

23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023

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Dear Sir / Madam

**Representation on Waltham Forest Local Plan (LP1) Proposed Submission Document (Regulation 19) and Local Plan (LP2) Draft Site Allocations Document (Regulation 18) London Hotel Group**

We write on behalf of our client, London Hotel Group (LHG), to submit a representation to the London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) in response to the following consultation process and documents:

- Examination in Public Stage 2 Consultation dated 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022
- The Council's correspondence dated 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022
- Examination Consultation – Further Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQs) Stage 2 Topics
- LPE30 – Examination Stage 2 Topic Paper (September 2022)
- LPE45 – Waltham Forest Character and Intensification Study (August 2019)
- LPE46 – Skyline Study (November 2021)
- LPE27 – Statement of Common Ground (March 2022)

This representation follows previous submissions made as part of the LBWF Local Plan process as follows:

- Representation to Waltham Forest Draft Local Plan and Character and Intensification Study (September 2019);
- A submission as part of the Waltham Forest Call for Sites process (December 2019);
- Representation on Waltham Forest Local Plan (LP1) Proposed Submission Document (Regulation 19) and Local Plan (LP2) Draft Site Allocations Document (Regulation 18) (December 2020);
- Representation on Waltham Forest Local Plan (LP2) Draft Site Allocations Document (Regulation 19) (January 2022)

## **Background**

For the avoidance of doubt, the Site in question is shown on the site plan at **Appendix I** of this letter and falls within the jurisdiction of the London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF). The Site as a whole is made up of a number of properties; the addresses of the of the buildings within the Site boundary are listed below:

- 543 Lea Bridge Road;
- 525, 527 and 529 Lea Bridge Road;
- 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 Russell Road;
- 2, 2A, 4, 6, 8 and 10 Amberley Road.

The site measures 0.541ha and includes a mixture of hotel buildings (Use Class C1) and residential units (Class C3).

We have previously objected in December 2020 to Part B of Draft Policy 57 of the Waltham Forest Local Plan (LP1) Proposed Submission Document (Regulation 19) in December 2020, stating that it should not preclude Taller and Tall Buildings outside of Strategic Locations and Opportunity Sites, and considered that the then wording should be as follows:

*B. Taller and Tall buildings **may** be supported outside Strategic Locations and Opportunity Sites subject to local character and context and where an opportunity for Transition or Transformation is justified and agreed in accordance with the approach to intensification as set out in Policy 8.*

The suggested re-wording of Draft Policy 57 was considered to better reflect the potential for such sites to come forward where Taller and Tall Buildings would support sustainable development, would contribute towards delivering the objectives of the Local Plan, and be justified and consistent with the evidence base. We note that the Council's approach to tall buildings was supported by the post-ambly consideration that:

*"14.10 The London Plan suggests that local authorities should define what is considered to be a tall building, as this may vary in different parts of the capital and should take into account local character and context. This is an important consideration in Waltham Forest, where there are significant variations in character, townscape and sensitivity to growth and intensification.*

*14.11 In line with the Characterisation and Intensification Study (2019), Policy 8 (Character-Led Intensification) of this Plan sets out an approach to intensification based on the categories of Reinforcement, Transition and Transformation. Table 14.1 in Policy 58 (Taller and Tall buildings) sets out recommended ranges of heights for each of these categories, based on the evidence provided in that study."*

It was therefore clear that the Council's approach was underpinned by a robust evidence base and was previously aligned with the then emerging Policy D9 of the London Plan that required a tall building to be defined.

We also previously made representations to Draft Site Allocations Document (Regulation 19) in January 2022 in which the site was identified as draft Allocation SA75 and suggested an indicative

development capacity of 90 new homes (gross) and which noted that the Site was in a 'Transition'<sup>1</sup> character area. We noted that draft site allocation SA75 at present did not specify a tall building within the draft allocation. However, we made representations on the basis that a tall building should be recognised within the final site allocation.

This was on the basis that the Council was applying the Characterisation and Intensification Study (2019) an evidence base document to the then emerging Local Plan to inform Draft Policies 8 and 57 and which will provide the Council with a guide to ensure that the "right forms" of intensification occur at the "right locations" (paragraph 4.33).

Part B of the Characterisation and Intensification Study, Design Principles was representative of the principles to be adopted in LHGs forward intensification proposals, given that the site layout is effectively a 'half block' typology, which allows one streets character, in this instance Lea Bridge Road, whilst responding sympathetically to the existing context of the site. Given the location of the site on a corner of a major route, the principles for the 'Corner block redevelopment' typology are also relevant.

In addition, we noted the Regulation 19 draft of Policy 57 of the then emerging Local Plan (LP1) set out that Taller/Tall buildings may be appropriate, subject to local character and context, where an opportunity for Transition or Transformation is justified and agreed. The draft Site Allocation SA75 acknowledged that the intensification approach for the Site is 'Transition' and therefore tall buildings should be considered appropriate in principle, subject to meeting the criteria in the then Draft Policy 57. This representation aligned with the December 2020 representation (**Appendix II**) where we considered greater flexibility could be achieved within the Policy 57.

We stated that the Site is circa 120m west of the Bakers Arms District Centre which has been identified in the draft Local Plan iterations as a strategic location within South Waltham Forest that is expected to deliver a minimum of 16,000 new homes and 3,250 new jobs (draft Policy 9) and that Bakers Arms will be enhanced by transitioning, building on their historic characteristics, into an attractive metropolitan cultural town centre with new quality homes

We also stated that the current site coverage and massing fails to make the best use of land and rather that the spatial characteristics of the site (i.e. a corner site along Lea Bridge Road, with a high PTAL, close to Leyton Midland Overground station, close to the Bakers Arms Centre and in an area which will be subject to significant strategic change) allow for the comprehensive intensification of the site in order to optimise the delivery of uses.

This aligned to LHGs previous pre-application discussions with the Council where tall and taller building on the subject site have been supported by Officers.

Therefore, as set out above and throughout our previous representations, we considered that the Site is:

- suitable for a tall/taller building as aligned by the evidence base used to underpin the Regulation 19 approach:

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<sup>1</sup> Transition was defined in Table 14.1 of the Waltham Forest Local Plan (LP1) Proposed Submission Document (Regulation 19), This captures a typical shoulder height of 3-5 storeys, recommended heights for Taller Buildings of 6-9 storeys and recommended heights for Tall Buildings of between 10 - 17 storeys.

- the flexibility should have been built into draft Policy 57, both to align with the wider development plan and to ensure a flexible and design-led response as required by draft Policy 56:
- the Council had a robust evidence base to support its direction of policy
- that the Site Allocation SA75 should explicitly acknowledge the potential for height across the Site in order to support a 'Transition' approach to intensification at the Site and optimise site capacity

### **Local Plan Hearings and Subsequent Documents**

We did not take part in the Hearings in March 2022 but we watched the discussions of Wednesday 23rd March 2022 and have reviewed the Statement of Common Ground (ref: LPE27) dated March 2022 and the subsequent Examination Stage 2 Topic Paper (ref: LPE30) dated September 2022 and the Examination Consultation – Further Matters, Issues and Questions (MIQs) Stage 2 Topics.

The thrust of the Statement of Common Ground on Policy 57 – Tall Buildings, and the associated introduction of a draft Policy on Building Heights is based upon the objective to align with the approach to Policy D9 of the London Plan (2021). The changes to Policy 57 seek to define a 'tall building', i.e, 10 storeys, establish a policy which sets out clearly defined locations for tall buildings and ensure that the areas that these are supported via a map-based approach.

The revised approach to Policy 57 begins by stating that tall buildings will only be supported on some sites identified for a Transition or Transformation approach to character-led intensification, but then subsequently refers to 'other identified strategic locations'. It is not clear whether these other locations are inclusive of the specific identified locations in the subsequent Topic Paper (see Figure 2, page 51), the wider 'Strategic Locations' identified in the Appendix 1 table of the Skyline Study (November 2021) or are some other defined location. Notwithstanding this, the approach includes much less flexibility than the previous policy direction included.

The introduction of the "Building Heights" Policy re-introduces the original character-led approach to building height which was previously identified Criteria D of Policy 57 of the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan. We previously supported the principles of this then draft Policy and Table 14.1, given that it supported buildings up to 17 storeys in Transition areas.

The revised Table 14.1 now substantially changes this approach, and now states that 'Refer to Policy 57 – Tall Buildings and relevant Local Plan Site Allocations'. This is not sound for the reasons set out below.

We have also reviewed the Skyline Study (November 2021) and question whether this can be relied upon as a part of the evidence base, as noted in the Topic Paper.

The document plainly fails to test the suitability of the Site for a tall building in the same manner that other sites have been assessed. Furthermore, this document goes contrary to the methodology and approach adopted in the Character and Intensification Study.

Latterly, it fails to assess the Site in its own right and this is particularly concerning given that we have previously made extensive representations on the suitability of the Site for accommodating a tall building.

Our position is that we have objections on this given:

- the now locationally restrictive nature of Policy 57 which potentially fails to allow for the assessment of the suitability of a tall building on the local character and context:
- there is an acknowledgement that Policy D9 is required to be read in the round of the Development Plan, and that a slavish adherence to the identification of suitable locations for tall buildings could be contrary to the wider objectives of the Development Plan – a principle widely established following the Master Brewer case<sup>2</sup> in which it was established that Policy D9 is not to be interpreted in a way automatically treats proposals for tall buildings as contrary to the development plan where they are not supported in the local plan:
- the lack of substantive evidence base, and the absence of a clear path from the Waltham Forest Character and Intensification Study to adopting the revised approach to this Policy – given that Policy 57 is now much more tightly defined in comparison to previous drafting which relied upon this Study as part of its evidence base:
- the lack of clarity or response to our previous representations to the Waltham Forest Local Plan (LP2) Draft Site Allocations Document (Regulation 19) (January 2022), and the timescales for the adoption of this document – which is key given that this site is an emerging Site Allocation and has the clear potential to support a, now clearly defined, tall building:
- the Council's justification for a substantial shift in its policy approach in the Topic Paper, is unsubstantiated, unclear and not aligned with the evidence base.

**Response to Inspectors Further Matters, Issues and Questions**

| <b>Matter 6 : Built Environment, Heritage and Design</b>   | <b>Response</b>  |
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| <b>Visual impacts</b>  |  |
| <p>6.1 Is the approach to tall buildings and building heights set out in the Topic Paper (LPE30 section 3.5) and in the Statement of Common Ground (LPE27) justified and in general conformity with the London Plan?</p> | <p>We disagree that the approach to tall buildings and building heights set out in the Topic Paper (LPE30 section 3.5) and in the Statement of Common Ground (LPE27) are justified and in general conformity with the London Plan.</p> <p>As explained in our previous text, the methodology and evidence base to the identified locations for tall buildings has not been updated since the drafting of the much more flexible Regulation 19 version of Draft Policy 57.</p> <p>In any event, it must be clear that the application of Policy D9, and therefore the current wording of draft Policy 57, must not to be interpreted in a way automatically treats proposals for tall buildings as contrary to the development plan where they are not supported in the local plan.</p> |

<sup>2</sup> London Borough of Hillingdon, R (On the Application Of) v Mayor of London [2021] EWHC 3387 (Admin) (15 December 2021)

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>6.2 Is the approach to tall buildings and building heights compatible with the Plan's spatial and growth strategy including the delivery of 27,000 new homes and Policy 8 – Character Led Intensification? Is it justified that tall buildings could be appropriate on sites in both Transformation and Transition character areas?</p> | <p>We make no comment upon the approach to tall buildings and building heights compatible to the Plan's growth strategy.</p> <p>We do not agree the Council and GLA has adequately justified that tall buildings could be appropriate on sites in both Transformation and Transition character areas.</p> <p>Notwithstanding our position that this Transition site is suitable for a tall building, the evidence base which underpins the revised approach to Tall Buildings (Policy 57) and Table 14.1 of the new Building Heights Policy is the same that was used to support a significantly more flexible approach. WE maintain that greater flexibility – in light of the Master Brewer case law – is captured in the Policy in the same manner as our representations dated December 2020.</p> <p>Furthermore, the reliance upon relevant LP2 Site Allocations – at a stage where these are unresolved – is not justified, and therefore potentially prejudicial to London Hotel Group.</p> |
| <p>6.3 At a strategic level, are the sites/locations identified on the map at Figure 2 of the Topic Paper (LPE30 page 52) as having potential for tall buildings appropriate and justified by the evidence? To what extent has the Skyline Study (LPE46) informed the sites/locations identified in Figure 2?</p>                          | <p>We strongly disagree that the sites and locations are justified, for the reasons we set out in the letter. Neither stated documents – the Waltham Forest Character and Intensification Study or the Skyline Study are consistent with each other, or enable the Council to come to the adoption of the identified sites and locations. The latter also fails to consider the potential of this Site for a tall building – despite representations to this affect.</p> <p>We also note that the Statement of Common Ground document, which appears to act as the text to be used as Policy 57, makes no reference to either evidence base document.</p> <p>For these reasons, the approach to Policy 57 is fundamentally not justified.</p>  |
| <p>6.4 The Council has reconsidered some of the locations it considers to be suitable locations for tall buildings. Do the sites/locations identified on the map in Figure 2 (LPE30 page 52) reflect the additional locations identified as suitable for tall buildings in paragraphs 3.5.4.4 and 3.5.4.5 of the Topic Paper (LPE30)?</p>  | <p>There is consistency between documents.</p>   |

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| <p>6.5 How will the proposed policy approach to tall buildings and building heights be implemented alongside Policy 56 in practice?</p>   | <p>We maintain that there is a lack of consistency between Policy 57 and the new Building Heights Policy. However, it appears that Policy 56 and Policy 57 – based on their complementary qualitative criteria requirements can be implemented alongside each other.</p> |
| <p>6.6 Overall, is the approach to tall buildings and building heights positively prepared, justified, effective, consistent with national policy, and in general conformity with the London Plan? Are any main modifications, including to Policy 57, necessary for soundness?</p> | <p>For the reasons set out in this letter, we maintain that the approach to tall buildings and building heights is no justified and is unsound.</p> <p>We suggest that following changes to Policy 57 are included for soundness.</p>                                    |

**Table 1. Response to Further Matters, Issues and Questions**

As outlined above, we maintain that the Council should revise its approach to Policy 57 to align with their previous Regulation 19 drafting, with the update as set out in our December 2020 correspondence.

If the Inspector considers the Statement of Common Ground Policy 57 to be justified, we would request that the following modifications be made to the Policy wording:

Para 4 of Policy 57 – “In other identified strategic locations **that are not identified in Figure XX**, and subject to a Council-led assessment of local character and context, a tall building may be considered where an opportunity for transition or transformation is justified and agreed by the Council, on sites which benefit from good local public transport connectivity. Such sites will be identified in Local Plan 2 (Site Allocations) and/or other subsequent Development Plan Documents”.

This suggested approach will ensure that

- the Council’s Transitional objectives for such locations can be achieved,
- that the wider objectives of the Development Plan can be considered, and
- that suitable sites which are outside of the broad locations identified as being suitable for tall buildings can be assessed correctly.

**Summary and Conclusions**

These representations have been prepared on behalf of London Hotel Group and provide comment on the Local Plan (LP1) Proposed Submission Document and Local Plan (LP2) Draft Site Allocations Document.

In the first instance, we consider that the Waltham Forest Local Plan (LP1) is broadly ‘sound’ as it is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy and we are supportive of the overall aims of the plan. Overall, the client is supportive of the objectives of the Local Plan

and, in particular, the aspiration for growth and intensification in South Waltham Forest and the Bakers Arms District Centre.

However, we consider Draft Policy 57 should be reworded in order to reflect the opportunity for tall buildings to be located outside of identified locations where they meet the relevant criteria and positively support the objectives of sustainable development and the wider Local Plan. We also consider that the evidence base of the revised Draft Policy 57 be updated to ensure that the policy can be justified.

We also consider that the Site detailed within this letter should be considered for a tall building as part of the Site Allocation SA75 in the next iteration of the Local Plan : Site Allocations document. (LP2).

The Site provides an excellent and sustainable opportunity to deliver a comprehensive intensification of the site that will include a tall building and this revised approach to policy will align with the position adopted by Officers in recent pre-application discussions in which support has been given for tall and taller buildings.

Yours faithfully,



**Simon Fowler**  
**Planning, Development and Regeneration**



**For and on behalf of Avison Young (UK) Limited**



## Appendix I - Site Plan





**Appendix II - Representation on Waltham Forest Local Plan (LP1) Proposed Submission Document (Regulation 19) and Local Plan (LP2) Draft Site Allocations Document (Regulation 18) (December 2020)**

14<sup>th</sup> December 2020

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Dear Sir / Madam

**Representation on Waltham Forest Local Plan (LP1) Proposed Submission Document (Regulation 19) and Local Plan (LP2) Draft Site Allocations Document (Regulation 18) London Hotel Group**

We write on behalf of our client, London Hotel Group (LHG), to submit a representation to the London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF) in response to the following consultation documents:

- Local Plan (LP1) Proposed Submission Document (Regulation 19)
- Local Plan (LP2) Draft Site Allocations Document (Regulation 18)

The consultation period on both of these documents closes on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

This representation follows previous submissions made as part of the LBWF Local Plan process as follows:

- Representation to Waltham Forest Draft Local Plan and Character and Intensification Study (September 2019); and
- A submission as part of the Waltham Forest Call for Sites process (December 2019).

This letter contains an overview of the Site being promoted by LHG before making representations on the Local Plan (LP1) Proposed Submission Document and Local Plan (LP2) Draft Site Allocations Document to demonstrate why the Site should be considered for a site allocation for a tall building and mixed-use development.

**Site Context and Background**

The Site is shown on the site plan at Appendix I of this letter and falls within the jurisdiction of the London Borough of Waltham Forest (LBWF). The Site as a whole is made up of a number of properties; the addresses of the of the buildings within the Site boundary are listed below:

- 543 Lea Bridge Road;
- 525, 527 and 529 Lea Bridge Road;
- 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 Russell Road;
- 2, 2A, 4, 6, 8 and 10 Amberley Road.

The site measures 0.541ha and includes a mixture of hotel buildings (Use Class C1) and residential units (Class C3).

LHG and the Council have engaged in pre-application discussions to date, and these continue to be ongoing. The proposals include the demolition of all buildings on the Site, and the intensification of the Site through a mixed-use development that includes taller buildings. It is anticipated that this development will be brought forward on a phased basis. The Council's position to date is supportive of the principles of development.

The site is not within a designated town or district centre but is approximately 120m west of the Bakers Arms District Centre. For the purposes of hotel use, the Site is therefore 'edge of centre'<sup>1</sup>. We have accessed the LB Waltham Forest's Policies Map (2013) and there are no designations relating to the Site. Additionally, none of the buildings within the site are listed nor lie within the Bakers Arms Conservation Area. The closest heritage asset is the Bakers Almhouses (Grade II) which is located to the northeast.

The Site has a PTAL rating ranging between 4 and 5 (Good / Very Good). The Site is therefore in a highly accessible location. The Site is located within Flood Zone 1 (low risk) according to the Environment Agency's Flood Maps.

### **Waltham Forest Local Plan (LP1) Proposed Submission Document (Regulation 19)**

The draft Local Plan sets out the Council's vision and plan for how the Borough will grow and develop over the next 15 years. The Plan identifies a number of strategic objectives for the Borough over this timeframe, including increasing housing supply, economic growth and job opportunities and the promotion of well-designed and integrated development which creates a sense of place. Our client supports the aspirations for the Local Plan.

Draft Policy 4 sets out the primary locations for growth involving new homes and jobs with supporting infrastructure. This includes South Waltham Forest which will deliver a minimum of 14,900 new homes and 3,250 new jobs in the Strategic Locations, one of which is Bakers Arms District Centre. This is expanded upon in Draft Policy 9 which states that South Waltham Forest will deliver a minimum of 16,000 new homes and 3,250 new jobs. We consider the higher target of 16,000 new homes for South Waltham Forest should be reflected throughout the Local Plan.

Draft Policy 8 of the Proposed Local Plan sets out the Council's approach to intensification which includes three categories: (A) Reinforcement; (B) Transition; and (C) Transformation. We support the Council's approach and consider that the Site would fall into the 'Transition' category due to its location on a Major Route (Lea Bridge Road) and proximity to the Designated Centre and Strategic Location of Bakers Arms.

Draft Policy 57 of the Proposed Local Plan concerns Taller and Tall Buildings. It states that in some locations, such as growth areas and public transport interchanges, subject to contextual analysis, and when included as part of a robust place making strategy, Taller and Tall buildings may be supported, subject to all of the following policy tests. "Taller" buildings are those that are taller

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<sup>1</sup> As defined by the NPPF (2019)

than their prevailing context and the typical shoulder heights proposed in a development, whilst “Tall” buildings are substantially taller, making a significant impact on the skyline of the borough.

The first policy test (A) sets out that Taller and Tall buildings will generally only be supported in identified Strategic Locations and Opportunity Sites. In such locations, for a site to be considered appropriate will depend on: (i) proximity to public transport interchanges; (ii) public transport accessibility; (iii) walking and cycling networks; and (iv) nearby facilities such as shops, community facilities and social infrastructure. We consider this is contrary to Draft Policy 8 which identifies areas of ‘transition’ as beyond just Strategic Locations, also including Designated Centres, Major Routes and Borough Arrival Points. We therefore consider the

Following this, the second policy test (B) states that Taller and Tall Buildings are *unlikely* to be supported outside Strategic Locations and Opportunity Sites. However, that in some limited circumstances, subject to local character and context, and where an opportunity for Transition or Transformation is justified and agreed, Taller and/or Tall buildings may be considered appropriate. Such sites could include: (i) “Gateway” sites or key entrance points into the Borough; (ii) “Landmark” locations at key junctions along principal routes; (iii) Central areas or key junctions within designated centres; or (iv) sites fronting large areas of open space, subject to there being no harmful impact on openness and visual or physical amenity.

We consider Draft Policy 57 as currently worded does not completely align with the Council’s approach to intensification as set out in Draft Policy 8 we therefore consider that there should be grateful flexibility in Draft Policy 57 to allow Taller and Tall Buildings to be located on ‘Transition’ and ‘Transformation’ sites where other policy tests are met. Part A of Draft Policy 57 is currently worded to suggest Taller and Tall Buildings will generally only be supported in identified Strategic Locations and Opportunity Sites but this does not reflect the Council’s approach to intensification in a wider range of locations including Designated Centres, Major Routes and Borough Arrival Points.

Thus, whilst Part B of Draft Policy 57 does not preclude Taller and Tall Buildings outside of Strategic Locations and Opportunity Sites, we consider the wording should be as follows:

*B. Taller and Tall buildings **may** be supported outside Strategic Locations and Opportunity Sites subject to local character and context and where an opportunity for Transition or Transformation is justified and agreed in accordance with the approach to intensification as set out in Policy 8.*

The re-wording of Draft Policy 57 would better reflect the potential for such sites to come forward where Taller and Tall Buildings would support sustainable development and contribute towards delivering the objectives of the Local Plan.

We also note that Paragraph 14.11 of the supporting text to Draft Policy 57 should read as follows:

*“In line with the Characterisation and Intensification Study (2019), Policy 8 of this Plan sets out an approach to intensification based on the categories of Reinforcement, Transition and Transformation. Table 14.1 in Policy **57** (Taller and Tall buildings)...”*

The approach to Hotels is set out in Draft Policy 40 which states that the designated centres will be the preferred locations for new retail, office, leisure and cultural/tourism, entertainment, hotel,

community and other service uses. We consider the approach to hotel development is in line with the sequential approach in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Overall, the client is supportive of the objectives of the Local Plan and, in particular, the aspiration for growth and intensification in South Waltham Forest and the Bakers Arms District Centre. Paragraph 35 of the NPPF sets out that Local Plans are considered 'sound' if they are:

- a) **Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- b) **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
- c) **Effective** – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
- d) **Consistent** with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework.

In light of the above, we broadly consider that the Waltham Forest Local Plan (LP1) is 'sound' as it is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy and we are supportive of the overall aims of the plan. However, we consider Draft Policy 57 should be reworded in order to reflect the opportunity for Taller and Tall buildings to be located outside of Strategic Locations and Opportunity Sites, as supported by Draft Policy 8, where such sites meet the relevant criteria and positively support the objectives of sustainable development and the Local Plan. With this suggested rewording of Draft Policy 57, we consider the Local Plan would be sound.

### **Waltham Forest Local Plan (LP2) Draft Site Allocations Document (Regulation 18)**

Furthermore, we welcome the opportunity to comment on the draft site allocations document. The Site is not currently identified within the Draft Site Allocations Document and we consider there is an opportunity to include the Site within the Site Allocations Document and on the Council's Brownfield Land Register as this would contribute towards the Council achieving its aims for housing and job growth over the plan period.

We previously made a submission as part of the Council's Call for Sites Process (December 2019) on behalf of our client, on the basis the scheme was capable of delivering a minimum of 0.1ha of non-residential development in the next 15 years.

We acknowledge that the sites allocations included in the Draft Site Allocations Document are 'Strategic Sites' defined as 100 or more new homes and 'Key Sites' which are critical to the delivery of the vision for the area but under 100 units. We consider the Site constitutes a 'Key Site' on the basis that it will deliver less than 100 new homes (plus non-residential floorspace) and help delivery the vision for Bakers Arms District Centre which sees it transitioning into an attractive metropolitan cultural town centre with new quality homes. We have reviewed the Site Allocations document and consider there are other key sites with similar characteristics included.

We consider the site should be suitable for a site allocation for a taller building and mixed-use development. The existing sites comprise an operational hotel and residential units. However, given the current market conditions and impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the hotel industry, the site allocation should be flexible to allow a range of uses to come forward that would be suitable in this location.

The Housing and Economic Land Available Assessment (HELAA) methodology set out in the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) assesses sites under the following criteria:

- Suitability
- Availability
- Achievability
- Overcoming Constraints
- Development Potential
- Delivery Timescales

The following provides an assessment of the site against these defined criteria.

#### *Suitability*

The NPPG sets out that 'a site or broad location can be considered suitable if it would provide an appropriate location for development when considered against relevant constraints and their potential to be mitigated'.

The existing sites comprises an operational hotel and residential units and therefore the principal of development for the intensification and re-provision of these uses has already been established. In addition, the site lies 120m west of the Bakers Arms District Centre boundary and therefore there are a range of local services, amenities and transport connection that are highly accessible from the site. The site is therefore suitable for future redevelopment.

#### *Availability*

The site is being promoted for comprehensive intensification on behalf of London Hotel Group who are actively seeking its delivery. We have considered the adopted LBWF Policies Map and the site is not within or adjacent to any existing or potential safeguarded sites, and in line with NPPG Paragraph 019 we do not foresee any impediments to the redevelopment of the site.

#### *Achievability*

Paragraph 20 of the NPPG (Reference ID 3-020-20190722) sets out that 'a site is considered achievable for development where there is a reasonable prospect that the particular type of development will be developed on the site at a particular point in time. This is essentially a judgement about the economic viability of a site, and the capacity of the developer to complete and let or sell the development over a certain period'.

The site is within single ownership and the landowner is actively seeking the delivery of the site for an intensification of uses. There are no known complications that would prevent the delivery of the development. As such, we consider that the site can be considered deliverable for redevelopment and therefore development is achievable.

#### *Overcoming Constraints*

We do not consider that there are any physical or environmental constraints which would prohibit an intensified use on this site:

- Flooding: The site falls within Flood Zone 1 and therefore there is a low risk of flooding;
- Heritage: The site is not located with a conservation area nor does it contain any designated or non-designated heritage assets; and
- Accessibility: The site has a PTAL rating of 4 / 5 and is well connected by public transport.

#### *Development Potential*

The NPPF requires development to optimise density, and the ItP London Plan (2019) Policy D1B sets out that development must make the best use of land by following a design-led approach that optimises the capacity of sites. In addition, objective GG2 of the ItP London Plan sets out the aspiration to make the best use of land, especially brownfield land. Specifically, the Policy states that those involved in planning and development must proactively explore the potential to intensify the use of land to support additional workspace and promote higher density development. Therefore, the redevelopment of the Site for an intensification of uses would be in accordance with the NPPF and the draft London Plan Policies by optimising the use of the Site.

#### *Delivery Timescales*

LBWF draft Local Plan sets out the vision of the borough over the next 15 years. We consider that the delivery of a comprehensive scheme to intensify the use of the site can be achieved within the plan period and help the borough achieve its targets over the plan period.

It is therefore considered that the site meets all the criteria of the NPPG and is therefore suitable to be allocated for comprehensive redevelopment with an intensification of uses.

### **Planning Considerations**

Set out below are the key reasons as to why we consider LBWF should allocate the site for intensified use in the forthcoming Local Plan. This would help the Council achieve its visions and objectives for the borough over the plan period.

#### Principle of Intensification

The site is comprised of a number of existing buildings currently in hotel and residential use. However, we consider there is an opportunity for a comprehensive intensification of the site to provide a greater quantum of development and to optimise the use of the site. As above, the allocation should be flexible to support a range of uses on this site given the impact COVID-19 has had on the hospitality industry. This is in accordance with the principles of sustainable development which encourages development to make the best use of land and realise the potential of brownfield sites, as set out in the NPPF, the Good Growth Objective 2 of the ItP London Plan and draft Policy 5 of the LBWF Reg 19 Local Plan.

Policy 7 of the draft Local Plan specifically seeks to encourage mixed use development. This includes a number of criteria which the Council will consider when assessing the most appropriate mix of uses for a site and whether that mix can practically be achieved:

- i. The location of the development and the character of the area;
- ii. Whether the proposed mix of uses would be appropriate in the existing street frontage;
- iii. The design quality of the proposal;
- iv. The financial and economic viability of the proposal;
- v. The contribution that land use swaps and off-site contributions could make;
- vi. Any other planning objectives considered to be a priority for the area;
- vii. The extent to which planning conditions could be used to protect the amenity of existing and future residents and businesses, and;
- viii. The compatibility of the proposed use(s) with existing, proposed and adjoining uses.

As stated, the site is located circa 120m west of the Bakers Arms District Centre, which is identified in the draft Local Plan as a strategic location within South Waltham Forest that is expected as a whole to deliver a minimum of 16,000 new homes and 3,250 new jobs (draft Policy 9). In particular, Bakers Arms will be enhanced by transitioning, building on their historic characteristics, into an attractive metropolitan cultural town centre with new quality homes (draft Policy 9).

We believe that the current site coverage and massing fails to make the best use of land and rather that the spatial characteristics of the site (i.e. a corner site along Lea Bridge Road, with a high PTAL, close to Leyton Midland Overground station, close to the Bakers Arms Centre and in an area which will be subject to significant strategic change) allow for the comprehensive intensification of the site in order to optimise the delivery of uses. Indeed, additional massing is appropriate in this location to allow for a transformation of character that is sought by the Local Plan.

Additional massing on this site could be in the form of increased height beyond the existing 4 storeys. To achieve the optimum quantum of development on the Site, future development proposals will be required to consider the Characterisation and Intensification Study (2019) which is an evidence base document to the emerging Local Plan and which informs Draft Policies 8 and 57.

The Characterisation and Intensification Study provides guidance to undertake an assessment of a sites immediate context, setting out how density and local character help to determine the appropriate nature of intensification. This has helped inform emerging Draft Policy 8 and will provide the Council with a guide to ensure that the “right forms” of intensification occur at the “right locations” (paragraph 4.33).

Moreover, in accordance with Part B of the Characterisation and Intensification Study, Design Principles, we believe that the site allows for a number of principles to be adopted in our forward intensification proposals. In the first instance, the site layout is effectively a ‘half block’ typology, which allows one streets character, in this instance Lea Bridge Road, whilst responding sympathetically to the existing context of the site. Given the location of the site on a corner of a major route, the principles for the ‘Corner block redevelopment’ typology are also relevant.

As above, we consider Draft Policy 57 should be slightly reworded to allow Taller and Tall Buildings outside of Strategic Locations and Opportunity Areas where this supports an opportunity for Transition or Transformation as per the intensification approach in Draft Policy 8. In addition, Draft Policy 57 includes a number of criteria against which proposals for tall buildings will be assessed. Table 1 below provides an assessment of the site against each of these criteria and also draws upon the Townscape and Heritage note prepared by Montagu Evans in support of the intensification of the site and which is included in Appendix II.

| Criteria in LBWF draft Policy 57   | The Site  |
|--|---|
| <b>Visual impacts</b>  |   |
| i. Impact on the existing character and townscape of their surroundings considered in long-range, mid-range and immediate views                | The Townscape and Heritage note prepared by Montague Evans sets out that developments of larger scale, including Lea Bridge House, are already influencing the character and appearance of this area and therefore an increase in height on this site would not be incongruous with its existing context. In addition, the existing buildings are not of historic interest or architectural merit and the proposals therefore represent an opportunity to deliver significant townscape benefits including providing active frontages at ground floor level and reinforcement of the local character through provision of residential uses. |
| ii. Impact on the existing streetscape, including the provision of active frontages and sufficient, high quality public realm at ground level; | The redevelopment of the site for intensified use would provide an opportunity to improve the existing streetscape and provide a high quality public realm at ground floor. In addition, the intensification of use would   |

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|  | provide an active commercial frontage at ground level onto Lea Bridge Road.   |
| iii. Impact on the existing, and where relevant emerging, skyline;   | <p>As set out in the accompanying Townscape and Heritage note, the buildings on the Site are experienced in a wider urban context which includes development of varying age, scale and quality. Taller development already forms part of this wider setting. The note acknowledges that a taller building on the site will be visible on views from the Bakers Arms Conservation Area, however the Conservation Area Appraisal states that there are no long views of especial note either in or out of the Conservation Area and that views out of the Conservation Area to the east, modern and larger scale developments are currently visible.</p> <p>In addition, developments of larger scale, including Lea Bridge House, are already influencing the character and appearance of this area and therefore an increase in height on this site would not be incongruous with its existing context.</p> |
| iv. Contribution to existing and proposed spatial networks and hierarchies, wayfinding, and legibility;  | This is set out in full in the accompanying Townscape and Heritage note prepared by Montague Evans. In summary, the note concludes that the Site could sustain increased massing, the principle of intensification is justified and that the redevelopment proposals present an opportunity to deliver significant townscape benefits through the replacement of buildings of undistinguished buildings typical of their period with a high quality development that responds to its particular townscape context.  |
| v. Impact on local heritage assets, their settings, and views into and from them. Heritage assets include conservation areas, listed or locally listed buildings and parks and gardens | This is set out in full in the accompanying Townscape and Heritage note prepared by Montague Evans. In summary, the note concludes that the Site could sustain increased massing, the principle of intensification is justified and that the redevelopment proposals present an   |

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|   | opportunity to deliver significant townscape benefits through the replacement of buildings of undistinguished buildings typical of their period with a high quality development that responds to its particular townscape context.                                       |
| vi. High quality design with careful attention paid to form and proportionality, materials, finishes, and details;  | This would be incorporated into the design of any development proposal for the Site. A redevelopment scheme of high quality provide an opportunity to deliver significant townscape benefits, as set out in the accompany Townscape and Heritage note by Montague Evans. |
| <b>Environmental Impacts</b>  |  |
| vii. Avoidance of harmful overshadowing or other impacts that would compromise the comfort and enjoyment of surrounding public open space, private or communal outdoor spaces, private amenity of neighbouring properties, watercourses and canals; | This would be incorporated into the design of any development proposal for the Site.   |
| viii. Avoidance of harmful environmental impacts in relation to wind movement, solar glare, microclimatic conditions, air, noise and light pollution and bird and bat strikes;  | This would be incorporated into the design of any development proposal for the Site.   |
| ix. Use of sustainable design and construction methods  | This would be incorporated into the design of any development proposal for the Site.   |
| <b>Functional Impacts</b>   |  |
| x. Demonstration of the safety of all occupants, including considerations such as internal and external design, construction detailing, materiality, and emergency exit routes  | This would be incorporated into the design of any development proposal for the Site.   |
| xi. The impacts of servicing, maintenance, and building management on safety, quality, and enjoyment of the surrounding public realm;   | This would be incorporated into the design of any development proposal for the Site.   |
| xii. The avoidance of interference to aviation, navigation and/or telecommunications; and   | This would be incorporated into the design of any development proposal for the Site.   |
| <b>Cumulative impacts</b>   |  |
| xiii. The cumulative visual, functional and environmental impacts of proposed, consented and planned tall buildings in the surrounding area.  | An initial assessment of the scheme in the context of surrounding development is included with the Townscape and Heritage note prepared by Montague Evans. The   |

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|  | cumulative impact of the development would be assessed as part of any development proposal for the Site. |
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**Table 1. Assessment of the site against the criteria in draft Policy 57**

Therefore, as set out above, we consider that the site is suitable for comprehensive intensification which is in line with local, regional and national policy, and should be allocated as such in the emerging Waltham Forest Local Plan.

**Summary and Conclusions**

These representations have been prepared on behalf of London Hotel Group and provide comment on the Local Plan (LP1) Proposed Submission Document and Local Plan (LP2) Draft Site Allocations Document.

In the first instance, we consider that the Waltham Forest Local Plan (LP1) is ‘sound’ as it is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy and we are supportive of the overall aims of the plan. However, we consider Draft Policy 57 should be reworded in order to reflect the opportunity for Taller and Tall buildings to be located outside of Strategic Locations and Opportunity Sites where they meet the relevant criteria and positively support the objectives of sustainable development and the Local Plan.

We also consider that the Site detailed within this letter should be considered for a site allocation for mixed-use development as part of the Local Plan (LP2). The Site provides an excellent and sustainable opportunity to deliver a comprehensive intensification of the site. The site is deliverable, as defined by the NPPF, as a result of the suitability, availability and achievability of the site for redevelopment. As set out above, there would be a number of public and planning benefits associated with the redevelopment of the Site which would be in accordance with the three dimensions to achieving sustainable development set out in the NPPF.

The aspirations for the comprehensive intensification of the site would meet the Council’s strategy for the area and help achieve the vision and objectives for the borough over the next 15 years as set out in the emerging Local Plan.

For the reasons set out above, we consider that the site is suitable for comprehensive intensification and redevelopment and should be included in the Brownfield Land Register and allocated within the forthcoming Local Plan.

Yours faithfully,



**Lauren Whiteley**  
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For and on behalf of Avison Young (UK) Limited

Appendix I - Site Plan



**Appendix II – Townscape and Heritage Note prepared by Montague Evans**

# BRIEFING NOTE

## SITE EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS OF TOWNSCAPE AND HERITAGE CONTEXT: WALTHAM FOREST LOCAL PLAN CALL FOR SITES

This note has been drafted by Montagu Evans LLP on behalf of London Hotel Group to inform discussions with the Waltham Forest Council in respect of the Borough's Local Plan Call for Sites (2019). It sets out the rationale for why the subject Site is suitable for an allocation of intensification. We understand that the Site is promoted for a hotel-led redevelopment with the re-provision of existing residential properties.

The report is prepared in relation to the Site which comprises the following addresses:

- 543 Lea Bridge Road;
- 527 and 529 Lea Bridge Road;
- 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 Russell Road;
- 2, 2A, 4, 6, 8 and 10 Amberley Road.

Collectively these buildings comprise a mixture of hotel buildings and residential units. The Site lies at the corner between Lea Bridge Road (A104) and Russell Road, approximately 120m west of the Bakers Arms District Centre. There are no designated or non-designated heritage assets within the Site boundary and it does not lie within a conservation area. We return to relevant heritage designations below.

### **Purpose and Structure of this Note**

This note critically assesses the capacity of the Site and surrounding area to accommodate intensification. Section 1.0 sets out the policy position and statutory provisions relevant to any forthcoming proposals for the Site or its allocation. We also have regard to the evidence base informing the emerging local plan, including key documents relating to townscape character and intensification. Section 2.0 provides a brief history of the area's development and describes the current buildings on the Site. Section 3.0 analyses the current townscape character and Section 4.0 describes the special interest and setting of relevant heritage assets. Section 5.0 sets out our findings.

### **1.0 Statutory Provision and Policy Framework**

The Site lies approximately 60m from the grade II listed building known as the Bakers Almshouses (and its associated gates and railings, also grade II). These listed buildings in the vicinity of the Site comprise sensitive and weighty considerations in planning terms. They are subject to separate statutory provision under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Section 66 (1) of that 1990 Act requires the decision maker considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Case law has made clear that the statutory duty to preserve the settings of listed buildings should be accorded 'considerable importance and weight' in the determination of an application<sup>1</sup>.

### **National Policy**

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<sup>1</sup> Barnwell and several subsequent decisions, whose import is now reflected expressly in the NPPF in paragraph 193 (2019).

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Paragraph 193 supports that proposition; Paragraph 193 of the NPPF (2019) sets out that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, 'great weight should be given to its conservation'. It goes on to state that 'the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be'. There is potential for significance to be harmed or lost not only through alteration or destruction of a heritage asset but also through development in its setting.

However both statute and policy (see NPPF paragraphs 195 and 196) allow that a development may be consented for some other planning reason, on the balance of benefits. It is a matter of degree and relative weight on a case-by-case basis.

NPPF policies, together with the guidance on their implementation in the Planning Practice Guidance, form the framework for the consideration of change affecting the setting of designated heritage assets. National best practice guidance confirms that changes to setting might include the visual impact of a proposal, or a change in our ability to appreciate the special interest of a heritage asset. It is clear from policy and guidance, and confirmed by the Courts in recent judgments, that impact on setting itself is not the consideration. Setting is important only to the extent it enables an appreciation of significance or contributes directly to it. Thus a change to setting, even a major one, can be neutral, beneficial or harmful depending on the particular facts of any case.

The Site also lies in the vicinity of the Bakers Arms Conservation Area. Although the settings of conservation areas are not protected through statute, the NPPF states that the setting of a designated heritage asset (including conservation areas) can contribute to its significance, and the setting protection extended to CAs in policy terms is equivalent to that for listed buildings.

By virtue of paragraph 189 of the NPPF, development proposals which have an effect upon the historic environment are required to describe the significance of identified heritage assets so that the impact of proposals may be understood. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposals on their significance. We provide a high level summary of heritage significance in this note; any forthcoming proposals for the Site would be accompanied by a heritage statement to fulfil this requirement.

## **Development Plan**

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 stipulates that where in making any determination under the Planning Acts, regard is to be had to the development plan, and the determination must be made in accordance with that plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The following documents form the statutory development plan.

- London Plan;
- Waltham Forest Core Strategy (2012);
- Waltham Forest Development Management Policies (2013).

The Site is not subject to specific designations within the adopted local plan.

The applicable London Plan policies comprise 7.6 (Architecture), 7.7 (Location and Design of Tall and Large Buildings) and 7.8 (Heritage Assets and Archaeology). We return to these, and the adopted local plan policies, below.

## **Emerging Development Plan**

The Draft Local Plan '*Shaping the Borough*' will be a new borough-wide planning, development and regeneration strategy from 2020 to 2035. Once finalised and adopted, it will replace the Core Strategy (2012), Development Management Policies Document (2013), and a number of other planning documents.

The emerging local plan is supported by an evidence base which includes the Waltham Forest Character and Intensification Study prepared by Maccreanor Lavington (August 2019). The study has been prepared to support LBWF in understanding the best way to accommodate growth and intensification in the borough in a way that responds to the current and developing character of the borough.

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The report does not identify Sites suitable for intensification but provides guidance to assist in undertaking an assessment of a particular Site's immediate context. It makes clear that density and local character are two primary elements that should inform understanding and determination of suitability for intensification. The report also provides guidance on design principles that should inform a character-led approach to intensification. We have had due regard to this document in the preparation of this note.

## 2.0 The Development of the Site and Description

The Site's immediate environs were first developed in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, when former agricultural land was developed as housing following the introduction of the railways across the Lea Valley. By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century urban expansion had created an area characterised by extensive residential development. Throughout this period the Site remained an undeveloped plot on the corner of Russell Road and Lea Bridge Road. It remained as such until 1946, by which point a building is shown on the blot with its frontage to Russell Road.

The present building on the Site comprises a late 20<sup>th</sup> century building typical in its architectural appearance of its period. The building is of three storeys, faced in yellow brick with red brick banded detailing, including string courses and window heads, with pitched dormers and slate roof. It is of no particular architectural quality.

## 3.0 Existing Townscape Character and the Contribution Made by the Site

Lea Bridge Road comprises one of the key strategic routes through the borough, running from the Whipps Cross roundabout to the Lee Valley Ice Centre near the boundary with the London Borough of Hackney. The road is intensively used and comprises a major through-route.

Accordingly this route, around which the townscape developed, is a major influence in the area. Development fronting the road is dense, with coarse-grain development characterising the Bakers Arms District Centre. Immediately adjacent to the Site is the railway bridge which forms another significant townscape influence, and separates the Site and surrounding townscape, to a degree, from the heritage assets to the west.

This part of the townscape accommodates a cluster of commercial buildings, including larger footprint buildings and a number of which have been subject to recent redevelopment and increases in scale.

The Site itself, which fronts Lea Bridge Road, is of no more than ordinary to low architectural quality and displays no detailing of interest. To Russell Road, its elevations are blank and inactive, or present railings behind which is the hotel's existing hard surface car park. The southern elevation to Lea Bridge Road is dated and similarly provides no activity at street level; it also offers little in the way of public realm. In its current form, we consider, the extant building detracts from the vitality of the area.

## 4.0 Relevant Heritage Considerations

Four designated heritage assets lie in proximity to the Site. These are:

- Bakers Almshouses (grade II) – c.80m from the Site at their closes point
- Gates and Railings to the Bakers Almshouses (grade II) – c120m from the Site
- K6 telephone kiosks – c.140m from the Site
- The Bakers Arms Conservation Area – c.80m from the Site at its closest point

Other heritage assets, including the grade II\* listed Church of St Barnabas and St James the Greater, are located in the wider area, albeit at some distance (c.530m) from the Site.

The setting of these heritage assets will require consideration in any forthcoming proposals for the Site. The Bakers Almshouses lie closest to the Site and the redevelopment of the Site may have an impact upon the setting and an appreciation of significance of the asset. We therefore consider these in further detail below.

### *Bakers Almshouses*

The Bakers Almshouses were grade II listed in 1971. Designed in an Italianate style and laid out around three sides of a quadrangle, the buildings are of two storeys with a distinctive roof profile and detailing of interest.

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The buildings of historic and architectural value for their connection with the social history of Leyton, as well as for their composition and the detailing and quality of materials which give the complex an attractive and coherent character reflective of its historic function.

The almshouses have an enclosed character which is the product of the courtyard arrangement of the low scale blocks set back from Lea Bridge Road behind substantial gates. They are now understood as historic buildings (whose function has changed) within a greatly changed urban setting including buildings of varying scale, architectural character and quality.

In views of the asset from Lea Bridge Road the Site largely occluded by the railway bridge, which forms a substantial physical and visual townscape barrier. Notwithstanding, we consider that the low townscape quality of the buildings on the Site mean that it forms a detracting element in the assets' wider setting. It makes no contribution to an appreciation of the asset's significance.

The same analysis broadly applies for the entrance gates to the almshouses which are separately listed at grade II.

## 5.0 Findings in Relation to Townscape and Heritage

The Site occupies a large corner plot on a major route through the area. Accordingly the existing buildings present generous frontages to both Lea Bridge Road and Russell Road.

Those buildings are not of historic interest or of architectural merit. Indeed, we consider their contribution to the function and appearance of the townscape to be ordinary to low. Accordingly, the redevelopment of the Site would not have any direct effect on buildings of local historic or architectural interest.

Neither would it impact any formally designated land such as green belt or MOL.

As described above, the redevelopment of the Site would, however, engage the legal and policy considerations that flow from the presence of the grade II listed almshouses in proximity to the Site – section 66(1) of the Planning (LBCA) Act 1990 and paragraphs 189-196 of the NPPF, as well as relevant local plan policies.

Accordingly, this sensitive setting relationship would need to be considered as part of any forthcoming application proposal for the Site. As noted, the buildings are experienced in a wider urban context which includes development of varying age, scale and quality. Taller development already forms part of this wider setting.

Whilst the Site does not lie within the Bakers Arms Conservation Area, its redevelopment may affect views from the western part of the CA. The effect of the proposals on the character and appearance of the CA will therefore need consideration. The Conservation Area Appraisal, which is comprehensive, expressly states that there are no long views of especial note either in or out of the CA. We note that in views out of the CA to the east, modern and larger scale developments are visible.

For the reasons outlined above, we do not identify there to be an in-principle issue with an increase in mass on this Site. Subject to detailed design the impact on heritage assets may be acceptable. That consideration of detail is a matter of judgement and subject to discussion in relation to individual proposals.

Notably, redevelopment presents the opportunity to deliver significant townscape benefits, through the replacement of buildings of undistinguished buildings typical of their period with a high quality development that responds to its particular townscape context.

The following urban design benefits may be delivered through a sensitively designed scheme:

- Enhanced legibility and place making, reflective of the Site's proximity to the Bakers Arms District Centre;
- Marked improvement in the townscape quality of the site;
- Better street enclosure to Lea Bridge Road and Russell Road;
- Active frontages at ground floor level and accordingly an improvement to vitality;
- Reinforcement of local character through provision of residential uses; and

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- Enhanced public realm and landscaping.

In a planning context (in both terms of design and amenity), what matters is the actual impact of a proposed development, rather than any notional height.

As noted, developments of larger scale, including Lea Bridge House and others, are already influencing the character and appearance of this area. Accordingly an increase in height on this site would not be incongruous with its existing context. Again, the nature of the impact is subject to detail.

In our analysis of the existing context of this area, including the adopted and emerging policies on building heights, we have identified no policy reason to restrict the height of a building on this site.

When we take the above into account, we conclude that the Site could sustain increased massing and that the principle of intensification is justified. We have identified nothing in principle that would make this Site unacceptable for such an allocation.