

Committee: Strategic Development	Date: 18 th January 2007	Classification: Unrestricted	Agenda Item No: 8.3
Report of: Corporate Director of Development and Renewal		Title: Planning Application for Decision	
Case Officer: Terry Natt		Ref No: PA/02/01555	
		Ward(s): St Katharine's and Wapping	

1. APPLICATION DETAILS

Location: News International site at the south east junction of the Highway and Vaughan Way, London E1.

Existing Use: Car park.

Proposal: Erection of two buildings of 10 and 27 storeys to create 115,388 sq. m floor space for Class B1 (Offices), 1,419 sq. m A1 (Shop), 913 sq m A3 (Cafe and restaurant) and 1,200 sq. m D2 (Assembly and leisure), together with new access and servicing arrangements, car parking for up to 650 cars, lorry marshalling area & landscaping works.

Drawing Nos: PENS/PA/03/001 Rev F, PENS/PA/03/002 Rev B, PENS/PA/03/003 Rev F, PENS/PA/03/004 Rev F, PENS/PA/03/005 Rev F, PENS/PA/03/006 Rev F, PENS/PA/03/007 Rev F, PENS/PA/04/001 Rev F, PENS/PA/04/002 Rev B, PENS/PA/04/003 Rev F, PENS/PA/04/008 Rev B, PENS/PA/05/001 Rev F, PENS/PA/05/002 Rev F, PENS/PA/05/003 Rev F, PENS/PA/05/004 Rev F, PENS/PA/05/005 Rev F, PENS/PA/05/010 Rev B, PENS/PA/05/011 Rev B, PENS/PA/05/012 Rev B, PENS/PA/05/013 Rev B, PENS/PA/05/014 Rev B, PENS/PA/05/015 Rev B, PENS/PA/05/016 Rev B, PENS/PA/05/017 Rev B, PENS/PA/05/018 Rev B, PENS/PA/05/019 Rev B, PENS/PA/05/020 Rev B, PENS/PA/07/001 Rev F, PENS/PA/07/002 Rev F, PENS/PA/07/003 Rev B, PENS/PA/07/004 Rev B, PENS/PA/08/001 Rev F, PENS/PA/08/002 Rev B

Applicant: News International C/-Montague Evans

Owner: News International

Historic Building: N/A

Conservation Area: N/A

2. SUMMARY OF MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 The local planning authority has considered the particular circumstances of this application against the Council's approved planning policies contained in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets Unitary Development Plan, associated supplementary planning guidance, the London Plan and Government Planning Policy Guidance and has found that:

- a) In principle, the redevelopment of the site is acceptable, subject to appropriate planning obligations agreement and conditions to mitigate against the impact of the development;
- b) It is considered that the proposed use would not have an adverse impact on the

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 (Section 97) LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN THE DRAFTING OF THIS REPORT

Brief Description of background papers:	Tick if copy supplied for register	Name and telephone no. of holder:
Application, plans, adopted UDP. draft LDF and London Plan		Terry Natt 020 7364 5204

residential amenity of the surrounding properties. A number of conditions are recommended to secure submission of details of materials, landscaping, external lighting, and plant, and to control noise and hours of construction;

- c) The submitted Environmental Impact Assessment is satisfactory, including the cumulative impact of the development, with mitigation measures to be implemented through conditions and a recommended legal agreement;
- d) The development would add positively to London's skyline without causing detriment to local or long distant views. The scheme would bring the benefits of job creation and enhance the streetscape and public realm. The need to secure an appropriate planning obligations package is noted;
- e) The development would provide improved pedestrian linkages through the site to St Katherine's Dock and London Underground and bus stations; and
- f) The proposal incorporates a number of sustainability measures.

3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 That the Committee resolve to **GRANT** planning permission subject to:

A. Any **direction** by **The Mayor**

B. The prior completion of a **legal agreement**, to the satisfaction of the Chief Legal Officer, to secure the following:

a) Public Transport Improvements, including:

- a contribution of £200,000 for a congestion relief feasibility study for Tower Hill Underground station,
- £200,000 per annum for a period of three years for bus service enhancements and improved waiting facilities to serve the route 100 bus stop on Vaughan Way.
- Shadwell interchange – Contribution to access and public realm improvements to the value of £2,840,000. Including:
 - Improvements in and around Shadwell DLR station
 - A new East London Line station entrance on Watney Street, with new accessible lifts serving the platforms
 - Better lighting and more CCTV cameras
 - improved pedestrian crossings;
 - new pavements and road surfaces
 - better enforcement of existing parking restrictions

c) A contribution of £110,000 to employment. Plus a commitment to and establishment of connections between the applicant and local employment groups to secure the use of local labour both during construction and post-construction.

d) The provision of two sites within the scheme plus a contribution of £150,000 for the creation of works of art for the identified two sites.

e) A Contribution of £500,000 towards primary car needs of employers/employees not covered by existing provisions.

f) A contribution of £200,000 will be sought as a contribution towards the completion of a masterplan for the News International/Tobacco Dock area as identified in the City Fringe AAP

g) A contribution towards the upgrade and improvement of access to and through the nearby Swedenborg gardens to the value of £200,000.

h) Provision of permanent public access to the plaza areas between the two proposed buildings.

i) A total of 400 car parking spaces provided on a temporary basis and only in association with the continued operation of the printing works.

- 3.2 That the Head of Development Decisions is delegated power to impose conditions and informatives on the planning permission to secure the following

Conditions

- 1) Time limit for full planning permission
- 2) The submission and approval of the following details:
 - Plans showing a reduction in the number of car parking spaces from 650 to 500
 - Samples of materials of the external facings of the building
 - A landscaping scheme for the site to include hard and soft finishes, pedestrian routes, external lighting, signage, seating and litter bins
 - Landscape management plan
 - Screens/ canopies
 - The detailed design of the lower floor elevations of the commercial units including entrances and shop fronts
 - On site drainage works
 - Foundation design
 - Surface water control measures
 - The insulation of the ventilation system and associated plant
 - A flue system for the café/restaurant.
- 3) Parking – maximum of 500 cars & minimum of 450 cycle and 67 motorcycle spaces.
- 4) Upon cessation of printing works operations, revised basement plans to be submitted
- 5) Energy strategy to be submitted
- 6) Operational Traffic Management Plan for the site
- 7) Hours of construction (8am – 6pm Mon-Fri; 9am – 1 pm Sat)
- 8) Hours of operation limits – hammer driven piling (10am – 4pm)
- 9) Mitigation measures identified by the Environmental Statement including habitat provision for black redstarts
- 10) The submission of a land contamination study and the implementation of any necessary remedial works
- 11) Implementation of a programme of archaeological works
- 12) Any other condition(s) considered necessary by the Head of Development Decisions

Informatives

- 1) Application is subject to a Section 106 agreement
 - 2) Head of Highways Development to be consulted about any works affecting the public highway.
 - 3) Notice board to be affixed to site regarding emergency contacts.
 - 4) Consult English Heritage regarding the programme of archaeological works.
 - 5) Consult Environmental Health regarding the land contamination study.
 - 6) Any other informative(s) considered necessary by the Head of Development Decisions.
- 3.3 That if the Committee resolves that planning permission be granted the Committee **confirms** that it has taken the environmental information into account, as required by Regulation 3 (2) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999.
- 3.4 That the Committee **agree** that following the issue of the decision, a statement be placed on the Statutory Register confirming that the main reasons and considerations on which the Committee's decision was based, were those set out in the Planning Officer's report to the Committee (as required by Regulation 21(1) (c) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999.

- 3.5 That if by 18 July 2007, the legal agreement has not been completed to the satisfaction of the Chief Legal Officer, the Head of Development Decisions is delegated power to refuse planning permission.

4. PROPOSAL AND LOCATION DETAILS

Proposal

- 4.1 Application is made for full planning permission for the erection of two buildings 10 and 27 storeys for primarily office (B1) use and additional uses of shop (A1), café/restaurant (A3), and leisure (D2). The development would consist of:

- 115,388 sq.m. of office space.
- 1,419 sq.m. of retail/shop space.
- 1,200 sq.m. of leisure use.
- 913 sq.m of café/restaurant use.
- 2,921 sq.m. of public areas (including reception areas).

- 4.2 The two buildings effectively divide the site into a north and south area with a central landscaped open space, accommodating a café and also allowing for a principal pedestrian route off Vaughan Way and through to Pennington Street.

- 4.3 Building 1 fronts the **northern** portion of the site and has a main frontage to The Highway. The design of the building follows the curve of the road and is setback from the boundary to enable a glazed façade to extend to the lower levels. The building rises to a maximum height of 10 storeys with a total gross area of 42,264sq.m. It is anticipated that Building 1 would become the new headquarters for News International. However, the design of the building is not bespoke and is suitable for other commercial occupiers.

- 4.4 On the **southern** part of the site lies Building 2. The building would be 27 storeys with a 4 storey podium. It would provide gross floorspace of 72,743sq.m. It has been designed taking into account the wind, daylight and sunlight studies.

- 4.5 Vehicular access to both buildings would be as existing via The Highway and Virginia Street. A basement car park is proposed, accommodating:

- 650 car spaces including 28 spaces allocated for disabled parking.
- 67 motorcycle spaces.
- 450 cycle spaces.
- Lorry marshalling areas.

- 4.6 Pedestrian access to the site is proposed from a number of locations. The principal point of access would be off Vaughan Way and via the central area of open space. Pedestrian access to Building 1 would also be provided directly off The Highway leading to an internal pedestrian street at ground level which would feature restaurants, bars, café and a convenience store. A pavilion café is proposed within the central landscape open space.

- 4.7 The application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 1999.

Site and surroundings

- 4.8 The application site is approximately 2.0 ha and currently occupied by News International as an open air car park and lorry marshalling area associated with the company's printing operations located to the east on Pennington Street. The existing car park has around 400 informally laid out car parking spaces. The land itself is relatively flat and features a high security fence and brick wall along its perimeter. The surrounding area comprises a mix of

commercial and residential uses.

- 4.9 The application site is bounded by The Highway to the north, Vaughan Way to the west, Virginia Street plus the News International plant to the east and Asher Way to the south. The Highway is one of the major arterial roads into central London from the east (A1203).
- 4.10 To the north, on the opposite side of The Highway, is open parkland. Adjacent to the parkland there is a mix of low rise residential blocks, retail and commercial space. Further north, situated off Cable Street, are two residential towers over 20 storeys high.
- 4.11 East of the site beyond Virginia Street are commercial properties with residential flats above, comprising 6 storeys. A row of Grade II listed warehouse buildings are located long the southern side of Pennington Street. Directly south of the site are the residential developments known as Trade Winds Court and Spice Court fronting Asher Way. These residential buildings range from 5 to 10 storeys.
- 4.12 To the west is the Thomas Moore complex which includes the 14 storey Trinity Tower. This complex mainly provides traditional office and other commercial floor space. Further west, adjacent to the Thomas Moore complex is St Katherine's Dock.

Planning History

- 4.13 The following planning decisions are relevant to the application:

T/93/238 In December 1994, the London Docklands Development Corporation granted planning permission for redevelopment of the site by the erection of 3, six storey buildings, one with access points to the pedestrian bridge linking News International premises and one 15 storey building comprising offices (B1), shop (A1), café & wine bar (A3) all with associated underground car parking for both News International printing buildings and the proposed buildings. The permission included the formation of a new vehicular and pedestrian access and relocation of the security building in conjunction with the realignment of Virginia Street and alterations to Vaughan Way to create a taxi 'drop off' point.

The permission was renewed in December 1998 but expired on 22 December 2004.

5. POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 For details of the status of relevant policies see the front sheet for "Planning Applications for Determination" agenda items. The following policies are relevant to the application:

Unitary Development Plan 1998

Proposals:		Archaeological importance or potential
Policies:	DEV1	Design Requirements
	DEV2	Environmental Requirements
	DEV3	Mixed use developments
	DEV4	Planning Obligations
	DEV6	High Buildings outside CAZ
	DEV8	Views
	DEV12	Landscaping
	DEV13	Tree Planting
	DEV18	Public Art
	DEV45	Development in areas of archaeological importance
	DEV50	Environmental Impact of Major Development

DEV51	Contaminated land
DEV56	Litter and Waste
CAZ2	Development providing Central London Core Activities outside the CAZ
EMP1	Promoting Employment Growth
EMP4	Expansion of Existing Firms
EMP6	Access to Employment
EMP10	Business Uses outside CAZ
T9	Strategic Traffic Management
T13	Off-Street Car Parking
T15/T16	Transport and development
T17	Parking standards
T21	Pedestrian Routes
T24	Cyclists
S6	New retail development

Emerging Local Development Framework

Proposals:	Area of Archaeological Importance or potential Strategic Roads Strategic Cycle Routes Development Sites – CF20 News International
Core Strategies:	CP1 Creating Sustainable Communities CP3 Sustainable Development CP4 Good Design CP5 Supporting Infrastructure CP8 Financial and business centres CP30 Quality and Quantity of open space CP41 Integrating development with transport CP43 Better public transport CP45 Strategic Road network CP48 Tall buildings CP50 Important views
Policies:	DEV1 Amenity DEV2 Character and design DEV3 Accessibility and Inclusive design DEV5 Sustainable design DEV6 Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy DEV9 Sustainable construction materials DEV10 Disturbance form Noise pollution DEV12 Construction management DEV14 Public Art DEV17 Transport assessments DEV18 Travel plans DEV19 Parking for motor vehicles DEV27 Tall buildings assessment EE2 Redevelopment of employment sites OSN2 Open space
AAP Policies:	CFR 1 City Fringe Spatial strategy CFR 2 Transport and Movement CFR 5 Open Space and Flooding CFR 6 Infrastructure and services CFR 21 Employment uses in Wapping sub-area CFR 23 Retail and leisure uses in Wapping sub-area CFR 24 Design and built form in Wapping sub-area CFR 25 Local connectivity and public realm in Wapping sub-area

Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London (London Plan)

Policy 3B.4 Mixed use Development

Policy 3B.1 Developing London's Economy

Policy 4B.1 Design Principles for a Compact City

Policy 4A.7 Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Community Plan The following Community Plan objectives relate to the application:

A better place for living safely

A better place for living well

A better place for creating and sharing prosperity

6. CONSULTATION RESPONSE

6.1 The views of officers within the Directorate of Development and Renewal are expressed in the MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS section below. The following were consulted regarding the application:

LBTH Environmental Health

6.2 Advises that the scheme's impact on the amount of daylight and sunlight reaching surrounding properties is satisfactory and recommends a condition to secure decontamination of the site.

LBTH Highways Department

6.3 The amount of proposed car parking is questioned. The development may or may not be wholly occupied by News International. From a 24 hour, 3 day car parking survey, the maximum accumulation during this period was between 350-400 cars. It may well be possible that a number of night time journeys are not essential and this level of parking could be negotiated downwards and it would be up to News International to identify those workers whose parking requirement is a necessity.

There will be extensive footway works on The Highway and Vaughan Street, possibly increasing widths of the public highway, and these will be carried out by the Council at the developer's expense. They will include a taxi/car drop off point on Vaughan Way where the existing parking arrangements will require alteration.

(OFFICER COMMENT: The amount of car parking provided would not normally be acceptable. Conditions are recommended to ensure that upon closure of the next door printing plant, the number of car parking spaces provided shall be reduced substantially to meet parking standards. Further, conditions would be applied to reduce the number of car spaces from the 650 applied for, to 500. Discussion as to why 500 car parking spaces is appropriate is undertaken below in paragraphs 8.20 - 8.23).

Obligations are recommended to secure contributions to improve the public realm and undertake highways improvements associated with the scheme.

Greater London Authority (Statutory Consultee (Includes TfL and LDA))

6.4 At Stage 1 the Mayor advised:

- Proposed mixed use development should incorporate a residential element.
- The London Plan requires a provision of 50% off site affordable housing contribution.
- Support is given to the architecture and design-particularly the reduction in height of the 13 storey tower to 10 storeys to lessen the impact on strategic views.
- Proposal would not adversely impact on the setting of the Tower of London World Heritage Site.
- Development could impact upon biodiversity particularly the protected black redstart.

- Funding required for both studies and improvements to the Underground, bus services, pedestrian access and crossings to the existing road network, improvements to the cycle network.
- An increase in the proposed number of cycle parking is required (1 space per 125 m² of B1 office i.e. 923 spaces).
- Development of a Green Travel Plan to promote sustainable modes of transport should be provided

(OFFICER COMMENT: As a designated office location in Tower Hamlets emerging LDF, it is considered that it would not be appropriate to require the provision of housing on this site. The London Plan's policies for off-site provision apply within the CAZ and are not applicable in this instance. In response to TfL's requests for contributions to various public transport/road network improvements, a package of s106 contributions is recommended to address TfL's requirements).

English Heritage (Statutory Consultee)

- 6.5 English Heritage (EH) has no objections in principle to the revised scheme including the height and scale of the northern ten storey building. It recognises that that the design of the tower has developed and could result in a building of high architectural quality. Changes to the scheme at ground level have also improved the possibility of providing a high quality urban space.

However, EH are still concerned at the potential impact of the 27 storey tall building at this location, to the east of the Tower of London. They point out that the joint English Heritage/CABE *Guidance on tall Buildings* strongly endorses the development plan led approach to the location of tall buildings. It is EH's view that the acceptability of locating tall buildings to the east of the Tower of London should be assessed as part of a plan led strategy that identifies acceptable locations for tall buildings in the borough and not by ad hoc speculative proposals.

If planning permission is granted, a condition to secure a programme of archaeological investigation is recommended.

(OFFICER COMMENT: The scheme has been amended reducing the height of Building 1 (north) by two storeys but English Heritage still advise that they have reservations regarding the height of Building 2 (South building - 27 storeys). The emerging City Fringe AAP identifies appropriate locations for clusters of tall buildings and office development but also notes that tall buildings may be appropriate outside these identified areas. Further analysis regarding tall buildings policy is set out below).

City of London

- 6.6 Initially expressed concern that the combined effect of the existing high building at the Thomas Moore complex and the two proposed buildings would result in a large increase in the mass of development forming the backdrop to the Tower of London World Heritage Site.

Government Office for London (Statutory Consultee)

- 6.7 No comments received.

Environment Agency

- 6.8 No objection in principle. Recommends conditions are imposed on any planning permission regarding:
- Contaminated land.
 - Details of foundations.

- Surface water control measures.

Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment

6.9 No comments received.

Corporate Access Officer

6.10 The Access officer has reviewed the Access Statement and is satisfied that access requirements are met.

London Fire and Civil Defence Authority

6.11 No comments received.

London City Airport

6.12 No safeguarding objections.

Historic Royal Palaces

6.13 Originally concerned about views of the Tower of London from the foot of London Bridge and just east of the bridge along the Queen's Walk. Building 1 would have appeared behind the turrets of the White Tower diminishing their current distinctive silhouette against the skyline.

(OFFICER COMMENT: The scheme has been amended reducing the height of Building 1 by two storeys and Historic Royal Palaces now advise that this fully addresses their concerns).

English Nature

6.14 No observations received.

Countryside Agency

6.15 No observations received.

7. LOCAL REPRESENTATION

7.1 A total of 515 neighbouring properties within the area shown on the map appended to this report were notified of the original application on 14 November 2002. The application has also been publicised in East End Life and on site.

7.2 Twenty six objections were originally received. Following the receipt of amended plans, on 28 September 2006, the objectors were re-notified and a further notice was placed in East End Life. In response, a further six objections were received.

7.3 The total number of representations received from neighbours in response to notification and publicity of the application were as follows:

No of individual responses: 26 Objecting: 26 Supporting: 0

7.4 The following issues were raised in representations that are material to the determination of the application and are addressed in the next section of this report:

- Loss of daylight and sunlight.
- Over intense development

- The height of the buildings is out of keeping with the surroundings.
- No local benefit.
- Buildings of this size will place too much strain on sewerage and water systems.
- There is currently a surplus of office space in London.
- The site should be developed for residential use and or key workers.
- Access off Virginia Street is inappropriate.
- Large number of car parking spaces.
- Increase in congestion and pollution.
- Noise impacts from lorries and HGV's.
- Headlamp glare & pollution.
- Entrance/exit should be parallel to Virginia Street on News International land.
- Inappropriate location for heating/cooling plant.

8. MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 The main planning issues raised by the application that the Committee must consider are:

1. Land Use (Whether this site is appropriate for large scale office development)
2. Scale, design, tall buildings
3. Access and transport (inc. car parking)
4. Amenity impacts
5. Environmental impact assessment

Land Use

- 8.2 The site is unallocated on the Proposals Map of the 1998 Unitary Development Plan. However, it immediately abuts the defined Central Area Zone (CAZ) where headquarter offices and communications headquarters will normally be permitted – UDP policy CAZ1.
- 8.3 Although the thrust of UDP policy is to direct major office development to the two identified Central Area Zones in the west of the borough and the Isle of Dogs; UDP policy CAZ2 says that development providing central London core activities may be permitted outside the Central Area Zones provided:
1. The scale and density of the development is appropriate to the surrounding area and will not adversely impact on the local environment, or the amenity of adjoining uses;
 2. The site is well served by public transport and within easy reach of public transport interchange facilities;
 3. The site has adequate road access and can accommodate all necessary servicing off the public highway;
 4. The development will not adversely affect existing residential accommodation or result in the loss of residential accommodation.
- 8.4 In addition, UDP policy EMP1 states that employment growth will be encouraged through the re-use of vacant land, whilst policy EMP4 encourages the expansion of existing firms either on their present site or elsewhere in the borough.
- 8.5 The proposal would provide approximately 115,000 sq m of predominately office floor space situated adjacent to the Central Activities Zone. The location of the high quality office space is considered appropriate and supported by the adopted UDP, which identifies a *“concentration of office space at the junction between Vaughan Way and the Highway”*
- 8.6 The site has been allocated in the draft LDF Proposals Map as part of the larger News International site “CF20”. Policy CFR26 of the draft City Fringe Area Action Plan (DCFAAP) states that the preferred uses for the larger News International site include “Residential, Employment, Public Open Space and a health facility.” Policy CFR21 states that major

offices are supported in the western part of the News International site (i.e. the application site.)

- 8.7 The GLA have advised that the site should be redeveloped for mixed use purposes with the provision of affordable housing. If this is not provided within the development, a 50% off-site contribution should be required.
- 8.8 The Draft City Fringe AAP recognises a requirement for the need for residential in this locality and has identified the remainder of the News International site (i.e. the printing works to the east of the application site), together with the redevelopment of the Tobacco Dock area, as suitable for mixed use. This is to take the form of a master plan for the whole News International site and the Tobacco Dock environs. It is considered in this instance that the requirement for off site affordable housing would be inconsistent with the Council's policies for this portion of the News International site. The further redevelopment of News International's printing works and the Tobacco Dock environs will address both the Council's and the Mayor's requirements for affordable housing in the area.

Ancillary Uses

- 8.9 As mentioned, the proposal provides a range of ancillary uses - leisure (gymnasium), a number of A3 (café/restaurants) and small scale retail (A1). These proposed uses would be located at either ground floor or lower ground floor, which would enhance the vitality of the site and area as a whole. These design principles are consistent with the UDP policies DEV1, DEV3 and policy CP11 of the draft LDF.

Conclusion

- 8.10 An office-led redevelopment on this extensive open car park would be consistent with both the adopted UDP and the emerging policy in the LDF. The Council's emerging plan-led approach to the redevelopment of sub areas in and around the City Fringe has been developed in conjunction with the GLA with the western end of the News International site allocated for office development whilst acknowledging that there is scope to provide housing, including affordable housing, on the remainder of the overall site. On this basis, it is considered that it would be unreasonable to refuse this application on the basis that it does not provide affordable housing or to require that 50% of the proposed floorspace area should be provided as affordable housing off-site.

Scale, design & tall buildings policy

- 8.11 The development proposes two separate buildings of 10 storeys (Building 1) and 27 storeys (Building 2). The design of Building 1 slopes down from its highest point at the eastern end of the site to 7 storeys to the western end (Virginia Street). The tower element of Building 2 is designed in a form of a diamond, sloping towards the south eastern corner of the site.
- 8.12 UDP Policy DEV6 stipulates that proposals for high buildings (above 20m) are only appropriate outside of Central Area Zones where it can be demonstrated that they would not be detrimental to visual amenity. In addition, the development should not have a detrimental impact in terms of overshadowing, wind turbulence or other effects. Policies CP4, CP48 and DEV2 of the draft LDF all require regard to be given to the scale and mass, architecture quality of tall building proposals.
- 8.13 Historic Royal Palaces was originally concerned that the taller building impacted on strategic views from the Queen's Walk across the river to the Tower of London. The building has since been reduced in height and Historical Royal Palaces have withdrawn their objection.
- 8.14 The GLA consider that the proposal accords with criteria for tall buildings set out in the national advice with Planning Policy Statement 1, the English Heritage/CABE guidance on

tall buildings, the London Plan and the adopted Tower Hamlets Unitary Development Plan.

8.15 The GLA noted further that:

“The site is within the background assessment area of the river prospect from London Bridge towards Tower Bridge and the Tower of London in the draft View Management Framework (GLA, April 2005). The view assessment submitted with the application reveals that the new tower will usually appear in close proximity to Trinity Tower and will contribute to the form of a ‘mini’ cluster in this location. The new cluster is relatively low-rise compared to those in the City of London and Canary Wharf.

The Tower of London is surrounded by a number of modern buildings in close proximity, which have a greater impact on the Tower than the proposed development, which is located approximately 500 metres away. The development does not fall within the buffer zone set out in the draft (non-statutory) Management Plan for the World Heritage Site. The development represents a high quality piece of townscape that consolidates an existing building group/cluster and hence it will not adversely impact on the setting of the Tower of London.”

8.16 The proposed piazza would be orientated towards St. Katharine’s Dock and the Tower of London. This would help to create a feeling of arrival/destination and sense of place and would extend the established and well used pedestrian route from the Tower environs through St. Katharine’s Dock, which currently stops at Thomas Moore Square to the west of the development site. The positioning of the public space makes the most of natural sunlight and would produce a feeling of enclosure, as there is frontage on all sides, and provide a buffer from the noise and pollution on the Highway. The proposal is not considered to have negative impacts on the nearby Grade II listed warehouse buildings on the southern side of Pennington Street. Indeed, the design and focus of the piazza accessways will highlight these somewhat forgotten buildings. The active public uses provided at the lower levels of the buildings would animate the street and the new piazza and would increase public safety.

Conclusion

8.17 The site currently presents a vast area of openness and breaks the continuity of the urban fabric. The scheme proposes to fill this gap and physically repair the surrounding townscape. The architectural style of the proposed buildings is contemporary consisting of aluminium panels and glazing. The architectural standard is considered high.

8.18 The development would maximise the development potential of an under-utilised brownfield site and substantially enhance the public realm. The site is considered appropriate for a tall building as it would consolidate an existing cluster adjacent to the CAZ and contribute to an interesting skyline whilst not adversely impacting on important views.

8.19 The proposed scale & design of the two buildings is considered appropriate and in accordance with the Council’s adopted and emerging policies for tall buildings.

Access and Transport

Vehicular access and car parking

8.20 Access to the site for vehicles would be via Vaughan Way which runs south from The Highway. The access would link into the basement parking and loading area. The proposal includes a significant amount of basement parking and loading facilities. Parking Standards in the adopted UDP 1998 state the maximum amount of parking as 1 space per 750 sq.m. of gross floor area, which would allow a maximum of 153 spaces. The London Plan and emerging LDF states that the maximum amount of car parking spaces permitted is 1 space per 1250 sq. m. of floor area, which would allow a maximum of 96 spaces. The amount of

parking is far in excess of both adopted and emerging development plan standards and would not normally be supported for a generic office development either on this site or other locations in the area.

- 8.21 News International has however announced a medium-term intention to relocate the printing plant from Wapping to Broxbourne in Essex. The applicant argues that 650 car parking spaces and lorry marshalling areas are required due to the current specialist News International operations which will remain on the adjoining site in the medium term (exact time limit is undetermined as yet). TfL and Tower Hamlets Highways accept the need to retain some existing provision in association with the existing operations at News International. However, the 650 car parking spaces proposed is considered excessive. To this end, TH highways recommends that 350-400 car spaces is the maximum that could be justified based upon current operations.
- 8.22 Based upon the LDF and London Plan, approximately 100 spaces is the maximum number of spaces that should be provided for an office development of 120,000 sq.m. floorspace. (120,000 sq.m./1 per 1250 sq.m.) Adding the 400 justifiable car spaces to the London plan and emerging LDF standard of 100 spaces would allow 500 car spaces to be allocated to this development as it currently stands. A condition would be required to reduce the applied number of car parking spaces from 650 to 500. This level of car parking is still well over the standard for office development and an over provision with regard to the site's location.
- 8.23 To address the over-provision of parking spaces on site, it is recommended that any planning permission be conditioned to limit the number of parking spaces to the continued operation of the next-door printing plant. This condition would require a reduction in the number of car parking spaces on site from the 500 approved as part of this application to 100 in order to bring the development inline with current and emerging policy, once the printing works function departs the adjacent site permanently. On this basis alone the number of car parking spaces is considered acceptable. In the absence of appropriate measures the scheme would result in significant conflict with development plan standards and policy.

Pedestrian access

- 8.24 The pedestrian environment would be greatly improved by the opening up of the site and the creation of new routes and vistas. This would be enhanced by the ground floor retail uses and open spaces and the connection between Pennington Street and Vaughan Way. Appropriate conditions are recommended to secure suitable lighting, signage and quality materials for the public space.
- 8.25 Significant section 106 obligations are recommended to address issues involving vehicular and pedestrian traffic management and public realm improvements, particularly in relation to Tower Hill and Shadwell tube/DLR stations.

Amenity

Daylight /Sunlight reaching adjoining property

- 8.26 Daylight is normally calculated by two methods - the vertical sky component (VSC) and the average daylight factor (ADF). The latter is considered a more detailed and accurate method, since it considers not only the amount of sky visibility on the vertical face of a particular window but also window and room sizes plus the room's use.
- 8.27 The VSC method provides an indication as to whether there will be changes in lighting levels. It does not necessarily reveal whether the predicted quantity and quality of light would be adequate following the construction of a new development. However, the ADF method provides a means for making such an analysis.

8.28 Sunlight is assessed by the calculation of annual probable sunlight hours and the amount of sunlight available in both the Summer and Winter is calculated for windows within 90 degrees of due south.

Daylighting results

8.29 Telfords Yard (adjoining to the east across Virginia Street). No window would have a VSC below 21%. This is marginally below the BRE's 27% guideline for suburban housing. However, ADF calculations show that light levels would be close to existing or at acceptable levels.

8.30 Asher Way (to the south of the site). 73 windows have been tested. Six windows would have their VSC reduced by between 3% and 21%. The BRE advises that a 20% VSC reduction should not be noticeable and it is considered conditions would be satisfactory.

Sunlight

8.31 Telfords Yard 98.5 % of the windows would exceed the BRE Guideline of 25% for summer sunshine with only one window having a marginal fail of 24%. In terms of winter sunshine 78.5% of the windows would meet the BRE's guideline of more than 5% average sunlight access. The other 21.5% (14 windows) are marginally below the BRE's guideline requirements for average winter sunshine. However, given the inner-urban context of the site and surrounding development, this is acceptable.

8.32. Asher Way Located to the south of the site with north facing windows, there would be no impact on these windows.

Conclusions

8.33 BRE Guidelines advise that different light criteria is often appropriate in city centres. Taking this on board, whilst the proposal would have an affect to neighbouring buildings, the quality of the remaining light to adjacent residential properties would not be unacceptable or unusual for this city fringe location. On balance, the proposal is considered acceptable following detailed consideration of the applicant's light study.

Noise

8.34 The main issues with regard to noise relate to the impact of a proposed single storey, stand alone plant building on Pennington Street and lorries entering and exiting the site both during construction and following the occupation of the buildings.

8.35 Subject to the imposition of conditions requiring appropriate insulation and noise suppression measures, the plant building adjacent to Pennington St will not impact adversely on properties to the east of Pennington Street.

8.36 It is recommended that construction traffic should be controlled by a construction management plan which amongst other things would limit vehicular movements and construction times.

8.37 With regard to post construction lorry movements, the amount of traffic would not be significantly different from that generated by the current open car / lorry park to which News International receive regular deliveries. Once the printing operations cease and the car parking is reduced traffic movement would be significantly less.

Sustainable Development/ Renewable Energy

- 8.38 Policies DEV 5 and DEV6 of the Draft LDF Core Strategy Document require all new development to incorporate sustainability and energy efficiency measures. The GLA concluded that *“Currently the proposal does not contain renewable energy measures, partly because the submission of the application predates the London Plan; but, after meeting GLA officers, the applicant is working on a strategy to address the relevant policies. Without a credible strategy the application cannot be supported in strategic planning terms.”*
- 8.39 It is recommended that any planning permission is conditioned to require the submission, approval and implementation of an energy strategy to ensure the implementation of the renewable energy measures.

Biodiversity

- 8.40 It is recommended that an appropriate condition be included to ensure that “brown roofs” are provided to enhance opportunities for the nesting and foraging of black redstarts.

Environmental Impact Assessment

- 8.41 The Council’s consultants, Casella Stanger, undertook a review of the Environmental Statement. The initial review highlighted a number of areas where additional information or clarification should be provided. Further to the Council’s request, the applicant has submitted information required under Regulation 19. This has been re-advertised in accordance with the legislation and again reviewed by both Casella Stanger and the Council’s Environmental Health Department.
- 8.42 The Environmental Statement has been assessed as satisfactory, with mitigation measures to be implemented through conditions and/ or Section 106 obligations.

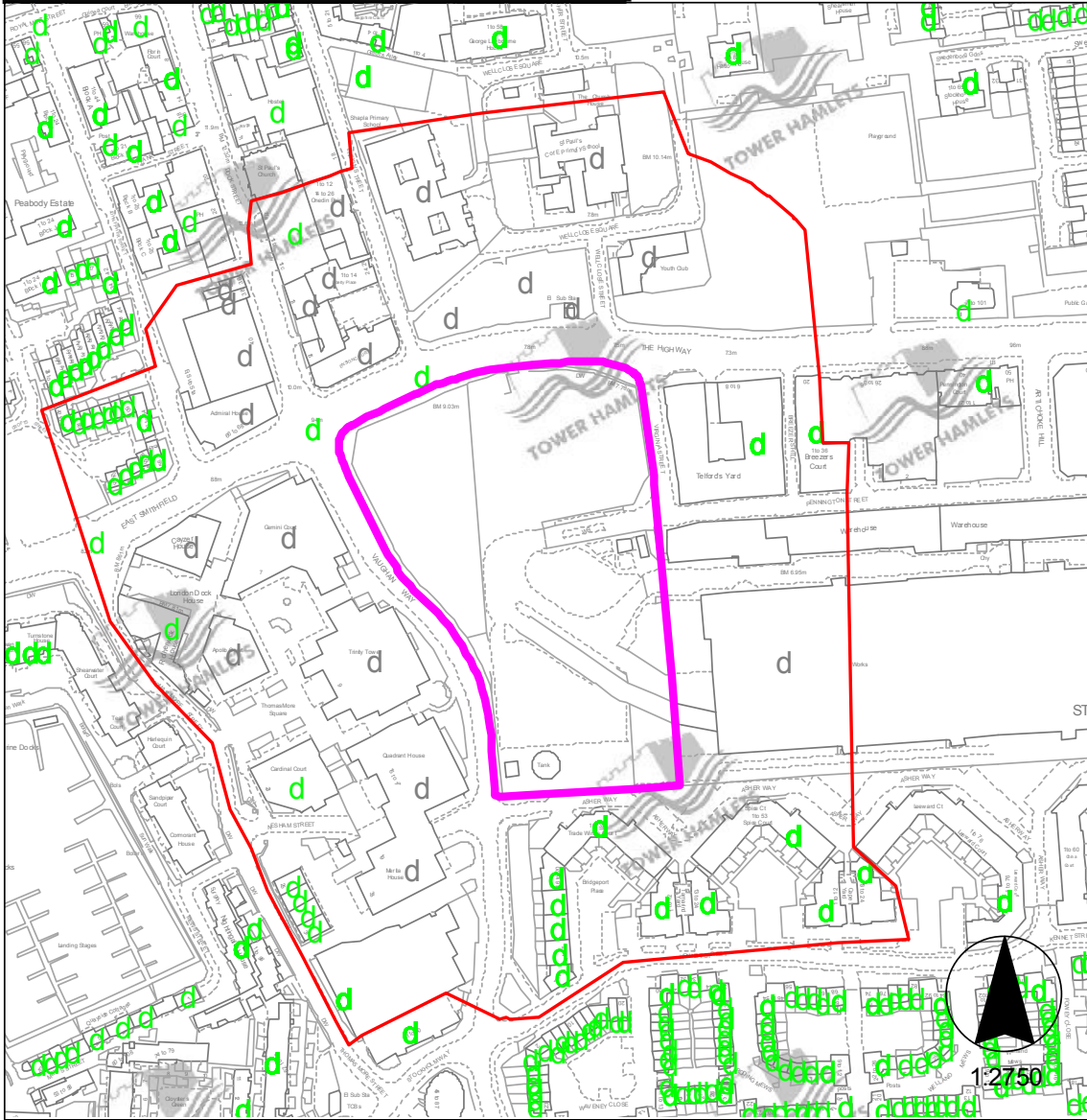
Other Planning Issues

- 8.43 The development would bring local benefit in terms of increased employment opportunities and remove an unsightly open car park. There is no evidence that water and sewage requirements could not be met. The site is allocated for offices and it is not a material consideration as to whether the offices are speculative.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 All other relevant policies and considerations have been taken into account. Planning permission should be granted for the reasons set out in the SUMMARY OF MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS and the details of the decision are set out in the RECOMMENDATION at the beginning of this report.

Site Map



Legend

- Planning Application Site Boundary
- Consultation Area
- d Land Parcel Address

This Site Map displays the Planning Application Site Boundary and the neighbouring Occupiers / Owners who were consulted as part of the Planning Application process. The Site Map was reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright.
 London Borough of Tower Hamlets LA086568