

18 January 2023

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Ref. 1229984

Ms Andrea Copsey
Programme Officer
(on behalf of Inspectors Mrs S Housden BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI &
Mrs C Jack BSc (Hons) MA MA (TP) MRTPI)

Dear Ms Copsey

**THE WALTHAM FOREST LOCAL PLAN (LP1) 'SHAPING THE BOROUGH' STAGE 2 EXAMINATION
WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF THE ARCH COMPANY PROPERTIES LP**

We write on behalf of The Arch Company Properties LP ("The Arch Company"; "our Client") with respect to the Inspectors' Further Matters, Issues and Questions Consultation on the emerging *Shaping the Borough: Waltham Forest Local Plan (LP1)* (hereafter: "Waltham Forest Local Plan (LP1)") and specifically with regard to the Land at Joseph Ray Road (*Site Allocation SA17 (Joseph Ray Road)*) in the Waltham Forest Local Plan (LP2) Site Allocations (November 2021).

For the avoidance of doubt, we have also submitted written representations in relation to the previous public consultations on the above document in October 2019 and December 2020 on behalf of our Client as well as to the emerging Waltham Forest Local Plan (LP2) Site Allocations.

These representations have been prepared in response to the Inspectors' Further Matters, Issues and Questions ("MIQs") Stage 2 Topics Paper and any related evidence base or background documents (with a particular focus on Document refs. LPE30, LPE31, LPE32, LPE45 and LPE46).

The Arch Company & LB Waltham Forest Portfolio

As in previous rounds of consultation, it is considered that it will be helpful to provide some background information on The Arch Company nationally and their portfolio within the London Borough of Waltham Forest ("LB Waltham Forest"; "the Borough"). The Arch Company acquired Network Rail's former commercial estate business in 2019. It is the landlord for more than 4,000 businesses across England and Wales, making it the UK's largest small business landlord, working with thousands of business owners, from car mechanics to bakeries and restaurants, who make a unique and vital contribution to the UK economy, and its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In regard to the potential implications of the emerging Local Plan, it is of importance to identify that The Arch Company has substantial land holdings within the Borough, specifically in Leytonstone, with a portfolio of sites available for delivery over the plan period.

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The key site within this portfolio is the *Land at Joseph Jay Road*, adjacent to Leytonstone High Road Overground station, predominantly covering the land to the west of Leytonstone High Road (but excluding some properties directly adjacent to the High Road), to the north-west of the London Overground railway line and to the south-east of the London Underground (Central) line and A12. The site can be described as underutilised brownfield land which currently accommodates a mix of commercial, warehouse and light industrial uses at a low density, is designated within the proposed *Waltham Forest LP1 Policies Map* as Locally Significant Industrial Site (“LSIS”), and allocated for redevelopment under *Site Allocation SA17 (Joseph Ray Road)* (hereafter: “Site Allocation SA17”; “the site”; Note: formerly Site Allocation SA18).

Accordingly, and taking account of the wider scale of The Arch Company’s portfolio, the potential implications of the emerging Local Plan (both LP1 and LP2) are significant. As such, our Client has a strong interest in ensuring that the Waltham Forest Local Plan (LP1) creates a strong and ambitious planning policy framework in order to facilitate the sustainable and good growth the Borough requires to meet its identified housing and employment needs – and for sites such as the *Land at Joseph Ray Road* to play their important role as significant contributors towards those targets.

Matter 2: Vision, Strategic Objectives, Sustainable Development and Scale of Growth

The Arch Company supports the Council’s ambitions and approach towards Housing Delivery, including its evidence base and targets, as set out in Section 3.1 of LPE30. Taking into account the Council’s approach, methodology and assumptions relating to our Client’s land holding at the *Land at Joseph Ray Road*, as further discussed below, and assuming the Council’s due diligence/evidence base work to determine housing supply/delivery rates on other allocated sites over the revised plan period followed a similar approach, it is considered that the proposed strategic housing targets are considered achievable.

Matter 3: Housing Land Supply and Borough Wide Housing Policies

In relation to **Question 3.1(e)** and **3.3**, our Client considers it necessary to provide further clarity and confirmation in relation to ‘*Site x. Joseph Ray Road*’ and the Council’s evidence base work contained in LPE32.

As set out in Appendices II and IV of LPE32, the Arch Company can confirm that the information provided by the Council within the respective document is correct and deemed realistic. Our Client secured relevant development break clauses on all existing tenancies for 2024/25 and undertook an initial feasibility study which has been shared with the Local Planning Authority (and other key stakeholders) in the past to ensure the proposed redevelopment of the site is (*in-principle*) feasible, deliverable and achievable in the short-/medium-term, thereby resulting in the delivery of a mix of employment and residential uses.

Subject to identifying a preferred planning strategy (i.e. influenced by development phasing, application type/format, etc.), it is envisaged that the pre-application consultation stage can be entered into later this year, with a planning application submission likely to be made in the next 12-18 months. The on-site delivery of a (phased and comprehensive) development is therefore envisaged to be commenced once planning permission has been granted/relevant pre-commencement conditions discharged, expecting the completion of the first residential phase c. 12-18 months following commencement (c. 2026/27 in an ideal scenario).

With regards to the development capacity/quantum for the *Land at Joseph Ray Road*, it is important to reiterate, as set out in previous written representations to the Waltham Forest Local Plan LP1 and LP2, that on the basis of our Client’s feasibility work and the initial parameter testing undertaken by the Council (with the latter culminating in the underlying Draft Skyline Study, ref. LPE46), a capacity of 320 new homes as anticipated by LB Waltham Forest in the emerging Plan is a realistic, yet conservative target (and should therefore be regarded as an indicative or minimum target).

It is considered that the exact number of new homes (alongside any other land uses including employment-generating floorspace), or indeed a potential uplift to the target currently contained in LPE32 (Note: Our Client's feasibility study anticipated approx. 390 new homes), can and should be determined as part of the pre-application and planning application process, subject to relevant environmental and townscape testing.

Taking into account its (limited) surrounding environmental, townscape and heritage constraints and/or sensitivities, the Council's assumption that the site is capable of accommodating a *"sensitive, high-quality intensification (transformation) that contributes towards delivering growth and enhancing the built environment in South Leytonstone"* (Draft Skyline Study, p. 138) is supported. Utilising brownfield development sites such as the *Land at Joseph Ray Road* and optimising development capacity through the use of tall buildings is therefore considered to be a justifiable approach to meet the Council's evidenced needs which follows the principles and objectives set out in Chapter 11 (Making effective use of land) of the National Planning Policy Framework ("NPPF", 2021) and Policy GG2 (Making the best use of land) of the London Plan (2021).

Insofar as it relates to our Client's land holding(s), the Plan's approach to housing supply and trajectory is therefore deemed to have been positively prepared, justified, effective, consistent with national policy, in general conformity with the London Plan (2021), and supported by The Arch Company.

MATTER 6: Built Environment, Heritage, and Design (in the context of the *Land at Joseph Ray Road*)

In relation to **Question 6.3**, and specifically in relation to the *Land at Joseph Ray Road*, the sites and locations identified as having potential for tall buildings are considered appropriate and justified.

As abovementioned, the site itself is subject to (limited) surrounding environmental, townscape and heritage constraints and/or sensitivities, and currently constitutes underutilised brownfield land. The findings of the Skyline Study (LPE46) largely accord with our Client's own initial feasibility study which indicate that the site has the potential to accommodate height (and tall building elements) with relevant environmental and townscape testing to be undertaken at pre-application and planning application stage. Optimising its future use and capacity, including the (sensitive) provision of tall buildings, is therefore strongly supported and deemed to accord with the objectives of Chapter 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2021). Our Client further fully agrees with the Council's justification set out in Section 5.5.7 of the Examination Stage 2 Topic Paper (LPE30), particularly Para. 5.5.7.3.

In summary, the work undertaken at plan-making stage, including the Draft Skyline Study, is considered to be appropriate to establish and justify suitable locations for tall buildings with the planning application process capable of identifying any potentially required mitigation measures and ensuring tall buildings are of a sufficiently high architectural quality, and are well-integrated into wider placemaking initiatives at ground level.

Conclusion

The Arch Company considered it necessary to submit representations at this stage of the plan-making process to confirm the Council's assumptions in relation to the *Land at Joseph Ray Road* (draft Site Allocation SA17). The information set out in LPE32, insofar as it relates to delivery timescales and anticipated completion dates, accords with our Client's current estimates, envisaging the submission of a planning application for the redevelopment of the site within the next 12-18 months.

With development breaks secured and subject to on-going (formal) discussions between our Client and the Local Planning Authority, key stakeholders and the Greater London Authority ("GLA"), the site is available for a phased, comprehensive redevelopment in the short-/medium-term and has the potential to make a significant contribution towards the Council's identified housing and employment needs with the final quantum of development (in terms of residential, employment and commercial floorspace) as well as its scale, height, massing, layout and placemaking

being further developed as part of a future pre-application and planning application process. However, the location and nature of the site, accessibility and proximity to transport/social infrastructure, and limited environmental or heritage constraints make the *Land at Joseph Ray Road* an ideal location for intensification and tall buildings (also see LPE30).

In general, and particularly insofar as the Council's evidence base relates to the *Land at Joseph Ray Road*, the Waltham Forest Local Plan (LP1) is considered to be positively prepared, justified, effective, consistent with national policy, and in general conformity with the London Plan (2021)

Our Client and we are looking forward to continuing our positive, pro-active discussions with LB Waltham Forest to assist the Council and the Inspectors in preparing a sound and deliverable Waltham Forest Local Plan (LP1), and to bring forward new development, such as the *Land at Joseph Ray Road*.

Please do not hesitate to contact my colleague Christopher Schiele [REDACTED] or myself at this office should you require any further information or wish to discuss these representations.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Alex Christopher
Director

[REDACTED]

cc.

LB Waltham Forest Place & Design Team