

Delegated Report		Analysis sheet		Expiry Date:		12/03/2013	
		N/A / attached		Consultation Expiry Date:		N/A	
Officer				Application Number(s)			
Richard McEllistrum				2013/1224/P			
Application Address				Drawing Numbers			
Cartwright Gardens Bloomsbury London							
PO 3/4	Area Team Signature	C&UD	Authorised Officer Signature				
Proposal(s)							
Request for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion for works involving the redevelopment of student accommodation, for 1,220 beds, and associated environmental improvements.							
Recommendation(s):		EIA not required					
Application Type:		Request for Screening Opinion					
Conditions or Reasons for Refusal:		Refer to Draft Decision Notice					
Informatives:							
Consultations							
Adjoining Occupiers:		No. notified	00	No. of responses	00	No. of objections	00
				No. electronic	00		
Summary of consultation responses:		N/A					
CAAC/Local groups* comments: <small>*Please Specify</small>		N/A					

Site Description & Surroundings

The site extends across a complete urban block and the full extent of the facing Gardens. The urban block fronts Sandwich Street to the east, Leigh Street to the south, Cartwright Gardens to the west and Hastings Street to the north. It is currently host to a variety of buildings of varying ages, though all of 20th century construction. Buildings range in height from single storey courtyard filling basement levels structures, to the 5-9 storey Commonwealth Hall (1950s) at the southern end of the site, through the 7 storey central Canterbury Hall (1930s) to the 15 storey (all above basement) Hughes Parry Hall (1969) at the northern end of the site.

The buildings comprise student accommodation (circa 980 bedrooms), principally in the form of catered single bedrooms, generally with shared sanitary and other facilities. A variety of ancillary uses exist on site, including staff accommodation, flexible meeting space, dining rooms, common rooms and squash courts.

Principal vehicular access exists at 2 locations on the eastern frontage, with a secondary access to the west. 20 car parking spaces are noted to exist on the site at present. Limited soft landscaped open space exists at the northern edge, and the site is otherwise predominantly hard landscaped or occupied by built form.

The site lies within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area (sub area 13), where the central Canterbury Hall is an identified 'positive contributor'. The eastern side of Sandwich Street, facing the site, is host to positive contributors for its central stretch and northern part, with Statutorily Listed Buildings on the southern part. A variety of uses surround the site, with private residential properties mainly to the immediate east, shops and restaurants with mainly residential above to the south (of which the majority of ground floor units on Leigh Street form part of the Marchmont Street / Leigh Street / Tavistock Place Neighbourhood Centre) and beyond the Gardens (a defined Open Space (no. 154)), across the main (western) frontage of the site, the western crescent is comprised of Hotel uses in its southern half and is given over to student accommodation for the northern half. As is shown in the map extract below, Listed Buildings occupy the entirety of the western crescent of Cartwright Gardens (and the statue therein) and the southern side of Leigh Street, with the facing buildings on Hastings Street comprising only positive contributors.

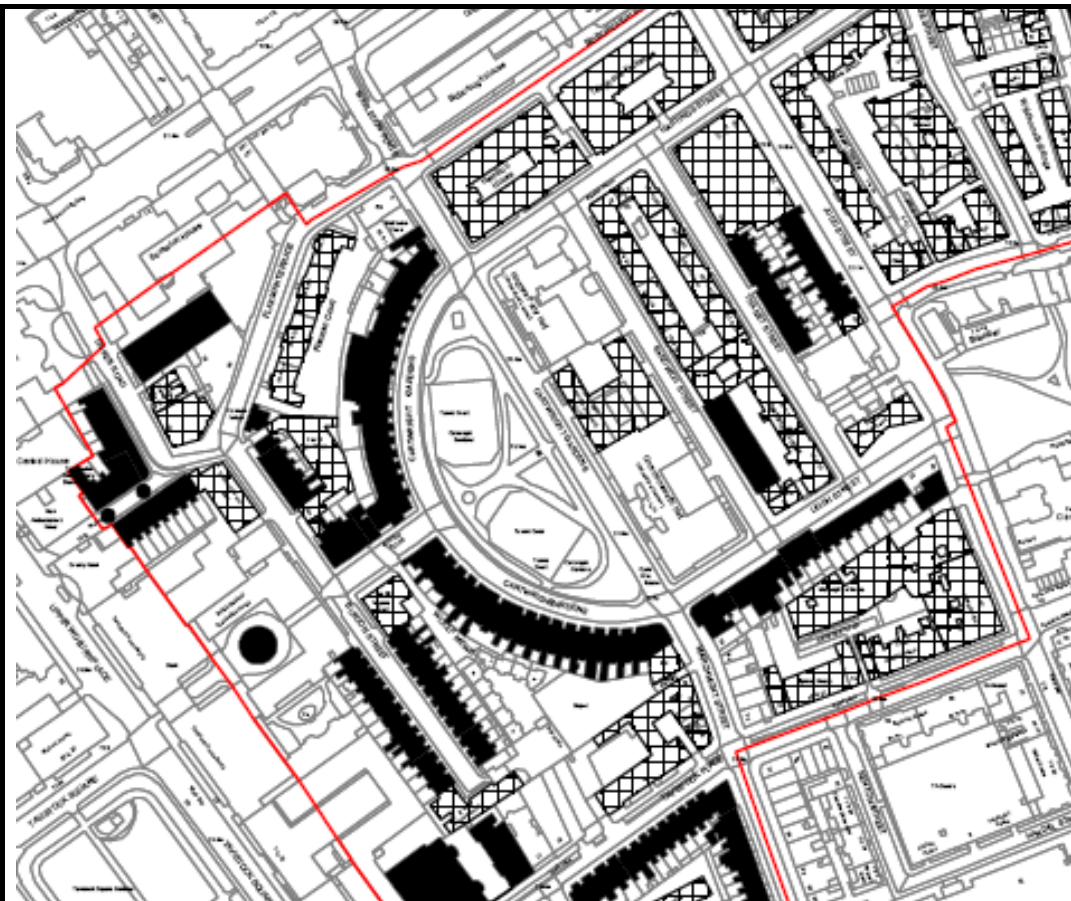


Figure 1 (extract of Sub Area 13 Map, from CAA)

The site is otherwise identified on the LDF Proposals map as lying within the Central London area, the Background Assessment Area of (London Plan / View Management Framework) Vista from viewing point 6A.1 (Blackheath Point to St Paul's Cathedral), and adjoins the path of part of a Metropolitan Walk (in Sandwich and Hastings Streets). The site also lies within a defined Air Quality Management Area

Relevant History

2012/3786/P – EIA Screening application (on a smaller site, not including the open Gardens) for a development involving 'the redevelopment of student accommodation, involving an increase in number of student bedrooms from 980 to approx 1300, and associated environmental improvements' Decision – EIA not required (23/07/2012)

Relevant policies

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

Town & Country Planning Act 1990

Development Management Procedure Order 2010

Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011

NPPF 2012

Proposal & Assessment

The proposed development involves the redevelopment of the student accommodation within the urban block part of the site and environmental improvements and modification to the range of access to and use of the Gardens opposite. The tower element of Hughes Parry Hall would be retained and refurbished, and the remaining buildings demolished and replaced with a single building, including 2 closed and one open internal courtyard, of varying height, and including a range of uses, primarily including student bedrooms on corridors, or cluster flats / townhouses along much of the Sandwich Street frontage.

The heights would vary across the new building (generally from 5 to 7 storeys above ground), and be secondary to the height of the tower. A single vehicular ingress would be former on the Sandwich Street frontage, south of the tower, with an egress aligned to enter Cartwright Gardens. 35,500m² (GEA) would then be provided on the site (including the refurbished tower), having the effect of increasing the number of bedrooms on site from 1013 to approx 1200.

The scheme would also involve 'landscaping improvements to Cartwright Gardens open space', and following implementation of the wider scheme, the Gardens would be 'available for full public use', likely to be between dawn till dusk.

The total site area of the proposed development area is approx 1.4ha, where the principal redevelopment (of the greater part of the built form on the urban block) occurs to an area of 0.519ha. The site area also includes the length of public highway on Cartright Gardens, north of the junction with Leigh Street and south of such with Hastings Street and the pavement part of the public highway on the southern side of this part of Hastings Street, the western side of Sandwich Street and that part of the northern side of Leigh Street.

The proposed development does not fall within the schedule of development types set out within Schedule 1. The site is not located upon land within a 'sensitive area', as defined by Regulation 2(1), though does involve development defined under part 10(b) to Schedule 2 of the EIA regulations (hereafter referred to as 'the Regulations'), namely an example of an 'Urban development project(s)' where the area of the development exceeds 0.5 hectare. It therefore it falls for the development to be considered against the selection criteria in Schedule 3, for screening Schedule 2 development.

The relevant non statutory types of 'sensitive' areas which are of relevance, are identified above, being that the site is within a Conservation Area, and is substantially surrounded by built form with a high proportion of statutory Listed Buildings. No designated SSSIs, SPAs, Ramsars, SACs, Local Nature Sites or sites of Metropolitan or Borough Importance lie within even moderate proximity of the site, and the closest sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance lie some 200m distant to the south east. The site lies within a defined Air Quality Management Area (which extends across the borough in its entirety), though, being within the Central London part of the borough, as within the Clear Zone where even greater attention is paid towards air quality.

In regard to the criteria set out in Part 1 of Schedule 3:

The size of the development, representing an increase in terms of bedrooms from 1013 to 1200 (approx) (18.5% increase), on a site where the principal form of redevelopment only marginally exceeds the 0.5ha threshold, and though it is not a minor increase in built form, is not in itself especially 'significant', given the character and density of built form typical of its central London location.

Though the development would, in concert with the significant redevelopment occurring in the wider surrounding areas, including the Kings Cross comprehensive redevelopment, exert greater impacts upon the surrounding environment, such impacts anticipated are not in themselves significantly demanding upon the immediate locality. (which has not been the subject of any recent significant major developments or permissions). Thus the local, cumulative impact arising from the proposed scheme, would, like the majority of mid sized major developments throughout the central London

area, not be so significant to give rise to 'potential significant effects' as set out in the Regulations.

The moderate increase in development proposed, combined with the typically lower impacts arising from modern buildings with comparatively high levels of sustainable/energy efficient construction and operation, is such that no significant effects would be expected in this regard.

The retention of part of the built form, combined with the application of modern policies and standards to the potential reuse of construction materials and the operation of new development, would allow effects arising from the production of waste to not be potentially 'significant'.

Again, the application of modern standards to new built form and appropriate design and layout is regarded to be sufficient to limit effects arising from pollution and nuisances. Combined with the reduction in parking spaces and thus an anticipated accompanying reduction in day to day private vehicle trips to the site, the impact of site activity may be expected to be improved as a result of the development. Impact from demolition and construction works would need to be managed by some provision of a legal agreement, should a subsequent application be approved, but would not be expected to constitute a 'significant impact'.

Finally, in regard to the characteristics of the development, due to the nature of the use and the necessary built form required to accommodate it, no significant risk of accidents would be anticipated. The act of opening up the Gardens to wider public (daytime) use does not in itself raise any significant risk of accidents of the manner expected in the Regulations.

In regard to part 2 of Schedule 3, as the existing land use and land take up for such remains, the abundance, quality and capacity of natural resources in the area required to serve the proposed development would not be materially affected, and the nature and scale of use is not considered to be liable to threaten to exceed the absorption capacity in the surrounding area. Though care will of course need be taken to ensure that what effects may arise through the intensification of occupation in the densely populated area, or through the addition of built form and other resultant effects upon the surrounding heritage landscapes, are adequately mitigated, such effects arising from the type, scale and nature of development proposed, would not in principal be considered to, prima facie, exert significant effects within the meaning of the Regulations.

None of the impacts considered to be liable to arise from the proposed development, by virtue of the characteristics of the development, nor its location, when assessing the extent (geographical area and population size affected), transfrontier nature, magnitude and complexity, probability, duration, frequency or reversibility of the impact, are considered to give rise to the potential for 'significant effects'.

Conclusion

As such, though the development is, by definition, Schedule 2 development, it is not considered to be EIA development as defined by Regulation 2(1) of the Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2011 (SI 2001 no. 1824).