. However, the articulation of the massing of the towers including the set back of the top of the tower would partially mitigate the effect of coalescence in these views.
44. The Depot tower would be closer to Brook House compared with the extant scheme. While this would reduce the space between the towers, the distance would still be sufficient to largely avoid the effects of coalescence in this respect. As discussed earlier, the reduction in space between Brook House and The Depot tower as well as the relationship between the heights of the proposed towers with Brook House would result in a more harmonious appearance than the extant schemes.
45. In summary, given their height and massing, the proposed towers would have an adverse effect on the spacious character of the North

Tottenham/Angel Edmonton area. It would also harm the modest character of the High Road/Fore Street character area. However, the harm would be limited compared with the extant schemes since the relationship between the siting and heights of the proposed tall buildings would appear more harmonious.

Maximising vs optimising residential density

46. London Plan Policy D3 states that all development must make the best use of land by following a design-led approach that optimises the capacity of sites, including site allocations. Policy SP1 of the Strategic Policies states that the Council will expect development in Growth Areas to maximise site opportunities.
47. The Council has indicated that the scale and slab block form of the tall buildings are evidence of maximising rather than optimising. It was also stated that without a townscape justification based on the legibility of cross routes as proposed in the HRWMF, the scale of the tall buildings can only be explained as a means of maximising density.
48. Since the tall buildings would have faceted facades and the jacket feature would break down the massing of the buildings, the towers would not appear as typical slab blocks or point blocks. The proposed towers would be sited roughly at the end of the proposed east-west routes from High Road to the site which would utilise existing pathways between buildings. Although the routes from High Road to each of the towers would not all be in a straight line, given their orientation and siting, and that they would be visible along the east west routes through the area, the towers would aid wayfinding through the site.
49. Currently Brook House provides a landmark for the northern edge of the masterplan area. Given their height and width, the proposed towers would stand out against the prevailing skyline to a much greater degree than Brook House and the heights suggested in the masterplan. The scheme would therefore diminish the role of Brook House as the primary landmark for the area.
50. The proposed towers would provide additional landmarks for the masterplan area. However, since the HRWMF indicates three landmarks including Brook House, the presence of more than one landmark in itself does not appear to be precluded in policy terms.
51. The HRWMF does not indicate the tower at The Depot site being a landmark building. Instead, the route east west through the site in this area appears to be reserved for a railway bridge link from High Road to the west. The Depot tower is sited closer to Brook House compared to that shown in the HRWMF and the extant permissions. This would restrict a direct route through the site from High Road to

such a potential bridge link to the west. However, as confirmed during the Inquiry, the bridge link does not form a critical part of the masterplan as it does not appear to be referred to in writing.

52. In the proposed scheme, the view from High Road through Pickford Lane would be terminated by the entrance to the tower, rather than being left open for a bridge link. Given that a primary access to the site from High Road would be at this location, the proposed siting of The Depot tower would assist wayfinding through the local townscape. Moreover, a route to a potential bridge link, albeit not a straight path, would be safeguarded by the creation of Northern Square. Accordingly, the loss of a direct route to a potential bridge link and the creation of a landmark tower at The Depot site is justified in my view.
53. The Council also state that the number of single-aspect units and the floor to ceiling heights are indicative of the proposal maximising rather than optimising residential density. However, the Council did not have any substantial concerns with respect to the living environment of future occupiers. Given the evidence I see no reason to disagree and therefore do not consider that the proposal would maximise rather than optimise residential density.

Architectural quality

54. The articulation of the facades was subject to extensive reviews during the application process and underwent a number of design changes as a result. I will necessarily assess the scheme upon which the Council based its determination.
55. The top of the towers would feature a darker grey infill to the masonry elements. While the darker colour could result in a heavier appearance, the use of a contrasting tone to the cladding jacket would help to visually break up the massing of the building. In addition, the use of this material as a vertical continuous feature from the top of the towers to the ground level would unify the top, middle and bottom portions of the buildings. The exact colour and tone of the infill material could be controlled by the use of a suitably worded condition.
56. The tops of the towers would also feature light grey or white ceramic framing with open corners that would lighten the massing of the tops of the towers. Although the framing would be set out in square proportions, the narrow width of the frame elements would result in a lightweight appearance at the top of the towers.
57. The stack bonding of the grey infill bricks at the tops of the buildings would not appear noticeable from ground level other than where the feature meets the base of the towers. Together with the lightness of the framing and its open corners, the tops of the towers would not

appear top heavy in immediate views such as View 6. In long views such as View 27, the framing at the top of the towers would allow some of the sky to be seen through the open corners. This would result in a lightness that would be apparent from long distances.

58. The height of the top of the towers would constitute roughly a fifth of the overall height of the towers. Given the location of the site, the base and part of the middle of the towers would be obscured by intervening buildings in many surrounding views. Given the set back of the tops of the towers, they would have a smaller massing than the middle part of the towers. Therefore, the height of the tops of the towers would aid the breakdown of the massing of the tall buildings.
59. The elevational treatment of the tops of the towers would continue in the 'core' element that would run vertically through the buildings to ground level. A ceramic terracotta jacket at the middle of the towers would wrap around a large part of the buildings while revealing the core element. Reeded profile terracotta infill panels would be set within a smooth terracotta frame and the glazing and fenestration components would be in a bronze colour that would also feature in the core element. Projecting floor slabs and deep reveals to window openings would add layers of depth to the elevation.
60. Accordingly, while the window fenestration and balconies would be vertically aligned and the areas of glazing may have been reduced during the application process, the architectural expression of the middle of the towers including the terracotta frame would not appear unduly heavy.
61. Given the above, the overall range of textures, colour, tone and depth would result in a highly articulated and well-designed façade with materials and design features that would be echoed throughout the three tall buildings.
62. The interface of the Depot tower with the 'shoulder' block would be expressed through the darker materials of the core element being brought to ground level visually separating the two elements. As such there would be clear distinction between the two parts of the building.
63. In addition, the proposed tall buildings and their elevational treatment would be viewed against Brook House which has comparatively less elevational articulation resulting in a bland appearance. Therefore, notwithstanding my findings with respect to the height and scale of the tall buildings, the facades of the proposal would appear to be of a higher quality in terms of architectural design and materials compared with Brook House. This aspect of the scheme would consequently have a positive effect on the character of the area.

64. Given the above, the architectural quality and materials would be of an exemplary standard as required by London Plan Policy D9.

Townscape

65. The HRWMF indicates essentially four urban blocks whereas the proposal includes the Goods Yards towers rising from a single podium. Although the layout would depart from the masterplan layout, the creation of the podium and a route running north south through the site aids legibility through the site while permitting opportunity for the development of adjacent plots up to their boundary. Consequently, this aspect of the scheme would not harm the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusions

66. The proposal would undoubtedly have a significant effect on long, mid-range and immediate views. The height, breadth and massing of the tall buildings would result in an abrupt change in scale compared with the prevailing local townscape. This would have an incongruous effect in a number of views and would diminish the spacious and modest character of the surrounding area. However, this effect would be tempered by the articulation of the massing and the harmonious relationship between the proposed towers.
67. The extant permissions in comparison would result in a less significant change in scale. However, given the heights and spacing, the consented towers would have a less harmonious relationship than the proposed tall buildings. As such the harm to the character and appearance of the area that would result from the proposal would be limited compared with the consented schemes.
68. The height of the proposed tall buildings would aid wayfinding by marking the east west routes through the site. In addition, the scheme would not result in adverse effects in terms of the living environment of future occupiers with respect to internal space. As such, the scheme would represent an optimum capacity of the site.
69. The proposed buildings would have highly articulated facades with a range of materials, textures, colours, tones and layers of depth that would be set out in well-proportioned bays that would result in an exemplary standard of architectural quality. This aspect of the scheme would have a beneficial effect on the character of the area.
70. However, given the adverse effect on the character of the area from the scale, height and massing of the tall buildings, overall, the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
71. Therefore, the scheme would conflict with London Plan Policy D3 which seeks, among other things, that development proposals should

enhance local context by delivering buildings and spaces that positively respond to local distinctiveness through their scale. It would also conflict with London Plan Policy D9 which seeks tall buildings that positively contribute to the character of the area. The proposal would conflict with Policy SP11 of the Strategic Policies, AAP Policy AAP6 and DM DPD Policy DM6 which together seek development that respects and responds positively to its local context and surrounding character.

72. In addition, the scheme would conflict with AAP Site Allocation NT5 which requires that developments should accord with the principles set out in the most up-to-date Council-approved masterplan.
73. It would therefore also conflict with Policy SP1 of the Strategic Policies which requires development in Growth Areas to accord with the full range of the Council's planning policies and objectives. The proposal would also fail to accord with paragraph 130 of the Framework in this particular respect.
74. The proposal would not conflict with London Plan Policy GG2 which requires among other things, that developments apply a design-led approach to determine the optimum development capacity of sites.
75. The harm to the character of the area that would result from the proposal's conflict with the above policies would be limited by the exemplary architectural quality of the proposed facades. Moreover, the harm would be limited in comparison with the consented schemes on the site.

R. Sabu

INSPECTOR