Initial Planning Note

Garages at West Road, Dagenham

August 2021

Executive summary:

This note has been prepared by the Be First Planning Consultancy Team to consider the planning context of the site known as Garages at West Road, Dagenham, and its potential for residential re-development. This is an initial, desk-based, high-level note only; no discussions have been held with the Local Planning Authority. No admission of liability is accepted without further work being undertaken.

The principle of the use of this brownfield site for residential accommodation is likely to be considered acceptable (subject to demonstrating the existing garages are underused and will not cause unacceptable harm to local highways upon their demolition). Access from West Road is significantly constrained due to the narrow entrance which only allows single access along the road. The access jointly provides pedestrian access to the adjacent Play area and open space which would need to be maintained.

In the first instance, it is recommended to explore if the access could provide suitable entry for emergency and service vehicles before commission an architectural feasibility study.

Site information:

Site address: Garages at West Road, Dagenham, RM6 6YA



Figure 1: Site location plan

Site area: c. 0.05 hectares.

Existing use: Garages and hard landscaped access.

Proposed use: Residential (Class C3).

PTAL: 0 (worst, on a scale of 0 – 6b where 1 is the lowest). The site is located 0.7 miles from Chadwell Heath Station (14-minute walk), providing access to TfL Rail services to Stratford and Central London.

Site background and key planning policies

Site planning history:
There are no historic planning applications for the site listed on LBBD's online planning register (accessed 14 July 2021).

Planning designations:

- The entire site is located within Flood Zone 1 (Lowest Risk).
- None of the nearby buildings are listed, either statutorily or locally, and the site does not fall within a conservation area.

Key planning policies (applicable to early feasibility/design exploration stage):

- London Plan ('LP') Policies D2 and GG2 expects new development to optimise housing output, especially on brownfield land. Density should be design-led have consideration to accessibility to a range of infrastructure.
- LP Policy H2 expects borough's to proactively support well-design new homes on small sites (below 0.25 hectares in size) where they diversify the sources of housing supply.
- LP Policy T5 specifies minimum cycle parking standards of: 1 space per studio unit (1-bed), 1.5 spaces per 1 bedroom unit; and, 2 spaces for all other dwellings, plus 1 visitor space per 40 units;
- LP Policy T6 specifies maximum car parking standards in this location (outer London, PTAL 1b) of up to 1.5 spaces per unit.
- LP Policy S4 requires the provision of play and informal recreation space if the site is likely to be used by children and young people.

It will be necessary to consider further policies (e.g. energy standards, sustainable drainage and urban greening) as the design for this site progresses.

Planning obligations / CIL
CIL is charged based on the net uplift in floorspace, and for residential uses in this location ('rest of borough' band) is chargeable at the rates set out below. There is relief from CIL for affordable housing.

- London Mayoral CIL £25/sq m + indexation; and,
- LBBD CIL £10/sq m + indexation.

Initial planning analysis:

Existing use

The site currently comprises garages (see photo of entrance to site in Figure 2 below).



Figure 2: Google streetview of site (image captured October 2020)

Garages and car parking are sui generis uses. There are no local or regional planning policies which specially deal with the loss of garages; therefore, their loss will be considered on a case-by-case basis. It is advised that the existing occupancy rates for this site are confirmed by LBBD to understand how intensively the site is used.

Depending on the level of existing use, the loss of this facility could displace some informal car parking, which could be a sensitive concern for residents. A transport consultant should be instructed at an early stage to assess parking stress on local streets and advise if there is sufficient capacity to accommodate any displacement. At present, the site access is blocked by a barrier and further fencing so it does not appear to be regularly used for parking.

A balanced judgement will then need to be made between the loss of the use/potential impacts on the local highways, environment, and the public benefits of any new proposal. Positive consideration will be given to uses, like residential (particularly affordable residential/accommodation for older people), which meet an acute identified local need.

Principle of residential use

The use of small brownfield sites to deliver residential homes is supported, in principle, by London Plan policy H2. Should the loss of the garages and parking be demonstrated to be acceptable then the principle of new residential accommodation should be supported.

Design considerations

Access from West Road is significantly constrained due to the narrow entrance and therefore an assessment will need to be conducted to review whether the access would cater for larger or emergency vehicles. The design would need to include space for turning as the access is only single route.

The site is situated adjacent to Designated Open Space. The proposed design would be expected to be considerate of the adjacent open space to ensure height and massing would not encroach or have an overbearing impact on the Open Space.

The following should also be considered at this early feasibility stage:

- LP Policy D3 expects a site's density to be informed by design, proportionate to the site's connectivity and accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport to jobs and services.
- The site has a low PTAL (0) with closest local services a 14-minute walk away to Chadwell Heath station which will impact on the density that can be achieved. Therefore, we consider that the site should be able to accommodate 2 storeys, subject to consideration of overlooking/privacy and daylight/sunlight impacts on existing neighbouring properties.
- The site is adjacent to St Chad's Park which is designated Open Space. It will be required to show that height and massing will not have an over
- Design will need to ensure that that development does not cause unacceptable harm to neighbouring residential buildings in relation to loss of privacy, overlooking and daylight/ sunlight levels in compliance with Regulation 19 Policy DM11.
- Technical Housing Standards which are incorporated into LP Policy D6 will need to be met.
- Proposals will need to demonstrate how access to the site would work in terms of servicing, allowing space for a vehicle to easily enter and leave the site.
- External amenity space and children's play equipment will need to be provided in accordance with the Mayors Housing SPG and Mayor's Play and Recreation SPG.
- 10% of new units should be designed to confirm to Building Regulations M4(3) for wheelchair users, with the remaining conforming with Building Regulations M4(2).

Affordable housing

Given the site's size and layout, it is considered highly unlikely that the site will be able to accommodate more than 10 units, which is the minimum required for affordable housing to be delivered. Nonetheless, should a scheme trigger affordable housing, 50% is expected on public sector land. This should be split 50:50 between low-cost rent and intermediate tenures.

Parking and highways considerations

Planning policy acknowledges the need for some car parking in outer London locations with poor PTALS. LP Policy T6.1 advises that dwellings in outer London with a PTAL of 1b to provide up to 1.5 car parking space per a dwelling.

Cycle parking should be provided in accordance with the new LP standards and designed in accordance with the London Cycle Design Standards guidance.

Should access limitations not be resolved, it is likely that any development on site would be reliant on surrounding streets for car parking. A transport consultant would need to undertake car parking surveys to ensure there would be enough capacity based to accommodate parking need.

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