

SOW/16-00972

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LONDON
BIRMINGHAM
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Dear Elizabeth

Re: Planning Permission for the demolition and redevelopment of Panda House, 628-634 Commercial Road, London, E14 7HS

We write on behalf of, Wayview Limited (the “Applicant”) and have been instructed to submit a full planning application for the demolition and redevelopment of an unlisted building in a Conservation Area, at the above site, for the following:

“Demolition of existing building and erection of a building of up to five-storeys and two set back floors plus a lower ground floor to provide 109 rooms for short-term hostel and HMO accommodation.”

Executive Summary

The application seeks permission to create 109 rooms for short-term hostel and HMO accommodation. 31 hostel units are proposed and located within the lower ground and ground floors, with 78 HMO units proposed and located on the upper floors.

Planning permission was first granted at the site in 2012 (ref. PA/11/02318) for the extension of the existing building upward to five-storeys, to increase the number of rooms within the hostel. This permission was not implemented and has now expired. Nevertheless, the permission establishes a principle of development for a larger building and number of rooms at the site.

A pre-application enquiry was submitted on 18 May 2018 and a subsequent meeting held on 10 August 2018. Design comments were provided directly after the 10 August 2018 meeting, which recommended:

- Carrying out additional work to gain a better understanding of the character and local context and the buildings which make a positive townscape and streetscape contribution;
- A more considered design solution to better respond to the site context, and
- Additional plans and views to support a planning application.

A supporting Heritage Report was submitted as part of the pre-application enquiry, and it concluded that the proposals preserve the character and appearance of the St Anne’s Church Conservation Area and the setting of the nearby listed buildings. The scheme would be a significant enhancement over the existing Panda House – the existing building makes no contribution to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

The proposals maintain the majority of initial design provided to the Council via the pre-application enquiry, with certain revisions to comply with the comments received by Elizabeth Donnelly. These revisions are detailed via the supporting documentation and within this Statement.

Supporting Documents

The following documents have been submitted via the Planning Portal (ref. PP-07758475) in support of this application:

- Completed Application Form, signed and dated;
- CIL Form;
- Design and Access Statement (including Delivery and Servicing Strategy, Schedule of Materials and Finishes, Sustainable Drainage Strategy, Foul Sewerage and Utilities Assessment and Noise Impact Assessment and Sound Insulation Details), prepared by Create Design;
- Detailed and scaled drawings, prepared by Create Design;
- Accommodation Schedule, prepared by Create Design;
- Photos and Photomontages, prepared by Create Design;
- Daylight and Sunlight Assessment, prepared by Right of Light Consulting;
- Energy and Sustainability Statement (including BREEAM Pre-Assessments), prepared by MES Building Solutions;
- Heritage Statement, prepared by KM Heritage;
- Transport Statement (including Delivery and Servicing Plan), prepared by TPP Transport;
- Travel Plan, prepared by TPP Transport;
- Demolition and Construction Management Plan, prepared by the Applicant;
- Building Management Plan, prepared by the Applicant;
- Planning Statement (including Historic Impact Assessment, Conservation Area Appraisal and Air Quality Assessment);
- Design Comments (Email Correspondence from Elizabeth Donnelly, dated 10 August 2018), and
- Written Pre-Application Response (dated 20 December 2018).

Site and Surroundings

Site

The site is located on the south side of Commercial Road (A13), between Mill Place to the west and Island Row to the east. The Docklands Light Railway (DLR) runs near to the boundary of the site.

The existing building on the site is of red brick construction, in a square layout with central courtyard. The building is three-storeys high at the front facing Commercial Street, stepping down to two-storeys at the rear. The existing building on site is of limited architectural quality and does not make a positive contribution to the street scene.

The building is currently used as a hostel (Sui-Generis Use) comprising 52 bedrooms. Retrospective consent was granted in 2002 for a hostel to be occupied by homeless persons, although it is understood that more recently the building is used as a hostel to provide short-term accommodation for young, single workers. The site is located within the St Anne's Conservation Area, and is also identified on the Council's Proposals Map as being within the cross rail boundary. The site lies to the north of the Thames Policy Area. There are no further designations.

The site is not located within an area subject to flooding and the building itself is not listed, nor are there any TPOs at the site.

The site's PTAL is 6a; therefore the site has good accessibility. Public Transport is provided by a number of bus services on Commercial Road, and Limehouse Station is less than 500m from the site.

Surroundings

Commercial Road is a busy arterial road, which acts as a strategic link between East London and the City. The area surrounding the site is predominantly residential in character, with the exception of 'Our Lady Immaculate' Church and Limehouse Library to the east of the site.

The buildings within the vicinity of the site vary in scale and architectural style. Building heights typically range between three and six-storeys, although the building opposite the subject site, known as Iona Tower, is 14-storeys high.

Directly opposite the site are traditional three-storey townhouses with painted stone bases and brick above, located above are contemporary apartment buildings six-storeys in height comprising brick and fibre cement.

Directly to the west of the site is a modern six-storey building of brick construction containing flats known as Regents Canal Place. To the rear of the site is a three-storey residential building containing flats, known as Rose Court of brick and render finish and Mansard slate roof. To the east is 'Our Lady Immaculate' Roman Catholic Church which is approximately six-storeys high and includes a bell tower in its north-west corner.

A number of Grade II Listed Buildings are located nearby the site, including the drinking fountain located under the railway bridge to the west, the row of townhouses opposite, known as 699-711 Commercial Road and the Limehouse District Library to the east.

Planning Background

The site is used as a hostel, providing short-term accommodation for young, single workers, and as such has a recognised hostel use (Sui Generis).

A full review of the site's planning history via the LPA's online planning register is summarised below.

Reference	Description	Decision
PA/15/01882	Demolition of existing building and erection of a building of up to six-storeys plus basement for use as short-term accommodation (100 rooms).	Refused 13/07/2017
PA/13/01588	No Material Amendment following grant of planning permission dated 25/06/2012, Ref. PA/11/02318. Amendment(s) sought: Internal layout alterations only.	Granted 24/07/2013
PA/11/02318	Refurbishment and extension to the existing hostel building to increase the height to between three and five-storeys with set-back upper floors to provide an additional 33no. rooms (resulting in an increase from 41 to 74no. rooms) with associated improvements to communal areas, elevations and landscaping, together with provision of enhanced refuse/recycling storage, cycle storage and motorcycle parking.	Granted 25/06/2012

PA/05/01822	Removal of condition 1 of planning permission dated 21/02/02 Ref: PA/00/1481 to allow the continued use of the property as a hostel.	Granted 14/08/2006
PA/04/00462	Revised proposal comprising demolition of hostel and redevelopment of site by the erection of a four-storey building comprising 2 commercial units for retail (A1 use) and light industrial/office (B1 use) plus 34no. self contained flats, (21no. one-bedroom flats, 10no. two-bedroom flats and 3no. three-bedroom flats).	Withdrawn
PA/04/00062	Demolition of former hostel and redevelopment to provide an eight-storey building comprising 58no. residential units plus 195sqm commercial space on the ground floor.	Withdrawn
PA/00/01481	Retention of use as a hostel for the occupation of homeless persons (Retrospective application).	Granted with legal agreement 21/01/2002.

Planning permission ref. PA/11/02318 (granted in 2012) establishes the principle of development and confirms that development of a hostel and an increase in height is acceptable in this location.

Application ref. PA/15/01882 had four reasons for refusal including need and scale for additional accommodation; design and conservation; impact on residential amenities; servicing and delivery and blue badges, and lack of an air quality assessment. The new proposals respond to these reasons in detail.

Pre-Application Engagement

A pre-application submission was made to the Council on 18 May 2018 and a meeting held with Elizabeth Donnelly at the Council's Offices on 10 August 2018. During the meeting, it was advised that further clarification on the management of the proposed use would be required, in order to determine a principle of development. Further work was requested to demonstrate a considered design solution that accords with the site's context.

The Council's Written Pre-Application Response

The Council's written response, dated 20 December 2018, is attached to this application. The response detailed that there is no in-principle objection to the proposed development, subject to addressing comments and concerns relating to design and heritage. The main response is summarised overleaf.

Design and Heritage

The development should provide a meaningful appraisal that demonstrates an understanding of the character of the St Anne's Church Conservation Area and the buildings (beyond those that are statutory listed) that contribute to its significance. On this basis, it was recommended to carry out additional work to gain a better understanding of the character and local context and the buildings which make a positive townscape and streetscape contribution.

It was then explained that at seven-storeys (even with the two-storey setback) the proposal would create an overbearing and overly dominant relationship with Our Lady Immaculate Church and its tower. It was

recommended to reduce the height of the proposed building so that it is no taller than five-storeys (including ground floor), setting back the roof-storey also.

The design response shows that the building sits forward of the Church and the alignment increase the visual prominence of the proposal, whilst detracting from the tower of Our Lady Immaculate. Therefore, it was recommended that the building be re-orientated and the frontage set back so that the building better reveals the significance of the tower.

Overall, a more considered design solution was recommended that better responds to the site context. This should be illustrated with via the drawings provided, along with additional drawings to support a planning application.

Please see the email correspondence from the Officer detailing the design comments attached to this Statement. It is clear from this that no consideration was given to the conclusion of the Heritage Statement submitted in response to the initial design comments.

Other Matters

The development should demonstrate that there will not be an unacceptable impact on parking conditions on neighbouring roads, adjacent to the property. Further, information on the parking arrangements (including disabled and cycle parking) and refuse storage should be provided. In addition, details should be provided to demonstrate the proposed management of the use.

Response to Officer

Following the initial design comments, a Heritage Statement was prepared and submitted to the Officer on 09 October 2018. The Statement demonstrated that the proposals:

- Are sympathetic to the historic nature of the area, in particular the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
- Replace a building that makes no contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
- Reflect the eclectic mix of buildings types, form, scale and heights whilst allowing the landmark qualities of the church tower to retain its prominence – from classical, to art nouveau and Queen Anne – to modern, post war and industrial, and
- Preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area and the setting of nearby listed buildings, and further is a considerable enhancement over the existing Panda House.

The proposals maintain the majority of initial design provided to the Council via the pre-application enquiry, with certain revisions to comply with the comments received by Elizabeth Donnelly. These are summarised as follows:

- Lower Ground Floor – the refuse and cycle store are accessed separately, via a lift (refuse) and through the main core of the building (cycle).
- Ground Floor – the layby along the east sidewalk has been removed along with one of two disabled parking spaces, and replaced with additional landscaping. The landscaping emphasises the refuse lift to the Lower Ground Floor in the interest of safety. A new swept path has been added to show refuse vehicles can access the site in forward gear. Cycle parking added to the north-west corner of the site.
- First-Fourth Floors – slim windows have been added to the side elevations (to bathrooms).
- Fifth Floor – shrubbery illustrated along terrace perimeter.

- Sixth Floor – terraces rearranged so all HMO units (except two single bedroom units) have private outdoor space. Skylight added to communal kitchen. Internal Juliet balconies provided.
- Roof – skylight added above communal kitchen.
- North Elevation – Metal railings replace glass balustrades on floors 1-4 and shrubbery added at fifth floor terraces.

Further detail can be found in the supporting drawings and Design and Access Statement.

In terms of transport, as the proposal is Sui Generis, there are no established parking standards for the use. The London Plan (2016), which the Council's Development Plan Documents comply with recommend using an established standard that is of a similar use. Therefore, the hotel C1 standard was applied to both the hostel and HMO elements of the scheme as all three uses provide short-term accommodation. Nevertheless, double the hotel C1 standard has been applied, and so rather than 1:20 bedrooms for long-stay, a 1:10 has been applied which equates to eight spaces, and for short-stay rather than 1:50 bedroom, a 1:25 ratio has been applied which equates to three spaces. This gives a provision of 12 spaces to be provided in the Lower Ground Floor and four spaces to be provided at street-level (Sheffield cycle stand).

A Building Management Plan was requested to clarify the proposed management of the property, which was provided on 3 September 2018 and is included in the supporting documentation for this application and these proposed uses.

The Proposal

In development of the scheme, we have given consideration to the previous permitted proposal and the scheme refused in 2015. Improvements have been made to the permitted scheme and the reasons for refusal from the 2017 addressed. We have then gone on to consider relevant policy and the specific current circumstances of the site.

Enhanced Permitted Scheme

The application seeks permission to demolish the existing building and provide a replacement five-storeys and two set back floors plus basement to provide 109 rooms for short-term hostel and large HMO accommodation. 31 hostel units are proposed and located within the lower ground and ground floors, with 78 HMO units proposed and located on the above floors.

The scheme will retain the use at the site (as a Sui-Generis use) and increase the height of the existing building, which are both similar – in principle – to the expired permission (ref. PA/11/02318). The scheme also includes ancillary facilities including cinema room, gym, office, reception desk, communal kitchens and laundry rooms, ancillary cycle parking and landscaping.

The submitted scheme comparisons to the permitted scheme comprise:

- ~~Seek~~ to demolish the existing building and build a replacement five-storey building, with two set back floors representing additional two-storeys of residential development;
- The building is significantly thinner than the permitted scheme; retaining Island Row as a vehicle access road;
- Provision of 109 rooms, creating an additional 35 rooms;
- ~~Shared~~ lounge areas and working spaces;
- Provision of Lower Ground Floor gym facilities for occupants;
- Updated proposed materials and building line to better respond to the local context;

- Better utilisation of Lower Ground Floor to provide additional facilities and 16 cycle spaces on-site (12 spaces on the Lower Ground Floor and four spaces on the Ground Floor);
- Update the internal layout to better accommodate the proposals;
- Appropriate servicing and associated parking (one accessible parking bays) to be provided, and
- Two 1100L and two 660L bins are proposed for recyclable waste, and six 1100L bins are proposed for general waste.

The two set back floors will be subordinate to the main building line to provide private amenity space for the occupants of these floors.

Response to Refused Planning Application (ref. PA/15/01882)

The report raised four issues as detailed below and were the basis for the reasons for refusal.

Need and scale for additional accommodation

“The proposed development failed to demonstrate a need for additional hostel accommodation in the Borough and the site is proportionate to its location within the town centre hierarchy.”

The hostel is operating at a high capacity, and the provision of additional rooms would fulfil latent demand. It is expected that demand would improve with the enhancement of facilities and more formal living conditions and sleeping arrangements will improve existing conditions.

Design and conservation

“The proposed part three to part six-storey building, by virtue of its height, bulk and detailed design would be visually intrusive on and harmful to the St Anne’s Church Conservation Area. The proposal failed to respect the character and appearance of the conservation area, creating a visually incongruous development.”

The revised scheme provides a simpler and thinner massing, with a significant set back on the top two floors. The window arrangement is more consistent, with a strong vertical rhythm to provide uniformity when looking at the building from street level. The development will be constructed with appropriate materials that are sympathetic to the character of the surrounding area and listed buildings i.e. brick and aluminum glazing (as specified by the Design officer). All of these details have been described by the supporting Heritage Statement, as preserving the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and the setting of nearby listed buildings, and a substantial enhancement over the existing Panda House.

Impact on residential amenities

“The proposed part three to part six-storey building, by reason of its height, scale and mass and relationship with the neighbouring properties at Regent Court on 626 Commercial Road and Rose Court on Mill Place would have an adverse impact on residential amenities in terms of loss of outlook and unneighbourly sense of enclosure.”

The revised scheme has been designed to reduce the impact on local outlooks.

- The western elevation has been reduced in terms of width to increase the distance between the development and Regent Court. The width of the top two floors have also been decreased so they would not be perceived to be overbearing or reducing the amount of receivable light on Mill Place, which would not result in loss of outlook and sense of enclosure.

- The height of the five-storeys is significantly lower than the approved 2011 scheme, which reduces the overall height of the southern elevation. Further, the top two floors have been set back further to improve the perception of receivable light on Mill Place. Therefore, the perception of an overbearing scheme is minimised and the surrounding outlook and sense of enclosure is improved.

The revised scheme has also reduced the impact on overlooking.

- The reduction in width on the western elevation is proposed to increase the distance between the development and Regent Court and minimise the potential of overlooking.
- The number of windows at the southern elevation facing Rose Court has been reduced, with the width of the building, which both decreases the perception of an overbearing development and overlooking into Rose Court.
- The windows at the north elevation are facing the A13 and would not have any adverse impact on the residential amenities associated with Caspian Apartments.
- The approved 2011 scheme had rear facing windows and this was considered acceptable.

Servicing and delivery and blue badges

“In the absence of a Servicing and Delivery Plan and provision of off-street blue badge spaces, the proposed development failed to demonstrate adequate servicing and delivery arrangement including adequate blue badge spaces to accommodate the scale of the proposed development.”

The revised scheme has one on-site blue badge holder bay and a delivery and loading bay for handling refuse and linens without disruption, which is in accordance with the Council’s Transportation and Highways Officer (ref. PA/15/01882) and policy DM14 (Managing Waste) of the Development Management Document (2013). These bays and servicing arrangements are located to the east of the site, adjacent to ‘Our Lady Immaculate’ Church.

Air quality assessment

“In the absence of an air quality assessment including an air quality neutral assessment, the proposed development failed to demonstrate adequate measures can be incorporated to minimise public exposure to air pollution.”

The site is not within, or in close proximity to an Air Quality Management Area, and as a ‘car-free’ development, there won’t be enough traffic generated to cause a significant impact on air quality. A review of the London 2013 Air Quality Map characterised the site by the presence of Commercial Road to the north, with road traffic creating the most notable impact on the site. Public spaces are kept above the first-storey to reduce the risk from pollutants as they reduce significantly away from street level in accordance with policy 7.14 of the London Plan (2016 as amended) and policy DM9 of the Development Management Document (2013).

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Guidance

Relevant Central Government Policy is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (the “Framework”), adopted in February 2019 (as amended) and its accompanying National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG), adopted/launched online in 2014.

The Framework (2019) is underpinned by a presumption in favour of sustainable development. In terms of decision taking, paragraph 11 and the NPPG advises that Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) should seek to approve development proposals which accord with the Development Plan without delay, or grant planning permission for proposals where the Development Plan policies are out-of-date – unless any adverse impact of doing so would significantly outweigh the benefits, or the application of policies in the Framework (2019) that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed (including designated heritage assets).

Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes

Paragraph 59 explains to support the Government’s objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land can come forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay.

Paragraph 61 explains the size, type, tenure and range of housing needed for different groups should be assessed and reflected in planning policies, which reflect local demand.

Promoting Sustainable Transport

Paragraph 102 explains that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed; opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure, and changing transport technology and usage, are realised; opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued; the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified, assessed and taken into account; and patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes, and contribute to making high quality places.

Paragraph 109 explains that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe.

Paragraph 110 explains that applications for development should create places that are safe, secure and attractive – which minimise the scope for conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles, avoid unnecessary street clutter, and respond to local character and design standards.

Making Effective Use of Land

Paragraph 118 explains planning decisions should give substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, and support appropriate opportunities to remediate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land; and promote and support the development of under-utilised land and buildings, especially if this would help to meet identified needs for housing where land supply is constrained and available sites could be used more effectively.

Paragraph 121 explains LPAs should also take a positive approach to applications for alternative uses of land which is currently developed but not allocated for a specific purpose in plans, where this would help to meet identified development needs.

Paragraph 122 explains planning decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, taking into account the identified need for different types of housing and other forms of development, and the

availability of land suitable for accommodating it; and the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting.

Achieving Well-Design Places

Paragraphs 124-132 explains that it is important for LPAs to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes. Specifically, paragraph 127 explains planning decision should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.

Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment

Paragraph 189 explains that in determining applications, LPAs should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

Paragraph 192 explains that when determining applications, LPAs should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

Paragraph 193 explains that when considering the impact of a proposed development 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). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Paragraph 194 explains that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset from development within its setting should require clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 195 explains that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply: a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible, and d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Paragraph 196 explains that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Paragraph 200 explains LPAs should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

Paragraph 201 explains that not all elements of a Conservation Area will necessarily contribute to its significance. Loss of a building (or other element) which makes a positive contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area should be treated either as substantial harm under paragraph 195 or less than substantial harm under paragraph 196, as appropriate, taking into account the relative significance of the element affected and its contribution to the significance of the Conservation Area as a whole.

Local Policy

The LPA's relevant Development Plan Documents consists of the London Plan (2016 as amended), Core Strategy (2010) and the Managing Development Document (2013).

The site is within the St Ann's Church Conservation Area and Crossrail Boundary according to the adopted proposals map (dated 2013, in conjunction with the Managing Development Document (2013)). The St Ann's Conservation Area Appraisal will be reviewed and analysed in the 'Historic Impact Assessment and Conservation Area Appraisals' section.

London Plan

The following London Plan (2016 as amended) policies are relevant to the proposal:

- Policy 3.8 (Housing Choice) explains that new developments offer a range of housing choices, in terms of the mix of housing sizes and types, taking account of the housing requirements of different groups and the changing roles of different sectors in meeting these.
- Policy 4.5 (London's visitor infrastructure) explains that developments should contribute towards 10% of bedrooms wheelchair accessible; and beyond the CAS developments should be focused in opportunity centres areas where there is good public transport access to central London.
- Policy 6.1 (Strategic approach) seeks to promote sustainable modes of transport and accessibility, and reduce the need to travel by car.
- Policy 6.3 (Assessing effects of development on transport capacity) requires transport demand generated by new development to be within the relative capacity of the existing highway network.
- Policy 6.9 (Cycling) states development should provide secure, integrated, convenient and accessible cycle parking facilities in line with the minimum standards set out in the London Cycle Design Standards; and provide on-site changing facilities and showers for cyclists.
- Policy 6.13 (Parking) states that developments in all parts of London must provide disabled parking, meet the minimum cycle parking standards and provide for the needs of businesses for delivery and servicing.
- Policy 7.2 (An inclusive environment) requires a Design and Access Statement to be submitted with development proposals and should explain how user groups and specific need of disabled people have been integrated into the proposed development.
- Policy 7.4 (Local character) states that buildings and streets should provide a high-quality design response that has regard to the pattern and grain of the existing spaces and streets.
- Policy 7.6 (Architecture) seeks to ensure buildings are of high quality; be of a proportion, composition, scale and orientation that enhances, activates and appropriately defines the public realm; and use materials that complement the local character.
- Policy 7.8 (Heritage assets and archaeology) explains that development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, but being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.
- Policy 7.14 (Improving air quality) states that development proposals should be at least 'air quality neutral' and not lead to further deterioration of existing poor air quality.

Core Strategy

The following Core Strategy (2010) policies are relevant to the proposal:

- Policy SP05 (Dealing with waste) requires the provision of adequate waste storage facilities in all new development.
- Policy SP06 (Delivering successful employment hubs) explains that the location of new hotel/visitor accommodation should be related to major visitor attractions where there is a clear link in scale, nature and location between the accommodation and attraction being served.
- Policy SP08 (Making connected places) seeks to deliver an accessible, efficient and sustainable transport network, ensuring new development has no adverse impact on safety and road network capacity, required the assessment of traffic generation impacts.
- Policy SP09 (Creating attractive and safe streets and spaces) seeks to encourage improvements to the pedestrian environment. In addition, this policy seeks to ensure new development has no adverse impact on the safety and capacity of the road network.
- Policy SP10 (Creating distinct and durable places) seeks to ensure that buildings and neighbourhood promote good design principle to create buildings, spaces and place that are high quality, sustainable, accessible, attractive, durable and well-integrated with their surrounds.

Development Management Document

The following Development Management Document (2013) policies are relevant to the proposal:

- Policy DM4 (Housing standards and amenity space) states that all housing developments should have adequate provision of internal space in order to provide an appropriate living environment. In addition, amenity space and child play space will be protected and any new provision should be provided in accordance with the Council's "Amenity space and child play space standards".
- Policy DM5 (Specialist housing) states that the redevelopment of any site which includes specialist and supported housing should re-provide the existing specialist and supported housing as part of the redevelopment unless it can be demonstrated that there is no longer an identified need for its retention in the current format.
- Policy DM7 (Short stay accommodation) states that visitor accommodation will be supported where the size is proportionate to its location within the town centre hierarchy; there is a need for such accommodation to serve visitors and the borough's economy; it does not compromise the supply of land for new homes and the LPA's ability to meet its housing targets; it does not create an over-concentration of such accommodation or cause harm to residential amenity; and there is adequate road access and servicing for coaches and other vehicles undertaking setting down and picking up movements.
- Policy DM9 (Improving air quality) states that major development will be required to submit an Air Quality Assessment demonstrating how it will prevent or reduce associated air pollution during construction or demolition.
- Policy DM14 (Managing waste) states that development should demonstrate how it will provide appropriate storage facilities for residual waste and recycling as a component element to implement the waste management hierarchy of reduce, reuse and recycle, and major development should provide a Waste Reduction Management Plan for the construction and operation stages.
- Policy DM15 (Local job creation and investment) states that development which is likely to have an adverse impact on or displace an existing business must find a suitable replacement accommodation within the borough unless it can be shown that the needs of the business are better met elsewhere.
- Policy DM20 (Supporting a sustainable transport network) states that development should be located appropriately depending on its type and scale, with developments generating a higher number of trips

to be located in town centres and/or other areas well served by public transport. In addition, Transport Assessments will be required for all major developments.

- Policy DM21 (Sustainable Transport of Freight) states that developments that generate a high amount of trips during construction and for servicing to demonstrate how the impacts on the transport network and on amenity will be avoided, movement by low-emissions / electric vehicles and bicycles are prioritised and goods vehicles are accommodated on site.
- Policy DM22 (Parking) states that development will be required to comply with the LPA's car and cycle parking standards.
- Policy DM23 (Streets and public realm) states that development will be required to improve safety and security without compromising good design and inclusive environments by locating entrances in visible, safe and accessible locations; creating opportunities for natural surveillance; making clear distinctions between public, semi-public and private spaces; and creating clear sightlines and improving legibility of the surrounding area.
- Policy DM24 (Place-sensitive design) states that development will be required to be designed to the highest quality standards, incorporating good principles of design. The design should be sensitive to and enhance the local character and setting of the development, taking into account the surrounding scale, height, mass, bulk and form of development, building lines and setbacks, design details and elements and the natural environment. The development should also ensure the use of high-quality building materials and finishes.
- Policy DM25 (Amenity) states that development should protect, and where possible improve, the amenity of surrounding existing and future residents and building occupants, by not resulting in an unacceptable loss of outlook and privacy, nor enable unreasonable levels of overlooking or sense of enclosure. The development should also not create unacceptable levels of noise, vibration, odour or dust pollution during the construction and life of the development.
- Policy DM26 (Building heights) states that the height and scale should be proportionate to its location within the town centre and sensitive to the context of its surroundings; and not adversely impact heritage assets.
- Policy DM27 (Heritage and the historic environment) states that development will be required to protect and enhance the borough's heritage assets, their setting and their significance.

Emerging Local Policy

Both the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the Council are planning to adopt a new Local and London Plans respectively. These plans are at a significant stage of potential adoption and as such some weight may be held in account the determination of this application.

Draft London Plan

The following London Plan emerging policies are relevant to the proposal:

- Policy H18 (Large-scale purpose-built shared living) explains that large-scale purpose-built shared living Sui Generis use developments, where of good quality and design, may have a role in meeting housing need in London if, at the neighbourhood level, the development contributes to a mixed and inclusive neighbourhood, and it meets the following criteria:
 - It meets an identified need;
 - It is located in an area well-connected to local services and employment by walking, cycling and public transport, and its design does not contribute to car dependency;
 - It is under single management;
 - Its units are all for rent with minimum tenancy lengths of no less than three months;

- Communal facilities and services are provided that are sufficient to meet the requirements of the intended number of residents;
- The private units provide adequate functional living space and layout, and are demonstrably not C3 Use Class accommodation, and
- A management plan is provided with the application.
- Policy DM4 (Housing quality and standards) explains that new homes should have adequately-sized rooms and convenient and efficient room layouts which are functional, fit for purpose and meet the changing needs of Londoners over their lifetimes. Particular account should be taken of the needs of children, disabled and older people.

Supplementary text to policy H18 explains that to qualify as large-scale purpose-built shared living, the development, or block or phase within a development must be of at least 50 units. This type of accommodation is seen as providing an alternative to traditional flat shares and includes additional services and facilities, such as room cleaning, bed linen, on-site gym and concierge service. To ensure this form of accommodation is meeting its specific housing need, it is important that it does not effectively become a hostel, so tenancies should be for a minimum of three months.

Draft Local Plan

The following Local Plan emerging policies are relevant to the proposal:

- Policy D.H3 (Housing quality and standards) explains that development is required to demonstrate that as a minimum, it meets with the most up-to-date London Plan space and accessibility standards; it provides a minimum of 2.5 metres floor-to-ceiling heights, and at least 10% of new homes are designed to be suitable for occupation by a wheelchair user or could easily be adapted for occupation by a wheelchair user.
- Policy D.H7 (Housing with shared facilities (houses in multiple occupation) explains that new HMOs will be supported where they are located in an area of high transport accessibility; do not give rise to any significant amenity impact(s) on the surrounding neighbourhood, and comply with relevant standards and satisfies the housing space standards outlined in policy D.H3.

Planning Considerations

Existing Use

The principle of development on the site has been accepted, by virtue of a previously permitted scheme ref. PA/11/02318. The existing use on the site is a hostel. The previously permitted use was a hostel in a replacement building, which increased the storey height. The current proposal is a mix of hostel and large HMO units, all of which provide short-term accommodation in a replacement building.

An affordable alternative housing product is being provided, which will be available for a variety of people and not specific to one type of person. In a highly accessible location, providing for many different users groups, the scheme makes the best use of a brownfield site and complies with policy 4.5 of the London Plan (2016 as amended), policy D4 of the Draft London Plan and policies D.H3 and D.H7 of the Draft Local Plan.

Further, the existing hostel is considered to be an appropriate use within the town centre hierarchy (policy DM7 of the Development Management Document (2013)) and the HMO units provide short-term accommodation that is also considered an appropriate use within the town centre hierarchy. The current scheme does not create an over-concentration of hostel accommodation or compromise the Borough's supply

of land for new homes. The proposed development is expanding on the quality and type of accommodation at the site.

Design and Amenity

The proposals have been designed to respond to the existing built environment and be appropriate for the context in terms of scale, mass, height, bulk and form of development.

Scale and Mass

The site is surrounded by a number of six-storey, above ground developments, within residential or non-residential use. The addition of a six-storey building - above ground - is therefore appropriate in scale and nature. The proposed storey height is also appropriate given the same storey height permitted in the 2011 scheme. The link between major attractions is clear with the site's close proximity to Limehouse Station (DLR) and the seven bus routes that serve the site (towards Old Street, Bethnal Green, Charing Cross, Aldgate, Blackwall, Leamouth, East Ham and Crossharbour), all of which provide access to various areas in London at its attractions e.g. The O2 Arena and Troxy Music Venue (Commercial Road). To this effect, the proposed development complies with policy SP06 of the Core Strategy (2010) and policy D.H7 of the Draft Local Plan.

Height and Bulk

The top two floors are set back to match the scale of Rose Court and Mill Place and the main building is lower than the approved 2011 scheme to reduce bulk and sense of enclosure at the site. In addition, these set back floors create continuity from 'Our Lady Immaculate' Church to Regents Canal Place, and allow the Bell Tower to be well viewed from Commercial Road in accordance with policy SP10 of the Core Strategy (2010).

Form of Development

The building forms a transition in the building lines on Commercial Road from 'Our Lady Immaculate' Church to Regent's Canal Park, and the elevations have been designed to provide continuity on Commercial Road and respect the built environment in accordance with policy DM24 of the Development Management Document (2013) and policy SP10 of the Core Strategy (2010).

Internal Space Standards

The proposals accord with the most up to date internal space standards and amenity spaces for the proposals, in line with policy DM4 of the Managing Development Document (2013) and policy 3.8 of the London Plan (2016 as amended). External amenity space will be provided at the lower ground floor i.e. courtyards and the two set back fifth and sixth floors i.e. private terraces and Juliet balconies for single-rooms. Balconies are provided on the remaining first, second, third and fourth floors.

Daylight and Sunlight

The BRE guide notes that guidelines should be interpreted flexibly since natural lighting is only one of many factors in site layout design. National policy also explains that a level of flexibility should be given regarding daylight and sunlight. Access to natural light is possible for all units in the proposed scheme. The results provided in the supporting Daylight and Sunlight Assessment demonstrates near-full compliance. We therefore consider there is an appropriate level of receivable daylight in the context of an urban location, as the Council did with the 2011 permitted scheme.

Privacy and Overlooking

The proposals will not result in loss of privacy, nor cause an unreasonable level of overlooking, or unacceptable increase in the sense of enclosure. The main building has been significantly reduced at the east elevation (adjacent to the Church) compared to the approved 2011 scheme to reduce bulk and prevent an imposing scheme. The top two floors are set back to break up the mass of the development and will include landscaping to screen the development from potential overlooking. The remaining floors are of a similar bulk to the existing and an appropriate distance from the adjacent property (Regent Canal House). Therefore, there will not be an unacceptable impact on local amenity as the proposals adhere to policy DM25 of the Development Management Document (2013).

Heritage

The proposals are to redevelop the existing hostel but provide a more efficient use; improving the quality of the facilities and shared spaces to suit modern demand. This includes short-term accommodation with shared cooking facilities, lounges and recreational areas and shared working spaces. As a result, the building has been designed in accordance with the varying characters of Commercial Road, to reflect the rhythm and proportion to the east and west that recognises the architectural proportions of some of the surrounding Victorian buildings (in accordance with policies SP10 of the Core Strategy (2012) and DM24 of the Development Management Document (2013)). To the west of Panda House, it is demonstrated that the proposals are of a similar height and therefore the proposed building will sit comfortably within the surrounding area (in accordance with policy DM26 of the Development Management Document (2013)).

The design draws on elements of the existing St Anne's Church Conservation Area in order to protect and enhance the borough's heritage asset, its setting and its significance in accordance with policy DM27 of the Development Management Document (2013) and policy 7.8 of the London Plan (2016 as amended). A number of design cues are utilised including window hierarchy, horizontal perception and brick patterns, which ensure the development is appropriate for the area and is considered to be fully in accordance with policies DM24 and DM26 of the Development Management Document (2013). The proposed brick is similar in colour and tone to the adjacent historic buildings and modern developments.

When viewed on Commercial Road and Island Row, the upper storeys of the proposals are setback considerably from the main building line. This is to ensure that breathing space is given to the Church and the visual significance of the Church is maintained, particularly along Commercial Road (in accordance with policy DM27 of the Development Management Document (2013)). Although the existing building is set back slightly and it is proposed to bring the building forward, the proposal still retains a set back from the pavement edge similar to the adjacent building to the west (The Mission) and the new Library building to the east. It is considered the Church and its tower will retain their prominence and their contribution to the character of the street, regardless of the slight reposition of the building (in accordance with policy SP10 of the Core Strategy (2012) and policy DM27 of the Development Management Document (2013)).

Regarding the east and west elevations, in reality, they will never be seen directly side-on due to the tight nature of the side streets off Commercial Road. The area is typified not only by the variety of building types, scale and proportions, but also the ability to get glimpsed views down streets, round corners and over other buildings, and with similar building heights along Commercial Road, the proposed development will preserve the building relationships along Commercial Road (in accordance with policy SP10 of the Core Strategy (2012) and policies DM24, 26 and 27 of the Development Management Document (2013)).

Transport and Servicing

The building is proposed to be used for short-term hostel and HMO accommodation and will be managed in such a way that accords with these types of accommodation. The submitted Transport Statement, prepared by TPP, demonstrates that there is sufficient road access and servicing for the required movements (in accordance with policy DM7 of the Development Management Document (2013)).

Site Accessibility

The site is appropriately located in an area with a PTAL of 6a which equates to an ‘excellent’ level of public transport accessibility. The proposed development is located off Commercial Road, which is an existing highway network that boasts bus and train services to many areas across London. Therefore, the site is located in a sustainable location and can be supported by the existing highway network in accordance with policy 6.3 of the London Plan (2016 as amended). The proposed development is also ‘car free’ with the exception of one blue badge holder bay (provided on-site) which is discussed in further detail in the Transport Statement and accords with Policy DM22 and policy D.H7.

In accordance with policy 7.2 of the London Plan (2016 as amended), the supporting Design and Access Statement demonstrates how user groups and specific needs of disabled people have been integrated into the proposed development. Specifically, accessible toilets (ground floor) and rooms are proposed (at the rear eastern and western ends of the building), with two lifts located in the central core. These wheelchair accessible rooms are provided on each floor up to the fifth floor.

Parking and Servicing

Odyssey Markides undertook a revised Parking Stress/Occupancy Survey in April 2017 and compared this with the results of the January 2015 survey. Odyssey Markides concludes that there is no significant change to the rates seen in the immediate vicinity of the site. The slight increase shown is attributed to the timing of the revised survey, coinciding with the Easter holidays. It is considered that the proposals will not impact on the capacity and safety, or on any forthcoming works to the highway in accordance with Policy DM20 of the Development Management Document (2013) and policies SP08 and SP09 of the Core Strategy (2010).

The existing use of the development will be retained, which the existing road and transport networks were able to support. The proposed development will be ‘car-free’, with the exception of one on-site blue badge holder bay and space for delivery and loading vehicles for handling refuse that are located to the east of the site. A swept path analysis has been undertaken to demonstrate the delivery and servicing vehicles can access and exit the site in forward gear. The analysis shows large vehicles will follow the existing road network along Mill Place and Island Row and not need to reverse to access and/or exit the loading bay. Therefore, the proposals will have a minimal impact on the transport network.

The proposals provide 12 covered and secure cycle spaces and two Sheffield cycle stands (for an additional four cycle spaces on street) in accordance with minimum cycles parking standards required by Appendix 2 of the Managing Development Document (2013) which complies with policy DM22 of the same document.

Historic Impact Assessment and Conservation Area Appraisal

The site is located within St Anne’s Church Conservation Area and close to a number of Grade II Listed Buildings. The Framework (2019) sets out that in determining applications, applicants are required to state the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of

detail provided should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance (Paragraphs 189 and 192).

In light of the Government guidance provided, we have considered the proposals in relation to the Grade II Listed Buildings and relevant Conservation Area Appraisal.

The LPA's St Anne's Church Conservation Area Appraisal (2007) states that the Conservation Area's land use and prevailing character is defined by the mixed uses of principal public buildings amongst a more residential townscape. The site is located within the Limehouse area, where Commercial Road is identified as being part of the character of the Conservation Area. The quality of the street environment is considered to impact its character and setting, which the LPA seeks to preserve and enhance.

The Appraisal concludes that Limehouse is rapidly evolving into a residential district, and any scope for development within the Conservation Area should be assessed according to its impact on the setting of St Anne's Church. The site is located significant distance from the Church and will not negatively affect the perception of the Church, nor impact views to and from the tower.

The Conservation Area Appraisal states that many significant sites within the St Anne's Conservation Area are undergoing redevelopment which will fundamentally alter the character, in respect to the setting of St Anne's Church. The existing use at the site will be retained and the proposals will improve the quality of development that accords with the move to provide residential development in the surrounding area of Limehouse. The proposed designs feature a stepped back façade which respects the existing built line adjacent to Commercial Road, in addition to the retaining the design cues of the surrounding buildings including window hierarchy, horizontal perception and brick patterns, to ensure the proposed development supports the local character of the Conservation Area.

The site is located close to a number of Grade II Listed Buildings including the drinking fountain located under the railway bridge to the west, the row of townhouses opposite, known as 699-711 Commercial Road and the Limehouse District Library to the east, their full listing description and setting are considered in detail below.

Drinking Fountain (under Railway Bridge at Junction with Lowell Street)

A polished granite drinking fountain first listed in September 1973. The site is located on the wall of the railway bridge, adjacent to the pedestrian walkway and Commercial Road. The site is located a considerable distance from the drinking fountain and due to its proximity to the main road and other similar modern development; it is not considered that the proposals will have a significant impact on the setting of the listed drinking fountain.

699-711 Commercial Road

On the other side of Commercial Road comprises a group of listed buildings located at the western end of the terrace and were first listed in September 1973. The listing details state that the buildings comprise three-storied and basement level, 2no. windows on each, those of first floor with moulded co-architraves and labels (except No. 707 where facade has been partly rebuilt).

Additional details include:

- Ground floor windows, round headed in similar architraves, No. 699 with shop front;
- All sashes with glazing bars;
- Round headed doors with fanlights, plain, or fluted, pilasters and panelled doors, and

- Steps with iron railings.

The listed buildings front directly onto the wide and busy Commercial Road. When taking the surrounding development into consideration, and the new residential development neighbouring the row of terraced houses to the west, it is not considered that the proposal will have a significant impact on the listed buildings.

Limehouse District Library

Passmore Edwards Library was built in 1900 and designed by Messrs Clarkson architects. The library comprises four-storeys, 5no. windows with end bays advances. A full description of the external appearance is provided in the listing description. It states that the ground floor is of rusticated white stone with vermiculated quoins, cornice above. Additional details include:

- Outer upper bays of yellow brick with engaged side pillars under stone cornice and stone coped Flemish gable; and
- Ground floor windows, round headed casements with fanlights, above, casements with mullions and transom flush with adjoining masonry.

The Gate Piers and Iron railings at Limehouse District Library are also Grade II Listed and include the rusticated white stone gate piers with cast iron lamp holders above and modern iron railings. The library is currently vacant and in a state of disrepair. It is located off Norway Place, adjacent to 'Our Lady Immaculate' Church. The listed building is located directly adjacent to Commercial Road and is experiencing considerable levels of development nearby. Therefore, the proposals will not cause harm to the heritage asset or its surroundings.

On balance, the proposals will not have an adverse impact on the setting of the listed buildings and the proposed redevelopment of a building that has little or no significant architectural merit will enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in accordance with paragraphs 200 and 201 of the Framework (2019) and policy DM24 (Place-sensitive design).

Summary

The Council granted planning permission ref. PA/11/02318; permitting the refurbishment and extension to the existing hostel building to increase the height of the building to a total of five-storeys. This development was permitted to come forward within the St Anne's Church Conservation Area, and as such established the principle of this scale of development for short-term hostel accommodation within a heritage asset.

In determining planning permission PA/11/02318, the officer stated the proposed design would enhance the building's appearance and benefit the wider Conservation Area. The officer found that the existing building did not add to the Conservation Area and the proposals would improve it. As no works have taken place to the external façade, it is considered that the building still fails to have a positive impact on the Conservation Area and the proposals would enhance the surrounding area. This was echoed in the PA/15/01882 application where the officer stated there is no special architecture or historic interest of the building and its demolition would not be unacceptable.

The Officer Report in both applications did not refer to the proposals in the context of the Listed Buildings and as such it is considered the proposals did not negatively impact on the listed buildings. There have been no additional listed building designations neighbouring the site since this permission and as such, it is considered that the development would still be appropriate.

To clarify, the importance of the heritage asset has not altered in the intervening period since planning permission was granted and it is therefore considered that there is no adverse heritage impact from the updated proposals.

Conclusion

In summary, the principle of development on the site has been accepted, by virtue of a previously permitted scheme ref. PA/11/02318. The existing use on the site is a hostel. The previously permitted use was a hostel in a replacement building, which increased the storey height. The current proposal is a mix of hostel and large HMO units, all of which provide short-term accommodation in a replacement building.

The scheme improves on the 2011 permitted scheme in many ways – it's simpler, smaller and sleeker. It will enhance the Conservation Area and have no adverse impact on listed buildings in the local vicinity. The scheme will be car-free, providing one disabled space in accordance with the London Plan (2016). In these terms, the following conclusions are drawn in respect of the proposals.

- The proposed development accords with the prevailing planning policy in terms of the NPPF Framework (2019) and the Development Plan;
- There is an opportunity to preserve and subsequently enhance the Conservation Area by improving the current building, as it offers no contribution;
- An affordable alternative housing product is being provided for the Borough, which will be available for a variety of people and not specific to one type of person, and
- The proposal is consistent with all other development management considerations.

Therefore, the proposal should be considered as sustainable development, and planning permission be granted for the proposal at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Silas Willoughby".

Silas Willoughby (Apr 5, 2019)

Silas Willoughby

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Planner

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