

## Tabled Paper for Planning Committee

23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020

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Agenda Item: 7(3)  
Application Number: 2019/4201/P  
Address: St Pancras Commercial Centre, 63 Pratt Street, London, NW1 0BY

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### 1. Amendments to the report

#### GLA

- 1.1. The Supplementary listed a number of issues that are outstanding. The GLA has now confirmed that they are satisfied with the provision of affordable workspace; they are satisfied that there is an overall increase in light industrial floorspace (i.e. by deducting the mezzanine floorspace from the existing and proposed totals) and they are also satisfied with the façade treatment.
- 1.2. The GLA have also confirmed that an early implementation viability review will be required, in line with paragraph 3.56 of the Mayor of London's Affordable Housing and Viability SPD (2017) which states: *"To incentivise delivery both Fast Track and Viability Tested schemes should be subject to an early review which is triggered where an agreed level of progress on implementing the permission has not been reached after two years of the permission being granted or as agreed with the LPA, and the Mayor where relevant, on a site-by-site basis."*
- 1.3. An early implementation viability review will be secured by the section 106 legal agreement. The GLA also note that the legal agreement should ensure that the re-provided light industrial uses are completed prior to occupation of the residential element of the scheme. The section 106 legal agreement will also secure this.
- 1.4. There remain further points of clarification regarding fire strategy, noise and vibration mitigation and energy. Having regard to the fact that the decision is to be referred to the Mayor, the applicant is in ongoing discussions with the GLA on all these points. Officers are satisfied that each matter is capable of resolution without further amendment to the scheme.

### 2. Impact on heritage assets

- 2.1. Paragraph 1.4 of the Officer's report notes that the application site is not within a conservation area, although Regent's Canal Conservation Area is to

the north and east of the site, on the other sides of Georgiana Street and St Pancras Way respectively. Camden Broadway Conservation Area abuts the Regent's Canal Conservation Area to the north (further north along Royal College Street) and Jeffrey's Street Conservation Area is to the north-west, on the other side of Camden Road.

- 2.2. Paragraph 1.5 of the Officer's report lists the nearby listed buildings, which include grade II listed buildings on Georgiana Street (to the west), Lyme Street (to the north-west), and Royal College Street (to the north). The Greek Orthodox Church on Camden Street (to the west) is grade I listed.
- 2.3. Paragraph 1.6 of the Officer's report lists the nearby locally listed buildings, which include the Golden Lion PH on the southern corner of Pratt Street and Royal College Street; The Prince Albert PH on the corner between Lyme Street and Royal College Street; and terraced dwellings on Royal College Street (to the north) and Pratt Street (to the west).
- 2.4. The Council has a statutory duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, in accordance with Section 66 of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 (as amended). The Council also has a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area, in accordance with Section 72 of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act) 1990 (as amended).
- 2.5. Policy D2 of the Local Plan seeks to preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, and locally listed heritage assets.
- 2.6. Paragraph 190 of the NPPF guides that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise.
- 2.7. Paragraph 193 of the NPPF guides that, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
- 2.8. Paragraph 196 of the NPPF guides that, where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

- 2.9. Paragraph 197 guides that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 2.10. The conservation areas and listed buildings identified above are designated heritage assets and the locally listed buildings are non-designated heritage assets.
- 2.11. As noted, the application site is not within a conservation area and the proposals do not directly affect any listed or locally listed buildings. The proposed buildings are considered to be well-designed so that views towards them are not in and of themselves harmful. Nonetheless, the visual impact on the various designated and non-designated heritage assets in the vicinity of the application site have been considered and it has been concluded that there would be no harm caused thereto.
- 2.12. The nearest listed buildings are the grade II listed terraced townhouses to the north / north-west on Georgiana Street, Lyme Street and Royal College Street. Whilst parts of the proposed new buildings might be tangentially visible from these locations, the buildings and their settings would not be harmed. From most viewpoints, the new buildings will appear in the distance, or will be obscured by other buildings. In any case, there is no presumption that modern structures cannot be built within sight of a listed building. Instead, it is the listed building's setting that is appraised. This proposal cannot reasonably be said to be within the setting of any of the nearby listed buildings, and they are consequently not able to be harmed by it.
- 2.13. The grade I listed Greek Orthodox Church is to the west, on Camden Street. An element of the proposed new buildings would be visible behind the listed building in the background; however, the new building would be so far in the distance that it is not considered to have an impact on the setting of the listed building.
- 2.14. Regent's Canal Conservation Area is to the north of the application site, on the other sides of Georgiana Street and St Pancras Way respectively. It also covers the triangular section of land between Lyme Street and Royal College Street. Looking south along Royal College Street, the part of the proposal that is closest to the conservation area adopts a lower height (the market housing block), facing the four-storey locally listed Prince Albert PH, acting as an intermediary between the conservation area and the taller parts of the development, which are more distant. From the southern boundary of the conservation area, the taller parts of the building would be largely screened from view and the market housing block would reasonably match the adjacent buildings in terms of height and scale.

- 2.15. The part of the conservation area directly to the north of the application site is composed of modern yards of low or no heritage value, which are likely to be redeveloped with substantial buildings in the short to medium term, which will, in turn, largely conceal the proposal from the north.
- 2.16. The proposed development would not be seen from the east, as the existing buildings along the canal completely obscure views of the site as viewed from the canal.
- 2.17. The only substantial view of the proposed new buildings is from the canal towpath, to the north of the site, looking across the Bangor Wharf site. Bangor Wharf is likely to be redeveloped in the future, meaning views towards the application site will be more screened than they are currently. It is worth noting that along this part of the canal the traditional form is fairly tall buildings built right up against the canal edge. The Regent's Canal Conservation Area Statement (2008) notes that: *"Between Kentish Town Bridge and the Gray's Inn Bridge the canal takes on a quieter character with a higher degree of containment and fewer views in and out"*. The current open view towards the sky and towards the application site is therefore considered to represent an anomaly. Indeed, the conservation area statement notes that: *"the depot site at Bangor Wharf provides an excellent opportunity for enhancement"*.
- 2.18. On the basis of the above, it is not considered that the proposals would cause harm to the character and appearance of the Regent's Canal Conservation Area.
- 2.19. Further afield, to the north, lies the Camden Broadway Conservation Area and the Jeffrey's Street Conservation Area. There will be extremely limited views along Royal College Street of the site in the distance. These views will be so long as to be irrelevant. Consequently there is considered to be no harm to these conservation areas.
- 2.20. The locally listed Golden Lion PH uncharacteristically stands alone on a corner surrounded by low, modern buildings and parking. Clearly, this is not the historic arrangement and it is considered that the building would have been historically linked to taller street frontage buildings beyond. During the course of negotiations, officers were mindful of the strong street corner the Golden Lion building presents, which informed the design approach to the corner opposite, which the proposal would provide. The view from the south will change; however, as the sites to the south are developed in the future, views towards the new building will inevitably change.
- 2.21. The locally listed houses on Royal College Street would suffer even less impact than the listed ones they face, whilst those on Pratt Street would have an oblique view. As with the listed buildings referred to above, it is not considered that the proposal would affect their setting and consequently there is no harm caused to them.

- 2.22. In conclusion, it is not considered that the proposed development would cause any harm to designated or non-designated heritage assets, or their settings. The proposal is therefore considered to comply with the aims of Policy D2 of the Camden Local Plan 2017.

### **3.     DRP comments**

- 3.1.   At pre-application stage, the proposed scheme was formally reviewed at Camden's Design Review Panel. The comments of the panel are summarised as follows:

- The scale of the proposals is informed not just by the existing context, but also by future development planned on nearby sites.
- Recommend continuing the four storey shoulder height around all the elevations.
- In longer views, the top storeys will be visible. The panel suggests further exploration of ways in which the visual impact of the top two stories could be softened.
- Some concern about the height of the affordable housing block, but on balance, feel it can be justified because of its role in closing long views from the north down St Pancras Way.
- Very supportive of the emerging architectural expression, which draws inspiration from historic buildings nearby.
- The relationship between the different buildings on the site promises to be successful.
- The office floorspace would benefit from greater shared amenity space.
- Need to provide play facilities in a safe location for children in the housing blocks.
- Concerns about the servicing route and conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.
- The apartments would provide high quality accommodation, although the applicant should aim to avoid the provision of single-aspect, north-facing units.

- 3.2.   Changes to the proposals were made in response to the DRP comments. For example, changes were made to the façade treatment on the upper storeys of the building and the proposals for the public open space and its relationship with the servicing route have been further developed.

### **4.     Section 106 legal agreement**

- 4.1.   The following additional obligations shall be secured by the section 106 legal agreement:
- Early implementation viability review (as per the comments made in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3 above)
  - Light industrial uses are to be completed prior to occupation of the residential elements of the scheme (as per the comment made in paragraph 1.3 above).

**ENDS**