



**Havering**  
LONDON BOROUGH

**Strategic Planning  
Committee – Developer  
Presentation  
23 January 2025**

<b>Pre-Application Reference:</b>	<b>W0221.22</b>
<b>Location:</b>	<b>Como Street Car Park Como Street</b>
<b>Ward:</b>	<b>ST. EDWARDS</b>
<b>Description:</b>	<b>REDEVELOPMENT OF CAR PARK FOR RESIDENTIAL LED DEVELOPMENT WITH SOME COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT</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 The proposed planning application has been the subject of pre-application meetings with Officers. There have been five pre-application meetings including one workshop with officers and the scheme has evolved over the months. The proposal was presented to the Council's Quality Review Panel on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and a Chair Review on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024. Pre-application discussions with the applicants have included the principle of the development proposed including quantum of development, massing, height layout, access and landscaping planning that have been undertaken by the applicants subject to a masterplan being developed for the site. The proposal is being brought to Committee at this stage.

**2 PROPOSAL AND LOCATION DETAILS**

**2.1 Proposal**

Full planning application for missed-use development of the site comprising:

- 137 new residential dwellings (number of affordable units yet to be decided);
- Low – medium high-density development, with building heights between 3 to 9 storeys;

- 540sq.m of flexible commercial / community space across 7 open plan units, all at GF level;
- Environmental improvements to River Rom;
- A new public green space adjacent to the to the River Rom including public play space for children;
- A new pedestrian link to the town centre through the site;
- Waste and recycling strategy utilising and underground refuse system;
- Associated landscaping, parking spaces and cycle stores;
- Vehicular access is from Como Street as existing.

2.2 The proposed pre-application enquiry subject to review is a detailed application. The information provided as part of this enquiry includes proposed quantum, layout 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.

#### **Site and Surroundings**

2.4 The site measures approximately 0.9 hectares in area. The development would be on brownfield land which is already occupied by an existing surface level car park with 141 spaces. The site is located within London Plan Opportunity Area, Local Plan Strategic Development Area, and an Archaeological Priority Area. The site is positioned at a key node immediately adjoining Romford's Ring Road. Como Street is mainly a residential street.

In terms of its local context, the application site lies east of River Rom and west of North street which forms part of the Strategic Road Network ("SRN"). The application site is bound to the north by a Como Street, which is the main vehicular access point and to its south by St. Edwards Way. To the west on the opposite side of the river rom lie the rear gardens of the residential properties on Linden Street.

#### **Planning History**

2.7 None

### **3 CONSULTATION**

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

- Transport for London (Statutory Consultee)
- Environment Agency
- Historic England -Archaeology
- Thames Water
- Essex and Suffolk Water
- EDF Energy
- LFEPA – Water
- Fire Brigade
- Natural England
- CCG/NHS
- Metropolitan Police – Design Out Crime
- National Air Traffic Services (NATS)

### 3.2 Quality Review Panel (QRP) Comments

- The proposal has been presented to the Havering Quality Review Panel twice (5th February and 3rd September 2024). Members should note that the proposal as presented to them may have changed to reflect the QRP. The Table below sets out how the scheme has evolved in response to QRP comments.

	<b>Chairs Review Comment</b>	<b>Design Team Response</b>
01.0	<b>Summary</b>	
01.1	<i>The Havering Quality Review Panel acknowledges the difficulties involved in developing a site with multiple constraints and welcomes the testing of alternative layouts. However, the preferred option is not significantly different to the site layout seen at the previous design review meeting. The panel asks that its previous comments are reconsidered and suggests some efficiencies to help to create the best possible scheme.</i>	The scheme has been developed to consider all the key points raised in the Chairs Review. The main changes are described below in relation to each point in this response table.
01.2	<i>The panel recognises the changes made to improve the scheme, including the reduction in the height of Block D from twelve storeys to nine; more generous and rational terraced houses in Block A; relocation of four-bed family homes from the roundabout to the riverside frontage; increased play provision; removal of parking from the centre of the site; a clearer split between public and private landscaped space; and improvements in the quality of the architecture, including the proposed materials and detailing.</i>	The design team have worked to retain all the improvements noted by the panel while making updates to the scheme to reflect the main points raised in the Chairs Review comments.
01.3	<i>The scheme should demonstrate that a future pedestrian connection to the south of the site is possible, allowing integration with the council's upcoming Liveable Neighbourhoods scheme. The project team should avoid bringing vehicles into the public realm.</i>	The revised scheme retains a new public pedestrian link through the site which works with both the current situation and if the 'Liveable Neighbourhoods Scheme' comes forward. The new link is located centrally, with the option to either go north or south using the current underpass.
01.4	<i>The panel recommends testing whether moving the parking to the overshadowed parts of the courtyard to the north would allow greater enjoyment of the riverside. The riverside play space is a positive feature, and the panel suggests focusing efforts on making it as successful as possible.</i>	The parking has been relocated along the northern boundary and away from the new public realm open space.
02.0	<b>Architecture</b>	

02.1	<i>The Panel commends the revised architecture. Materials and detailing approach promise high quality development in keeping with its context that could raise the bar in Romford.</i>	Noted, the architectural materials and detailing proposed are mindful of avoiding expensive detailing and utilise simple brick detailing and good quality red brick which has been retained in the updates to the scheme.
02.2	<i>The panel are concerned that the site layout creates complex forms and internal arrangements that could impact quality of materials.</i>	The updated design has removed a building, 'Block B' and consolidated the scheme into 3 block cores instead of 4, reducing complexity and minimising quantum of materials required without reducing number of homes.
03.0	<b>Site Layout</b>	
03.1	<p><i>The panel thinks that Test B leads to several positive outcomes. It makes efficient use of the wider northern end of the site, reduces the number of cores required, uses simple building forms. It also creates a clearer division between public and private landscaped spaces and allows a direct visual connection to the River Rom from the public realm space for members of the public to enjoy.</i></p> <p><i>However, Test B has issues with single aspect units fronting the roundabout, and an overshadowed courtyard to the north. The panel recommends exploring how the massing could be redistributed to achieve better light into the courtyard, especially in the evenings when it is more likely to be used.</i></p>	<p>Test B is more efficient in terms of reducing cores and making more use of the wider part of the site, however reducing the number of cores / buildings will reduce overall dual aspect and still has a significant issue with the shading to the northern courtyard as noted by the panel.</p> <p>The design team have explored and developed a hybrid solution between the test options as suggested by the panel, see more detail in response 03.3 below.</p>
03.2	<i>Test C is successful in terms of more dual aspect homes with good access to natural daylight. However, it results in a highly complex built form. The panel is concerned that, if it is too expensive to build, it may be subject to value engineering exercises post-planning stage, and therefore may not be delivered as it is currently drawn.</i>	The design team agree that test C is more successful in terms of housing quality and dual aspect. The design team have responded to comments on complexity of built form and removed a building, consolidating the built form into two buildings with 3 cores. Removing a core from the scheme while maintaining the number of homes being delivered overall.
03.3	<i>The panel suggests finding a hybrid solution, bringing together the best aspects of each test. The panel's views on this will need to be weighed up with the views of all stakeholders, including the council and housing operators, to find the appropriate balance.</i>	<p>The design team have focussed on developing a hybrid approach to the options shown at the last Chairs Review. The new proposal has minimised complexity of build by reducing number of cores and simplifying the block layouts, but carefully managing the aspect of homes to avoid single aspect facing the roundabout and no single aspect homes facing north.</p> <p>The revised scheme has also significantly improved the sunlight and daylight into the northern courtyard, now exceeding the minimum BRE guidance.</p>

04.0	<b>Landscape</b>	
04.1	<i>The panel asks that the scheme does not preclude a future pedestrian connection to the south where there is a level change to St Edwards Way. This will futureproof the development for future integration with the council's upcoming Liveable Neighbourhoods scheme.</i>	The revised design incorporates a set of steps to access St Edwards Way from the southern end of the site. This will be a secure and managed access for residents, but it does not preclude a future public connection if desired.
04.2	<i>In the panel's view, communal outdoor space will not function well as amenity space if it is dominated by servicing. It asks for all opportunities to be taken to avoid bringing vehicles into the public realm: for example, locating the underground refuse storage collection area at the edge of the site.</i>	We have explored all possible options for the URS bin provision and balancing residents' proximity to use the bins safely and easily. The URS vehicle needs a significant amount of space to empty the bins as well as turn around. We are unable to service the URS from St Edwards Way, the roundabout or the end of North Street so we have no choice but to service from within the site.
04.3	<i>The panel supports the removal of the parking spaces from the centre of the site, but the new location along the riverside is too visible and disrupts enjoyment of the River Rom. The panel recommends testing whether the parking could be relocated to the courtyard of Block B. This would be a good use for areas that will be more overshadowed.</i>	The parking has been relocated along the northern boundary and away from the new areas of public realm and away from the River Rom.
04.4	<i>It is positive that play provision for the development has been significantly increased by making the landscaping alongside the river private to residents. The panel is comfortable with this solution because it is more likely to be well maintained, and controlled access will increase safety.</i>	Agreed, the design has evolved but retains the play and landscaping along the edge of the River Rom boundary within a secure residential communal amenity area.
04.5	<i>The panel is not convinced that play space will be well-used in the courtyard of Block B to the north as it will be largely overshadowed. Efforts should instead be concentrated on making the riverside play space as successful as possible.</i>	The courtyard to block B has been redesigned so that it is now a very well-lit space and comfortably passes the BRE guidance for sunlight and daylight on the 21 <sup>st</sup> of March and is very well lit during all the summer months.
04.6	<i>The panel recommends naturalising more of the river to maximise its visual amenity and taking advantage of the linear form to create 'play-on-the-way' landscaping. These play structures should not all be under the shade of trees, so that they can be enjoyed throughout the seasons.</i>	The updated proposals increase the amount of naturalisation to the River Rom while balancing the need to create usable public realm space and play areas. Play is in several different locations to ensure that it is not all shaded by trees.
04.7	<i>The quality of the communal amenity and play spaces will depend on the surface materials and finishes, and further detail is needed on these. The</i>	All hard and soft landscaping are being developed in detail for the planning submission and the amount of hard landscaping has been reduced to the minimum needed to service the site and provide a new public link.

	<i>panel advises reducing the amount of hard surfacing in the playable areas.</i>	
04.8	<i>The panel supports the strategy of interplanting the existing retained trees with more appropriate native species. This will be positive for biodiversity and will help to protect the privacy of the properties along Linden Street.</i>	Agreed, a detailed tree removal and replacement strategy has been developed for the site and will be submitted as part of the planning application.
07.0	<b>Next Steps</b>	
	<i>The Havering Quality Review Panel is confident that the applicants can address the remaining comments in discussion with Havering officers. Como Street Car Park does not need to return for another design review.</i>	Noted and agreed. Following a further pre app workshop after the Chairs Review panel, we discussed the priorities of the site and developed the new proposal addressing all the main concerns by the QRP and LBH Planning Team.

#### **4 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- 4.1 In accordance with planning legislation, the developer will consult the local community on these proposals as part of the pre-application process.

##### **Planning Policy**

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024  
London Plan 2021  
London Borough of Havering Local Plan 2016 – 2031  
Draft Romford Master Plan 2024

#### **5 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

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

- Principle of development
- Density, scale and site layout
- Quality of Design/Living Conditions for Future Occupiers
- Housing mix/affordable housing
- Parking/Traffic
- Other issues

##### **5.2 Principal of Development**

- This is a brownfield site which abuts the Romford Town Centre and is Council owned land. The principle of residential led redevelopment of this site is accepted. The site is covered by Site Specific Allocation ROMSSA3 which allocates the site for residential development with ancillary fringe retail uses along North Street.
- The Site is also identified in the Council's Housing Trajectory 2019, which formed part of the evidence base for the Local Plan. The site is identified as being able to provide 150 units. The development of the site for residential development will make an important contribution to meeting the boroughs housing targets.

- The site is part of a development brief identified in the emerging Romford Masterplan – expected to be adopted in 2025.
- LBH supports the principle of residential led mixed use development on this site as it is providing additional homes in a well-established residential neighbourhood and shopping area, five to ten minutes' walk from Romford station subject to all other material planning considerations.
- At all levels of planning policy there is strong encouragement to maximise the use of such sites when they become available. Bringing forward this type of site that could be delivered in the short and long term will support the Council in meeting its housing requirement.
- The Council's Local Plan states that Romford has potential for significant regeneration and intensification, and national, London Plan and local policies seek to optimise the use of brownfield land for meeting the demand for new homes, and other growth.

### 5.3 **Density, scale and site layout**

- The proposed density would be within the ranges identified in the current London Plan and the adopted Local Plan. The London Plan has moved away from the density matrix approach and also density is only one indication of the appropriateness of proposed development. What is most important here is ensuring that the proposals deliver a high quality of design and living environment for future occupiers.
- At 3-9 storeys, the buildings will be taller than its direct neighbours but comparable to the ongoing development on Angel Way south of the site and elsewhere close to the ring road. Buildings of the height proposed, could be considered appropriate in this context subject to the quality and liveability of accommodation, proximity of the buildings to the boundaries of adjacent sites in terms of amenity impact and/or prejudicing development of surrounding land. Any height and bulk should be justified through a thorough townscape and contextual approach including identifying important viewpoints, in accordance policies 7 and 10 of the Local Plan. Members may wish to comment on this part of the proposal.

### 5.4 **Quality of Design/Living Conditions for Future Occupiers**

- There is merit in an approach as demonstrated which gives high priority to the quality of materials and which can demonstrate a coherent design led approach to the redevelopment of the site.
- It is important that any proposal provides high quality accommodation for future residents including provision of outdoor amenity space, avoiding single aspect dwellings and satisfactory outlook from habitable rooms.
- Consideration is required as to the quality of pedestrian environment, particularly from along Como Street and North Street, the amenity area of the site and river frontage, as well as links to Romford Town Centre and proposed liveable neighbourhood scheme.

## 5.5 Housing mix/affordable housing

- Council Policy 5 states that all housing schemes should include a proportion of family-sized homes and seek to reflect the recommended housing mix as set out in the table below. The policy does allow for variations to the recommended mix, but states that these must be robustly justified, having regard to individual site circumstances including location, site constraints, viability and the achievement of mixed and balanced communities.

- The Borough's housing mix as set out in the Local Plan Policy 5.

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4+bed
Market Housing	5%	15%	64%	16%
Affordable Housing	10%	40%	40%	10%

- The scheme proposes 137 new homes with the following mix:

30% 1 bedroom flats (42 no) (split of 35 x 1 b2p, 7 x 1B2p M4(3) wheelchair)

47% 2 bedroom flats (64 no) (split of 23 x 2b3p, 34 x 2b4p and 7 x 2b3p M4(3) wheelchair)

23% 3 bedroom homes (31 no) (3 x 3 bed, 6p houses / the balance 3bed, 5p flats).

- Current planning policy would require that a minimum of 35% affordable housing in all new developments and 50% on public sector land (of which 70% should be social rented and 30% intermediate/shared ownership by habitable room, which is subject to tenure mix) is proposed or it should be comprehensively demonstrated that the maximum viable quantum is being provided. As the site is Council owned land, the policy requirement for 50% affordable housing is applicable.
- The applicant has stated that the level of affordable housing on site is to be determined following a full understanding of the costs of the River Rom works and aspirations for naturalisation of the river within the site. Officers question what has informed the proposed housing mix in terms of policy requirement if the viability of the proposal is still in question? Members may wish to comment on this.

## 5.6 Parking/Traffic

- It is not anticipated that the proposals will generate significant levels of traffic. There would likely be a requirement to provide disabled and service area parking, but given the town centre location, providing additional residential parking spaces would not be required.
- Number of parking proposed:
  - 4 x accessible residential parking spaces, (3% dedicated on site)
  - 1 x commercial parking space,
  - 2 x dedicated large bays for servicing and deliveries (One within the site and one at the end of North Street)
  - 3 x dedicated scooter delivery bays (for small food deliveries).



- Given the quantum and the uses proposed and the nature of the site, providing a satisfactory servicing may be a challenge and Members may wish to comment on this.

### **Financial and Other Mitigation**

5.7 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.

5.8 The proposal would attract the following Community Infrastructure Levy contributions to mitigate the impact of the development:

- £25 per square metre Mayoral CIL towards Crossrail
- £125 per square metre Havering CIL

5.9 **Other Planning Issues:**

- Archaeology
- Biodiversity
- Sustainable Design and Construction
- Impact on local Education provision
- Infrastructure and Utilities
- Healthcare
- Open Space and Recreation
- Flooding and Sustainable Drainage System
- Secured by Design Sustainable Design and Construction
- Secured by Design
- Servicing Management

### **Summary of Issues**

5.10 In order to assist members, officers have raised similar concerns/issues expressed by the Quality Review Panel with the developer team as outlined in the table of responses to QRP comments in Paragraph 3.2 and members may wish to comment in relation to these points in addition to any other comments/questions that they may wish to raise.

### **Conclusion**

5.11 The proposed development has been considered at five pre-application meetings and a design workshop with officers, and the scheme has been developed as a result. 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.

5.12 Further, it is likely that this scheme may come back to this Committee for final review as part of the continuing Pre-Application engagement but only if members seek further clarification.