

3 February 2020

92-98 Vauxhall Walk, Lambeth

in the London Borough of Lambeth

planning application no. 19/02889/FUL

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

Demolition of existing building and erection of a ground plus 9 storey building (height 36.7 metres) comprising a flexible A1/A3/B1 unit on the ground floor and 2,709 sq.m. of Class B1a office space, with 9th floor communal and private roof terrace and ancillary facilities.

The applicant

The applicant is **Southern House/CLS Holdings PLC** and the architect is **The Manser Practice**.

Strategic issues

Principle of development: The principle of the redevelopment of this site for mixed use office led development in the VNEB Opportunity Area and within the CAZ is strongly supported. Further details should be provided as to how flexible and affordable workspace would be provided in accordance with the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan. (paragraphs 14 to 17).

Design and heritage: The approach to the building height, massing and scale is supported and the design is of a good quality. The proposed development will not impact on protected LVMF views and will not cause harm to heritage assets.(paragraphs 18 to 26).

Climate change: Further work is required and evidence submitted in relation to energy, flood risk and green infrastructure (paragraphs 29 to 33).

Transport: The applicant should provide more information regarding: healthy streets, trip generation and impact, cycle parking and car parking. A delivery and servicing plan and construction logistics plan should be secured by condition (paragraphs 34 to 40).

Recommendation

That Lambeth Council be advised that whilst the principle of development is supported the application does not fully comply with the London Plan, for the reasons set out in paragraph 44 of this report; but that the possible remedies set out in that paragraph of this report could address these deficiencies.

Context

1 On 20 November 2019 the Mayor of London received documents from Lambeth 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 1C(c) of the Schedule to the Order 2008:

1C(c) "Development which comprises or includes the erection of a building that is more than 30 metres high and is outside the City of London."

3 Once Lambeth 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 site is located to the north of Vauxhall and to the east of Albert Embankment and the main railway line linking Waterloo to south-west London, Surrey and beyond. It comprises a rectangular piece of land located on the corner of Vauxhall Walk and Tinworth Street, which currently accommodates a three storey 1980s brick building, providing 695 sq.m. B1 floorspace divided into five units.

6 The adjacent buildings to the south and west are part of the Spring Mews development, where the latest phase at 16 Tinworth Street was completed last year, and comprised student accommodation, CLS head office and the Staybridge Suites hotel and the development currently rises to 7 storeys.

7 The Site is located within the London Plan's Central Activities Zone (CAZ) and the Vauxhall, Nine Elms and Battersea Opportunity Area. It is also located within the Albert Embankment Conservation Area.

8 The site of the proposed development is located on Vauxhall Walk, to the east of the A3036 Albert Embankment, which is the nearest section of the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN). The site has a Public Transport Access Level (PTAL) of 6a, on a scale ranging from 0 to 6b where 6b represents the greatest level of access to public transport facilities. The site benefits from access to 8 high frequency bus services within a 7 minute walk of the site, along with multiple South Western Rail services and London Underground services from Vauxhall. The site is adjacent to a cycle track and within the Vauxhall Nine Elms Battersea (VNEB) Opportunity Area (OA). The site will therefore benefit from the Northern Line extension which is scheduled to be operational in autumn 2021.

Details of the proposal

9 The proposals are for the demolition of existing building and erection of a ground plus 9 storey building (height 36.7 metres) comprising a flexible A1/A3/B1 unit on the ground floor and 2,709 sq.m. (NIA) of Class B1a office space, with 9th floor communal and private roof terrace and ancillary facilities.

Case history

10 The application has been subject of GLA pre-application in principle meeting on 26 February 2019, at which broad support was offered for the principle of the land use and the scale of the proposal.

Strategic planning issues and relevant policies and guidance

11 For the purposes of Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the development plan in force for the area is Lambeth Council's Local Plan (2015) (insert year of adoption and the London Plan 2016 (The Spatial Development Strategy for London Consolidated with Alterations since 2011)).

12 The following are also relevant material considerations:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (updated February 2019);
- National Planning Practice Guidance;
- The Mayor's Intend to Publish London Plan (December 2019);
- Draft revised Lambeth Local Plan (October 2018);
- VNEB Opportunity Area Framework (2012).

13 The relevant issues and corresponding policies are as follows:

- Opportunity Areas *London Plan; VNEB Opportunity Area Framework*
- CAZ *London Plan; CAZ SPG*
- Heritage/urban design *London Plan; Shaping Neighbourhoods: Character and Context SPG;*
- Inclusive design *London Plan; Accessible London: achieving an inclusive environment SPG;*
- Climate change *London Plan; Sustainable Design and Construction SPG; London Environment Strategy;*
- Transport and parking *London Plan; the Mayor's Transport Strategy;*

Principle of development

14 The application site is located in the VNEB Opportunity Area which London Plan Policy 2.3 and Policy SD1 of the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan identifies as having the capacity to accommodate 18,500 new jobs and 18,500 new homes. It is also located in the Central Activity Zone (CAZ) where London Plan Policy 2.3 and Policy SD4 of the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan promotes the provision of nationally and internationally significant office functions including the intensification and provision of sufficient space to meet demand for a range of types and sizes of occupier and rental

values. The Lambeth Local Plan Policy ED3 also supports proposals for offices greater than 1,000sqm in areas including the CAZ and the Vauxhall Opportunity Area.

15 The Central Activity Zone SPG sets out that there should be a sensitive approach to application of mixed-use development in the CAZ. This is to ensure that the mix of uses support the CAZ strategic functions, incentivise redevelopment and renewal of the office stock, maintain an appropriate balance between offices and residential use, encourage active ground floor frontages where appropriate and support a mix of uses that contributes to the unique character of the CAZ.

16 The Mayor's intend to publish London Plan Policy E1 office also states that improvements to the quality, flexibility and adaptability of office space of different sizes (for micro, small, medium-sized and larger enterprises) should be supported by new office provision, refurbishment and mixed-use development, with increases in office stock especially supported in the CAZ. The policy also requires that development proposals related to new or existing offices should take into account the need for a range of suitable workspace including lower cost and affordable workspace.

17 The development proposals consist of 2,709 sq.m of office floorspace with 59 sq.m. of flexible A1 / A3 and B1 use on the ground floor, which will replace existing out dated office floorspace of 695 sq.m, and increase the quantum of floorspace by 2,014 sq.m. The proposal also provides flexible commercial uses at ground floor level which would serve to activate the ground floor frontage. The application is therefore compliant with London Plan and the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan in relation to CAZ, Opportunity Area and office policies. Notwithstanding this, applicant should set out how it has considered the scope to provide a proportion of flexible workspace or smaller units suitable for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and meets the requirement of Policy E3 affordable workspace.

Design and heritage

Design

18 The design principles in Chapter 7 of the London Plan and Chapter 3 of the Mayor's intend to publish 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.

19 The proposed development is for a 10 storey building which will replace an existing building of 3 storeys. The Vauxhall and Nine Elms OAPF identifies that development within the OA will predominantly be 8 – 10 storeys in height with taller buildings in appropriate locations along the Albert Embankment and in the central part of Vauxhall. In this case, the proposed building occupies a prominent corner and is an infill development located adjacent to the recent Vauxhall Spring Mews development which has substantially increased the immediate contextual height. This has resulted in the existing building being lower in scale compared to its immediate context with exposed gable ends of the adjacent development being prominent on street views. The increased building height on this plot would restore presence to the street corner and would form a point of interest in the local townscape. The removal of the current exposed gable ends on the Spring Mews development would be of benefit to the overall appearance of the streetscape. The proposal would not harm the character and

appearance of the surrounding conservation area or impact on protected views (see further below). The building height and massing is therefore supported and is consistent with policies on tall buildings contained within the London Plan and the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan.

20 The proposed building replaces the existing building floorplate and maintains the established building line of the Spring Mews development on Vauxhall Walk, but introduces a colonnade on Tinworth Street to allow the building to overhang the pavement to allow additional floorspace above. Design development has resulted in the reduction in the number of columns on the colonnade to allow increased light penetration and to cause less restriction to the pavement width. The ground floor of the proposed building would represent a significant improvement to the existing situation by providing an active ground floor frontage and effectively turning the corner of Vauxhall Walk and Tinworth Street. All remaining floors would be open plan flexible floorspace to attract a range of occupiers.

21 The architectural design of the proposals would complement the emerging context established by the recent adjacent Spring Mews development in terms of materiality, form and proportions, with extensive use of brick and similar elevation treatments which is supported. The proposed building would have a distinct base, middle and crown which is welcomed. The final appearance of the proposals will be subject to the quality of the materials and detailing. A condition should therefore be attached by the Council to secure key construction details and facing materials to achieve the highest design quality.

22 The site falls within the Background Wider Setting Consultation Area of the following LVMF views: Protected vista 2A.2: the Palace of Westminster from Parliament Hill summit; Protected vista 2B.1: the Palace of Westminster from Parliament Hill east of summit; and the backdrop to townscape view 27: Parliament Square to Palace of Westminster. The applicant has undertaken a townscape and visual impact assessment (TVIA) testing the impact of the proposed development on the key views within the local townscape. The TVIA states that there would be no impact on strategic LVMF views. Having regard to the limited scale of development and the screening effect of other large-scale buildings in the area, officers concur that there would not be any impact on strategic views.

23 The site also falls within the viewing corridor of the Brixton Rooftop and Brixton Panorama view identified in the Lambeth Local Views Study (2012). Similarly, the proposals would not have a harmful impact on this protected view due to the limited height of the proposed building.

Heritage

24 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 "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 in relation to conservation areas, special attention must be paid to "the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area". London Plan Policy 7.8 and Policy HC1 of the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan state that development should conserve heritage assets and avoid harm.

25 The NPPF states that when considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance is the value of the heritage asset because of its heritage interest, which may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic, and may derive from a heritage asset's physical presence or its setting. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Where a proposed development will lead to 'substantial harm' or total loss of the significance of a designated heritage asset, consent should be refused, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss. Where a development will lead to 'less than substantial harm', the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

26 The site is located in the Albert Embankment Conservation Area. Having regard to the details of the proposal and the existing and emerging character of the conservation area, officers consider that the development proposals preserve and enhance the setting and character of the conservation area. The proposed new building would enhance a key corner with a significantly better quality building than the existing development, with significant resulting enhancements to the ground floor active frontage and the quality of the elevational treatment. As discussed above, the proposed elevational treatment would complement the materials and detailing of existing and emerging developments, including the adjacent recently completed Spring Mews development. Although the height of the building means it would form a taller feature which would be visible from certain views within the Albert Embankment and Vauxhall Gardens conservation areas, including from Vauxhall Gardens itself, given that it would form a high quality feature that would be seen in the context of taller existing and emerging buildings, it is not considered that the development would cause harm to the character or setting of these conservation areas.

Inclusive design

27 The aim of London Plan policy 7.1 'An inclusive environment' and Policy D3 'Inclusive design' of the draft London Plan is to ensure that proposals achieve the highest standards of accessibility and inclusion, not just the minimum. The detailed application for the building has been designed to be fully accessible to all users.

28 The applicant has also ensured that the public realm interface is inclusively designed, which is welcomed. The implementation of key inclusive design principles must be secured by planning condition.

Climate change

Energy

29 The applicant has submitted an energy assessment in accordance with London Plan Policy 5.2 and the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan Policy S12. Although the carbon dioxide savings exceed the on-site target set within London Plan for non-

domestic uses. The proposed strategy is not in line with the London Plan policy and therefore it should be reviewed with revised carbon emissions submitted for all stages of the energy hierarchy. The applicant should also carry out further work and provide information in relation to overheating, connection to VNEB district heating network and the proposed air source heat pumps. Full comments have been provided directly to the applicant.

Flood risk

30 The approach to flood risk management for the proposed development complies with London Plan policy 5.12 and the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan policy SI.12. The surface water drainage strategy for the proposed development also complies with London Plan policy 5.13 and the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan policy SI.13.

31 The proposed development generally meets the requirements of London Plan policy 5.15 and the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan policy SI.5. The applicant should however consider water harvesting and reuse to reduce consumption of wholesome water across the entire development site. This can be integrated with the surface water drainage system to provide a dual benefit.

Green infrastructure

32 The design and access statement states that over 70% of the proposed roof space would be green roof, however the extent of green roof is not shown on drawing 1381_520_Proposed Roof Plan. A plan showing the green roof, including its specification, should be provided prior to Stage 2. A landscape plan should be provided prior to Stage 2, detailing the urban greening proposals.

33 The proposed development's Urban Greening Factor (UGF) is included in the DAS as 0.23, and therefore short of the 0.3 target set for commercial developments (note that the target is not 0.4 for commercial development, as referenced in the DAS). The applicant should review the urban greening proposed, seeking to improve the quality or quantity, to increase the application's UGF. Features for consideration may include: improving the quality of the proposed green roof, including a green wall or sections of the building façade, introduce planting at the ground level and expand greening on the proposed terraces.

Transport

Healthy streets

34 The applicant's transport assessment (TA) does not yet comply with TfL's healthy streets transport assessment best practice guidance. Information should be provided to demonstrate how the development will deliver improvements that support the ten healthy streets indicators throughout the site and within the local area.

35 The applicant has however provided a pedestrian audit using the PERS tool, and identified improvements to the pedestrian environment, such as public realm and street surface improvements in the Goding Street and Glass House Walk areas. The improvements necessary to support the development, with its resulting uplift in

pedestrian numbers, must be implemented by the applicant and any planning permission should secure these improvements via the appropriate mechanisms.

Trip generation and impact

36 The methodology used to determine the trip generation for the proposed development is accepted. Public transport improvements planned as part of the VNEB Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF) are sufficient to accommodate the proposed uplift in trips using public transport modes. A development infrastructure funding study (DIFS) for the VNEB OA has been undertaken, and included in the OAPF, which sets out a tariff rate for the OA that will be used to calculate the total contribution required for this development.

Cycle parking

37 The applicant has proposed 58 cycle parking spaces on site, in line with the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan minimum standards, which should be split between 47 long stay spaces and 7 short stay spaces. All cycle parking provision should be in line with the London cycle design standards (LCDS). Short stay spaces should be provided within the proposed public realm and close to building entrances. Long stay spaces should include a minimum of 20% of provision as Sheffield stands, and include provision for the storage of larger cycles. Further information regarding the layout, design and access of the cycle parking.

Car parking

38 The 'car lite' nature of the proposed development is supported, with one blue badge parking space provided within the wider Spring Mews development. Given the high PTAL of the site, with excellent accessible public transport opportunities, this level of blue badge car parking is considered acceptable. To ensure compliance with the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan policies, the applicant should ensure the blue badge space is provided with active electric charging capabilities.

Servicing and construction

39 A full delivery and servicing plan (DSP) should be secured by condition, along with a detailed construction logistics plan (CLP). These documents should be prepared in line with TfL guidance. All CLP measures proposed must conform with the Nine Elms Partnership CLP Framework and be implemented in partnership with the Nine Elms construction logistics coordination team.

40 The applicant should ensure all servicing vehicles park off street, in the loading bay adjacent to the proposed development or preferably using the existing off street loading bay for the Spring Mews development.

Local planning authority's position

41 Lambeth Council officers are still assessing the scheme and a date has not yet been set for committee.

Legal considerations

42 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 (the next bit is optional) 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

43 There are no financial considerations at this stage.

Conclusion

44 London Plan policies on CAZ, Opportunity Areas, design and heritage, inclusive access, environment and transport are all relevant to this application. Having regard to these policies the application complies with some of these policies but not with others as per the schedule below:

- **Principle of development:** The principle of the redevelopment of this site for mixed use office led development in the VNEB Opportunity Area and within the CAZ is strongly supported. Further details should be provided as to how flexible and affordable workspace would be provided in accordance with the Mayor's intend to publish London Plan.
- **Design and heritage:** The approach to the building height, massing and scale is supported and the design is of a good quality. The proposed development will not impact on protected LVMF views and will not cause harm to heritage assets.
- **Inclusive design:** The detailed application for the building has been designed to be fully accessible to all users
- **Climate Change:** Further work is required and evidence submitted in relation to energy, flood risk and green infrastructure
- **Transport:** The applicant should provide more information regarding: healthy streets, trip generation and impact, cycle parking and car parking. A delivery and servicing plan and construction logistics plan should be secured by condition.

for further information, contact GLA Planning Unit (Development & Projects Team):

Debbie Jackson, Interim Executive Director

020 7983 5800 email: debbie.jackson@london.gov.uk

John Finlayson, Head of Development Management

020 7084 2632 email: john.finlayson@london.gov.uk

Allison Flight, Deputy Head of Development Management

020 7084 2820 email: alison.flight@london.gov.uk

Katherine Wood, Team Leader – Development Management

020 7983 5743 email: katherine.wood@london.gov.uk

Jonathan Aubrey, Principal Strategic Planner (Case Officer)

020 7983 5823 email: jonathan.aubrey@london.gov.uk
