



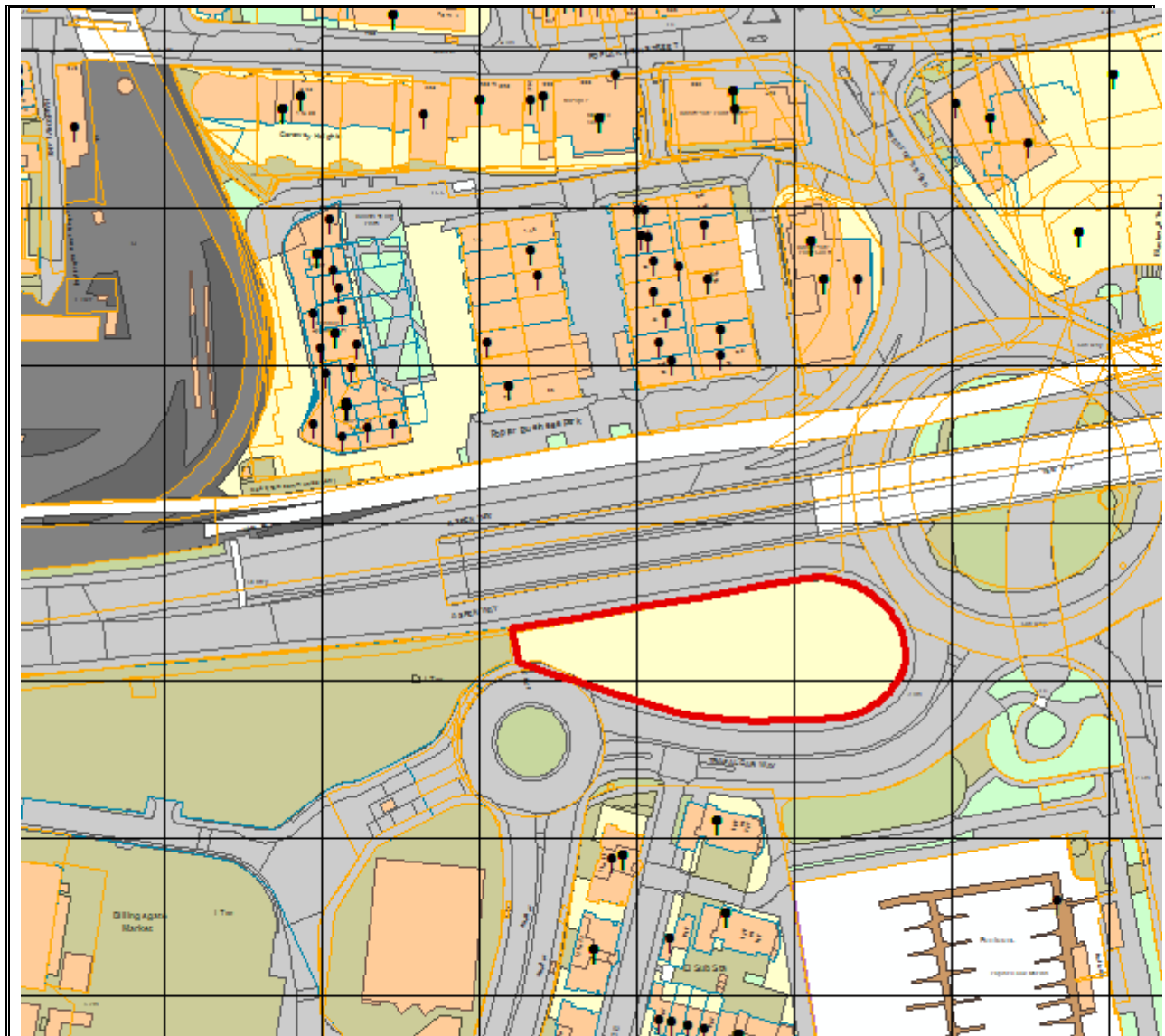
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**Pre-application presentation**

<b>Reference</b>	PF/19/00127
<b>Site</b>	2 Trafalgar Way, London E14 5SP
<b>Ward</b>	Blackwall and Cubitt Town
<b>Proposal</b>	Redevelopment of the site to provide educational, commercial incubator space and up to 1,643 student rooms for UCL and up to 76 'key worker' flats for employees of the university, in three towers of 24, 34 and 49 storeys
<b>Applicant</b>	Urbanest UK Ltd
<b>Architect/agent</b>	APT/Gerald Eve LLP
<b>Case Officer</b>	John Miller
<b>Key dates</b>	Pre-application request submitted May 2019 Pre-app discussions began in June 2019

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## SITE PLAN



<p><b>Site Plan</b></p> <p> <b>Grade II Listed Building</b></p> <p> <b>Conservation Area</b></p> <p> <b>Neighbourhood Centre</b></p> <p></p>	<p><b>Planning Applications Site Map</b> <b>PF/19/00127</b></p> <p>This site map displays the Planning Application Site Boundary and the extent of the area within which neighbouring occupiers / owners were consulted as part of the Planning Application Process</p>	<p> <b>TOWER HAMLETS</b> London Borough of Tower Hamlets</p> <p>Date: 09 June 2020</p>
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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance promote early engagement between developers and Local Planning Authorities at the pre-application stage, prior to submitting a planning application. The Council welcomes pre-application discussions and has a well-established process to facilitate this. 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.
- 1.2 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 2 Trafalgar Way site.

## **2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 Pre-application advice is being sought for the redevelopment of the site consisting of:

Three towers connected at podium level with a Gross Internal Area (GIA) of approximately 70,000 sqm likely ranging from 28 to 46 storeys (a maximum 142 m AOD height) comprising:

- Student accommodation (*Sui Generis*), including approximately 1,700 units and student amenities;
- Residential accommodation floorspace – residential dwellings (Use Class C3), including approximately 70 units;
- Commercial and retail floorspace – office / business (Use Classes A1, A3, B1 and D1), including a McDonald's restaurant;
- Servicing facilities and ancillary, plant space and landscaping;
- Public realm improvements;
- Residential and student amenity; and
- Basements.

## **3. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS**

- 3.1 The pre-application site is currently vacant hardstanding, which was previously occupied by a single storey McDonalds and surrounding car park and poor quality public realm. The site has a total area of 0.4 hectares and is located to the south of Aspen Way and to the North of Poplar Dock.
- 3.2 To the north of the site is Aspen Way, and further north is predominantly residential in character including the Blackwall Reach development. To the south are recent residential developments and the Poplar Dock marina. To the west is Billingsgate Market and Canary Wharf; whilst to the east is a mix of residential and commercial floorspace (office and retail) as well as a hotel. Blackwell DLR station is close to the site, to its north-east, across Aspen Way.
- 3.3 The site is within close proximity to the Canary Wharf Major Centre and Poplar High Street neighbourhood centre and is to be included within the South Poplar Masterplan Area. The

site falls within flood risk zone 2 and also highlights the site's exposure to severe air pollution, potential for archaeological remains (Tier2) and the site's location within the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar Sub Area. The adjoining Billingsgate Market site allocation, in addition to the Isle of Dogs Activity Area is also now designated as the north-westernmost extent of the Canary Wharf Secondary Preferred Office Location, Tall Building Zone and Strategically Important Skyline. The secondary Blackwall Tall Building Zone is located in close proximity to the north and east, across Aspen Way and Preston's Road.

- 3.4 There are a number of listed buildings approximately 250m to the east of the site. The All Saints Church Poplar Conservation Area is approximately 300m to the north of the site and the Naval Row Conservation Area is approximately 300m to the north east.

#### **4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

##### **Application site**

- 4.1 PA/08/01321 – Redevelopment of the site to provide a residential-led mixed use scheme including two towers of 29 storey and 35 storeys and comprising 414 residential units, re-provision of drive-through restaurant, retail / financial and professional service units, crèche, gymnasium, associated residential and community amenity space and car parking. (AMENDED DESCRIPTION). **Approved and implemented but not built out**
- 4.2 PA/14/01771- Application for minor-material amendment of planning permission PA/08/01321 dated 10/11/2009 (and as amended by NMA applications PA/11/03346 dated 19/12/2011, PA/13/02453 dated 12/11/2013 and PA/14/00062 dated 01/10/2014). The amendments consist of an increase in the height of building A (by 3.9m) and building B (by 5.1m), removal of building C, alterations to the housing mix and layouts, reduction in the number of residential units from 414 to 392, alterations to the facades of the buildings, and increase in the size of the basement. **Approved**

#### **5. PUBLICITY AND ENGAGEMENT**

- 5.1 The applicant has undertaken their own public consultation events which have included public consultation events, leafleting and meeting with local stakeholders.
- 5.2 Two public consultation events were undertaken in January 2020 which for which over 4000 flyers were sent to local residents with 40 participants attending the meetings along with 9 written comments being received.
- 5.3 In 2019 the applicant further met with neighbouring land owners, including the Canal and River Trust and Canary Wharf Group.
- 5.4 The proposal was presented to the Council's Conservation and Design Advisory Panel (CADAP) on 14th October 2019 and again on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2019. The panel's written response acknowledged that this development presented great opportunity and were encouraged that there was an aspiration to improve the quality of the surrounding public realm. The panel raised some initial issues which were addressed in the subsequent meeting. The points raised in the most recent meeting were:
- Welcome the significant work done since the November 2019 meeting as well as the ambition of the project
  - Sky gardens were a positive contribution, but require significant work and long-term maintenance to be successful at such a height.
  - Achieving Passivhaus status was not deemed essential; they felt greater attention should be paid to reducing carbon footprint of the design and construction phase.

- Greater consideration should be given to accessibility, particularly parking and the public realm.
- Solely providing for indoor play space was not supported and the scheme should explore the potential for outdoor play.
- Ensure sustainability, urban greening and long-term maintenance was captured through planning to avoid weakening the scheme during construction and building operation.

## **6. RELEVANT PLANNING POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS**

6.1 The Development Plan comprises:

- The London Plan 2016 (LP)
- Managing Growth and Sharing the Benefits - Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031 (2020)

6.2 The Emerging Development Plan comprises:

- The Draft London Plan (DLP)

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2019, the Mayor published his 'intend to publish' version of the London Plan. This version of the plan responds to the Inspector's recommendations. This will now be sent to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State can then issue a direction which requires the GLA to amend the Plan if required. The Plan cannot be published (adopted) until these points have been addressed. It is anticipated that the final Plan will be published circa March 2020

6.3 Other policy and guidance documents relevant to the proposal are:

- The National Planning Policy Framework (2019)
- National Planning Practice Guidance (updated 2019)
- BRE - Site Layout Planning for Daylight and Sunlight (2011)
- London Housing SPG (updated 2017)
- London Housing Affordable Housing and Viability SPG (2017)
- LBTH Planning Obligations SPD (2016)

## **7. PLANNING ISSUES**

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

### **Land Use**

7.2 The application site does not have any land use planning designations beyond being in the future South Poplar Master Plan Area, which is currently in its early stages of conception. It also falls within flood zone two and a Tier 2 Archaeological Priority Area.

7.3 The existing site includes a former McDonalds A3 use. The redevelopment of the site includes the re-provision of this.

7.4 Student housing is considered to contribute towards the borough's housing delivery, however draft London Plan policy H17 stipulates that 3 student housing rooms should be treated as 1 housing unit – this means that any number of student rooms above 1,200 would

offset the 'loss' of the current permission. In this case roughly 1700 student rooms in addition to circa 70 conventional homes will be provided.

- 7.5 In recognition of the Council's high housing need and significant historic delivery of student housing, the recently adopted Local Plan seeks to protect any sites with a current permission for conventional residential development from being converted into student housing.
- 7.6 There is rationale for treating this site as an exception to this policy requirement (given the poor air quality; wider connections to UCL's other developments and difficulties in delivering the site to date). This will need to be carefully demonstrated within the application submission documents to ensure it does not set a precedent, although there are wider provisions in draft London Plan Policy which supports the delivery of purpose built student accommodation.

### **Housing**

- 7.7 Local Plan policies require at least 35% affordable housing to be provided (excluding any re-provision of existing) in broad alignment with the Council's prescribed housing mix as set out in the Local Plan. The London Plan requires the maximum reasonable amount, subject to viability, to be provided.
- 7.8 Draft London Plan standards also calls for 35% of student accommodation to be secured as affordable accommodation, as defined by London Plan and associated guidance. Furthermore it requires the scheme to be tied to a registered provider, which will be UCL.
- 7.9 The application will provide circa 1700 student rooms across the site and 70 residential homes. It is not known whether the residential will be secured as affordable or at what mix, however, these are intended to be provided for 'key workers associated with the development and would be expected to be of an adequate mix as per local policy.
- 7.10 The proposed development would provide 35% of the student accommodation as affordable as per the draft London Plan standards. These are to be secured and monitored through s106 in line with London Plan and Draft London Plan Guidelines.
- 7.11 Further details of the housing (C3) component are currently the subject of further discussion with the applicant. These discussions focus on the applicant further outlining the plans for the C3 use in relation to local plan policies. Affordable housing should also be provided on site, although it is acknowledged that the extant permission secured a monetary contribution for off-site affordable housing,
- 7.12 The proposed development would be required to provide sufficient child playspace and amenity space for the residential component to comply with Local Plan policies. The quantum of playspace required will depend on the mix and tenure of housing proposed.

### **Design, heritage and building heights**

- 7.13 Planning policy requires high-quality designed schemes that reflect local context and character and provide attractive, safe and accessible places that safeguard and where possible enhance the setting of heritage assets.
- 7.14 Extensive pre-application discussions are ongoing in relation to the design and materiality of the development.
- 7.15 Part 1 of the Local Plan Tall Building policy D.DH6 sets out the criteria for assessing the appropriateness of a tall building. The policy further directs tall buildings towards the

designated Tall Building zones. Outside these zones, tall building proposals will be supported provided they meet the criteria set out in Part 1 of the Tall Building policy and can demonstrate how they will:

- a) be located in areas with high levels of public transport accessibility within town centres and/or opportunity areas
- b) address deficiencies in the provision of strategic infrastructure
- 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, and
- d) not undermine the prominence and/or integrity of existing landmark buildings and tall building zones

7.16 The pre-application site is not located within a tall building zone but is located directly adjacent to the Blackwall and Canary Wharf Tall Building Zones, as well as being identified in for inclusion in the South Poplar Master Plan Area. The proposed buildings range between 26-48 storeys. The developments height has been informed by the extant permission and that of the surrounding area. It is considered that massing is broadly accepted in townscape terms.

7.17 The design has evolved positively throughout pre-application discussions and overall officer's feel that the buildings would introduce a landmark scheme of the highest quality architecture which responds to the locality and contributes positively to the wider townscape.

### **Placemaking**

7.18 During pre-application discussions officers queried the potential for expanding the site boundary to incorporate the public realm south of Trafalgar way as well as the ramp access to the pedestrian and cyclist underpass. The applicant has proposed some improvements to Trafalgar way but the redevelopment as part of this proposal is considered unmanageable by the applicant due to ownership constraints.

### **Neighbouring Amenity**

7.19 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.

### **Transport and Servicing**

7.20 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 development proposes cycle parking across the site to serve the new buildings which would be located primarily at first floor level with ramp access within buildings 2 & 3 as well as additional short stay accommodation through the wider site and public realm. The development is proposed to provide 4 car parking spaces with 2 being blue badge spaces. This is a significant reduction from 37 within the extant permission.

7.21 Servicing arrangements for the accommodation would be located predominantly on along Trafalgar way with servicing for the McDonalds taking place from within the site via gate controlled access.

- 7.22 As part of the wider vision for the area, large scale transformative works to the Preston's Road roundabout to the north of the site are intended to be delivered. The extant permission contributed financially to this and it has been agreed that the proposed development would also contribute financially to the delivery of these works.

### **Environment**

- 7.23 Planning policies seek to secure a range of sustainable development outcomes including net biodiversity gains whilst not impacting on existing protected species; the implementation of efficient energy systems which seek to minimise carbon emissions and to secure effective strategies for addressing matters relating to contaminated land and sustainable urban drainage.
- 7.24 The developer will be providing necessary technical information pertaining to the above matters as part of the planning application. An Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Opinion has also been considered and determined by the Council.

### **Infrastructure Impact**

- 7.25 The proposed development will be liable to the Council's and the Mayor of London Community Infrastructure Levies (CIL) and planning obligations to be secured under Section 106 of the T&CP Act 1990,

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 The Committee notes the contents of the report and pre-application presentation.
- 8.2 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.



## 9. APPENDIX – IMAGES















