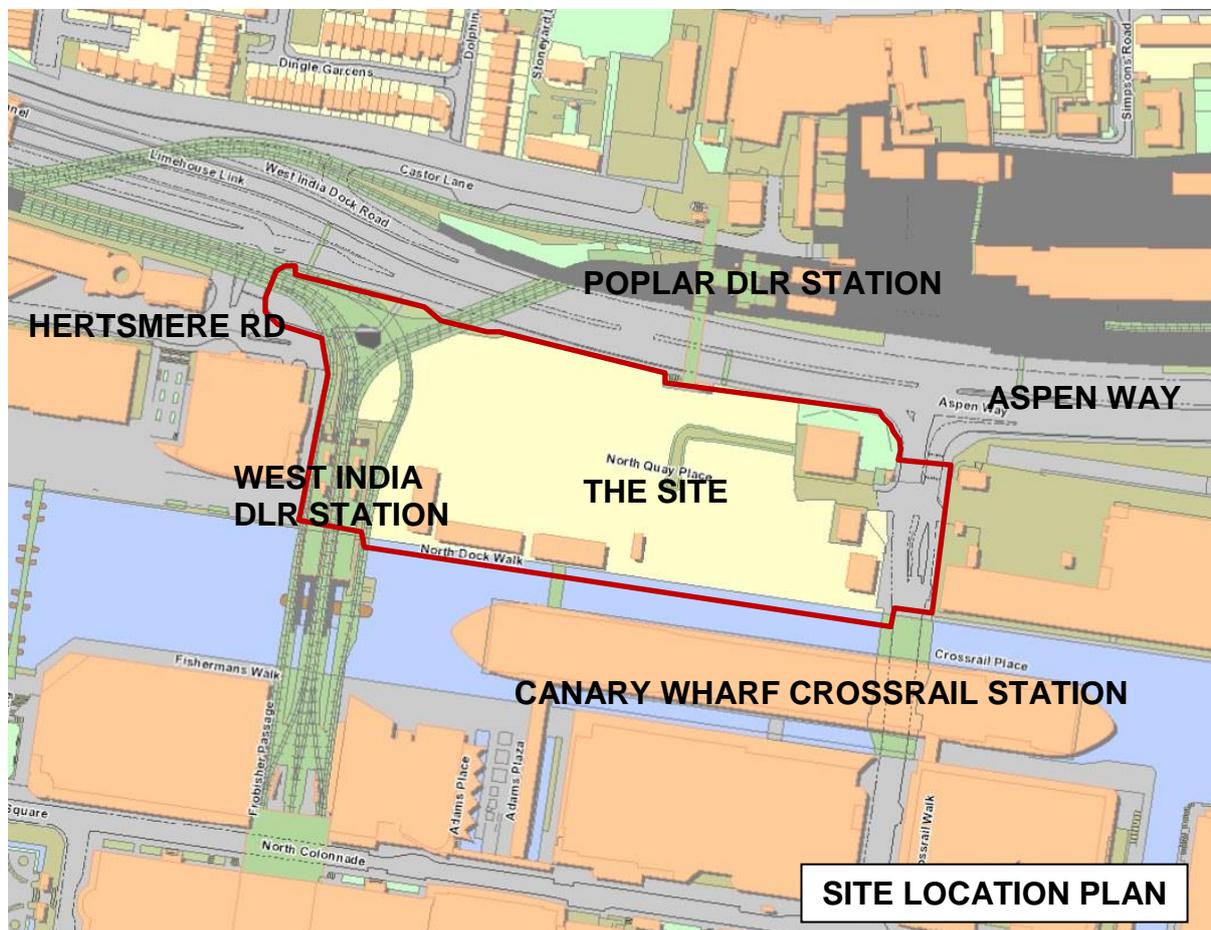


Pre-application presentation

Reference	PF/19/00247
Site	North Quay, Aspen Way, London
Ward	Canary Wharf
Proposal	Outline planning permission for construction of a mixed-use, high-density, high-rise, employment-led development with up to 8 new buildings of up to 225m AOD in height.
Applicant	Canary Wharf Group
Architect/agent	Allies and Morrison, Quod
Case Officer	Piotr Lanoszka
Key dates	Pre-application discussions began in October 2019 Initial developer's public consultation took place in November 2019 Planning application likely to be submitted by the end of May 2020



1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance promote early engagement between developers and Local Planning Authorities, prior to submission of a formal planning application. The Council welcomes pre-application discussions and has a well-established process to facilitate this.
- 1.2 In March 2019 the Council's Development and Strategic Development Committees considered a draft protocol for pre-application presentations. The protocol is now incorporated in the Committee Terms of Reference. The Council's updated Statement of Community Involvement also highlights the importance of pre-application engagement and the role of elected members and local communities in this stage of the planning process.
- 1.3 This report updates the Strategic Development Committee on progress made and issues identified in respect of pre-application discussions for the proposed redevelopment of the North Quay site.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Outline planning permission for construction of a mixed-use, high-density, high-rise, employment-led development.
- 2.2 The outline planning permission format with the associated suite of control documents would be based on the outline planning permission for the redevelopment of Wood Wharf. More information about the outline planning permission format is provided in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The development would comprise the construction of up to 8 new buildings. Flexibility is being sought in the uses that could come forward
- 2.4 Commercial uses would include: office floorspace (Use Class B1) and retail floorspace (A1 – A5); and hotels and serviced apartments (C1);
- 2.5 Residential uses would include: residential dwellings (C3), co-living (C4), student accommodation (Sui Generis);
- 2.6 Community floorspace would include: cultural and leisure uses (D1 and D2).
- 2.7 The development would comprise construction of up to 8 new buildings, in a mix of low, mid and high-rise buildings and building elements, reaching a maximum height of approximately 65 storeys (above ground floor) / 225 meters AOD. The anticipated maximum number of residential units is approximately 950 across a range of sizes and tenures.

3. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1 The site measures over 3 hectares and is subject to a site allocation in the new Local Plan. For details of the site allocation, please refer to Appendix 2.
- 3.2 The site is located to the north of the recently constructed Crossrail Station, on the northern side of the North Dock and to the south of Aspen Way. To the east, the site is bounded by Upper Bank Street with the Billingsgate Market located on the opposite side of the street, while to the west is the West India Quay DLR station & Delta Junction with various commercial and residential uses located further west, along Hertsmere Road.
- 3.3 The site lies within the northernmost part of the Canary Wharf Metropolitan Centre and is designated as a Secondary Preferred Office Location where Development Plan policy expects mixed-use employment-led proposals with no more than 25% of residential floorspace. The site is also located within the London Plan's Isle of Dogs & South Poplar Opportunity Area.

- 3.4 The site benefits from excellent public transport accessibility, being adjacent to West India Quay and Poplar DLR Stations and the Canary Wharf Crossrail Station as well as being within a short walking distance of the Canary Wharf Jubilee Line Underground Station.
- 3.5 The site currently serves as a temporary construction compound for the Crossrail scheme as well as for other development projects by Canary Wharf Group. The site includes a section of the Grade I listed quay wall, however this is fully covered by a marine deck.
- 3.6 There are a number of heritage assets in the vicinity of the site, the closest being the West India Dock Conservation Area, to the west, and the St Mathias Church Conservation Area to the north. Both conservation areas contain significant numbers of statutorily listed buildings. Given the high-rise nature of the proposed development, the proposed towers would be visible in the setting of other, more distant heritage assets, as well as in the strategic views identified within the London View Management Framework.
- 3.7 The site is located underneath one of the flight path approaches to London City Airport and within a Flood Risk Area. The North Dock is a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 The site benefits from an extant full planning permission ref PA/03/00379 dated 12/01/2007 for a development of three large floorplate office buildings of 43, 23 and 37 storeys (up to 221m AOD) and housing 372,660m² of office floorspace and 5,324m² of retail and food & beverage uses.
- 4.2 In April 2017 CWG submitted an application for a full planning permission ref PA/17/01193 for an alternative scheme, a mixed use development comprising 4 buildings ranging from 30 to 67 storeys in height (up to 227.58m AOD), providing up to 158,586m² of office floorspace, 1,423 residential units, 216 serviced apartments and 25,213m² of retail and food & beverage uses. The application was withdrawn in December 2017.
- 4.3 The key challenges posed by the previous proposal were as follows:

Land Use

- 4.4 The mixed use scheme was divided approximately 60/40 between commercial and residential floorspace. The principle of residential use within a core commercial area was at the time contrary to the spatial designations of the London Plan, the associated Central Activity Zone (CAZ) SPG and the Council's Core Strategy and could potentially prejudice the ability to retain a sufficient reservoir of sites in the area that are able to provide large floor plate offices to safeguard the future of Canary Wharf as a strategic office location of global significance.
- 4.5 Review by independent employment and land use consultants confirmed that the proposed 60/40 split would not result in undue harm to employment provision in the borough or to Canary Wharf's global role as a business centre, however the withdrawal of Deutsche Bank from the scheme cast doubt on the deliverability such a substantial office component – given that a pre-let for Deutsche Bank's new headquarters was necessary to secure funding for the remainder of the office tower.

Placemaking

- 4.6 The place-making role of the development in integrating Canary Wharf and Poplar, including through improving the physical access to the Canary Wharf centre and its jobs, amenities and public transport links for the residents of Poplar was a key issue. The adequacy of the proposed improvement measures to the Aspen Way footbridge and the links to it raised

particular concerns. This matter was not fully resolved at the time of withdrawal of the application, with officers confirming to CWG that significant improvements to the Poplar DLR bridge are no longer sought (officers were unable to demonstrate sufficient peak footfall to warrant widening of the bridge) but that provision of up and down escalators on the Poplar end of the connection is necessary.

- 4.7 The link is a crucial connection to a strategic transport interchange and to the Canary Wharf town centre for residents of Poplar. There were concerns that this connection would feel like a 'tradesmen entrance' or a 'poor door' to Canary Wharf although the scheme did provide generous level access from the southern end of the bridge, across North Quay, to the upper level of the Crossrail Station and the main ground level of Canary Wharf Estate (elevated by one storey from the dock level).

Townscape

- 4.8 Whilst some progress was made at pre-application stage, very significant concerns remained about the exceptional bulk of the northern elevation of the proposed office tower as well as insufficient variation in height of the residential towers, both leading to creation of a table top effect and an overbearing impression of a cliff edge or wall of development when viewed from Poplar.
- 4.9 Although considerable height and bulk is expected and appropriate in this location, the previous proposals did not make sufficient effort to provide a more sensitive transition between the high-rise Canary Wharf and the low-rise Poplar.

Affordable Housing

- 4.10 The applicant's offer was 17% affordable housing by habitable room, significantly below the Council's target. This raised very significant concerns. BNPP reviewed the viability information on behalf of the Council and considered that more affordable housing could be viably provided; however the application was withdrawn prior to this matter being resolved.

5. PUBLICITY AND ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1 The applicant's initial public consultation took place in November 2019, with a mail out to local residents and 3 public exhibitions. Applicant's summary of the feedback received is set out in Appendix 4.
- 5.2 The emerging proposals are scheduled to be presented to the Council's Conservation and Design Review Panel (CADAP) on Monday 27th January 2020.
- 5.3 The next stage of the applicant's public consultation is expected to take place in March 2020.

6. PLANNING ISSUES

- 6.1 The following key planning issues have been identified at the pre-application stage.

Land Use

- 6.2 The applicant is now pursuing a flexible outline planning permission which would allow them flexibility not only in land use but also in size, design and exact positioning of individual buildings, in turn allowing them to better adapt to changes in the office and residential markets over the next 5-10 years.
- 6.3 The proposed range of land uses includes office, retail, food & beverage, cultural/leisure uses, residential, co-living, student housing, hotel, and serviced apartments. The overall aim

is to create a more vibrant environment reflective of a modern metropolitan town centre. This could help improve the longevity of Canary Wharf as a business location.

- 6.4 At this stage the maximum residential scenario results in approximately 30/70 split of residential to commercial, with the maximum office scenario at 100% commercial with no residential whatsoever. Given the site's location within a Secondary Preferred Office Location, the emerging Local Plan allows for a 25/70 split while encouraging as much commercial floorspace as possible. Student housing and co-living are also subject to the 25% residential accommodation cap.

Townscape

- 6.5 The current approach is much finer grain than previously proposed, with significant potential to provide a more gradual and sympathetic transition in heights, bulk and massing between Canary Wharf and Poplar. Nonetheless, some concern remains that insufficient variation of building heights and close separation distances between buildings could still result in a wall of development whilst compromising the size and character of the new open spaces.
- 6.6 This tension is effectively the result of a trade-off between the withdrawn scheme as a collection of few well-spaced but significantly higher and bulkier buildings vs the new proposals as a collection of a large number of smaller buildings, whilst broadly maintaining the overall quantum of floorspace.
- 6.7 The townscape response has started evolving through the pre-application discussions, with a greater variety of heights introduced, however much work is still outstanding to limit the proposals' impacts on views from the north. Officers have still not seen any verified view photomontages.

Placemaking

- 6.8 The applicant maintains that the existing footbridge over Aspen Way is fit for purpose and does not plan to widen or substantially improve the connection, now relying principally on the emerging proposals for the redevelopment of the New City College to improve access on the northern side of Aspen Way (although it has been suggested that the previous commitment to provide escalators and public realm works on the north side could be translated into a commensurate financial obligation to assist with efforts to provide ramped access to the bridge on the north side).
- 6.9 An important issue is also how the bridge lands on North Quay and whether there would be sightlines from Poplar High Street to the Crossrail Station, to improve legibility of the route and make the connection as generous and welcoming as possible. Inclusive access and pedestrian capacity are also key considerations.
- 6.10 The proposed distribution of open spaces and routes is broadly acceptable and responds well to the context of the site and the Site Allocation brief. In particular, the east-west route provides potential to connect to the Billingsgate Market site, providing a link between Hertsmere Road and Trafalgar Way. Nonetheless, the level of enclosure provided by the proposed heights, massing and limited separation distances between building remains challenging.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 6.11 Planning policy seeks to protect and where possible improve the amenity of surrounding neighbouring properties and provide a good standard of amenity for all future occupants of development proposals. The application will be accompanied by necessary technical documents, such as daylight and sunlight assessments and noise reports which will be reviewed by the Council's relevant specialist teams.

- 6.12 Given the massing of the extant consent which was based on large floorplate office towers, it is likely that any proposals would result in lower amenity impact than that previously approved.

Transport and Servicing

- 6.13 Planning policies promote sustainable modes of travel and limit car parking to essential user needs. They also seek to secure safe and appropriate servicing. The proposals centre on creation of one servicing access point off Hertsmere Road and creation of a low traffic east-west route through the site to allow for drop-off. The proposals would be largely car-free, with the exception of some blue badge parking spaces. There is also potential for an east-west cycle route along the southern edge of Aspen Way.

Affordable Housing

- 6.14 At this stage no details of the affordable housing offer have been provided and officers' understand that this offer will be subject to development viability.

7. RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 The Committee notes the contents of the report and pre-application presentation.
- 7.2 The Committee identifies any other planning and design issues or material considerations that the developer should take into account at the pre-application stage, prior to submitting a planning application.

APPENDIX 1 - Outline Planning Permission

Outline planning permission may be understood as 'permission in principle' with the detail being assessed through the five reserved matters and any conditions and s106 obligations attached to the permission, subject to the limitations within the control documents.

The proposal would be "controlled" through the use of the three principal documents, as follows:

- Parameter Plans – these define, inter alia, where buildings, roads and open space may arrive on the site, the distribution of uses across the site and maximum heights and maximum footprints (length and width) of each development plot.
- Development Specification – this document sets out a written account of the parameter plans and details, inter alia, the floorspace specifications for the proposed land uses, minimum and maximum vehicle parking and minimum cycle parking and open space, the range of dwelling mix for each tenure and unit type and areas of new land and moorings.
- Design Guidelines – The purpose of this document is to determine a design language for the Masterplan and to establish a robust framework for its development that encourages high quality and rich diversity. Any future reserved matters applications for the development of any of the Development Zones defined in the Parameter Plans or open spaces between them will be required to accord with the Design Guidelines, unless there is a good and justified reason to depart from them.

The matters reserved for later determination are:

- Access - the accessibility to and within the site for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians in terms of the positioning and treatment of access and circulation routes and how these fit into the surrounding highway network;
- Layout - the way in which buildings, routes and open spaces within the development are provided, situated and orientated in relation to each other and to buildings and spaces outside the development;
- Scale - means the height, width and length of each building proposed within the development in relation to its surroundings;
- Appearance - the aspects of the development which determine the visual impression the development makes, including the external built form of the development, its architecture, materials, decoration, lighting, colour and texture; and,
- Landscaping - the treatment of land other than buildings for the purpose of enhancing or protecting the amenities of the site and the area in which it is situated, including soft and hard landscaping, earthworks, public art and boundary treatment.

4.9: North Quay

Design principles

Development will be expected to:

- respond positively to the existing character of the surrounding built environment and its dockside location
- improve strategic links from Canary Wharf to Poplar High Street through the provision of enhanced north-south links
- protect or enhance the waterside setting, ensuring public accessibility along the entire waterfront
- address noise mitigation measures in areas bordering Aspen Way with a green buffer and/or alternative measures
- provide active frontages and access along the dockside to create a series of interconnected spaces in accordance with the green grid
- improve biodiversity and ecology along the water edges and within open spaces
- create a positive sense of place through the delivery of an active public square connecting the Canary Wharf (Elizabeth line) station and the dockside promenade to Poplar DLR station and Poplar High Street
- accommodate a new east-to-west pedestrian/cycle route through the site which facilitates connections to the wider movement network and the DLR and underground stations adjoining the site, and
- address the barrier of Aspen Way and integrate the site with Poplar High Street to the north, and the Canary Wharf Elizabeth line station and the Canary Wharf estate to the south. These routes should align with the existing urban grain to support permeability and legibility.

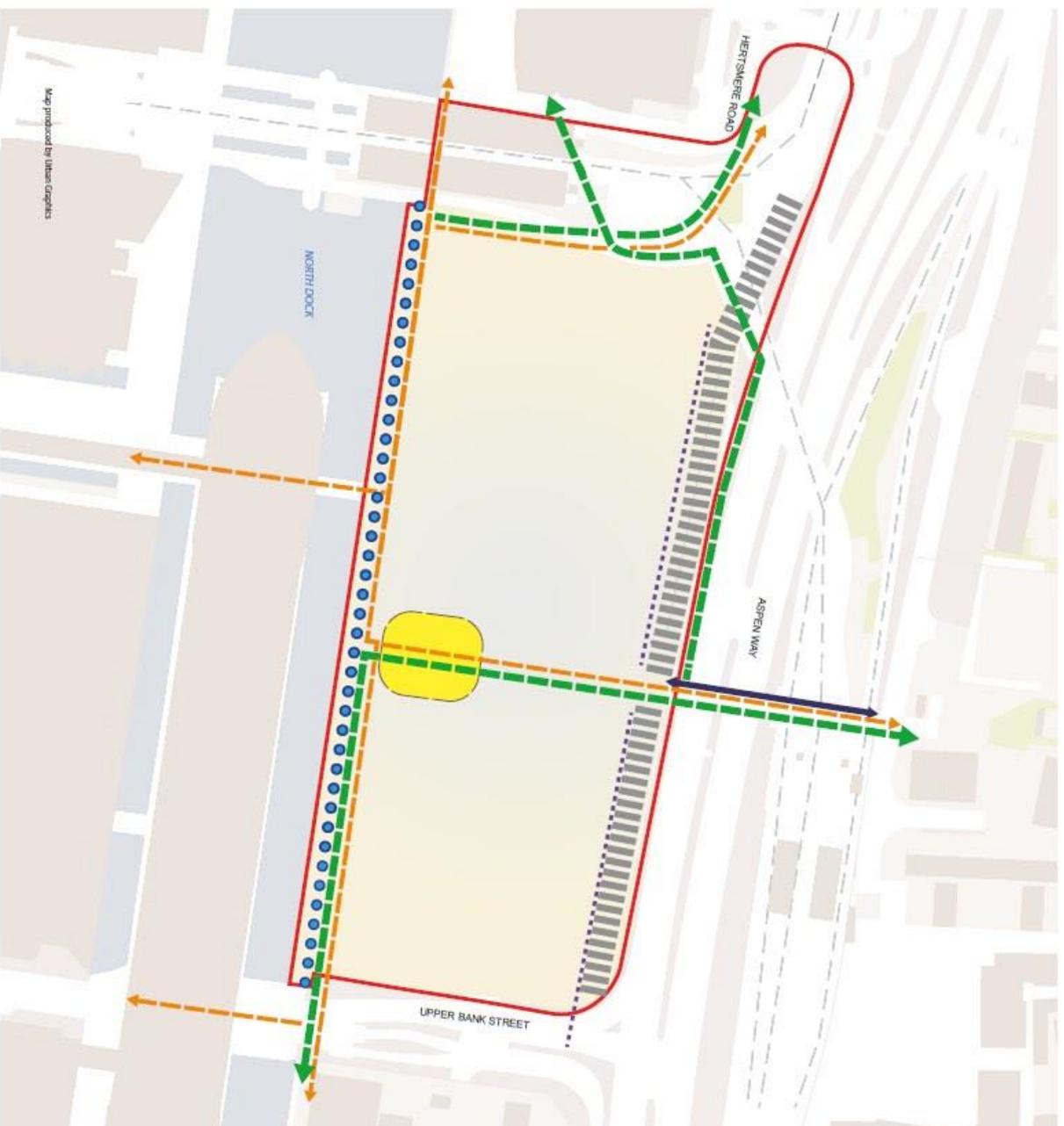
Delivery considerations

- Development should support the aspirations for enhanced and/or new bridge(s) over Aspen Way to better connect Poplar and Canary Wharf.
- Landowners within the Aspen Way, North Quay and Billingsgate site allocations are strongly encouraged to work together (ideally through a masterplan) to better connect Poplar and Canary Wharf and positively address the social, economic and environmental disparities between the areas.
- Development should accord with any flood mitigation and adaptation measures stated within the borough's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and the sequential test.
- Development of the site allocation provides a unique opportunity to positively address the social, economic and environmental disparities between Poplar and Canary Wharf.

Address	Upper Bank Street
Size (hectares)	3.27
Public transport accessibility levels	5-6a (2021)*, 6a (by 2031)
Flood zone(s)	2-3a
Land use requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment: Preferred office location (secondary) with ancillary supporting uses such as gyms, hotels, restaurants and retail. Housing
Infrastructure requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small open space (minimum of 0.4 hectares) Improvement and enhancement of existing pedestrian bridge over Aspen Way and routes to it

*the year 2021 has been used due to the arrival of the Elizabeth line at Canary Wharf

Figure 47: North Quay



Map produced by Urban Graphics

- 4.9: North Quay
(For illustrative purposes)
- KEY
- Site boundary
 - Public square
 - Waterfront walk
 - Noise or air screening/green buffer
 - Strategic pedestrian routes
 - Green grid
 - Local pedestrian routes
 - Existing bridge connection



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APPENDIX 3 – Images

Please note that as this is a live pre-app, the below images and plans may be out of date and not represent the current version of the development proposals.



Figure 1 – North Quay 2007 office scheme



Figure 2 – north Quay 2017 mixed-use scheme



Figure 3 – North Quay CGI of the first iteration of current proposals

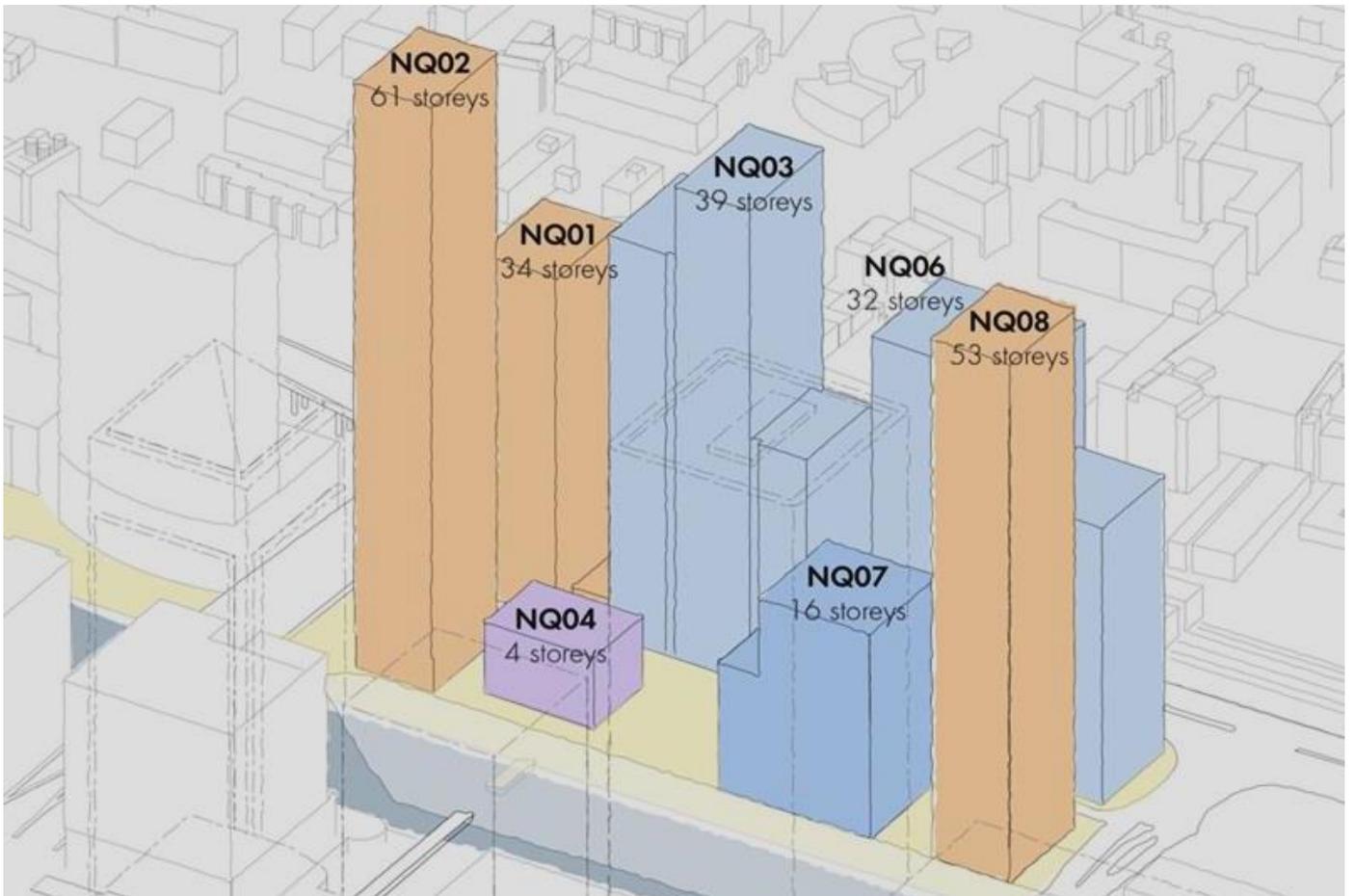


Figure 4 – Proposed massing and land use in the maximum residential scenario

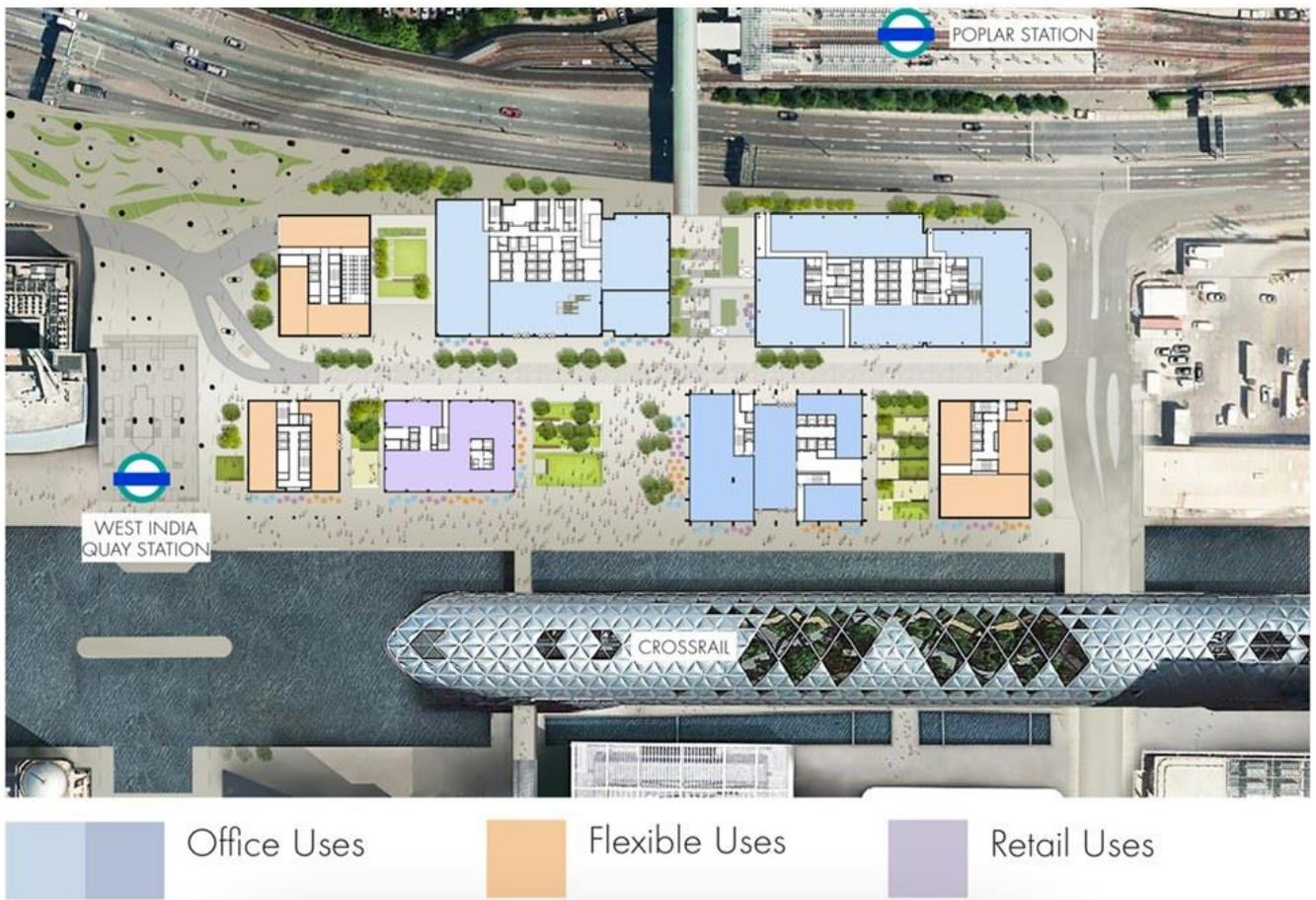


Figure 5 – proposed site layout and land use in the maximum residential scenario

APPENDIX 4 – Developer’s Summary of Initial Public Consultation