

Pre-application briefing to Committee Item No.

1. DETAILS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

Reference No: PPA/2023/0007

Ward: Noel Park

Address: Mecca Bingo, 707-725 Lordship Lane, N22

Proposal: Redevelopment of the Mecca Bingo site to create a mixed-use development consisting of a Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) block on Lordship Lane with associated facilities/amenity space; commercial / Town Centre floorspace space at ground floor level; affordable purpose built housing block and town houses and; communal amenity space and public realm.

Agent: Mr. Taylar Holtham, DP9

Ownership: Private

Case Officer Contact: Valerie Okeiyi

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The proposed development is being reported to the Planning Sub-Committee to enable members to view it ahead of the submission of the planning application. Any comments made now are of provisional nature only and will not prejudice the final 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 in early February 2024. The applicant is currently engaged in pre-application discussions with Haringey Officers.

3. SITE AND SURROUNDS

- 3.1 The site is occupied by a large single storey Bingo Hall with a large open air car park to the south. To the east of the site is the Vincent Estate. Immediately to the west of the site is Omnibus House, a seven storey rising to nine storey building consisting of residential units with a gym on the ground floor. To the south of the site are the three storey white-rendered town houses on Wellesley Road and the rear gardens of the two storey properties on Moselle Avenue.
- 3.2 The site sits on the heavily trafficked A109 Lordship Lane immediately to the north. The seven storey Hollywood Green Vue Cinema complex sits further to the west.
- 3.3 The site is located in an Opportunity Area as identified in the London Plan 2021 and is located in the Wood Green Growth Area as identified in the Council's

Local Plan 2017. The site also forms part of a designated site allocation in the Council's Site Allocation DPD – SA9 known as Mecca Bingo which seeks the redevelopment of the bingo hall for town centre uses with residential above. The site is also included within the boundaries of the Draft Wood Green Area Action Plan (2018) although this is no longer being pursued as a development plan document itself and is instead being subsumed into the emerging New Local Plan. The site is also within the designated Wood Green Metropolitan Centre and is adjacent to the Noel Park Conservation Area.

- 3.4 The site has a public transport accessibility level (PTAL) of 6a, considered to have 'excellent' access to public transport, being close to Wood Green Tube Station and the numerous bus services running along Lordship Lane and Wood Green High Road.

4. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The proposal consists of:

- The demolition of the existing Mecca Bingo building;
- **Building A:**
7, 8 and 9 storey building containing 985 sqms. of flexible town centre uses on the ground floor and 629 apartments of Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) on the upper floors with 748 sqms of amenity space;
- **Building B:**
5 and 6 storey building consisting of 24 residential units for shared ownership;
- **Building C:**
6 storey building consisting of 45 residential units for social rent;
- **Building D:**
2 separate buildings of 3 storeys consisting of 7 terraced houses for social rent;
- Extending Wellesley Road to access the new housing (Buildings D), with a new north south pedestrian link connecting it to Lordship Lane through a new 1377 sqms 'Pocket Park'.

5. PLANNING HISTORY

- 5.1 There is nothing relevant to the scheme at pre-application stage.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 Public Consultation

6.2 This scheme is currently at pre-application stage and therefore no formal consultation has been undertaken as yet. However, the applicant has recently undertaken their own pre-application engagement with the local community which consisted of a wide scale leaflet drop to properties in the local area informing residents of the pre-application scheme together with an exhibition and a presentation of the scheme to local residents who attended.

6.3 Quality Review Panel

6.4 The proposal was presented to the Quality Review Panel (QRP) on 20th September 2023. A summary of the Panel's response is as follows:

6.5 The panel is broadly supportive of the proposals for student accommodation, housing, commercial space and new public green space on this edge of town centre site but thinks that more work is needed to improve its quality.

6.6 The scale of the development is generally acceptable. However, exceptional architecture is required to mitigate the sudden change in height along Lordship Lane in views towards the town centre, alongside further work to minimise impact on the Noel Park Conservation Area. Analysis and mitigation of the microclimate, including daylight and sunlight impacts on neighbours, is essential to justify the height.

6.7 A more coherent approach to the landscaping across the site is encouraged especially. The management regime for the pocket park will need to be carefully controlled, including the possibility of night-time closure to prevent antisocial behaviour.

6.8 Following the QRP meeting, Officers have met with the developer team to discuss revisions and set up design workshops with officers to concentrate on the detailed design of the development. The revised scheme will be presented to Panel Members on 15th November.

(The QRP's full written response is included under Appendix II)

6.9 Development Management Forum

6.10 The pre-application proposal was presented at a Development Management Forum on 13th September 2023.

7. MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The Council officers' initial views on the development proposals are outlined below:

Principle of the development

- 7.2 The London Plan 2021 designates Wood Green as an Opportunity Area. The Council's Local Plan 2017 identifies Wood Green as a Growth Area. The site is located within these designations.
- 7.3 Policy SD6 of the London Plan states that town centres should be enhanced by identifying locations for intensification in order to optimise a mix of residential and non-residential uses. It also states that developments should support wider regeneration objectives.
- 7.4 Policy SP1 of the Local Plan 2017 states that the Council will expect development in Growth Areas to provide a significant quantum of new residential and business floorspace, maximise development opportunities on site, provide appropriate community benefits and infrastructure. The supporting text for this policy identifies several aspirations for Wood Green which include increasing the capacity and variety of uses within the town centre, maximising the capacity for housing and employment growth provision and be in accordance with all of the relevant Council planning policies and objectives (including those of the site allocations).
- 7.5 The site is designated as Site Allocation SA9 in the Council's Site Allocation Development Plan Document (DPD) which identifies this site for mixed-use development, and specifically for 'town centre uses with residential above'.
- 7.6 The pre-application proposal, which consists of new homes and Town Centre commercial space also includes Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA). Policy H15 of the London Plan (2021) relates to purpose built student accommodation, stating that Boroughs should seek to ensure that local and strategic need for purpose-built student accommodation is addressed, subject to matters including that the development contributes to a mixed and inclusive neighbourhood. Part B of the Policy states that Boroughs, are encouraged to develop student accommodation in locations well connected to local services by walking, cycling and public transport, as part of mixed-use regeneration and redevelopment schemes.
- 7.7 Policy DM15 (Specialist Housing) of the Council Local Plan 2017 states that student accommodation will be supported where it is required to meet a local and strategic need and is appropriately located within a Growth Area, such as Wood Green.
- 7.8 Proposals also need to demonstrate that they would not result in a loss of housing and that there is to be no adverse impact on local amenity, that the

accommodation is of a high quality design including consideration for unit size, daylight and sunlight, and provision is made for students with disabilities.

- 7.9 DM15 part D requires student accommodation schemes to demonstrate the need for the additional bedspaces and ensure the accommodation can be secured by agreement for occupation by members of a specified educational institution(s), or, subject to viability, the proposal will provide an element of affordable student accommodation in accordance with Policy DM13. The referenced Policy DM13 (Affordable Housing) states that onsite provision of affordable housing will be required and only in the following exceptional circumstances may an off-site provision be acceptable – where a development can a) Secure a higher level of affordable housing on an alternative site, b) Secure a more inclusive and mixed community and c) Better address priority needs.
- 7.10 The applicant is in discussions with several institutions to secure a nominations agreement and the affordable housing provision is discussed in more detail below.
- 7.11 The overall strategic requirement for Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) in London has been established through the work of the Mayor's Academic Forum, and a requirement for 3,500 PBSA bed spaces to be provided annually over the Plan period has been identified. The Developer Team has submitted a Student Needs Assessment as part of the pre-application engagement process. The Assessment finds purpose built student accommodation is in demand in Zone 3 locations such as Wood Green.
- 7.12 The rooms for the proposed PBSA vary in size ranging from 13sqm – 25.6sqm and 748 sqm of external communal amenity space would be provided. There are no specific standards set out in the London Plan however the proposed accommodation is considered to be high quality.
- 7.13 Accordingly, given the above policy context, the principle of a comprehensive redevelopment of the designated site, with flexible Town Centre floor space and PBSA is considered acceptable.

Demolition of Mecca Bingo:

- 7.14 Policy S5 of the London Plan, Policies SP15 and SP16 of the Local Plan and Policy DM49 of the Council's Development Management Development Plan Document (DM DPD) seek to resist the loss of existing recreational and community facilities and the proposal would result in the loss of Mecca Bingo which is a leisure/community facility. These policies indicate that such facilities should only be removed if they no longer meet an identified need or are no longer in demand, or if a replacement facility can be adequately provided elsewhere (locally).

- 7.15 The Developer Team has been in discussions with representatives of Mecca Bingo who have confirmed that there is no longer an adequate demand by the local community for the leisure facility - this will need to be fully evidenced. However, given that Site Allocation (SA) 9 does not require the retention of the existing community/leisure facility (Mecca Bingo) on the site, officers consider that the loss of the leisure facility, to be replaced with a comprehensive mixed use development that would bring forward considerable regeneration benefits, new homes and employment opportunities for the town centre and Wood Green, is acceptable and welcomed.

Design and Appearance

- 7.16 The existing building on site is a single storey 1980s building which occupies a substantial amount of the site, with a large surface car park taking up the majority of the site. The building has no particular architectural merit and the demolition of the building is considered acceptable.
- 7.17 The pre-application proposal comprises of four building components on the site, as follows:

Building A - PBSA: 7, 8 and 9 storey building;

Building B: 5 and 6 storey building;

Building C: 6 storey building and;

Building D: 2 separate buildings of 3 storeys

(**NB:** All buildings 18 metres and above will require a second staircase for fire safety reasons. The Applicant has confirmed that they are aware of this requirement and are designing the relevant buildings, triggering this requirement with a second staircase.)

- 7.18 The existing Wellesley Road will be extended to access the new housing (Buildings D), with a new north south pedestrian link connecting it to Lordship Lane through a new Pocket Park, onto which the commercial units below the PBSA will face.
- 7.19 Policy SP11 of the Councils Local Plan and Policy DM6 of the Local Plan states that development proposals should be of an appropriate height and a scale which responds positively to the site's surroundings. Proposals for taller buildings that project above the prevailing height of the surrounding area must be justified in urban design terms. Figure 2.2 of Policy DM6 identifies parts of Wood Green, including this site as being a 'Location Appropriate for Tall Buildings' and defines 'Tall Buildings' as being 10-storeys and over. The highest part of all the buildings proposed in this pre-application scheme is 'Building A' at 9 storeys. Therefore,

although this site is identified as a site appropriate for a 'Tall Building', the pre-application scheme, at 9 storeys (Building A) is not considered to be a 'Tall Building' in policy terms.

- 7.20 The location of the site and the existing surrounding townscape provides an opportunity for a high density and substantial redevelopment and Officers consider that the height, massing and scale of the proposals are acceptable within the site's context and surrounding existing built form. The pre-application scheme would represent a step up from the two to four storey residential context to the north, east and south of the site, albeit that the transition to the highest proposed height is made in steps. This is considered acceptable (subject to heritage considerations as discussed below) given the aspirations of the site allocations for the area.
- 7.21 The proposed layout, including the legible street and paths network and new "Pocket Park", are welcomed by Officers, albeit that design is not yet detailed; the park will provide a useful and much needed amenity and public park, bringing students, new and existing residents and town centre visitors together, as well as improving the setting of proposed and neighbouring buildings. Details of layout, use and management of the Pocket Park, and in particular how it relates to the proposed commercial uses and student accommodation are subject to ongoing discussion, as are design details and access arrangements to the eastern boundary, where no access or connections are proposed to the neighbouring existing Vincent Square council estate.
- 7.22 The detailed design and a brick-based materials palette which would take cues from the surrounding context, in particular of the Noel Park Estate immediately to the south which will assist in integrating the building into its surroundings. Regularly spaced windows will distinguish between base, middle and top of building A, to provide human scale and active frontage at street level, including vibrant town centre frontage along Lordship Lane and to the Pocket Park, and regularly spaced front doors to ground floor maisonettes and townhouses in the residential southern part of the site. The pre-application scheme proposes a comprehensive set of detailed, convincing and appealing house and flat layouts. However, detailed design, including elevational composition and detailed layout of both the student housing and apartment blocks, is still subject to ongoing discussion.

Heritage Impact

- 7.23 The site is located adjacent to the Noel Park Conservation Area and from the heritage conservation perspective it is important to understand how the proposed development will impact on the appreciation of the consistent historic character of the well-preserved Noel Park Conservation Area located immediately to the south of the development site.

- 7.24 The gradual decrease in height of the proposed development, which will step down from the 9 storey frontage on Lordship lane to the 6 storey residential buildings to the south of the site is welcomed to complement and mitigate potential heritage impact by transitioning towards the two storey townscape of the Conservation Area. The views that have been presented to date, to illustrate the building's potential impact on the heritage settings, have not raised any significant concerns.
- 7.25 However, in accordance with Policy SP12 Of the Council's Local Plan and Policies, DM5 and DM9 of the Councils DM DPD, local verified views are required in order to assess the visual impact of the pre-application scheme, especially in those key views that best unveil the historic character and townscape quality of the area including its landmark buildings such as the listed St Mark's Church. Relevant views include views looking across and into the Conservation Area towards the development site from Russell Avenue / Lymington Avenue and encompassing the listed St Mark's Church, also views along Moselle Avenue and views along Gladstone Avenue. A comprehensive heritage impact assessment will form part of future pre-application discussions.

Residential Unit Mix and Affordable Housing

- 7.26 The proposals seek to provide a mix of student accommodation and new affordable homes on the site. The proposal would provide 629 PBSA units and 76 new homes consisting of 21 x one bed, 39 x two bed, 9 x three bed units and 7 x five bed houses.
- 7.27 The breakdown of new homes in relation to each building is as follows:

| Building | A | B | C | D |
|-------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Student bedroom | 629 | | | |
| Shared Ownership | | | | |
| 1 bed | | 8 | | |
| 2 bed | | 13 | | |
| 3 bed | | 3 | | |
| Social Rent | | | | |
| 1 bed | | | 13 | |
| 2 bed | | | 26 | |
| 3 bed | | | 6 | |
| 5 bed | | | | 7 |
| Total | | | | |
| | 629 | 24 | 45 | 7 |

- 7.28 Policy H1 of the London Plan, in the supporting text clarifies that non-self-contained accommodation for students should count towards meeting housing

targets on the basis of a 2.5:1 ratio, with two and a half bedrooms/units being counted as a single home.

- 7.29 Taking into consideration the London Plan ratio, the number of new homes proposed as part of the pre-application for this site equates to 328 new homes. Of these new homes, 76 homes will be affordable which equates to 35% by habitable room, which complies the fast-track route set out in Policy H5 of the London Plan.
- 7.30 However, this does not meet the requirement of 40% affordable housing as required by Policy SP2 of the Council's Local Plan and DM13 of the DM DPD. Further discussions around this requirement with Officers and the Developer Team is ongoing as part of the pre-application engagement. The Developer Team has stated that there would be affordable units provided as part of the PBSA to make up the balance, but that number is not yet known.
- 7.31 Policy DM13 of the Local Plan states that 60% of homes should be provided as social/affordable rent and 40% as intermediate housing. The pre-application scheme proposes a split of tenures, which exceeds the requirements of Policy DM 13 policy, with 72% / 28% provided in favour of social rented homes.
- 7.32 This range of unit sizes, including the PBSA is considered appropriate and welcomed in this location as the proposal optimises the use of the site and will contribute to meeting local housing needs and supporting student housing needs.
- 7.33 The split of affordable housing in favour of social rent is welcomed – however further discussions as part of the pre-application engagement process regarding the level of affordable housing is ongoing and yet to be concluded.

Transportation and Parking

- 7.34 This site has a public transport accessibility level (PTAL) of 6a, which is considered to have 'excellent' access to public transport services. Several bus services are extremely accessible and Wood Green Tube Station is a 1 minute walk from the site.
- 7.35 The proposed scheme would be a car free development. For a public transport accessibility level of 6a the proposal does meet the criteria of T6.1 of the London Plan and Policy DM32 of the Development Management DPD for formal designation as a car free/permit free development. Blue badge spaces for the accessible units would be provided which will need to be policy compliant (10% of the overall number of residential units).
- 7.36 Policy T5 of the London Plan sets out the relevant cycle parking standards, which are reinforced in Policy DM32 of the Local Plan. The applicant has confirmed that the development will comply with these relevant standards.

- 7.37 Discussions are ongoing with the Council's Transport Planning team who require a parking stress survey to be carried out for the existing arrangements to provide details on the existing parking conditions and provision. In addition to this the developer will likely be required to provide mitigation measures to reduce potential parking impacts and promote the use of sustainable and active modes of travel.
- 7.38 Furthermore a servicing and management plan will be required setting out how the PBSA will be serviced and crucially how managing the arrival of new students to the PBSA will be undertaken, i.e. staggering drop off times in order to ensure all new students arriving by vehicles at the PBSA to take up residence are not all arriving at the same time as this would cause significant traffic safety concerns and also adversely impact on the amenity of local residents.

Impact on residential amenity

- 7.39 The positioning of windows will need to be designed to mitigate overlooking and loss of privacy to the rear garden and windows of the surrounding properties.
- 7.40 Further assessment will be required in relation to existing and newly published BRE guidelines in relation to daylight / sunlight requirements to ensure that the amenity of neighbouring residents with regards to daylight / sunlight and overshadowing is not materially affected. A noise assessment and if necessary, mitigation measures will also be required.

Sustainability

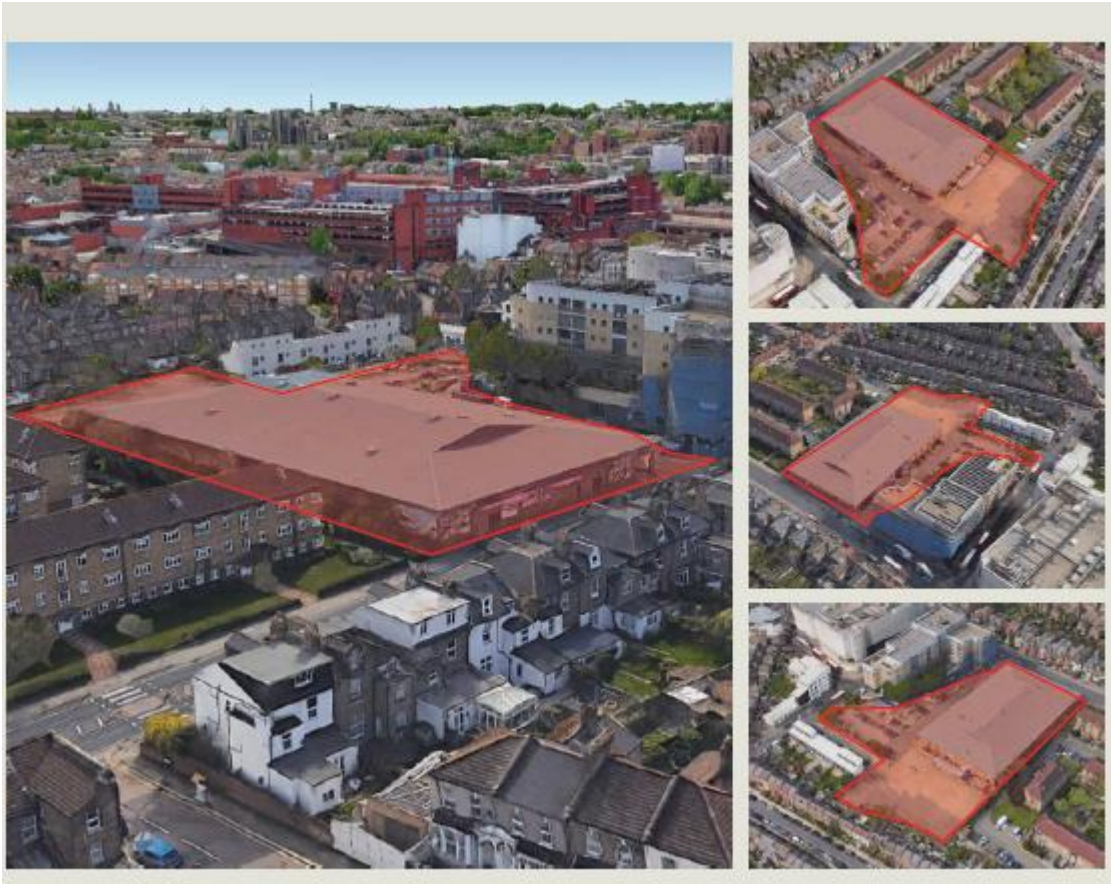
- 7.41 In accordance with the London Plan Policy SI2 all major development should be 'zero carbon' by minimising operational emissions and energy demand in accordance with the Mayor of London's energy hierarchy and discussions are ongoing on the overall energy strategy for the development. The Site Allocation SA9 states that the site is identified as being in an area with potential for being part of a decentralised energy network. Proposals should reference the Council's latest decentralised energy masterplan regarding how to connect, and the site's potential role in delivering a network within the local area.
- 7.42 A whole raft of sustainability and carbon measures, including Urban Greening proposals will be required and these discussions are at early stages but will be thoroughly addressed.

Appendix I – Plans

Site Location:



Mecca Bingo Site



Proposed Site Plan



North South View from Lordship Lane



View Down Lordship Lane



Appendix II – QRP Response

