

9 July 2018

**Dolphin Square, Pimlico**

in the City of Westminster

planning application no. 18/01099/FULL

**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**

Part redevelopment and refurbishment of Dolphin Square, including the reconfiguration of existing residential apartments; demolition and reconstruction of Rodney House to provide a new ten storey building comprising residential serviced apartments, retail and leisure floorspace; single storey rooftop extensions to the retained and refurbished Residential Houses to provide additional residential units; and a new row of townhouses to the Western Carriageway, in addition to landscaping and enabling works. The proposals will deliver an additional 189 residential units and 81 additional serviced apartments resulting in a total of 1,295 residential units and 205 serviced apartments.

**The applicant**

The applicant is **Westbrook Partners** and the architect is **Eric Parry Architects**.

**Strategic issues**

**Principle of development:** the proposed refurbishment and residential intensification of the existing Dolphin Square estate in this highly accessible location within the Central Activity Zone is supported in principle and complies with London Plan and draft London Plan policy in land use terms.

**Affordable housing:** no affordable housing offer has been made at the time of writing which is wholly unacceptable. GLA officers will continue to work with the Council and its advisors, to robustly interrogate the applicant's viability assessment to ensure the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing is secured. Early implementation and late stage review mechanisms must be secured in accordance with the Mayor's Affordable Housing and Viability SPG and Policy H6 of the draft London Plan.

**Transport:** cycle parking for all land uses should be increased to meet London Plan standards and car parking reduced. The new build and refurbished units should be car-free. The overall level of disabled car parking should be increased to meet minimum London Plan and draft London Plan standards.

Discussions and revisions are also required to address housing, play space, urban design, inclusive design, energy and transport concerns.

**Recommendation**

That Westminster City Council be advised that while the application is broadly supported it does not fully comply with the London Plan and draft London Plan, for the reasons set out in paragraph 57 of this report; but that the possible remedies set out in this paragraph could address these deficiencies.

## Context

1 On 4 June 2018 the Mayor of London received documents from Westminster City 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 must 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 categories 1A and 1B of the Schedule to the Order 2008:

- 1A – *“Development which comprises or includes the provision of more than 150 houses, flats, or houses and flats.”*
- 1B(c) – *Development (other than development which only comprises the provision of houses, flats or houses and flats) which comprises or includes the erection of a building or buildings outside of Central London and with a total floorspace of more than 15,000 square metres.”*

3 Once Westminster City 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](http://www.london.gov.uk).

## Site description

5 The application site is in a riverside location in Pimlico, and within a fringe location of the Central Activities Zone (CAZ) in Westminster. The site is bounded by Dolphin Square East and Dolphin Square West, to each of these sides, with the gardens of the houses fronting onto St. George's Square and Claverton Street opposite the lanes. To the north of the site is Chichester Street with Pimlico School and its open space opposite, and Grosvenor Road and the river Thames running along the site's southern side.

6 The site is a 7.4-acre residential restate is the UK's largest private residential rented estate and currently comprises 1,064 residential units distributed in twelve 10-storey buildings erected along the east, west and southern sides of the site, perceived as joined buildings but organised internally with individual entrances and cores. Along the northern side of the site is Rodney House, a 7-storey building with additional 165 serviced apartments and retail in the ground floor. All buildings are circa 80 years old with dated fabric and infrastructure. Currently the estate does not provide affordable residential units, as defined by Policy 3.10 of the London Plan.

7 The central patio mainly comprises a landscaped garden with a single storey building located to the north accommodating the ancillary spa/gym, restaurant and the estate's management facilities, accessed from Chichester Street through Rodney House. The basement comprises servicing and 153 car parking spaces. There are a further 98 car parking spaces at street level, along Dolphin Square East and West carriageways, where the entrances to the basement car parking is located. Currently there are 114 cycle parking spaces provided on site.

8 Grosvenor Road south of the site is part of the Transport for London Road Network. The closest London underground station is Pimlico, located 380 metres away and is served by the Victoria line, and the closest bus stop is Pimlico Academy & Library, 200 metres away from the site,

with other bus stops within acceptable walking distance, serving a large number of high frequency routes. The closest Cycle Hire station is on St George’s Square, approximately 180 metres east of the site and the closest part of the Central London Grid is Cycle Superhighway 8, Wandsworth to Westminster, via Grosvenor Road. Cycle Superhighway 5, Oval to Pimlico, is also very close to the site via the Grosvenor Road and Millbank junction. The site has a public transport accessibility level of 5-3 and immediately rises to a 6a and 6b to the north-east, indicating the site has a very good level of public transport access.

9 The site comprises the Dolphin Square Conservation Area and the Dolphin Square estate buildings are locally listed. Further to this, the site is bounded by Pimlico Conservation Area to both east and west sides of the site, within which are the statutory listed buildings at nos. 54-60, 62-70 and 76-108 St George’s Square immediately to the east of the site. Several other statutory listed buildings are located in the neighbouring area, mainly clustered around St. George’s Square and Churchill Gardens Road, to the west of the site. The site also lies within flood zones 2 and 3, and is part of the Wandsworth-Bermondsey Thames Policy Area.

## Details of the proposal

10 The application proposes the comprehensive refurbishment of the existing private rented residential estate, which is build to rent (BtR) residential product, comprising repair to the existing building fabric and structure, reconfiguration of the existing unit mix and new build elements to increase the overall number of private residential rented units across the estate from 1,106 to 1,295 and provide 81 additional serviced apartments, as follows.

	Existing	Proposed	
Main building residential flats	1,106	Refurb/Reconfig.	1,113
		Rooftop new build	68
Rodney House residential flats	0	78	
Townhouses	0	16	
<b>Total private rented residential</b>	<b>1,106</b>	<b>1,295</b>	
<b>Total Serviced Apartments</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>205</b>	

11 The new build elements will consist of single storey roof top extensions to the main residential estate buildings raising them from nine to ten storeys, a row of new townhouses on the western carriageway and the demolition and replacement of Rodney House with a taller building to match the revised scale of the refurbished residential houses in the estate. The following table provides a comparative breakdown of the existing and proposed floorspace and uses:

	Floorspace (GIA sq.m.)		
	Existing	Proposed	Difference
Residential (C3)	80,111	92,995	12,884
Serviced apartments (C2)	9,708	14,077	4,369
Retail (A1-A4)	964	1,157	193
Leisure (D2)	2,838	2,183	-655
Office (B1)	108	0	-108
Car park	4,542	4,677	135
<b>Total</b>	<b>98,271</b>	<b>115,089</b>	<b>16,818</b>

12 The proposals also include an enhanced retail frontage to Chichester Street and the internal Gardens, the relocation of the existing gym, restaurant and administrative facilities currently at courtyard/ground floor to basement level to open up the north end of the Gardens and additional landscaping.

## Case history

13 The applicant held pre-application discussions with the GLA in November 2017. The principle of development to deliver additional residential units and serviced accommodation, in addition to an enhanced retail offer in this CAZ fringe location was supported. Further discussion was required in relation to the provision of affordable housing and the applicant was encouraged to explore the opportunity for a car-free development given the excellent location in terms of public transport accessibility, CAZ location and existing cycle network. Other advice was offered in relation to housing quality, urban design, inclusive design, climate change and transport

## Strategic planning issues and relevant policies and guidance

14 For the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the development plan in force for the area is Westminster's City Plan (2016), saved policies of Westminster's Unitary Development Plan (2010) and the London Plan 2016 (Consolidated with alterations since 2011).

15 The following are also relevant material considerations:

- The National Planning Policy Framework.
- National Planning Practice Guidance.
- Draft London Plan 2017, which should be taken into account on the basis explained in the NPPF.

16 The relevant issues and corresponding policies are as follows:

- CAZ/mix of uses *London Plan;*
- Housing *London Plan; Housing SPG; Housing Strategy; Affordable Housing and Viability SPG;*
- Urban design *London Plan; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Character and Context SPG; Housing SPG; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation SPG;*
- Historic environment *London Plan; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Character and Context SPG*
- Inclusive design *London Plan; Accessible London: Achieving an Inclusive Environment SPG;*
- Energy *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 *London Plan; the Mayor's Transport Strategy; Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy; Crossrail SPG.*

17 In addition, on 5 March 2018, the Government published the draft revised National Planning Policy Framework for consultation (until 10 May 2018). This should be taken into account appropriately in accordance with its early stage of preparation.

## Principle of development

18 The site falls in the Pimlico area, within the Central Activities Zone (CAZ). Policy 2.10 of the London Plan and Policy SD4 of the draft London Plan recognise the CAZ has a rich mix of strategic as well as local uses, including residential neighbourhoods. Policy 2.12 of the London Plan sets out that the Mayor and boroughs should work together to protect and enhance predominantly residential neighbourhoods within the CAZ and Policy SD5 of the draft London

Plan sets out that offices and other CAZ strategic functions are given equal weight relative to new residential, including in predominantly residential neighbourhoods. Policy 4.5 of the London Plan establishes that within the CAZ, smaller scale provision for visitor accommodation should be in fringe locations with good transport, and recognises the need for apart-hotels in the context of broader policies of the London Plan. The draft London Plan reinforces this approach through Policies E10 and SD5, whilst setting out that serviced accommodation should not erode other strategic functions of the CAZ. Additionally, Policy 3.8 of the London Plan sets out that an offer of different types of dwellings should be provided following identified housing needs.

19 The Westminster City Plan identifies Pimlico as an area primarily for residential use with supporting retail, social and cultural provision. Given the site does not fall within locally defined CAZ frontages or local shopping centres within Pimlico, local policies support the residential use of the site with new commercial uses accepted, if providing for the local residential community.

20 The proposals would increase the quantum of residential units and serviced apartments within the existing residential estate, in this predominantly residential part of Pimlico, in addition to providing a marginal uplift in retail floorspace compared to the existing offer. Overall, the provision of 205 serviced apartments (an uplift of 81 units) is a proportionate scale of visitor infrastructure provision in relation to this part of Pimlico and the site's accessibility to public transport hubs, and would not compromise the balance of local land uses given the current quantum existing on site. Likewise, the proposed small increase in retail floorspace is also proportionate to the existing quantum, would not harm the existing neighbouring residential area and would support the future and existing residents and the CAZ functions. The 189 new residential apartments are also supported given their contribution to the provision of new homes in Westminster in line with Policy 3.3 of the London Plan and Policy H1 of the draft London Plan. Therefore, the proposed residential-led, mixed-use refurbishment and redevelopment of the existing estate is supported in principle and complies with London Plan and draft London Plan policy in land use terms.

21 Notwithstanding the above, the maximum length of stay within the proposed serviced apartments must be limited to no more than 90 days and this should be secured by planning obligation. If this is not secured they will be considered C3 residential and be subject to London Plan and draft London Plan affordable housing policy requirements.

## **Housing**

22 Dolphin Square is the largest private residential apartment block in the UK, It is under unified ownership and management and currently comprises 1,106 residential flats and 124 serviced apartments, in addition to ancillary leisure and retail uses. The site does not currently provide any affordable housing and the proposals will not result in the net loss of any existing accommodation.

23 The applicant proposes a build to rent (BtR) product. The contribution of the private rented sector in addressing housing need is acknowledged by the Mayor's Affordable Housing and Viability SPG, London Plan Policy 3.8 and Policy H13 of the draft London Plan, and the proposed uplift of 189 BtR units be provided at Dolphin Square is supported. All of the units must be covered by a covenant to retain the homes as BtR for a period of at least fifteen years. In addition, a clawback mechanism is required to secure any difference in the total value of the market rent units and their value on a for sale basis should the covenant be broken. Both of these provisions must be secured by planning obligation. The applicant should also provide further information demonstrating that the BtR offer addresses the criteria in Part B of Policy H13 and the Mayor's SPG. The proposed residential offer would result in an overall uplift in residential units from 1,106 to 1,295 and would comprise the following mix:

<b>Unit type</b>	<b>Existing</b>	<b>Proposed</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Studio	222	375	153
One bed	564	605	41
Two bed	264	233	-31
Three bed	41	78	37
Four bed	12	2	-10
Five bed	3	2	-1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,106</b>	<b>1,295</b>	<b>189</b>

### Affordable housing

24 London Plan Policies 3.11 and 3.12 and draft London Plan Policy H5 and Policy H6 seek to maximise the delivery of affordable housing, setting a strategic target of 50% across London. At a local level, Westminster City Council's Policy S16 seeks to deliver 30% of all new housing as affordable. With regards to BtR products, Policy H13 of the draft London Plan, sets out that where the criteria in Part B are met, the affordable housing can be solely discounted market rent (DMR) in tenure, at a genuinely affordable rent (preferably London Living Rent level) and this should be secured in perpetuity. The Mayor's Affordable Housing and Viability SPG introduced a threshold approach to viability, which is now incorporated within Policy H6 of the draft London Plan. BtR schemes that provide 35% affordable housing on site, where at least 30% is provided at London Living Rent levels and the remainder set at a range of rents below market rent agreed in partnership with the GLA and Westminster City Council, in addition to meeting all other requirements of Part C of Policy H6 of the draft London Plan, are not required to submit viability information nor be subject to a late stage review. This is referred to as the Fast Track Route. If an offer of less than 35% is made, or the full requirements of Part C are not met, then the applicant will be required to submit a detailed viability appraisal (FVA) and the scheme must follow the Viability Tested Route.

25 The applicant has not made an affordable housing offer at the time of writing which is wholly unacceptable, however, it has made a commitment to delivering an element of affordable housing, the level of which is to be determined through viability testing. A financial viability appraisal carried out in accordance with the Mayor's SPG, testing both the continuation of the existing private rented tenures and an alternative scenario assessing the sale of the new build units to be provided, has been shared with GLA officers and the Council. The appraisal identifies that both scenarios result in a substantial deficit compared to the benchmark value which raises some concerns with regards to the deliverability of the scheme. Notwithstanding this, GLA officers have provided initial feedback to the applicant and the Council querying a number of inputs and the benchmark valuation for further consideration, and will continue to work with both parties, and the Council's advisors, to robustly scrutinise the viability to ensure the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing is secured. In accordance with the Mayor's SPG and Policy H6 of the draft London Plan, an early stage review will be required and, if the threshold level of affordable housing is not met, a late stage review will also be required. The Council must publish the financial viability assessment including any review, in accordance with the Affordable Housing and Viability SPG and to ensure transparency of information.

26 As set out at pre-application stage, the applicant is strongly encouraged to meet the 35% benchmark in order to benefit from the Fast Track Route. In line with London Plan Policy 3.12, draft London Plan Policy H6 and the Affordable Housing and Viability SPG, the applicant will be expected to explore all opportunities to secure grant funding to boost affordable housing supply above the maximum reasonable amount.

## Residential quality

27 London Plan Policy 3.5 and Policy D4 of the draft London Plan promote quality in new housing provision, with further guidance provided in the Housing SPG. All of the reconfigured units and the proposed new build units will meet the London Plan and draft London Plan minimum residential space standards. All units should achieve minimum 2.5 metre floor to ceiling heights and ADF analysis undertaken to ensure sufficient daylight penetration is achieved, particularly to north facing units.

28 The proposed residential layouts in Rodney House follow the same configuration of the existing block with predominantly single aspect units accessed via four lift cores. It is noted that the proposal increases the number of studio/1 bed units, which increases the number of units sharing the same core at each level. While the constraints of working with the existing building envelope are accepted, it is disappointing that the applicant has not taken the opportunity to improve on the existing layouts by introducing 'through units' to allow corridors to be separated into unit clusters and the proportion of dual aspect units to be increased. The applicant should provide further justification on the rationale behind the Rodney House residential layouts for assessment.

29 Notwithstanding the above, the proposed town houses are well designed, with living areas facing onto the street to encourage passive surveillance and will provide a high quality residential environment.

## Children's play space

30 London Plan Policy 3.6 and draft London Plan Policy S4 require development proposals to make provisions for play and informal recreation based on the expected child population generated by the scheme. The minimum requirement for the site should be calculated using the GLA's play space calculator which accompanies Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play and Informal Recreation SPG. The submission material does not provide any information with regards to play space. While it is acknowledged that the BtR nature of the scheme, in combination with the predominance of smaller studio and one bed units is not likely to create a large child yield, the applicant should provide a child yield calculation and play space strategy to support the proposals and to allow an appropriate assessment of the scheme against the strategic policy requirements with regards to recreational amenity.

## **Urban design and heritage**

31 The design principles in chapter seven of the London Plan and chapter 3 of the draft London Plan place expectations on all developments to achieve a high standard of design which responds to local character, enhances the public realm and includes architecture of the highest quality that defines the area and makes a positive contribution to the streetscape and cityscape. Overall, as set out in the following paragraphs, the proposed refurbishment and redevelopment provides an opportunity to make positive urban design improvements particularly with regards to the legibility of the estate, the arrival experience and the estate's existing relationship with surrounding street frontages.

32 The proposed replacement Rodney House block will improve the building's ground floor frontage along Chichester Street and access into Dolphin Square via an enlarged vaulted entrance colonnade and is supported. The relocation of the leisure facility below ground to enable the garden courtyard and its amenity value to be increased in line with the proposed additional quantum of accommodation is also supported. The full extent of the proposed

Rodney House's ground frontage is activated with commercial and residential frontages which greatly improves on the existing condition in terms of both access and passive surveillance.

33 While it is recognised that the replacement 10 storey building is three storeys taller than the existing Rodney House building, the additional height is supported on the basis of the proposed improvements to the ground plan and the sensitively proportioned symmetry and detailing of the new block. This also introduces a consistent 10 storey scale to the full perimeter of Dolphin Square in conjunction with the proposed single storey roof level additions. The scale and separation distance of the neighbouring school to the north ensures that the additional height would not create an overbearing effect at street level. The applicant, however, should confirm the findings of daylight/sunlight analysis and any impact of overshadowing to the school.

34 The proposed single storey additions to the east, west and south wings have been sensitively designed in terms of window proportions relating successfully to the existing composition at lower levels and in creating an improved clean-lined roofline. The brick detailing to these elements is also well considered and provides subtle contrast to the existing and rebuilt brick coursing below. Similarly to the above, the applicant should confirm the findings of daylight/sunlight analysis and any impact of the extensions to the central garden and the flats in the east and west wings.

35 The design and layout of the proposed mews housing along the West Carriageway is well conceived and utilises the existing level change to provide basement parking/refuse storage and allow the mews houses to be activated with individual entrances to the street. This will help to animate the street and encourage public access along its length which is strongly supported. In addition, the public realm and landscaping improvements to the east and west carriageways are welcomed and improve on the legibility and access arrangements to existing residential entrances along each flank of the block.

### Townscape and heritage

36 The Dolphin Square estate is not statutorily listed, but is locally listed and recognised as a heritage asset in line with its status as the primary building within the Dolphin Square Conservation Area, which is itself defined by its neo-Georgian red brick character. A small portion of the application site falls within the Pimlico Conservation Area, which bounds the estate building to both the east and west sides and contains the Grade II listed residential terraces at nos. 54-60, 62-70 and 76-108 St George's Square immediately to the east of the site and Grade II listed St Saviours Church at the northern end of the square. The neighbouring Churchill Gardens Estate and associated Churchill Gardens Conservation Area to the west also contains several listed buildings. The Pimlico Conservation Area contains several other listed buildings some distance to the north west of the site clustered around St George's Drive, as does the Lillington and Longmore Gardens Conservation Area to the north east. London Plan Policy 7.8 and Policy HC1 of the draft London Plan confirm that development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

37 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the tests for dealing with heritage assets in planning decisions. In relation to listed buildings, all planning decisions should *"have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses"* and with regards to conservation areas, *"special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area."* The NPPF states that when considering the impact of the proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight

should be given to the asset's conservation. Significance can be harm or loss through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. A townscape and visual impact assessment has been provided which has tested the proposals through a number of verified local views from within both the Dolphin Square and Pimlico conservation areas.

38 The proposals would improve on the composition of the northern portion of Dolphin House, with the replacement Rodney House building completing and enclosing the perimeter block at its upper levels. Based on the thorough heritage-led design approach that has informed the new additions, GLA officers consider that the significance of the Dolphin Square Conservation Area would be enhanced by the proposals, particularly in terms of the improved street frontage along Chichester Street, the colonnaded public access into the garden square creating a visual connection into the gardens, the rationalised roof line and the removal of the existing poor quality leisure building, improving the overall built composition of the estate and its connection with the surrounding built fabric and conservation areas. The architect has also ensured that each new build element has been detailed and proportioned to draw directly from the integrity of the 1930's architecture, which is welcomed.

39 The public realm enhancements to the east and west carriageways have been sensitively designed to ensure the historic character of the Dolphin Square and Pimlico conservation areas are preserved, with the added benefit of improving public access through the site, linking the Thames and Chichester Street.

40 As described above, Dolphin Square is bounded directly by the rear of the St George's Square Grade II listed stucco terraces. Modelled views demonstrate that the proposal would be visible in the setting of the listed terraces in some views to some degree, however, it would cause no harm to the heritage assets as there would be no discernible change to their setting and the proposed high-quality detailing and materials would not alter the ability to experience the terrace's special architectural value. The proposed replacement Rodney House appears as a more substantial and complete building in the setting of St Saviour's Church when viewed from the north, reflecting the character and integrity of the original building. The high-quality detailing and proportions of its northern elevation will preserve and enhance the setting of Grade II listed Church.

41 The proposed roof line extensions would also be visible within the setting of the listed estate blocks in the adjacent Churchill Gardens Conservation Area, however, the magnitude of change compared to the existing building would be marginal and would therefore cause no harm to the listed buildings or conservation area, preserving their significance and special character. In longer range views, including from Riverside walk on the south side of the Thames, the additional height to Dolphin Square, well-proportioned symmetry and high-quality architecture would enhance the character of both Dolphin Square and Pimlico conservation areas when viewed from this position.

42 Having regard to the statutory duties in respect of listed buildings in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and the relevant paragraphs in the NPPF and draft revised NPPF in relation to listed buildings, conservation areas and non-designated heritage assets, GLA officers consider that the development will not cause harm to the significance or the special character of the heritage assets and their settings. The proposal therefore accords with London Plan Policy 7.8.

## **Inclusive design**

43 The proposals comprise a mixture of refurbishment and reconfiguration of existing flats, in addition to some new build in the replacement Rodney House and new terraced housing. All

of the new and reconfigured flats will be designed to meet Building Regulations Part M and in accordance with London Plan Policy 3.8 and Policy D5 of the draft London Plan, 10% will be designed to Building Regulation standard M4(3) standard, with the remaining 90% designed to Building Regulation standard M4 (2). While it is acknowledged that the refurbished units will not be modified to meet current standards, all existing and retained units will benefit from improved access and circulation arrangements, and amenity space. The proposals will also provide improvements to mobility around the estate, in the form of re-landscaped around the communal gardens. While the constraints of the historic fabric of the existing estate are acknowledged, the applicant is strongly encouraged to further improve on the choice of step-free accessible entrances from within the gardens to the east and west wings, which appears limited in the plans provided. Further comments with regards to accessible parking provision are provided in the transport section below and should be addressed.

## **Sustainable development**

### Energy strategy

44 In accordance with the principles of London Plan Policy 5.2 and Policy SI2 of the draft London Plan, the applicant has submitted an energy statement, setting out how the development proposes to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. In summary the proposed strategy comprises: energy efficiency measures (comprising a range of passive design features and demand reduction); a communal heat network powered by a combined heat and power (CHP) unit; and, renewable technologies (ground source heat pump). The current scheme would exceed the minimum onsite carbon reduction targets set within London Plan Policy 5.2 for the domestic and non-domestic uses. Detailed comments have been issued directly to the applicant and the Council requiring further information on the overheating analysis and efficiency modelling, encouraging the applicant to prioritise a connection to the Pimlico district heat network in accordance with strategic policy hierarchy, combined heat and power and the maximisation of renewable technologies which must be addressed prior to the Mayor's determination at the final decision-making stage. Following the resolution of the outstanding energy issues, any shortfall in carbon savings below the zero carbon target for the domestic element should be offset through financial contributions to the Council's carbon offset funds.

## **Transport**

### Cycling and walking

45 The proposed long-stay cycle parking provision (450 spaces) does not meet the minimum adopted London Plan standards and is therefore unacceptable. The minimum long-stay cycle parking spaces required for the residential aspect of the development to comply with the new draft London Plan is 1,913, the basis for this number has already been provided to Westminster City Council. This cycle parking should be provided and secured by condition.

46 Cycle parking spaces will also be required for the 205 proposed serviced apartments. Details on the unit mix and bedroom numbers for these apartments should be provided to calculate the minimum number of long-stay spaces required. The proposal also includes 1,157 sq.m. of retail and 2,183 sq.m. of leisure space. An additional further 6 long-stay spaces are required for the retail staff, together with lockers and showers, and 1 space per 8 staff members are required for the leisure space. These should also be secured by condition.

47 The London Plan requires a minimum of 37 short-stay spaces to be provided to service the 1,295 residential units and 205 serviced apartments, in addition to a minimum of 79 short-

stay spaces for the retail and leisure floorspace proposed. This provision of London Plan compliant short-stay cycle parking spaces should also be secured by condition.

48 Additionally, all cycle parking should be compliant with the London Cycling Design Standards and the routes through East and West Dolphin Square should be accessible for pedestrians and cyclists to 24/7 to increase the site's permeability. This should be secured by condition.

#### Car parking

49 The proposals will result in a net loss of 10 spaces compared to the existing, with a total of 241 spaces remaining. Although this level provision is compliant with adopted London Plan standards and local maximum car parking standards, it does not comply with draft London Plan standards set out in Policy T6.1 and Table 10.3 of the draft London Plan, which promotes car free development (except for disabled parking) on well-connected sites within the CAZ.

50 The parking survey submitted as part of the application shows that the maximum uptake of existing car parking spaces is 38% (95 spaces); which demonstrates that the current provision is underutilised. The expected demand is estimated to be for 187 spaces, which is still lower than the proposed provision. Therefore, noting that the draft London Plan policy position, at the very least, the reconfigured and new additional units should be car-free (except for disabled parking).

51 With regards to disabled parking, Policy T6.1 of the draft London Plan, requires 38 blue badge parking spaces to be provided from the outset, to meet the draft London Plan requirement of one accessible parking bay per dwelling for three per cent of dwellings. A robust management plan should also be secured to ensure they are only used by disabled people and to demonstrate how this provision could be increased to meet the full 10% requirement should there be demand. Further information is also required on the serviced apartments to enable assessment of the disabled persons parking requirements for this accommodation.

#### Servicing, construction and travel planning

52 The servicing and delivery strategy would remain unchanged from the existing arrangement and is acceptable, with additional loading bays provided for on-site servicing for the retail units along Chichester Street. The submitted travel plan includes promotes active and sustainable travel, which is welcomed, however, this isn't reflected in the proposed targets. Therefore, more ambitious targets should be included in the travel plan, reducing driving to a minimum of 10% and walking and cycling increased further.

#### Crossrail

53 The site is within the area where section 106 contributions for Crossrail will be sought in accordance with the London Plan Policy 6.5 and the associated Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 'Use of planning obligations in the funding of Crossrail' (April 2013).

### **Local planning authority's position**

54 Westminster City Council is currently undertaking detailed assessment of the proposals including continued independent scrutiny of the applicant's viability assessment. A date for the application to be considered by its planning committee has not yet been scheduled.

## Legal considerations

55 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

56 There are no financial considerations at this stage.

## Conclusion

57 London Plan and draft London Plan policies on the Central Activity Zone, housing, affordable housing, urban design, heritage, inclusive design, energy and transport are relevant to this application. The proposals do not fully comply with the London Plan and draft London Plan for the reasons set out below. The resolution of these issues could, nevertheless, lead to the application becoming compliant with the London Plan and draft London Plan:

- **Principle of development:** the proposed residential-led, mixed-use refurbishment and redevelopment of the existing Dolphin Square estate to deliver an uplift in residential units and serviced apartments in this highly accessible location within the Central Activity Zone is supported in principle and complies with London Plan and draft London Plan policy in land use terms. The maximum length of stay within the proposed serviced apartments must be limited to no more than 90 days and this should be secured by planning obligation.
- **Housing:** all of the private rented units must be covered by a minimum fifteen year covenant to retain the homes as build to rent, in addition to a clawback mechanism to secure any difference in the total value of the market rent units and their value on a for sale basis should the covenant be broken. The applicant should also provide further information demonstrating that the units will address the criteria in Part B of Policy H13 and the Mayor's Affordable Housing and Viability SPG. The applicant should also provide a child yield calculation and play space strategy.
- **Affordable housing:** the applicant has not made an affordable housing offer at the time of writing which is wholly unacceptable. GLA officers will continue to work with the Council and its advisors, to robustly interrogate the applicant's viability assessment to ensure the maximum reasonable amount of affordable housing is secured. Early implementation and late stage review mechanisms must be secured in accordance with Policy H6 of the draft London Plan.

- **Residential quality:** it is disappointing that the applicant has not taken the opportunity to improve on the existing layouts in Rodney House by introducing 'through units' in the replacement building to allow corridors to be separated into unit clusters and the proportion of dual aspect units to be increased. The applicant should provide further justification on the rationale behind the Rodney House residential layouts for assessment.
- **Design:** Overall, the proposed refurbishment and redevelopment is supported in strategic urban design terms and will improve the overall legibility of the estate, pedestrian arrival experience and the estate's existing relationship with surrounding street frontages through landscape works and increased active frontages. The marginal overall increase in height is also supported and does not raise any strategic concerns with regards to heritage impact.
- **Energy:** the proposals meet the minimum onsite carbon reduction targets set within London Plan Policy 5.2 and Policy S12 of the draft London Plan. Further information is requested regarding the overheating analysis and efficiency modelling, potential connection to the Pimlico district heat, combined heat and power and the maximisation of renewable technologies. Following the resolution of the outstanding energy issues, any shortfall in carbon savings below the zero carbon target for the domestic element should be offset through financial contributions to the Council's carbon offset funds.
- **Transport:** the proposed quantum of long and short stay cycling parking for all land uses should be increased to meet London Plan standards, in addition to a further reduction in car parking provision. At the very least, the new build and refurbished units should be car-free. The overall level of disabled car parking should be increased to meet minimum London Plan and draft London Plan standards and the more ambitious active travel targets should be included in the travel plan.

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