

UPDATE REPORT OF THE DIVISIONAL DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL

Agenda item no	Reference no	Location	Proposal / Title
5.1	PA/19/01838	267-269 East India Dock Road, London, E14 0EG	Internal and external alterations to the existing residential units at no. 267 East India Dock Road and proposed erection of a 163-bedroom hotel (C1 use class) comprising of a part four, and part-eighteen storey building over basement, with associated roof top plant room, ground floor servicing, car and bike parking and landscaping.

1.0 SUPPLEMENTARY ASSESSMENT**Building heights**

- 1.1 Given the location of the application site outside a Tall Building Zone, the following assessment against the criteria of policy D.DH6 should be considered alongside the design assessment of the committee report.
- 1.2 The Council's new Local Plan adopted on 15 January 2020, introduced four *Tall Building Zones* to which tall buildings are directed. In recognising the differing character of many places within the borough and the importance of site specific circumstances, the policy does not introduce a blanket restriction on development of tall buildings outside of the designated zones, but introduces criteria which must be met to manage building heights effectively.
- 1.3 **Part 3** of policy D.DH6 gives support to tall building proposals located outside of the Tall Buildings Zones, provided that they not only meet the design criteria for all tall buildings as per Part 1 of the policy, but also demonstrate compliance with four additional criteria set out in Part 3 of the policy.

Policy D.DH6 assessment against part 1 criteria

- a. *"be of a height and scale, mass and volume that are proportionate to their role, function and importance of the location in the local, borough-wide and London context; and take account of the character of the immediate context and of their surroundings"*
- 1.4 The proposals follow the Tall Building Study guidance and ensure that the size of the tall building would be proportionate to the future role of the building as a landmark of district importance. The distribution of massing within the site, through the combination of podium and tower approach, would safeguard the low-rise street scene of Follett Street whilst maximising the potential of the scheme to mark the eastern end of the Chrisp Street District Centre. The detailed design and materiality would positively respond to the local character.
- b. *"achieve exceptional architectural quality and innovative and sustainable building design, utilising robust and durable materials throughout the building"*
- 1.5 The proposed design is innovative and of exceptional architectural quality, proportionate to the future prominence of the scheme. Slender long bricks and other high quality facing

materials would be used and the building would meet the sustainability requirements of BREEAM 'Excellent'.

c. *“enhance the character and distinctiveness of an area without adversely affecting designated townscapes and landscapes (including building/roof lines) or detracting from important landmarks, heritage assets, key views and other historic skylines and their settings”*

1.6 The proposed development would not harm the setting of any of the nearby heritage assets. The design responds to the character of the area through modulation of massing and use of traditional facing materials. The plinth would provide a continuation of predominant building heights on Follett Street and East India Dock Road whereas the tower would be located on the south-eastern corner to limit its impact on the lower rise street scene at the rear.

d. *“provide a positive contribution to the skyline during both the day and night time”*

1.7 The proposed design would provide visual interest at all times.

e. *“not prejudice future development potential of adjacent/neighbouring buildings or plots”*

1.8 The proposals would safeguard the rear access rights to adjoining properties and would not prejudice their development potential.

f. *“maintain adequate distance between buildings to ensure a high quality ground floor experience and enhanced residential environment”*

1.9 The proposals would continue established building lines on Follett Street and East India Dock Road. The building would be set back at the south-eastern corner to provide a generous entrance area to the hotel, supplementing the wide pavement in this location and providing space for members of the public to gather. Obscured glazing has been incorporated where necessary to reduce privacy impacts.

g. *“demonstrate consideration of public safety requirements as part of the overall design, including the provision of evacuation routes”*

1.10 The design of the tall building incorporates two stair cores to aid evacuation. Emergency vehicle access would be provided by the existing surrounding public highways. Detailed fire safety issues would be addressed at the Building Regulations stage.

h. *“present a human scale of development at street level and comprise an attractive and legible streetscape that takes into account the use of the public realm for a variety of users and includes active uses at ground floor level”*

1.11 At street level the plinth would act as a continuation of the adjoining terrace, maintaining human scale of the frontage. The ground floor would be activated by the hotel lobby and lounge as well as by the retained commercial unit at 267 East India Dock Road. The entrance to the hotel would be located at the corner, in the most legible location.

i. *“provide high quality private communal open space, play areas and the public realm (where residential uses are proposed) for which occupants of the building can use and where appropriate provide shared facilities at the ground floor level to encourage social cohesion”*

1.12 Not applicable as the scheme is commercial but public realm improvements are proposed and would be secured as a planning obligation.

j. *“demonstrate that the development does not adversely impact on the microclimate and amenity of the application site and the surrounding area”*

1.13 Computational fluid dynamic modelling was carried out confirming that the public realm surrounding the site would not be excessively windy.

k. *“demonstrate that the development does not adversely impact on biodiversity and open spaces, including watercourses and water bodies and their hydrology”*

1.14 The site does not have any current biodiversity value and is not in close proximity to any biodiversity assets.

l. *“comply with civil aviation requirements and not interfere to an unacceptable degree with telecommunications, television and radio transmission networks and river radar equipment”*

1.15 Because the building would be significantly lower than other tall buildings in the area it would not affect aviation, as confirmed by London City Airport’s safeguarding team. The slender form of the tower would limit any telecommunications reception shadow cast by the building.

Policy D.DH6 assessment against part 3 criteria

a. *“be located in areas with high levels of public transport accessibility within town centres and/or opportunity areas”*

1.16 The site benefits from very good public transport accessibility (PTAL 5), and is located within the Chrisp Street District Centre and the Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Area.

b. *“address deficiencies in the provision of strategic infrastructure”*

1.17 The proposals would be liable for standard Tower Hamlets and London CIL and S106 obligations. Those obligations would be worth approximately £2m, going some way towards addressing borough-wide deficiencies in infrastructure provision.

1.18 The proposed development would not fully meet the ambition of this policy to “unlock strategic infrastructure provision” (para 8.75 of the supporting text). Nonetheless, on balance, given the limited opportunity for on-site provision of infrastructure, the regenerative benefits of the proposal in terms of promoting footfall at the eastern end of the district centre and the acceptability of the proposed tall building in all other respects, the shortfall against Part (b) of the policy is not considered to be significant enough on its own to warrant refusal of the proposals.

c. *“significantly strengthen the legibility of a Major, District or Neighbourhood Centre or mark the location of a transport interchange or other location of civic or visual significance within the area”*

1.19 The tall building would be sited at a prominent gateway location, adjoining an important road junction. In accordance with the Tall Building Strategy, the building would serve as a landmark of district importance for the eastern end of the Chrisp Street District Centre. The building would thus strengthen the legibility of the centre and mark a location of significance within the area.

d. *“not undermine the prominence and/or integrity of existing landmark buildings and tall building zones (taking account of the principles set out in Figure 8)”*

1.20 The proposed tower would be significantly lower and more slender than the Balfron tower, the nearest designated landmark building (Grade II* listed). The proposals would also not detract from the setting of the All Saints Church (Grade II listed). The tall building would also be significantly lower than the towers at the centre of the Blackwall Tall Building Zone, next to the Blackwall DLR Station.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 The recommendation that planning permission should be **GRANTED** remains, but is amended subject to any direction by the Mayor of London following the Stage 2 referral process.