

Southall Gas Works Site (West Southall)

in the London Boroughs of Ealing and Hillingdon

Context

The majority of the site is located in Ealing on the boundary with the London Borough of Hillingdon. The three bridges at the western end of the site land in the Minet Country Park in Hillingdon. The site is broadly triangular in shape and is approx 36.5 hectares. It is bounded by areas of Victorian housing to the north, Southall town centre- a specialised shopping centre for the Asian community, to the east and north, the railway to the south and the Minet Country Park and the Grand Union Canal to the west. The site retains three operational gas holders and associated facilities including below-ground high pressure lines with easements above. Industrial and transportation uses once filled the site and Southall has developed around it. Some industrial uses and airport car parking currently remain on the site but would be replaced by this proposal as would two of the operational gas holders. Southall station is opposite the eastern site entrance and will be served by Crossrail.

The site was the subject of a previous proposal that had a number of shortcomings. The developers have engaged a new team of master-planners and consequently the scheme proposed differs greatly from the previous proposal. GLA officers have been closely involved in the development of the scheme

National Grid properties are the landowners and applicants. MAKE are the architects.

Proposal

A hybrid planning application was submitted in October and the Stage I report will be going to the 9 December meeting.

Outline application

- 3,400-3750 residential units.
- Non-food retail 14,200 sq.m.
- Supermarket 5,859 sq.m.
- Café/restaurant uses 1,750 sq.m.
- Approx 800 parking spaces (these will be available for the whole of Southall Town Centre together with this site).
- Coach parking (there is a need for coach parking in the area as many coaches visit the area for the specialized shopping and large family events).
- Primary school (two form entry; the Council has said that there is no need for a secondary school).

- Health centre
- Sports pavilion
- Hotel 9,650 sq.m.
- Conference/banqueting 3,000 sq.m.
- Cinema 4,700 sq.m.
- Office/studios 3,500 sq.m.
- 2 Multi-storey car parks and on street parking – max 950 non-residential spaces and max 2,625 residential spaces (0.7 spaces per dwelling)
- Coach park for 8 coaches.
- Play and recreational space, wetland area, canalside park., town square (min 2.5 ha of playspace)

Full application

- Pump lane link road- new access road from the Hayes bypass to the site for vehicle and pedestrian access.
- Eastern access- new access road from Southall centre to the site, including land currently occupied by properties on The Crescent (these properties will be subject to Compulsory Purchase Order)
- Minet Country Park Footbridge- bridging over the canal and Yeading Brook in the centre of the western end of the site providing access to the Minet Country Park.
- Springfield Road Footbridge- northern pedestrian and cycle access to Minet Country Park and Springfield Road.
- Widening of South Road across the railway line- for the creation of a bus lane.
- Accessed onto Beaconsfield Road

The following have been identified as development principles for the site:

- Creating a civic space alongside the vibrant streets on which many festivals and processions take place.
- Complement the specialist shops with multiple retailers.
- Offer apartments, maisonettes and townhouses in addition to predominant existing terraced and semi-detached housing stock.
- Develop an active canal frontage as a destination.
- Provide a defined public park with recreational facilities that are not provided by the adjacent country park and build bridge links from the site to Minet Country Park.

Site wide energy is proposed. The preferred option is to provide this through connection to Blue NG a super-efficient new technology that generates power from the gasification process in gas holders.

This provision will be the subject of a separate planning application and there will be an alternative strategy in place should this not get approval.

Quantum of affordable housing has yet to be finalised.

The proposal has been developed in consultation with Ealing Council and the GLA. The proposal is supported in principle by Ealing Council and was favourably received by CABE.

Key Issues

High remediation costs due to land contamination may affect the affordable housing and energy offer.

Land acquisition to enable the new accesses across Minet Country Park and at the eastern end of the site may be an issue. In particular Hillingdon Council owns some of the land and could potentially frustrate the development. This may not happen but compulsory purchase options are being investigated in case they are needed. Access at the eastern end of the site is also complex and may need to be facilitated by compulsory purchase of some residential properties.

The development is conceived as an extension to the existing town centre given the close proximity of the two areas. However, in planning terms, the site is strictly outside of the town centre and as such will need to be justified by the applicants through the sequential test set out in PPS6 (i.e. checking that there are no sites within the town centre that can accommodate the scale of retail proposed). Given the unique local circumstances, the approach proposed is justified, i.e. the current town centre serves a unique market and there is a need to extend the retail offer.

The two water-filled gas holders will be removed and the waterless one remains. The scheme has been designed to keep residential units away from the gas holder. This issue has not affected the level of density of the development.

The key transport challenges will be to ensure that the site is well integrated with the surrounding area, to improve public transport access, to maximise opportunities for walking and cycling, and to minimise traffic impacts. The canal and railway line present barriers to movement and the existing highway network surrounding the site is heavily congested. Buses are likely to be the only realistic way to improve the site's accessibility to public transport in the near future. A package of bus service improvements is being agreed with TfL London Buses.

Overall this has the potential to be a high quality scheme, subject to resolving affordable housing provision.

Presentation

Myra Barnes (Salisbury Jones Planning for National Grid); Paul Scott (MAKE Architects); Simon Slatford (RPS Planning); Giles Chalton (Capita Lovejoy Landscape Architects); Pat Hayes (Director of Environment & Regeneration, Ealing)

 , Senior Strategic Planner, Case Officer
@london.gov.uk

Outline planning permission

- **Residential**-up to 3,750 units
- **Retail**- Extension to Southall Town centre
- **Hotel; conference centre, school; offices; cinema**
- Significant **open space**

Detailed planning permission

- **Accesses into the site:**

- 2 foot and cycle bridges over canal and brook into Green Belt
- 1 road bridge into Green Belt
- Widening of road over railway line
- 3 accesses onto Beaconsfield Road



Artist impression of West Southall looking north



Artist impression of approach from Pump Lane



Illustrative view of bridge from tow path looking west



Strategic issues

- **Retail**
- **Design**
- **Green belt**
- **Blue ribbon network**
- **Energy**