



Havering
LONDON BOROUGH

**Strategic Planning
Committee
9 January 2019**

Pre-Application Reference:	PE/00977/2018
Location:	ROM VALLEY WAY RETAIL PARK AND SEEDBED CENTRE, DAVISON WAY, ROMFORD
Ward:	ROMFORD TOWN
Description:	REDEVELOPMENT OF SITE TO PROVIDE RESIDENTIAL LED MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT COMPRISING 11 BLOCKS OF 11 TO 16 STOREYS OF UPTO 1,122 UNITS (USE CLASS C3); 3,950SQ.M BUSINESS AND LIGHT INDUSTRIAL (USE CLASS B1A-C); 200SQ.M RETAIL (USE CLASS A1); 1,605SQ.M HEALTH CENTRE (USE CLASS D1) AND 395SQ.M DISTRICT HEATING CENTRE (SUI-GENERIS) WITH ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING PARKING, BINS AND CYCLE STORE. (OUTLINE APPLICATION FOR ACCESS ONLY)
Case Officer:	Raphael Adenegan

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This proposed development is being presented to enable Members of the committee the second time (first presented on 28 March 2019) to view it before a planning application is submitted and to comment upon it. The development does not constitute an application for planning permission and any comments made upon it are provisional and subject to full consideration of any subsequent application and the comments received as a result of consultation, publicity and notification.

- 1.2 The proposed planning application has been the subject of pre-application meetings with Officers. There have been six pre-application meetings with officers and the scheme has evolved over the months since the initial SPC presentation. Latterly, pre-application meetings with Officers have taken place on the 5th September 2019, and the 17th December 2019, with further meetings arranged as part of a Planning Performance Agreement. These proposals were presented to the Councils' Quality Review Panel on the 17th October 2019. Pre-application meetings also took place with the Greater London Authority (GLA) on the 21st October 2019 and the Transport for London (TfL) on 9th December 2019.
- 1.3 Members may recall discussing these preliminary proposals at their Strategic Planning Committee meeting of the 28th March 2019. Summary of Members' feedback to the broad principles for the development are as follows:
- i. Further detail is sought on the number of residential units proposed, the unit mix and their tenure;
 - ii. Early engagement with the existing business occupiers of the Seedbed; Centre and retail buildings is encouraged;
 - iii. Further detail is invited on the amount of existing employment floorspace on the site and the number of jobs it supports;
 - iv. A keenness to see employment space and jobs retained on site;
 - v. A keenness to see a/some food use(s) retained on site together with community space;
 - vi. Explore the impact of the development upon the highway network
 - vii. Consider the access and egress arrangements;
 - viii. Consider/address the connections between the site and the town centre, particularly pedestrian connections;
 - ix. Opportunity to improve bus connections;
 - x. Include the Romford Civic Society in any community consultation;
 - xi. The opportunity to open up the River Rom should be explored;
 - xii. Ensure the density is appropriate to site context;
 - xiii. Consider key worker housing given the proximity to the hospital and the recruitment difficulties the Trust has; and
 - xiv. Explore whether there is any potential to work with the Trust to relocate the emergency care centre from the hospital site.

2 PROPOSAL AND LOCATION DETAILS

2.1 Initial Proposal

- The proposal is continuing to evolve. The initial proposal is for the redevelopment of site with demolition of all existing buildings.
- Provision of employment floorspace to replace the Seedbed Centre.

- Residential development would be the predominant use of the site.
 - The quantum, layout and density of the development is at an early stage and subject to a masterplan being developed for the site.
 - Vehicle access would be as existing from Rom Valley Way, using the current access opposite Queen's Hospital, and from Davison Road.
- 2.2 The proposed pre-application enquiry subject to review is likely to be an outline application for the erection of up to 1,122 dwellings with all matters reserved except access. The information provided as part of this enquiry includes indicative quantum, layout, infrastructure provision, employment space and local retail space and public opens space areas.
- 2.3 The key objective will be to create high quality buildings and places, which helps boost the supply of homes, including affordable homes, within the London Borough of Havering. The scheme should also re-locate/ integrate existing employment uses.

Latest Proposal

- 2.4 Further to the submission of this proposal to the Strategic Planning Committee on the 28th March 2019, the scheme has evolved. The applicant / developer have responded to the feedback of members of this committee thus:
- i Further detail is sought on the number of residential units proposed, the unit mix and their tenure
–the number of units being proposed is currently in flux, but the schemes being presented range from 967 to 1,122 homes provided. The unit mix is also in flux but will incorporate 40% to 45% 1B, 40% to 45% 2B, and approx. 15% 3B or larger
 - li Early engagement with the existing business occupiers of the Seedbed Centre and retail buildings is encouraged
–engagement with the businesses has commenced and as the position unfolds this engagement will continue.
 - lii Further detail is invited on the amount of existing employment floorspace on the site and the number of jobs it supports
–The uses on site comprise:
 - 17 Units in B1a Office Use;
 - 8 units in B1c Light Industrial Use;
 - 3 Units in A1 Retail Use;
 - 6 units in B8 Storage Use;

- 2 Units in Sui Generis Use (retail trade only);
- 1 Unit in A3 Café use;
- 1 Unit in B2 General Industrial Use; and
- Unit in D1/D2 Baby Sensory Use.
- The units on site are therefore varied with the predominant use being in B1a Office Use

The current employment within the Seedbed Centre is estimated to be approximately 147 employees.

The replacement floorspace within the proposed Rom Yard facility will be 20% larger in area, but will be modern purpose-built accommodation that is flexible to a range of uses and will enable a greater level of employment to be created on site than that which is currently in place. The application seeks to provide a flexible range of employment uses, but considered alongside the employment to be generated by the retail and health provision, there is scope to deliver up to 360 jobs within the new development.

- iv A keenness to see employment space and jobs retained on site
 –this is at the heart of the development. The re-provided employment space will be significantly enhanced in terms of space (+20% vs the existing) and more than double that which are currently employed within the Seedbed Centre (147 existing employees compared with between 282 and 360 new jobs being created).

- v A keenness to see a/some food use(s) retained on site together with community space
 –as part of the place-making attributes of the new scheme options, a retail unit on the riverside is proposed, which will provide local residents with local walk-to food retail or café. This is proposed at a size that will complement the proposed homes, health centre and new riverside walk.

- vi Explore the impact of the development upon the highway network
 –we have engaged with Havering Highways as well as Transport for London (TfL) and the Greater London Authority (GLA) in considering highways impact. The large reduction in car parking on site will deliver significant benefits on the local highway network, which has been supported by both Havering and TfL. The reduction in vehicle traffic generated by the development will also yield air quality and sustainability benefits for local residents, encouraging pedestrian and cycle priority across large parts of the site and along the riverside, which are not currently accessible.

- vii Consider the access and egress arrangements
–as above. *The existing and proposed access arrangements are proposed to remain largely unchanged, with the exception of a reduction in the size of the Rom Valley Way hospital junction as a result of the reduction in vehicle movements proposed into and out of the site. This is a further benefit.*
- viii Consider/address the connections between the site and the town centre, particularly pedestrian connections
–*the proposals incorporate a masterplan layout that enables connections with neighbouring and adjoining developments and will continue to adopt a neighbourly approach to knitting together pedestrian and cycle routes between this site and those in the immediate vicinity. A significant benefit arising from the scheme will be the creation of a large riverside route, which is currently inaccessible, offering a significant benefit to those accessing the town centre to the north, and enabling access along the river's edge to destinations to the south and east at South Street. The developers share a long-term ambition to enable a new bridge crossing to be created to better link with South Street and the town centre to the north, albeit a landing point is currently being proposed in the absence of a deliverable counter-point on the other side of the river, which is in separate ownership(s).*
- ix Opportunity to improve bus connections
–*the applicant has engaged with both Havering and TfL on the issue of improving bus connections. There had been an ambition to create a new bus stop along the site's boundary with Rom Valley Way, but this is not practical or deliverable by virtue of there being no routes that use this side of the Rom Valley Way along this section. A better response is to ensure connections to existing bus stops are accessible, ensuring that the new residents of the development can easily access stops at South Street and the hospital.*
- x Include the Romford Civic Society in any community consultation
–*the applicant engaged with the Romford Civic Society who remained briefed as part of the evolving proposals. Engagement with the Civic Society indicated a strong support for the landscape-led approach to the site's redevelopment and the delivery of high quality public realm at the site. This was the primary focus of the discussion with the Society who welcomed the re-provision of the employment space and the delivery of new homes here.*
- xi The opportunity to open up the River Rom should be explored

–this has been the subject of extensive discussion with the Council, the GLA, Environment Agency and the Romford Civic Society and is a core element of the scheme proposals. The scheme proposes several beneficial responses:

- 1. Opening up access to the riverside, which is not currently accessible along the site's edge.*
- 2. Creating a high quality public realm along the river's edge offering opportunity for pedestrian and cycle movement within an accessible design that ensures access for all.*
- 3. Knitting the proposed public realm with the remainder of the site to ensure that it is an intrinsic element of the overall masterplan, not just a walkway around the edge of the scheme.*
- 4. Naturalising a large element of the river bank, creating a softer and more natural edge treatment to what is currently a very stark engineered approach to the flow channel.*
- 5. Creating ecology and education space along the river, enabling access to the channel as well as a proposed water meadow to the south of the site. This is dependent on the final masterplan options.*

- xii Ensure the density is appropriate to site context
–the site context is emerging and given the site's high public transport accessibility, lack of nearby sensitive receptors and the emerging context in this part of Romford, the proposed density is appropriate, albeit high in the context of the immediate existing area. This is acknowledged as changing and thus planning to make the most of these sites is appropriate, especially given the requirement to re-provide commercial space on site.
- xiii Consider key worker housing given the proximity to the hospital and the recruitment difficulties the Trust has
–the applicant is open to providing housing to meet a range of tenures, but new high quality housing will serve to enhance the recruitment potential of the Trust as a minimum.
- xiv Explore whether there is any potential to work with the Trust to relocate the emergency care centre from the hospital site.
–the nature of the health centre to be provided on site is not currently confirmed, but the outline nature of the scheme will enable this to accommodate a range of potential users, including emergency care, GP practice(s) or a range of other operators.

Site and Surroundings

- 2.5 The site is located on the northeast side of Rom Valley Way, opposite Queens Hospital and the former Ice Rink site and measures approximately 2.81

hectares. The River Rom is top the eastern and southern boundary of the site, whilst to the north is the Homebase site. Currently on the site are five retail units, providing around 6,000 sq metres of floor space and forty business units of various sizes providing around 3,500sq.m of floorspace.

- 2.6 The site has very good access to public transport and other services; it is approximately 600 metre walk from Romford station. The PTAL of the site ranges from 6a to 4. Vehicular access to the retail park is via Rom Valley Way, whilst the Seedbed Centre and Snow & Rock Store is accessed by Davidson Way.

Planning History

- 2.7 The site was developed in the late 1980's. There have been various planning applications in relation to the retail and employment uses but none of particular significance.

Planning Policy

- 2.8 National Planning Policy Framework 2019
London Plan 2016
Draft London Plan 2018
London Borough of Havering Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD 2008
Romford Area Action Plan DPD 2008
London Borough of Havering Proposed Submission Local Plan 2016 – 2031

3 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The main planning issues raised by the application that the Committee must consider are:
- Principle of development
 - Density and Site Layout including connectivity
 - High Quality Design including height of buildings relative to the context of the site
 - Naturalisation of River Rom, together with environmental improvements of the river environs
 - Housing provision, including affordable housing
 - Regeneration
 - Permeability and highways matters including link and connectivity with adjoining Homebase site and beyond to town centre
 - Retention/Relocation of existing uses

- Provision of infrastructure e.g. health centre or school
- Mitigating flood risk
- Archaeology
- Microclimate/ Daylight - Sunlight
- Sustainable Design and Construction
- Secured by Design
- Servicing Management

Financial and Other Mitigation

- 3.2 Any subsequent planning application will be supported by a package of measures secured under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 or the Community Infrastructure Levy (as appropriate), to mitigate impacts of the proposed development .

Conclusions

- 3.3 Whilst the scheme has evolved, officers are not yet in a position to support the current proposal. The proposed development continues to be considered at meetings with officers at London Borough of Havering (LBH), and with the Greater London Authority (GLA). Further discussions will take place with the GLA and Officers of London Borough of Havering, in accordance with the agreed Planning Performance Agreement.
- 3.4 Further, it is likely that this scheme will come back to this Committee for final review as part of the continuing Pre-Application engagement in the spring of 2020.