



**Havering**  
LONDON BOROUGH

**Strategic Planning  
Committee Members  
28 January 2021**

<b>Pre-Application Reference:</b>	<b>PE/00051/21</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>ST GEORGES HOSPITAL (RETAINED NHS LAND), SUTTONS LANE, HORNCHURCH</b>
<b>Ward:</b>	<b>HACTON</b>
<b>Description:</b>	<b>REDEVELOPMENT OF SITE TO PROVIDE HEALTHCARE FACILITY</b>
<b>Case Officer:</b>	<b>RAPHAEL ADENEGAN</b>

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## **1 BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 This proposed development is being presented to enable Members of the committee 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 Officers have been in pre-application discussions with regard to this site since late last year (2020). The present scheme involves a significant new public/community facility and has been subject to review by the Havering Quality Review Panel (QRP). It is considered appropriate to seek Members views before the proposal is developed any further.

## **2 PROPOSAL AND LOCATION DETAILS**

### **2.1 Proposal**

- The NHS sold 10 hectares of the wider St Georges site and this has planning permission for a total of 356 dwellings, replacing all buildings on site. This is currently under construction by Bellway Homes.
- The NHS retained 1.74 hectares of the site for future healthcare provision – the proposal for this site is the subject of this report.
- Outline planning permission has already been granted for the redevelopment of the site for healthcare provision with a building of up to 3000 sq metres floorspace.
- The present proposal seeks to increase the amount of floorspace compared to the outline planning permission. It is proposed that 5000 sq metres of healthcare facilities be provided in a single two/three storey building as well as associated landscape, parking and servicing space. The servicing space includes provision for mobile scanners.
- Whilst the NHS would seek to retain flexibility in the uses of the building, the following departments have been indicated to be accommodated in the building (all providing out-patient/appointment facilities – no emergency, in-patient or drop-in proposed):
  - Diagnostic (including mobile scanner units)
  - Frailty
  - Primary Care
  - X-Ray
  - Acute
  - Community
  - Minor Ops
  - Renal

## 2.2 Site and Surroundings

- The St George's Hospital site is located approximately 0.7km south of Hornchurch station.
- The hospital was vacated by the NHS in 2012 having been run down over previous years. The whole hospital site covers approximately 11.7 hectares.
- The site is located in the Green Belt. The hospital site contained a number of buildings varying from single to 2 storeys in height, large areas of car parking with landscaped grounds between buildings/parking areas as well as around the perimeter of the site.
- Beyond the hospital site to the east and south is open land comprising Hornchurch Country Park, which was part of the former WW2 Hornchurch Aerodrome. To the north and east there are residential houses.
- The part of the site retained by the NHS is toward the northern end of the site.

### Planning History

- 2.3 The most relevant planning history relating to the site is as follows:

P0323.15 - The redevelopment of the St Georges Hospital site inclusive of partial demolition of existing buildings to provide up to 3,000 m2 of new healthcare facilities, on 1.74 ha of the wider site, together with construction of a new vehicular access from Suttons Lane, associated car parking, landscape and infrastructure works. Approved 17 June 2020.

P0321.15 - The redevelopment of the St George's Hospital site inclusive of partial demolition and conversion of existing buildings to provide up to 290 dwellings, on 10.0 ha of the wider site, together with associated car parking, landscape and infrastructure works. Allowed on Appeal 13 July 2017

P0940.18 - Approval of Reserved Matters (layout, scale, appearance and landscaping) for Phase 1 of the outline part of the redevelopment at St George's Hospital (LPA Ref. P0321.15), comprising the construction of 194 dwellings, new public open space, car parking and associated infrastructure works, and details to satisfy Conditions 1, 8, 22, 23, 25 and 27 of permission ref. P0321.15. Approved 6 December 2018.

P1917.18 - Demolition of existing buildings, conversion of the former St George's Hospital Administrative Building and the erection of new buildings to provide 162 residential units (class C3) including car parking, cycle parking, landscaping and associated infrastructure along with the refurbishment of The Suttons Building for use as a Heritage Centre (Class D1). Approved 8 July 2020.

### **3 CONSULTATION**

3.1 At this stage, it is intended that the following will be consulted regarding any subsequent planning application:

- London Fire Brigade
- Environment Agency
- Historic England – Archaeology
- Police Design Out Crime Officer

### **4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

4.1 In accordance with planning legislation, the developer is planning to consult with the local community on these proposals as part of the pre-application process. This is due to take place following feedback from this Committee.

## 5 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 The main planning issues raised by the application that the committee must consider are:

- Principal of development – Green Belt
- Character of the site, including
  - Green Belt impact
  - Layout of proposal
  - Quality of design
  - Access
- Parking/Traffic
- QRP Feedback

### 5.2 Principal of Development

- The site is within the Green Belt. National planning policy specifies that redevelopment of sites in the green belt would be considered inappropriate development where there is a greater impact on the openness of the site. In the case of the St Georges site, the previous proposal for a 3000 sq m healthcare building was considered as part of the wider redevelopment of the site. The conclusion at that time was that the redevelopment, in its totality, would not have a greater impact on the openness of the green belt. However, the proposal is now for a significantly larger building and there has been some increase in the amount of residential development on the wider site. It is therefore likely that the proposal would be considered to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt. In such cases, planning permission should only be granted if there are sufficient very special circumstances to outweigh the harm to the green belt through loss of openness.
- The degree of harm to the green belt would need thorough assessment at application stage – It should be expected that any proposal be respectful to the existing open character of the site, providing a landscaped setting where the extent of the building and any associated hard surfaces are minimised in terms of site coverage.
- Subject to the degree of harm identified, it is considered that such harm may be capable of being outweighed through very special circumstances in this case, in particular the healthcare needs of the Borough. Based on discussions to date, the facility would provide both primary healthcare to the local area as well as borough-wide out-patient facilities on a site that was earmarked for healthcare provision. The healthcare needs of the borough and provision of significant community infrastructure would likely

be a factor to weigh in favour of the development when considered against any green belt harm.

- As the site was previously in hospital use, other than the Green Belt considerations above, there are no in principle objections to a healthcare use of the site.

### **5.3 Character of Site/Proposed Layout/Design/Access**

- The general open and green nature of the site should be maintained, reflecting the Green Belt location.
- From the initial plans, there were concerns over the amount of hardstanding proposed, particularly the amount required to accommodate the stationing and turning of the mobile scanner units. The applicant has been working to minimise this and a separate access for servicing has been proposed which helps to minimise the areas required.
- As a significant public building, its presence to the street and relationship to the adjacent new housing which replicates the original hospital buildings to Suttons Lane are important considerations. The design is developing in a positive way at this stage and Members feedback to the applicant would be useful.
- The approach to landscape, which is an important characteristic of the site, should be examined. The proposal includes a landscaped area to the front of the site and a community garden to the rear of the proposed building. Members may wish to comment on the quality of the spaces proposed.
- The design and finish of the building has not been finalised at the time of writing this report, although the design is evolving following comments from officers and the Quality Review Panel.
- At 2-3 storeys, the height would likely be considered to be generally acceptable. However, the building would have significant length and the appropriate treatment of these elevations to help break up mass would be important. Appropriate finishing materials to reflect the context of the site would be an important consideration as well as achieving a design that reflects the civic/public use. Members may wish to comment on the design at this stage.
- The proposal will provide essential healthcare facilities for the Borough and local area and consequently there will be significant numbers of visitors to the site. Priority provision for pedestrians and cyclists should be achieved as well as ease of movement into and around the site. Level access and convenience from the street, drop-off areas and the car park should be achieved.

### **5.4 Parking/Traffic**

- The proposal as last seen by officers showed provision of 113 car parking spaces as well as drop off areas for cars/taxis and ambulances. The proposal also includes cycle parking for staff and visitors.
- Servicing would take place from a proposed access to the north of the site.
- Further details have been requested in regard to likely demand for parking arising from the use as well as provision for staff.

## 5.5 Quality Review Panel (QRP) Comments

- The proposal was presented to the Havering Quality Review Panel on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2020. Members should note that the proposal as presented now may have changed to reflect the QRP and officer comments. The following comments in summary were made by the QRP:
  - *The scheme is clearly developing well, and the panel welcomes the refinement to the massing that has already occurred, which it feels moves the proposals in a more sympathetic direction. With further refinement to the detailing, the panel is confident that the building will sit well in the townscape, and has the potential to successfully balance the civic with the suburban.*
  - *The panel is pleased that thought has been given to the patient experience in using the building, and not simply its efficiency of operation. The public space is well considered and the arrangement of the landscape and car parking is promising, subject to some refinement. The panel feels that the integration of the building into the landscape design is a positive feature of the proposals. The panel is also pleased that arrangements for the long-term management and maintenance of the public realm are being established, as this will be critical to the success of the scheme. However, undertaking and responding to a rigorous analysis of daylight and sunlight will be essential given the arrangement of the building, which puts most of the massing to the south.*
  - *The approach to materiality, focusing on a limited palette appropriate to the suburban context, is welcome, as is the direction of the architecture, which is simple and elegant and successfully connects the interior with the facades. It urges the design team and officers to work together to develop the details and to lock in the ambition for quality evident within the work to date: the panel notes that the chosen procurement route creates pressures on quality and feels that this should be secured within any consent.*

## 5.6 Other Planning Issues

- Archaeology
- Sustainable design and construction measures
- Secured by Design

## 5.7 Summary of Issues

- In order to assist members, officers have raised the following issues with the developer team and members may wish to comment in relation to these points in addition to any other comments/questions that they may wish to raise:
  - Quality of pedestrian and cycle routes
  - Links to public transport
  - Green Belt very special circumstances
  - Need to demonstrate adequacy of parking provision and traffic impact
  - Further refinement of servicing area/mobile scanner area
  - Relationship to nearest residential dwellings
  - Elevational treatment to break down mass of building
  - Bay studies and window type details required
  - Scale of any plant or enclosures at roof level to be minimised
  - Details on use and management of landscape
  - Fencing/security strategy needs developing

## Conclusions

- 5.8 The proposals are still at an early stage and input from QRP and Members would help to influence the final details of any development. There are some aspects that require further work as identified in this report and Members' guidance will be most helpful to incorporate as the various elements are brought together.