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Statement of Community Involvement
for 2 Chester Road Hostel Accommodation

Prepared by HTA Design LLP
on behalf of Camden Council

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Appendices

1. Public Consultation Boards
2. Health Impact Assessment from Camden and Islington Public Health Dec 2019
3. Feedback document shared with local residents before the submission of the planning application June 2020



1.0 Introduction

- 1.0 This Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared in support of Camden Council's Community Investment Programme for the proposal at 2 Chester Road in London Borough of Camden.

Site Description

- 1.1 2 Chester Road is in Dartmouth Park Conservation Area in the London Borough of Camden. It is a triangular shaped site, which is bounded by Dartmouth Park Hill to the east, a primary road with bus routes to central London; and by Chester Road to the West, a one-way residential street largely comprising of terraced housing. To the north is a flat block and pedestrian walkway between Chester Road and Dartmouth Park Hill.
- 1.2 Dartmouth Park Hill also represents the boundary with the London Borough of Islington.

Development Context

- 1.3 The Housing Act 1996 Part VII (as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) sets out the duties of local authorities towards homeless people.
- 1.4 The London Borough of Camden (LBC) has a strategic objective to minimise homelessness and rough sleeping by ensuring that residents have a secure place of accommodation or are on a pathway to securing accommodation. A portfolio of temporary accommodation has been developed to assist households in transition to securing a more permanent home. This reduces the need to pay for temporary accommodation provided by the private sector. The availability of Camden-based and run temporary accommodation also keeps homeless households within the borough, helping them to maintain existing social and support networks and links to local services such as schools and GPs.
- 1.5 2 Chester Road was constructed in 1979 and currently provides short term housing for 28 single people.
- 1.6 In December 2018, the council's Cabinet agreed to terminate the lease between the Council and the owners of Englands Lane; a Temporary Accommodation (TA) family hostel in Hampstead. To replace this provision, it was agreed that two hostels providing



family sized accommodation at 2 Chester Road and 240 -250 Camden Road would be created.

1.7 As a result, accommodation at Holmes Road has been redeveloped to provide 59 new temporary homes for single homeless people. This additional capacity has enabled the hostel at Chester Road to be redeveloped for use by homeless families.

1.8 However, the age of the building at Chester Road, with its out-dated heating system and poor structural integrity means that it requires almost complete reconstruction to make it fit for purpose. The option of a light refurbishment and extension to the existing site were tested and the following conclusions were made:

- Each dwelling is effectively unique in its layout and are single aspect;
- Many dwellings are slightly over or undersized due to existing constraints. Usability and quality of individual spaces are likely to be compromised as a result;
- A disproportionate quantum of communal area is provided, due to 'leftover' spaces that are too small or not suitably located for residential use;
- The poor integration with the surrounding townscape cannot be improved; and
- The existing fabric of the building, materials used, and potential levels of contamination are unknown

1.9 On this basis it was considered that the cost of upgrading the existing building to current building standards would be prohibitive. It would also be unlikely to provide LBC with the exemplary, fit-for-purpose facility that is sought by the Temporary Accommodation Team.

Proposed development

1.10 The proposed development is described as:

“Demolition of the existing single person hostel at 2 Chester Road and construction of new family hostel facility to provide 50 homes in three blocks ranging between three and four storeys in height with basement, associated courtyard, external landscaping and ancillary works.”

The need to consult

- 1.11 Consultation is an integral part of the pre-planning application process. It helps to inform the design of the proposals, and it provides residents and other stakeholders with the opportunity to raise concerns and issues. These concerns and issues can then be carefully considered and addressed in the proposed plans before a formal planning application is submitted. The Localism Act (2011) sets out how the government intends to devolve the decision-making process to the neighbourhood/local authority level and empower local communities.
- 1.12 The Act includes a clause which requires developers to consult with residents living in the vicinity of the proposed development site and report on the pre-application consultation process which has taken place. Furthermore, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019 states that early engagement has the ‘significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of a planning application for all parties’ and that ‘good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community’ (paragraph 39, NPPF, 2019). Adopted national planning policy sets out that:
- ‘Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.’ (Paragraph 128, NPPF 2019).*

Figure 1: Proposed Site Plan





2.0 The consultation process

Timeline of events

2.0 Consultation events were held with the local community in May, June and September 2019, and conversations with the community about the proposals have continued. The consultation process is part of the project timeline shown below.

2.1 All consultation was led by the applicant; Camden's Community Investment Programme project team, and their team of consultants.

Table 1: Project Timeline

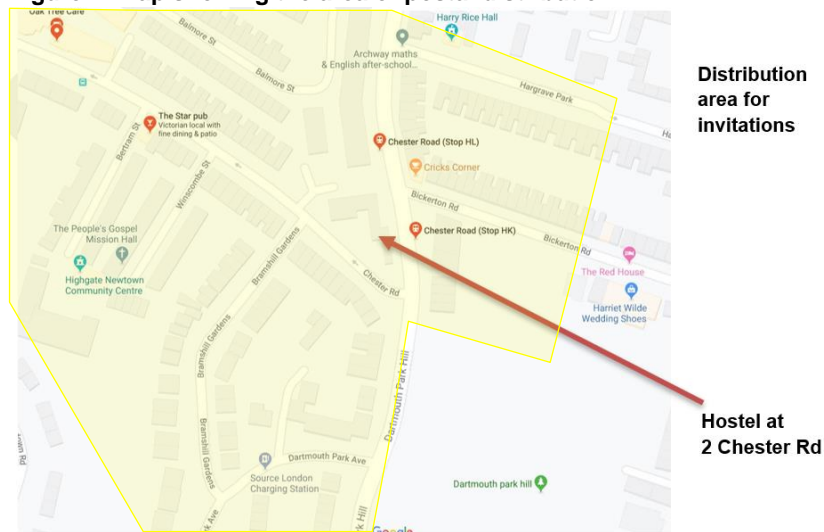
Project Timeline	
Month	Activities
December 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camden Cabinet decision to redevelop the hostel at Chester Rd for families. Designs discussed and developed with internal stakeholders.
April 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introductory briefing for Highgate ward councillors Invitation sent by direct mail to 1,685 local Camden addresses within 500m radius of the development
May 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exhibition of proposals at St Mary Brookfield church 16 May. Printed copies of the proposals available at Highgate Library Meeting held with Dartmouth Park Neighbourhood Planning Forum (DPNPF) to discuss the proposals. Proposals published on the DPNPF website. Dedicated email address ChesterRd@camden.gov.uk set up for enquiries and comments. Islington councillors emailed with the proposals
June 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second exhibition of proposals at St Mary Brookfield church 19 June Local residents from Islington who had not received a postal invitation to the previous event were invited by direct mail (68 addresses).
July and August 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions of design with stakeholders, including Highgate ward councillors Changes to the height and massing, density and materials used made as a result of consultation.

September 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invitation to exhibition posted to over 1,750 local residents on both sides of the Camden/Islington border. • Amended proposals presented at an exhibition 26 September and pdf of boards emailed to DPNPF. • Printed copy of the exhibition was available in Highgate Library.
October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation responses considered. Challenges, concerns and queries raised followed up.
November 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing and comments from Highgate ward councillors
July 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback document explaining the latest design proposals shared with residents and local stakeholders including Islington ward councillors. • Discussion with DPNPF before planning application submitted

Community Mapping

- 2.2 The site is in a residential area within the London Borough of Camden, but on the boundary with the London Borough of Islington. The map below shows the location of residents consulted.
- 2.3 1,750 invitations to the public exhibitions were delivered by Royal Mail to addresses within the proximity of the hostel in Camden and adjacent streets in Islington.

Figure 2: Map showing the area of postal distribution





- 2.4 The community consultation comprised of three public consultation events, which were all held at St Mary's Brookfield Church, Dartmouth Park Road. This location was chosen because it is within proximity to the site and is surrounded by residents and local business.
- 2.5 The first stage of the consultation took part over 2 events on 16 May 2019 and 19 June 2019, with responses received until the end of June 2019.
- 2.6 The second stage of the consultation took place on 27 September 2019. The presentation showed the updated designs in the light of feedback received. Further comments were sought, with comments closing at the end of October 2019.

What information was presented?

- 2.7 A pdf file of the exhibition was emailed to any resident responding to the invitation to say they were unable to attend- throughout the consultation period for both events. Printed (paper) copies of the exhibition boards were hosted in Highgate Library on Chester Road.
- 2.8 Dartmouth Park Neighbourhood Forum hosted pdf files of the exhibition boards. The WeAreCamden.org website also provided a link to the amended designs.

Where did the responses come from?

- 2.9 Responses were made on feedback forms provided at the events, or by emailing the project team, either on ChesterRd@camden.gov.uk or directly to named officers.
- 2.10 The overwhelming majority of responses came from people living in the streets adjacent to the hostel, in N19 and NW5 postcodes; and those living within a short distance of the development. (Shown on the map above)
- 2.11 This indicates that the consultation has reached and engaged the correct audience. Responses came from addresses in:
- Bickenham Rd (LB Islington)
 - Bramshill Gardens
 - Chester Road
 - Colva Walk
 - Dartmouth Park Ave
 - Dartmouth Park Hill (partly LB Islington)
 - Dartmouth Park Rd
 - Doynton Street



- Lissenden Gardens
- Raydon Street
- Regency Lawn
- Sandstone Place
- St Albans Rd
- Stoneleigh Terrace
- Tudor Mansions

2.12 In total 95 consultation responses were received.

41 responses (44%) came from completed consultation response sheets designed by Camden Council, while the other 54 (56%) were received via email.

2.13 The responses included significant support for the proposals to provide a better quality of accommodation for homeless families. Residents also raised a number of concerns which we have summarised and responded to in Chapter 3 below.

2.14 Following further design development, feedback on the finished design was provided to DPMPF, councillors and residents in advance of the planning application being submitted (Appendix 3).



3.0 Consultation responses and actions taken

3.0 The following provides a summary of feedback from the local community across the three consultation events and how the local community have responded to this feedback.

Table 2: Findings and responses from the consultation event held in May and June 2019

Comments	Response and actions taken
The building is too high and bulky (massing). There will be a negative impact on adjacent housing.	Daylight sunlight studies were undertaken by BRE to check the extent of the impact of the building upon surrounding properties and the report is included as part of the application pack. This informed the design development and changes were made to reduce the impact. The height of the building was reduced from maximum of 5 storeys to between 3 and 4 storeys. The blocks were reconfigured to reduce the impact on neighbouring housing.
There will be too many people living on a constrained site.	The number of dwellings in the development has reduced from 65 to 50.
The impact of the new building on the conservation area is not an enhancement.	A Supporting Heritage Statement was commissioned from Bidwells LLP to consider this issue. This is included in the application. Early discussions were had with the Neighbourhood Planning Forum (NPF). We remained in conversation about the design development with this forum.
Islington residents haven't been included in the invitation to your event (16 May).	A second public event was organised in June, and an invitation mailed directly to residents who live in Islington. Both Islington councillors and officers have been kept informed of the proposals.



<p>There are concerns about community safety and possible anti-social behaviour arising from the hostel</p>	<p>Camden officers working in Neighbourhood Safety and in the Temporary Accommodation team have been consulted to better understand any local issues. In addition, during the design process a local 'Design Out Crime' Officer was consulted, and his feedback is available in the supporting Design and Access Statement.</p> <p>Further consultation with the Temporary Accommodation team has also been undertaken and they have confirmed their commitment to preparing a draft management plan in consultation with the local community and officers across LBC.</p>
<p>There will be a negative impact on residents at Colva Walk. The area between the hostel and Colva Walk is a focus on anti-social behaviour</p>	<p>Consideration of the impact on Colva Walk is considered in the Design and Access Statement.</p> <p>The current public access between the hostel and Colva Walk is mostly used for vehicle access. The proposal will create a more accessible, landscaped, public pathway. The hostel is staffed 24/7 and the position of the staff facilities will provide passive surveillance of this area. There is also a new external lighting strategy. These measures should help to minimize anti-social behaviour.</p>
<p>The council's project management and procurement processes are not effective.</p>	<p>The team has followed the council's guidance and governance procedures for CIP projects.</p>
<p>The information presented doesn't show the true impact of the development.</p>	<p>Bell Philips Architects revisited the presentation, made improvements to the illustrations and views, and checked the accuracy of the 3D model ahead of the second consultation event.</p>



Table 3: Findings and responses from the consultation event held in September 2019

Comments	Response and actions taken
<p>There are still concerns that the building is too large and bulky given the existing hostel is very low in profile.</p> <p>Perhaps you could limit the size of the new building to fit within the existing footprint and profile.</p>	<p>The Applicant and their team undertook a further review to consider whether further reductions to the height of the building could be made. The options appraisal for the building was re-visited. However, it was found that a smaller building would yield fewer temporary accommodation homes to meet the needs of Camden's homeless families.</p> <p>Therefore the project would not meet the brief, or be financially viable, if it were reduced in height. The height of the building remains between 3-4 storeys.</p>
<p>There are continuing concerns about the impact of the new building on the Conservation Area; aside from the height and massing, many people have expressed a preference for a traditional brick finish to better fit with existing local character. Are ceramic tiles appropriate? Is this the right colour to use?</p>	<p>The design team has considered the comments received and a supporting Heritage Assessment has been prepared by Bidwells LLP.</p> <p>The materials used and the landscaping strategy have both been changed to enhance the design. The supporting Heritage Statement suggests the new building presents no significant impact upon the Conservation Area.</p> <p>The Applicant and design team have also sought the advice of Camden's Independent Design Panel. No significant concerns were raised with respect to the impact upon the Conservation Area.</p> <p>The issue will be carefully considered by the Local Planning Authority when it assesses the application.</p>
<p>The quality (size, amenities) of the accommodation being provided for homeless families is not good enough.</p>	<p>The Applicant and design team have reviewed the quality of the accommodation being provided against acceptable standards for hostels and the proposals represent an improvement upon the current offer for homeless families. For example a typical family-sized unit at Englands Lane hostel is 18m² and single aspect.</p> <p>This is discussed further in the Design and Access statement prepared by Bell Philips Architects and the supporting Planning Statement. Again, this issue will</p>



	<p>be carefully considered by the Local Planning Authority when it assesses the application.</p>
<p>The density of the development, with the introduction of many new families could place an unreasonable strain on local services and resources.</p> <p>Services are likely to be cut in future, but the demand upon them is likely to increase.</p>	<p>The Applicant and their team have undertaken research into school admissions data to understand the existing capacity for local schools.</p> <p>Many Camden schools currently have places available and pupil planning data suggests that school rolls are not predicted to increase. The experience of the Temporary Accommodation team find that most children moving into Camden hostel accommodation will continue to attend their existing Camden school.</p> <p>The Applicant and their team have consulted public health and local public health organisations about the strategy for Camden and Islington for increased future demand in the local area. (Appendix 1)</p> <p>Local community organisations Highgate Newtown Community Centre and CARIS Camden families have both welcomed the development and are offering support and services for homeless families.</p>
<p>How will you ensure the new landscaping (planting) will be maintained?</p>	<p>A maintenance plan will be in place for the trees and plants.</p>



4.0 Conclusion

- 4.0 Consultation with the public and with those residents who live around the proposed redevelopment is an integral part of the pre-planning application process. The team has proactively engaged with residents, councillors and organisations in the area.
- 4.1 The geographical spread of responses shows that the consultation reached the appropriate audience, including residents in the neighbouring borough of Islington and their ward councillors.
- 4.2 Consultation took place at an early enough stage in the design development to enable the comments received to have a material impact on the design. As a result of the consultation, changes were made. For example, the height of the proposed new building was lowered, and the number of units of accommodation provided on the site reduced.
- 4.3 The responses included significant support for the proposals as many stakeholders and residents recognised that the hostel redevelopment will enable Camden to provide a higher quality of temporary accommodation for homeless families than is currently available.
- 4.4 However residents also raised several issues of concern. The key concerns around height, the more intensive use of the site by a larger number of people, community safety, the impact of the new building on neighbouring residents, and on the conservation area. There are, for example, mixed views on the proposed use of ceramic tiles. The team has considered, investigated and responded to these concerns through careful consideration. Changes to the design have been made where appropriate, and there is additional information about the issues raised during the consultation in the reports that form part of the application.
- 4.5 Notwithstanding the concerns raised, there is support amongst the local community and their representatives for the proposal to redevelop the current hostel at 2 Chester Road.
- 4.6 On this basis, an effective engagement with the community has been carried out to support the development of the proposals presented in the application.