



Pre-application presentation

Reference	PF/18/00199
Site	Orchard Wharf
Ward	Blackwall & Cubitt Town
Proposal	Reactivation of the existing safeguarded wharf into a logistics centre within a proposed box on the lower levels and erection of six residential blocks to deliver 826 residential units.
Applicant	Regal Homes Management Limited
Architect	JTP (masterplan and residential) and Aukett Swanke (industrial)
Agent	Montagu Evans
Case Officer	Aleksandra Milentijevic
Key dates	Pre-application request submitted October 2018 Pre-app discussions began in November 2019 CADAP review in March 2020

SITE PLAN



Site Plan	
Grade II Listed Building	
Conservation Area	
Neighbourhood Centre	

**Planning Applications Site Map
PF/18/00199**

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



TOWER HAMLETS
London
Borough of
Tower Hamlets

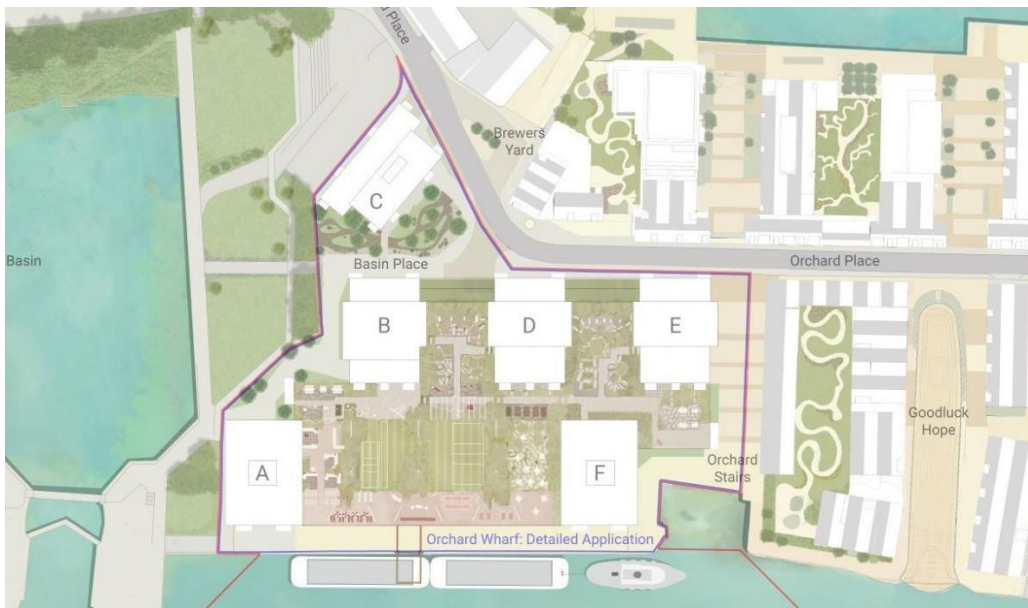
Date: 06 October 2020

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 Orchard Wharf site.

2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSAL

- 2.1 Pre-application advice is being sought for the redevelopment of the site consisting of the delivery of a logistics centre associated with the safeguarded wharf to operate as a 'last mile' logistics and the introduction of a residential use on the site.
- 2.2 The proposed logistics centre would occupy the majority of the site on the lower levels with the exception of the most northern section. The proposed residential use would be spread across the site in six towers ranging from 15 to 30 storeys. Five towers (buildings A – 21 storeys, B – 30 storeys, D – 25 storeys, E – 15 storeys and F – 21 storeys) are proposed on the podium level above the proposed logistics centre while one residential tower (building C – part 17 part 20 storeys) is proposed on the street level within the northern part of the site.



Proposed masterplan.

- 2.3 The scheme proposes various housing products including private units for sale (building A), Built to Rent (buildings B, D and F) and affordable housing units (buildings C and E). The intermediate offer is included in the Build to Rent product as Discounted Market Rent (DMR).

3. SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1 The pre-application site is situated on the north bank of the River Thames and comprises circa 1.36 hectares. The site is a designated safeguarded wharf and has not been in use since the 1990s.
- 3.2 The site is bounded by the East India Dock Basin to the west which is designated as Metropolitan Open Land forming part of the Lee Valley Regional Park and has been assessed as the Site of Interest of Nature Conservation (SINC). To the east and north-east is the consented mixed-used residential-led redevelopment Goodluck Hope beyond which is the Trinity Buoy Wharf, an educational and cultural development. Immediately to the north of the pre-application site sits a residential block 42 and 44 Orchard Place.
- 3.3 The pre-application site is accessed via Orchard Place which runs the length of the peninsular created by a final bend in the River Lea before it joins the Thames. The road is divided by the A1020 and the Lower Lea Crossing, a dual carriageway with a major vehicular bridge across the River Lea. The north side of Orchard Place, previously occupied by the former Pura Foods Ltd, is now home to a large scale residential-led mixed use scheme known as London City Island.
- 3.4 The site lies within the Lower Lea Valley and the Isle of Dogs and South Poplar Opportunity Areas, Flood Zone, Archaeological Priority Area and the Leamouth Tall Building Zone. The site is also part of the Poplar Riverside Housing Zone which is not considered a planning designation.

4. RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

- 4.1 PA/64/00374 – Full Planning Permission granted on 13/03/1964 for the erection of a two room brick office building and a prefabricated timber building at the premises of Greenham Ready Mixed Concrete, Limited, Orchard Wharf.
- 4.2 PA/10/00345 – Screening Opinion issued 12/03/2010 to whether an Environmental Impact Assessment is required in respect of an application for provision of aggregates concrete batching and asphalt facilities.
- 4.3 PA/10/00645 – Scoping Opinion issued 04/05/2010 to the information to be contained within an Environmental Impact Assessment to be submitted in support of an application for provision of aggregates concrete batching and asphalt facilities.
- 4.4 PA/11/03824 – Appeal dismissed on 16/09/2014 for a cross-boundary hybrid planning application for the erection of a concrete batching plant, cement storage terminal and aggregate storage facilities, together with associated structures and facilities, walkway and landscaping, jetty and ship to shore conveyor.
Full details: Demolition of all existing buildings; Concrete batching plant; Cement storage terminal; Aggregate storage facilities; Associated
Outline Application: All matters reserved Jetty; and ship to shore conveyor.
- 4.5 PA/20/00965 – Scoping Opinion issued on 30/06/2020 in respect of the future (proposed) development of the site for which hybrid planning permission will be sought.
Full planning permission will be sought for the following elements:

- Demolition of existing on-site buildings;
 - A three storey (16m AOD) concrete box to accommodate the safeguarded wharf facility, with up to 7,200m² of general industrial and storage / distributional floorspace (Use Class B2 / B8);
 - Six buildings ranging in height, five of which would be above the concrete box, between 15 and 32 storeys (57m and 110m AOD) in height above a raised wharf box (16m AOD);
 - Up to 900 residential units of mixed tenure;
 - Up to 400m² flexible commercial space (Use Class A1 - A5);
 - Blue badge car parking, and cycle parking; and
 - Open space, Thames Path improvements and works to the river wall.
- Outline planning permission will be sought for the following element:
- Works within and adjacent to the River Thames for barge / vessel docking and unloading.

5. PUBLICITY AND ENGAGEMENT

- 5.1 The applicant has undertaken their own public consultation events which have included public consultation events, advertising, leafleting, meetings with stakeholders and various feedback mechanisms.
- 5.2 Four consultation events were held in two phases. The first phase was in July 2019 at The Story Box whilst the second one was in February 2020 at Container City. Both venues are situated within the Trinity Buoy Wharf.
- 5.3 As part of informing residents and stakeholders, the applicant hand delivered flyers to more than 4000 surrounding addresses, distributed leaflets at East India and Canning Town stations, issued advertising in the East London and Docklands Advertiser. More recently, the applicant hand delivered a four-page community newsletter to surrounding addresses updating residents and stakeholders on the proposed scheme ahead of the submission.
- 5.4 The applicant provided a number of feedback mechanisms which included freepost, freephone and email.
- 5.5 Meetings were held between the applicant and various other groups including Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, Ballymore, Urban Space Management at Trinity Buoy Wharf, as well as City Island and Goodluck Hope Residents' Association.
- 5.6 An earlier version of the current proposal was presented to the Council's Conservation and Design Advisory Panel (CADAP) on 9th March 2020 to test the principles of the proposal. The panel's written response welcomed the potential of the project as it combines the industrial logistics and residential uses on a safeguarded wharf site; however, they considered that the proposed scheme failed to incorporate the industrial character and riverside location.
- 5.7 Comments from CADAP members included the following:
- Appropriate level of development and density
 - Monotonous scheme in its regularity
 - Building C: make it taller and slimmer with a more iconic design or relocate on to the podium box
 - Access: consideration to be given to relocation of the entrance to the industrial space and removal of basement access adjacent to building; suggesting removing basement access adjacent to building C to improve the relationship between the building and the basin

- Podium design: underdevelopment of blocks on the podium level – suggested more variety in typologies and potential central residential access and concierge for the podium blocks
- Public realm and open spaces: increase needed to the public space around block C; recognition of the new bridge to the north-east of the site; lack of active spaces leading to Orchard Steps; enable public river walk and access during the wharf's inoperative hours
- Incorporation of a public house on the south-west corner of the site
- Exploration of the potential of introducing creative workspace

Some improvements have been made to the proposed scheme since March 2020; however, there are outstanding issues as discussed below.

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)

The Mayor of London's Draft New London Plan with Consolidated Suggested Changes was published in July 2019. The Examination in Public (EiP) took place in January 2019. Generally, the weight carried by the emerging policies within the Draft New London Plan is considered significant as the document has been subject to EiP, incorporates all of the Mayor's suggested changes following the EiP and an 'Intent to Publish' was published by the Mayor of London in December 2019. However, some policies in the Draft New London Plan are subject to Secretary of State directions made on 13th March 2020, these policies are considered to have only limited or moderate weight. The statutory presumption still applies to the London Plan 2016 up until the moment that the new plan is adopted.

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)
- Mayor of London's Housing SPG (updated 2017)
- Mayor of London's 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 London Plan (2016) policy 7.26 protects safeguarded wharves and policy S.TR1 of the Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031 (2020) requires development to support, improve and enhance the borough's freight infrastructure, including safeguarded wharves.
- 7.3 Emerging policy SI15 of the draft London Plan (Intend to Publish) states that development proposals that include the provision of a water freight use on a safeguarded wharf, with other land uses above or alongside, will need to ensure that the development has been designed so that there are no conflicts of use and that the freight-handling capacity of the wharf is not reduced.
- 7.4 The site has not been in use since the 1990s, but it remains a designated safeguarded wharf. The site's continued use as a safeguarded wharf has been confirmed as part of the Mayor of London's Safeguarded Wharves Review 2018-2019.
- 7.5 The proposed use associated with the safeguarded wharf is envisaged as a 'last-mile delivery' logistics and distribution centre. Three options for handling goods on the site have been presented through the pre-application process. This includes a crane option, a pontoon option and a jetty option.
- 7.6 At present, there is no identified end user for the wharf use. The proposal would be submitted as a mix of outline and full planning application where the outline component would include the riverside infrastructure to be determined through reserved matters when an end user would be known whilst all other components of the proposed would form part of the full planning application.
- 7.7 The principle of reactivating the wharf use and introducing the residential use is considered acceptable subject to ensuring that the wharf capacity has been maximised, there is flexibility of the proposed use for future operators, and the long-term use and viability of the safeguarded wharf is not constrained.
- 7.8 The applicant has been extensively engaging with the Port of London Authority to explore the wharf's maximum capacity and alternative uses. Whilst the applicant has carried out various assessment for the proposed wharf use; the PLA has not formally confirmed their position on the proposal with respect to the wharf's capacity and alternative uses.
- 7.9 In addition to the wharf use implications, the acceptability of the proposal would be subject to demonstrating policy compliance with regards to the impact on the surrounding and proposed residential uses. It should be acknowledged that Goodluck Hope development has been designed with suitable mitigation measures, this is not likely to be the case with residential units at 42-44 Orchard Wharf. Similarly, the residential element of the proposal should deliver a policy-compliant scheme to ensure successful and high-quality residential environment.

Housing

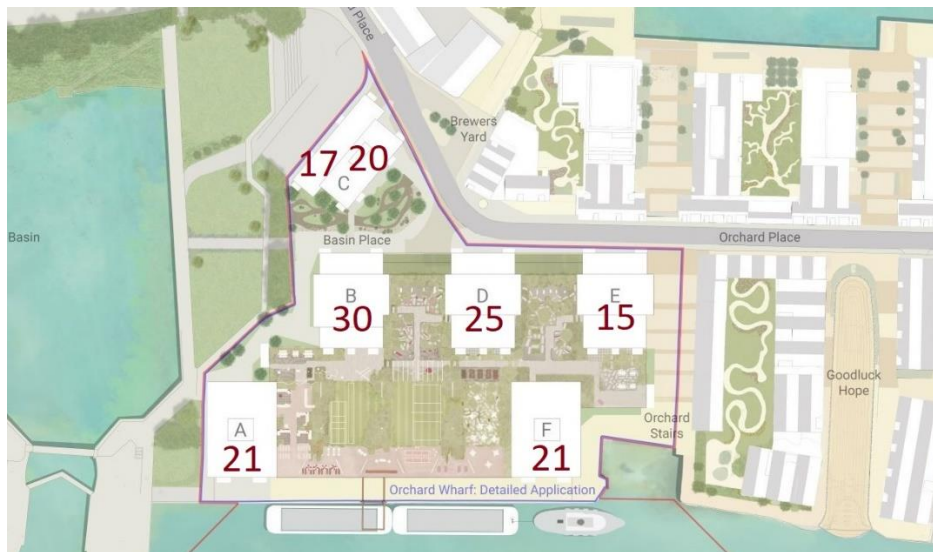
- 7.10 Local Plan policies require at least 35% affordable housing to be provided (excluding any re-provision of existing) in broad alignment with the Council's prescribed housing mix as set out in the Local Plan. The London Plan requires the maximum reasonable amount, subject to viability, to be provided. The policy refers to the GLA's Affordable Housing and Viability SPG which requires a minimum of 50% affordable housing provision for applications on industrial land to be considered under the fast track route.

- 7.11 Given the site's designation as a safeguarded wharf (industrial land), the proposal would be required to provide a minimum of 50% affordable housing unless it can be demonstrated that the capacity of the safeguarded wharf use would not be compromised as a result of the introduction of a residential use on the site. In that case, a lower threshold of 35% AH could be considered acceptable subject to a policy compliant tenure split as set out in Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031 policy D.DH2.
- 7.12 The proposed scheme seeks to deliver 826 residential units across six residential towers. The provision of a high density housing scheme within the Leamouth Tall Building Zone is in principle supported.
- 7.13 The proposal includes the provision of 35% affordable housing. As such, a viability assessment would need to form part of a future application. Once the maximum capacity, flexibility and long-term viability of the safeguarded wharf use have been established at the application stage, the proposal might be able to be considered under a fast-track route if the other elements of the proposal accord with the Development Plan policies.
- 7.14 The affordable housing offer is based on a 70:30 split between affordable rented units and Discounted Market Rent (DMR). The delivery of DMR units as part of the intermediate housing offer and the Build to Rent product is acceptable in policy terms; however, the rental levels should be aligned with other intermediate products.
- 7.15 In terms of housing quality, there are concerns with residential blocks B and D as they indicate nine units per core on each floor. There are concerns in terms of daylighting and sunlighting conditions as significant numbers of kitchen and living room areas would fail to meet the minimum daylighting requirements regardless of the site benefiting from the lack of obstruction to the south, north and west. The worst affected is block C which houses the affordable rented units.
- 7.16 The proposed communal amenity space is considered to be of sufficient amount and quality due to its position on the podium level with a southern orientation. Similarly, child playspace strategy provides a satisfactory overall space amount; however, it fails to satisfy the minimum play space for children aged 12-18.

Design, Heritage & Heights

- 7.17 Planning policies 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.
- 7.18 The Tower Hamlets Local Plan 2031 (2020) 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 (TBZs). Outside these zones, tall building proposals will be supported provided where they meet the criteria set out in Part 1 of the policy.
- 7.19 The pre-application site is located within the Leamouth Tall Building Zone (TBZ), which requires all buildings to step down towards the River Thames and ensure glimpses and views across the cluster. A general principle followed in all TBZs is stepping down towards the edge of tall building zones.
- 7.20 The logistics box would be three storeys in height above which are five of six proposed residential blocks. The tallest building, block B, stands at 30 storeys and overlooks the basin to the west and the proposed public realm and Orchard Place to the north-east. The riverside buildings, blocks A and F, are 21 storeys in height. The proposed buildings heights

drop down along Orchard Place with block D being 25 storeys in height and block E 15 storeys. The street building, block C, is part 17 part 20 storeys in height.



Proposed heights.

- 7.21 Height and massing have been raised as a concern throughout the pre-application process and has yet to be resolved. Officers are concerned that the proposed building heights fail to follow the policy requirement to step down towards the edge of the TBZ, i.e. the East India Dock Basin and the River Thames. Similarly, officers consider that the proposed buildings should acknowledge the Goodluck Hope tallest tower as the centre of this part of the Leamouth TBZ from which there should be a step down.
- 7.22 There is a general concern with respect to block C situated on the street level. Its inclusion in the scheme misses the opportunity to deliver a more generous open space and arrival point for a development of this scale. There is concern that the proposed affordable rented units located within block C would suffer from unacceptable sunlighting conditions. Other issues associated with block C include the provision of child playspace and servicing along Orchard Place.
- 7.23 The Councils design officers have raised concerns in relation to the architecture which seems to be busy and would benefit from an effective hierarchy, rhythm and contrast. Further consideration of the built form is also needed regarding the relationship between the podium associated with the wharf function and the proposed residential towers on the top.
- 7.24 The constraints of the site and structural challenges of the proposal should be acknowledged; however, it is considered that there is an opportunity to provide more public open space and buildings of appropriate heights to deliver a high quality living and working environment which fits in to the surrounding area and respects the local character.

Open Space & Public Realm

- 7.25 The extension of Orchard Place has created a small square between the podium and block C; however, there is a concern over the quality of this space due to the proximity of Towers B and C.
- 7.26 The proposed scheme would create public realm along the eastern boundary facing Goodluck Hope and there has been encouragement to create this space as active as possible.

- 7.27 Due to the site's designation as a safeguarded wharf, it has been acknowledged that opening the river access and walk is likely to be challenging due to the needs of the wharf use which should be prioritised.

Neighbouring Amenity

- 7.28 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.
- 7.29 Given the potential of the wharf use to create a significant adverse impact in terms of noise and vibration, the development would be required to include the relevant mitigation measures to safeguard the amenity of the surrounding area and the future residents of the development. Particular concerns have also been raised in relation to 42 and 44 Orchard Place as these properties are not likely to include the relevant mitigation measures themselves, unlike the most recent Goodluck Hope development.
- 7.30 A preliminary daylight and sunlight assessment has been carried out. Whilst some changes have been to the proposed scheme since, there are concerns about the level of adverse impact to daylighting and sunlighting conditions of 42 and 44 Orchard Place and Goodluck Hope.

Transport and Servicing

- 7.31 Planning policies promote sustainable modes of travel and limit car parking to essential user needs. They also seek to secure safe and appropriate servicing.
- 7.32 The site has a PTAL value of 1a-2 which indicates poor access to transport facilities. Whilst limited details have been submitted at the pre-application stage, the applicant has committed to provide a transport assessment which would include a few scenarios and assess the worst case scenario. There have been concerns over the potential road-road scenario for the wharf use. However, this is unlikely to be an unacceptable option given the strong requirement to utilise the river movement.
- 7.33 With respect to the residential use, the development is proposed as residentially permit free, with the exception of disabled car parking spaces associated with the 10% wheelchair units within the basement level below the logistics box. The provision of a policy compliant cycle storage would be secure on the basement level.
- 7.34 The majority of the residential use would be serviced within the basement space. The proposal includes a shared access route for deliveries and servicing vehicles accessed via the basement ramp located immediately adjacent to building C. One servicing bay is proposed on Orchard Place to serve building C. Another bay is proposed adjacent to block E and would be utilised for refuse collection.
- 7.35 There are concerns with respect to the servicing bay adjacent to block C and the quality of the public realm surrounding it. The eastern and western boundaries of the site would only be used for emergency access which would also allow for an uninterrupted pedestrian movement.
- 7.36 The extension of Orchard Place through the site between the podium box and block C is strongly supported. Further improvements to ensure the prioritisation of walking and cycling routes to key destinations, as well as an assessment of the Canning Town transport

interchange, would be included in the applicant's assessments forming part of the submission documents.

Environment

- 7.37 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.
- 7.38 The proposed development would constitute EIA. In this case, the ES would include the relevant impact assessments.
- 7.39 Some engagement has been done with the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority with respect to potential improvements to the basin, as well as public realm improvements and the creation of a visitor centre. However, the proposal would only be able to secure mitigation measures arising directly from the impact of the proposed development.

Infrastructure Impact

- 7.40 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 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

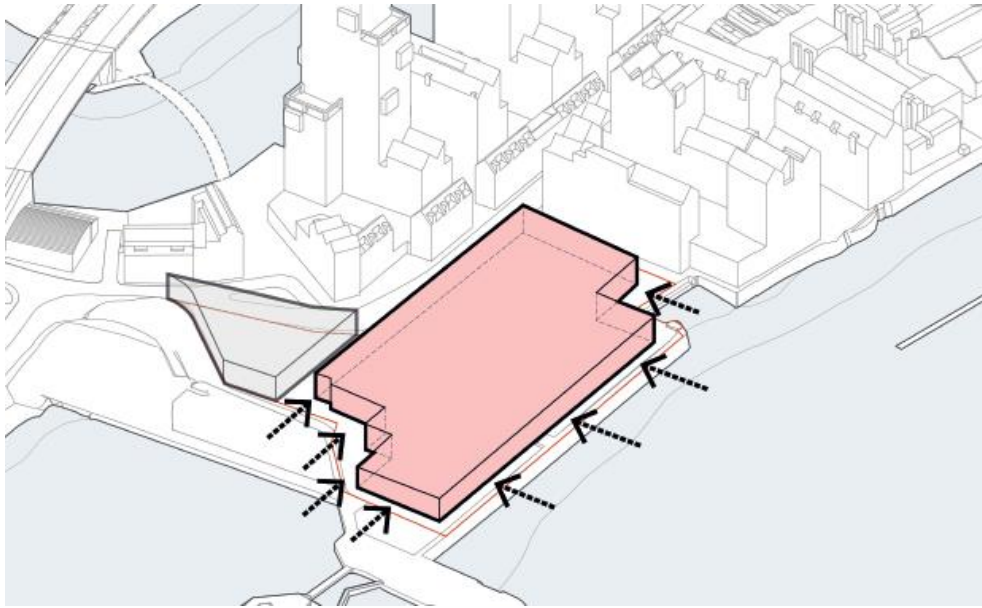
8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 The Committee notes the contents of the report and pre-application presentation.
- 8.2 The Committee is invited to comment on the issues identified and to raise 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



Masterplan.



Wharf use footprint (in red).

Crane option



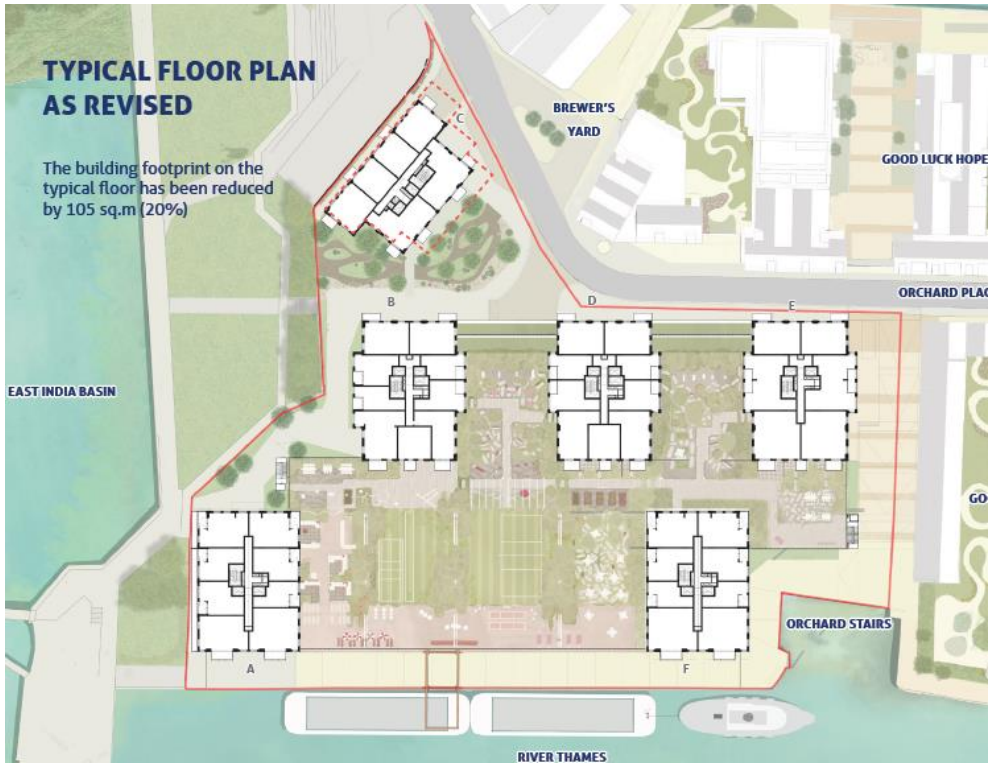
Pontoon option



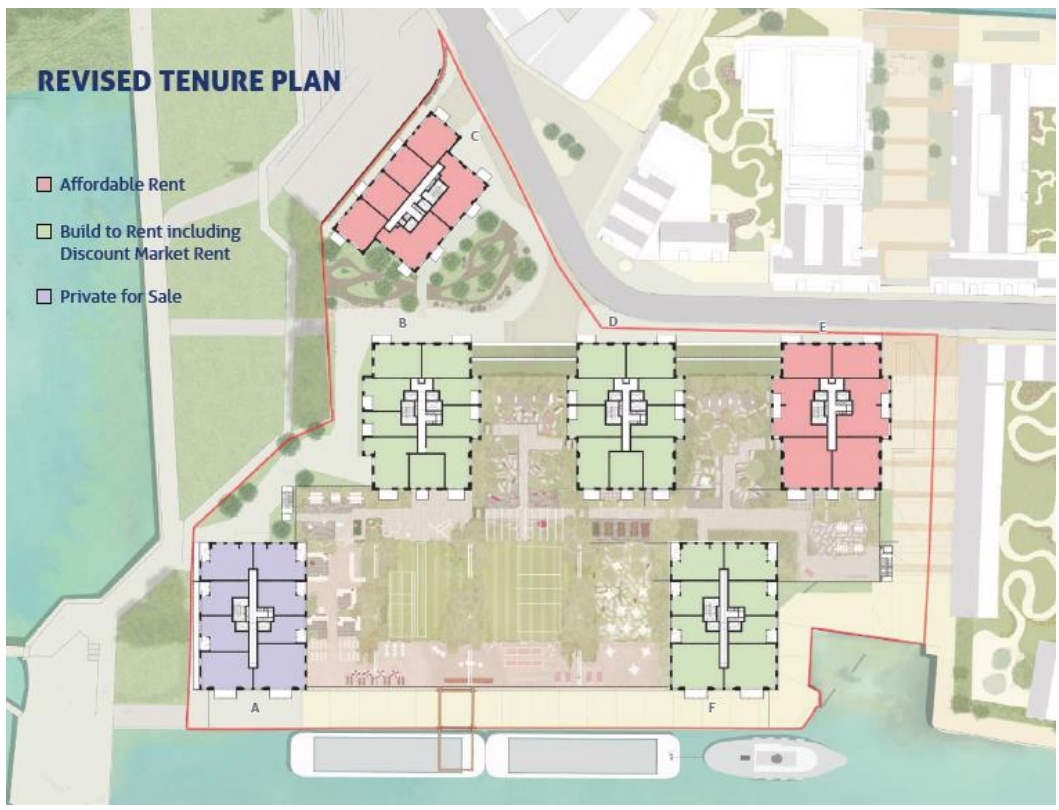
Jetty option



Wharf riverside infrastructure options.



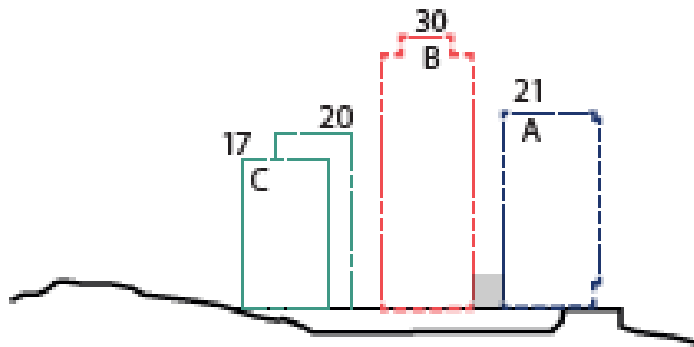
Typical floor plan.



Tenure plan.

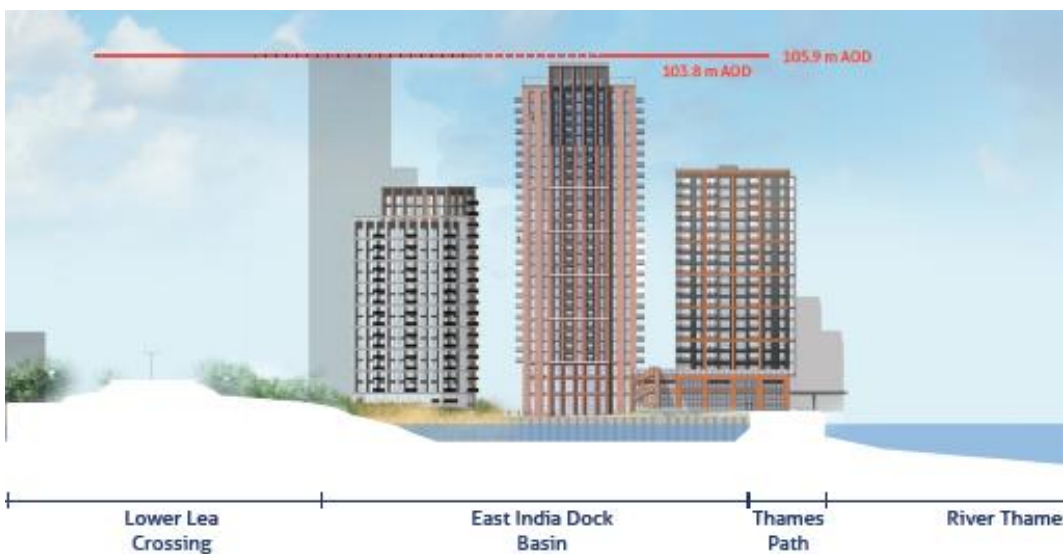


Proposed heights.



Storey Heights Diagram

Building heights as viewed from the East India Dock Basin.



Comparison to the Goodluck Hope tallest building.



View from the basin.



Closer view from the basin.



View from the Thames (Note: this image does not show the revised height of building B).



The site's entrance.



Entrance into Orchard Place.