

Land north and south of Avenue Road, South Acton Estate (regeneration phase 7.1)

in the London Borough of Ealing

planning application no. PP/2015/3558

Strategic planning application stage 1 referral

Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended); Greater London Authority Acts 1999 and 2007; Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008.

The proposal

Phase 7.1 of the comprehensive regeneration of South Acton Estate, comprising 246 new homes in buildings of between two and nine-storeys.

The applicant

The applicant is **Acton Gardens LLP**, and the architect is **Stitch**.

Strategic issues

The proposed **estate regeneration phase** is **strongly supported** in strategic planning terms.

The applicant should, nevertheless, ensure that outstanding matters with respect to **housing, urban design, sustainable development** and **transport** are addressed prior to the Mayor's decision making stage.

Recommendation

That Ealing Council be advised that whilst the scheme is broadly supported in strategic planning terms, the application does not yet fully comply with the London Plan for the reasons set out in paragraph 47 of this report. The resolution of those issues could, nevertheless, lead to the application becoming compliant with the London Plan.

Context

1 On 3 August 2015 the Mayor of London received documents from Ealing Council notifying him of a planning application of potential strategic importance to develop the above site for the above uses. Under the provisions of The Town & Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 the Mayor has until 11 September 2015 to provide the Council with a statement setting out whether he considers that the application complies with the London Plan, and his reasons for taking that view. The Mayor may also provide other comments. This report sets out information for the Mayor's use in deciding what decision to make.

2 The application is referable under Category 1A 1. of the Schedule to the Order 2008: “Development which comprises or includes the provision of more than 150 houses, flats, or houses and flats”.

3 Once Ealing Council has resolved to determine the application, it is required to refer it back to the Mayor for his decision as to whether to direct refusal; take it over for his own determination; or allow the Council to determine it itself.

4 The Mayor of London’s statement on this case will be made available on the GLA website www.london.gov.uk.

Site description

5 The South Acton Estate covers an area of approximately 25 hectares, and is located south of Acton High Street and east of Bollo Lane. A school and other educational buildings are located at the heart of the estate, along with a row of shops, just to the south, along Bollo Bridge Road.

6 The site of this particular phase (known as phase 7.1) is situated either side of Avenue Road, towards the north of the estate, at its eastern interface with residential development at Berrymead Gardens. The phase 7.1 site currently accommodates 73 homes. Table 1 below sets out the existing residential schedule of the phase 7.1 site.

Unit type	Social rent	Private market	Totals
One-bedroom	8	0	8
Two-bedroom	17	19	36
Three-bedroom	11	9	20
Four-bedroom	3	6	9
Total units	39	34	73
Total habitable rooms	140	138	278

Table 1: Phase 7.1 site housing baseline.

7 The nearest London Underground station to the site is Acton Town (Piccadilly Line) which is located to the west of South Acton Estate. South Acton London Overground Station is located south of the estate, approximately 600 metres from its centre. The area is well served by buses, with a number stops located on the periphery of the estate. The estate registers a public transport accessibility level of three to four, on a scale of one to six - where six is excellent and one is poor.

Details of the proposal

8 The proposal is to provide 246 new homes, landscaping, amenity features and public open space. Table 2 below sets out the proposed residential schedule for this scheme.

Unit type	Affordable rent	Intermediate	Private market	Totals
One-bedroom	25	8	48	81
Two-bedroom	28	9	63	100
Three-bedroom	25	0	31	56
Four-bedroom	9	0	0	9
Total units	87	17	142	246
Total habitable rooms	313	43	440	796

Table 2: Proposed regeneration phase 7.1.

9 The proposal is effectively a re-design and intensification of this phase of the approved South Acton Estate outline masterplan. The intensification amounts to approximately 90 additional units at the phase 7.1 site (over that originally envisaged for this plot by the approved masterplan). GLA officers understand that the proposal is, in part, a response to the decant preferences of existing residents at the estate.

Case history

10 On 13 August 2013 Ealing Council granted outline planning permission P/2012/0708 for the comprehensive regeneration of South Acton Estate. The Mayor of London had previously expressed his strategic support for the scheme on 2 October 2012 (GLA report PDU/2871/02).

11 A number of related phases of regeneration have now come forward at the estate. On 16 April 2015 a GLA pre-planning application meeting was held to discuss this proposal to intensify phase 7.1 of the consented outline masterplan. The advice issued by GLA officers on 5 May 2015 stated that the proposed residential intensification is supported in strategic planning terms. The applicant was, nevertheless, advised to ensure that the future planning application addressed matters with respect to: housing; urban design; inclusive access; sustainable development; and, transport.

Strategic planning issues and relevant policies and guidance

12 The relevant issues and corresponding policies are as follows:

- Housing *London Plan; Housing SPG; draft Interim Housing SPG; Housing Strategy; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation SPG;*
- Affordable housing *London Plan; Housing SPG; draft Interim Housing SPG; Housing Strategy;*
- Density *London Plan; Housing SPG; draft Interim Housing SPG;*
- Urban design *London Plan; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Character and Context SPG; Housing SPG; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation SPG;*
- Inclusive access *London Plan; Accessible London: achieving an inclusive environment SPG;*
- Sustainable development *London Plan; Sustainable Design and Construction SPG; Mayor's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy; Mayor's Climate Change Mitigation and Energy Strategy; Mayor's Water Strategy;*
- Transport and parking *London Plan; the Mayor's Transport Strategy;*
- Crossrail *London Plan; Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy; and, Use of planning obligations in the funding of Crossrail and the Mayoral Community infrastructure levy SPG.*

13 For the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the development plan in force for the area is 2012 Ealing Core Strategy and Adopted Policies Map; 2013 Development Sites DPD and 2013 Development Management DPD; and, the 2015 London Plan Consolidated with Alterations since 2011.

14 The following are also relevant material considerations:

- The National Planning Policy Framework, Technical Guide to the National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance; and,
- Draft Minor Alterations to the London Plan 2015.

Principle of development

15 The principle of comprehensive housing renewal at South Acton Estate is supported by the Mayor in strategic planning terms, and has been established through the granting of planning permission P/2012/0708 for the outline masterplan for estate regeneration. In accordance with London Plan policies 3.3 and 3.14 the approved redevelopment enables the delivery of an uplift in housing and affordable housing at the estate - both in terms of units and habitable rooms, and the section 106 agreement associated with the outline permission secures this (including a minimum baseline provision of 3,922 affordable habitable rooms).

16 Noting the precedent established by the approved outline masterplan, and having regard to the characteristics of the site more generally, GLA officers support the proposed intensification of this phase, which, it is understood, partly responds to a higher than expected proportion of existing residents expressing the wish to remain in this particular part of the neighbourhood.

Housing

17 This part of the estate currently accommodates 73 homes, and the proposal is to redevelop this area to provide 246 new homes as part of the wider South Acton Estate masterplan. London Plan Policy 3.14 is relevant in this case, and seeks to ensure that, at least, equivalent housing and affordable housing floorspace is reprovided in estate redevelopments. Supporting guidance within the Mayor's Housing SPG makes clear that this assessment may also be undertaken on a habitable rooms basis. Accordingly, an assessment against the requirements of Policy 3.14 is provided below.

Reprovision of affordable housing

18 It is evident from tables 1 and 2 above that the proposal for phase 7.1 would result in an uplift of 65 units/216 habitable rooms of affordable housing, and 173 units/491 habitable rooms of housing overall. This is strongly supported, and demonstrates the proposal complies with London Plan Policy 3.14 at the site specific level.

19 Furthermore, noting the cumulative provision of previous regeneration phases since 2007 (refer to table 3 below), it is evident that the proposed residential provision for phase 7.1 would contribute towards a growing net gain of housing and affordable housing at the South Acton Estate (equivalent to a combined uplift of 717 units/2,478 habitable rooms overall, and 240 affordable units/1,012 affordable habitable rooms). Accordingly, it is evident that the housing regeneration programme is progressing well, and in full accordance with London Plan Policy 3.14.

Phase	Original units and (habitable rooms)		New units and (habitable rooms)			Net change in units and (habitable rooms)		
	Private	Social rent	Private	Affordable		Private	Affordable	
				Inter-mediate	Rent		Inter-mediate	Rent
Earlier phases	113 (392)	488 (1,396)	482 (1,556)	224 (673)	439 (1,519)	+369 (+1,164)	+224 (+673)	-49 (+123)
Phase 7.1	34 (138)	39 (140)	142 (440)	17 (43)	87 (313)	+108 (+302)	+17 (+43)	+48 (+173)
TOTAL	147 (530)	527 (1,536)	624 (1,996)	241 (716)	526 (1,832)	+477 (+1,466)	+241 (+716)	-1 (+296)
							+240 (+1,012)	

Table 3: Proposed phase 7.1 and cumulative contribution of previous regeneration phases since 2007.

Maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing

20 London Plan Policy 3.12 seeks the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing, whilst also having regard to local and regional circumstances, and the need to promote mixed and balanced communities. The approved outline masterplan for the South Acton Estate secures a baseline provision of affordable habitable rooms (as discussed in paragraph 15), but also includes a requirement for each phase to provide the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing in their own right. Accordingly, whilst the proposed 42% provision of affordable housing within phase 7.1 is supported in principle, GLA officers note that the applicant has submitted a financial appraisal for a locally-led independent review. GLA officers will update the Mayor on the findings of the review (and the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing in this case) at the decision making stage.

Residential tenures

21 In terms of habitable rooms, the affordable housing provision across the phase would comprise 88% affordable rent and 12% intermediate provision. Whilst this does not accord with the strategic split identified by London Plan Policy 3.11 (which seeks a 60%/40% balance respectively), it is acknowledged that a greater weighting towards affordable rent is to be expected on estate regeneration schemes (given the need to respond to decant requirements). Accordingly, noting also that the approved masterplan will deliver an estate-wide tenure balance of 74%/26%, GLA officers are of the view that the proposed tenure split at this site is acceptable in strategic planning terms.

Mix of units

22 Having considered the schedule of accommodation presented for phase 7.1 (refer to table 2 above), GLA officers note that the scheme would provide a good range of dwelling typologies and unit sizes (ranging from one to four-bedrooms) and deliver homes of more generous spatial proportions compared to the existing stock. Furthermore, it noted that the phase would achieve a 39% provision of family housing within the affordable rent component. The proposed provision of family sized affordable rented housing is supported in line with the corresponding prioritisation afforded by London Plan Policy 3.11, and the overall housing mix is supported in accordance with London Plan Policy 3.8.

Residential standards

23 The planning statement and submitted plans demonstrate that all dwellings will comply with the 'Lifetime Homes' standard and meet or exceed the minimum space standards within London Plan Policy 3.5 (Table 3.3). A 10% provision of wheelchair accessible/adaptable units will also be made in accordance with London Plan Policy 3.8, and the scheme preforms well against the residential design criteria within the Mayor's Housing SPG. Accordingly GLA officers are of the view that the scheme is of a high residential standard, and would represent a genuine step change in housing quality over the existing situation at the site.

Children's play space

24 Based on the residential mix set out in table 2 above, and the methodology within the Mayor's Play and Informal Recreation SPG, GLA officers have calculated an expected child yield for the scheme of 132, and an associated play space requirement of 1,320 sq.m. It is noted that the proposal would provide a total of 1,415 sq.m. of children's play space, comfortably exceeding the requirement through a combination of undulating play lawns, courtyard play areas and gardens. This is supported in line with London Plan Policy 3.6.

Residential density

25 This site has a public transport accessibility level of four, and GLA officers have classified the setting as urban in character. The London Plan density matrix (Table 3.2 in support of Policy 3.4), therefore, suggests a residential density of between 200 to 700 habitable rooms per hectare for this scheme. As discussed in paragraph 16 above, GLA officers support the proposed intensification of this phase - which responds well to the principles of site optimisation, and enables the scheme to address the most recent decant requirements. The planning statement confirms that the proposed density is 465 habitable rooms per hectare, which is comfortably within the range identified by the London Plan.

Urban design

26 GLA officers strongly support the design of the outline masterplan for South Acton Estate (which was itself the subject of a number of joint GLA/Ealing Council design reviews). In particular, the principles of stitching the estate back into Acton, improving north-south connections, re-establishing a street grid, and creating a network of open spaces are key positive attributes of the masterplan.

27 The proposal for this phase reflects those principles, however, since the masterplan application was approved it has been necessary for the design of this plot to evolve slightly - in order to accommodate additional units in response to decant demand, and in response to the presence of an underground sewer which had not previously been identified. Accordingly, and in order to avoid building over the sewer (which is protected by an easement), the masterplan block layout has been partly broken up. A key focus of GLA pre-application design advice was to ensure that the revised configuration of blocks would still create: a rational building line; active frontages; and high quality public realm.

28 In response to pre-application advice, GLA officers welcome the reconfiguration of the terrace houses east of Church Road, which, it is noted, would now provide a well-defined and active frontage onto Church Road and the adjacent public realm. This is supported in accordance with London Plan Policy 7.3. GLA officers nevertheless seek further discussion with the applicant team with respect to the ambition to amalgamate the various open spaces east and west of Church Road (north of the junction with Avenue Road) in order to create a single coherent piece of high quality public realm.

29 The design of the flatted residential blocks at this plot is also broadly supported. The scale of these (up to 9-storeys) represents a small increase over that previously approved as part of the masterplan parameters, but nevertheless provides an appropriate response to context (as well as decant requirements). GLA officers support the proposed architectural approach in terms of materials and detailing, and the use of varying tones of brick to articulate and visually distinguish different blocks is supported in particular. As discussed in the housing section above, the residential quality is high – particularly in view of the generosity of cores, provision of deck-access typologies, and good quality ground floor entrances.

Inclusive access

30 The applicant has set out its approach to access and inclusion within the design and access statement and planning statement and the commitment to create a highly permeable and inclusive development and public realm is inherent within the scheme. It is evident that the scheme would deliver a good balance of housing choice (refer to paragraphs 22 to 23 above) as well as significant enhancement to the legibility and accessibility of this part of the estate (including connections to

and from amenity space at Avenue Road Park). Accordingly the proposed approach to access and inclusion is supported in accordance with London Plan Policy 7.2.

Sustainable development

Energy strategy

31 For the purposes of assessing applications against the carbon dioxide savings target within London Plan Policy 5.2, the Mayor now applies a 35% reduction target beyond Part L 2013 of Building Regulations. In accordance with the principles of Policy 5.2 the applicant has submitted an energy statement for the development, setting out how the scheme proposes to reduce carbon dioxide emissions in accordance with the London Plan energy hierarchy. In summary, the proposed strategy comprises: the proposal to exceed Part L of Building Regulations 2013 by 3% through efficiency measures (including passive design measures, heat loss measures and low energy lighting); a single energy centre, with three combined heat and power units (CHP), designed to connect to the wider Acton Gardens energy network (18% saving); and, installation of photovoltaic panels (13% saving). Overall the strategy would achieve a 34% carbon dioxide saving, falling marginally short of the target within London Plan Policy 5.2.

32 Having considered the strategy, and noting the slight shortfall against the policy target, GLA officers seek further discussion with respect to the following matters:

- Efficiency: The applicant should clarify why a different ventilation strategy has been used in some blocks. Applying mechanical ventilation heat recovery to all dwellings may allow the development to achieve the carbon reduction target.
- Cooling: GLA officers would welcome further information on how the risk of overheating has been mitigated (to include dynamic thermal modelling in line with CIBSE TM52 and TM49).
- District heating: Further to discussions at pre-application stage, GLA officers would welcome further information on the status and phasing of the masterplan heat network, and how this phase (and the energy centre within it) relates to the wider scheme.
- CHP: The applicant should clarify how the CHP units within this phase would relate to the wider masterplan heat network. If the CHP units are intended to help drive the wider network, further detail on energy loads should be provided to explain the rationale behind the proposed system sizing. If the CHP units are not intended to help drive the site-wide network, the proposal for this site should consist of temporary boilers until the main energy centre comes on line.
- Carbon dioxide target: Where the carbon reduction target cannot be achieved on-site the applicant should explore options for off-site mitigation in accordance with part E of London Plan Policy 5.2.

Climate change adaptation

33 It is noted that the proposed landscaping strategy offers various opportunities for new green infrastructure, as well as the carefully considered retention of high quality mature trees. Whilst it is acknowledged that as a general rule most of the green spaces within the scheme will be needed to provide amenity for residents, it is noted that the applicant is pursuing a roofscape strategy combining PV and biodiverse sedum roof areas. This is strongly supported in accordance with London Plan Policy 5.11, and will also support the wider aims of the sustainable urban drainage strategy - as set out within the submitted flood risk assessment. The Council is

encouraged to secure detailed approval of the proposed climate change adaptation measures by way of planning condition.

Transport

Access

34 As part of this phase the applicant has proposed to redesign the existing vehicular accesses to the west of Church Road, and to the east, while the new road created would link the eastern boundary of the site with the southern end of Oldham Terrace. This would provide pedestrian and cycle linkages to the High Street, which is supported. Access to the residential block to the south would be via a new priority junction with Avenue Road. Whilst TfL is satisfied with the proposed arrangements, a Stage 1 Safety Audit should be submitted for Ealing Council's approval prior to any grant of consent.

Parking

35 The proposal includes a total of 124 car parking spaces (71 in an undercroft parking area and 53 at surface level within a gated parking area), which equates to a ratio of 0.5 spaces per unit. TfL is satisfied with this level of provision. TfL also supports the proposed provision of 24 disabled parking spaces, and the provision of electric vehicle charging points (EVCP) to be provided in line with the London Plan standards. One on-street car club space will also be provided, and this is welcomed.

36 In line with London Plan Policy 6.13, TfL requests that the submission of a Car Parking Management plan (and all car parking details) is secured by way of planning condition/ obligation as necessary in order to regulate parking activities on site. TfL also expects that future residents would exempt from eligibility for local parking permits, with the applicant entering into a 'permit free' agreement with Ealing Council.

37 In line with London Plan Policy 6.9, the applicant has committed to provide cycle parking provision in line with the London Plan cycle parking standards. Based on the development quantum a minimum of 411 long-term and six visitor cycle parking spaces are required on-site. The applicant should commit to this provision accordingly. TfL further requests that all long-term facilities are designed to be secure, sheltered and easily accessible, as well as covered by CCTV. TfL also encourages that the applicant to provide a number of spaces that meet the storage requirements of larger, non-standard cycles.

Transport impact

38 In line with London Plan Policy 6.3, trip generation and mode share assessments have been undertaken (based on the 2012 Acton Gardens masterplan), which TfL considers acceptable. The proposed development comprises an additional 90 residential units compared to that previously consented for this part of the masterplan, and TfL notes that the additional impact of these units has been accordingly considered as part of the transport assessment. Having considered the submission, TfL is satisfied that the proposal is unlikely to result in significant additional highway and traffic impact over that of the approved masterplan.

39 As part of the consented outline masterplan, TfL has secured £450,000 towards the diversion of bus services (and associated infrastructure); £40,000 for bus shelter improvement; and, an obligation to provide a drivers' facility in phase 8 of the masterplan. On this basis TfL does not seek any further bus contributions from this proposal. However, on the understanding that the applicant is reviewing the phasing strategy (from phase 8 and onwards) TfL

recommends that Ealing Council review the trigger point for these contributions to ensure that adequate bus services will be in place to meet demand.

40 TfL also notes that the outline masterplan consent secured a contribution of £67,000 towards pedestrian, cyclist and road safety improvements, as well as the introduction of a 20 mile per hour speed limit in the surrounding area. These are to be delivered in phases 5 and 7 of the masterplan. According, TfL does not seek further contributions with respect to walking and cycling.

Travel planning

41 TfL usually expects a draft delivery and servicing plan to be submitted with proposals of this nature. TfL is nevertheless content for the submission of this plan (and its implementation) to be secured by planning condition in this instance. This will ensure compliance with London Plan Policy 6.14. TfL also expects the development to be supported by a construction logistics Plan. Both of these plans should accord with TfL guidance, and be secured by way of planning condition/obligation as appropriate.

42 A framework travel plan was submitted by the applicant. However, refinements are required in order that it will pass the ATTrBUTE travel plan assessment (TfL will provide further information as necessary). The revised and finalised travel plan should be secured by way of planning obligation in accordance with London Plan Policy 6.3.

Mayoral Community infrastructure levy

43 In accordance with London Plan Policy 8.3 the Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) came into effect on 1 April 2012. All new development that creates 100 sq.m. or more additional floorspace is liable to pay the Mayoral CIL. The levy is charged at £35 per square metre of additional floorspace in the London Borough of Ealing. Further details are available at: www.london.gov.uk/publication/mayoral-community-infrastructure-levy.

Local planning authority's position

44 Ealing Council is expected to formally consider the application at a planning committee meeting in September/October 2015.

Legal considerations

45 Under the arrangements set out in Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (Mayor of London) Order 2008 the Mayor is required to provide the local planning authority with a statement setting out whether he considers that the application complies with the London Plan, and his reasons for taking that view. Unless notified otherwise by the Mayor, the Council must consult the Mayor again under Article 5 of the Order if it subsequently resolves to make a draft decision on the application, in order that the Mayor may decide whether to allow the draft decision to proceed unchanged, or direct the Council under Article 6 of the Order to refuse the application, or issue a direction under Article 7 of the Order that he is to act as the local planning authority for the purpose of determining the application and any connected application. There is no obligation at this present stage for the Mayor to indicate his intentions regarding a possible direction, and no such decision should be inferred from the Mayor's statement and comments.

Financial considerations

46 There are no financial considerations at this stage.

Conclusion

47 London Plan policies on housing, urban design, inclusive access, sustainable development and transport are relevant to this application. Whilst the scheme is broadly supported in strategic planning terms, the application does not yet fully comply with the London Plan as set out below:

- **Housing:** The proposed regeneration phase would deliver an uplift in housing and affordable housing in accordance with London Plan Policy 3.14. The residential mix and quality is supported, and the proposed 42% provision of affordable housing is welcomed subject to independent review in line with London Plan Policy 3.12.
- **Urban design:** The proposed design is broadly supported in line with London Plan Policy 7.1. GLA officers nevertheless seek further discussion with respect to the ambition to amalgamate the various open spaces east and west of Church Road in order to create a single coherent piece of high quality public realm.
- **Inclusive access:** The proposed approach to access and inclusion is supported in accordance with London Plan Policy 7.2.
- **Sustainable development:** Whilst the energy strategy is generally in accordance with the London Plan energy hierarchy, GLA officers would welcome further discussion with respect to efficiency; cooling; district heating; CHP; and, carbon dioxide target in line with London Plan Policy 5.2. The proposed climate change adaptation measures are supported in accordance with London Plan policies 5.10, 5.11 and 5.13.
- **Transport:** Whilst the proposal is generally acceptable in strategic transport terms, the applicant and the Council should address the matters raised in this report with respect to access; parking; and, travel planning to ensure accordance with London Plan policies 6.3, 6.13 and 6.14.

48 The resolution of the above issue could lead to the application becoming compliant with the London Plan.

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