Initial Planning Note

Garages at Wheel Farm Drive, 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 Wheel Farm Drive, 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). The site is bound on all sides by rear gardens, which may create constraint as it would be key to ensure there would be no unacceptable harm to surrounding residential amenity

Access from Wheel Farm Drive is significantly constrained due to the narrow entrance and will not allow for access by refuse lorries or emergency service vehicles. There does not appear to be any other opportunities for creating access without removing rear garden space of adjacent properties.

Site information:

Site address: Garages at Wheel Farm Drive, Dagenham, RM10 7AJ



Figure 1: Site location plan

Site area: c. 0.067 hectares.

Existing use: Garages and hard landscaped access.

Proposed use: Residential (Class C3).

PTAL: 1b (very low, on a scale of 0 – 6b where 1 is the lowest). The site is located 1.1 miles from Dagenham East (20-minute walk), providing access to TfL Underground services to Barking 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 (Low 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) 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 April 2018)

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.

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 Wheel Farm Drive is significantly constrained due to the narrow entrance and will not allow for access by refuse lorries or emergency service vehicles. There does not appear to be any other opportunities for accessing the site via vehicle without removing garden space of adjacent properties. There are some examples of neighbouring properties which can also not be easily accessed via vehicle (e.g. 20 Wheel Farm Drive, accessed only by pedestrian and cycle modes along Fir Tree Walk). However, these were approved in a different policy context, and it is considered an application would now need to demonstrate suitable access for servicing.

The site is also bound to each side by rear gardens with windows facing the site from all side. Development would be constrained by this as it would be vital to ensure privacy and overlooking of existing and future residents is protected. Any development would need to be designed to correspond to the architectural character of the surrounding residential development.

In the first instance, access constraints should be explored to understand if access for emergency vehicles could be facilitated.

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 (1b) with closest local services a 20-minute walk away to Dagenham East station will impact on the density that can be achieved. On this basis and with consideration to the adjacent garden context, we consider that the site should be able to accommodate 1- 2 stories, subject to consideration of overlooking/privacy and daylight/sunlight impacts on existing neighbouring properties.
- Design will need to ensure that that development does not cause unacceptable harm to neighbouring residential buildings in relation to loss of privacy and overlooking 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.

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.

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

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