

VICTORIA QUARTER

(Land formerly known as British Gas Works,

Albert Road, Barnet)

DESIGN AUDIT

Prepared on behalf of
Citystyle Fairview VQ LLP

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Amended to reflect update to NPPF

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document has been prepared for Fairview New Homes as an independent design audit of a planning application at Victoria Quarter, Albert Road, Barnet.
- 1.2 The design audit has been written by Colin Pullan, Head of Urban Design and Masterplanning at Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH). He holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Planning and a Post Graduate Diploma in Urban Design. He is on the executive of, and former Chair of, the Urban Design Group, a membership charity established in 1978 open to all who care about the quality of life in our cities, towns and villages and believe that raising standards of urban design is central to its improvement.
- 1.3 He has over 30 years' experience as an urban designer in the private sector, covering all design matters. He studied at the Oxford Polytechnic JCUD (now Oxford Brookes), one of the most distinguished urban design universities before moving into private practice.
- 1.4 There are a number of relevant urban design criteria set by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Local Plan Policies and the National Design Guide which provide the basis upon which design quality can be measured. Accordingly this audit undertakes a review of the scheme against these criteria (which are summarised at Table 1 in the appendix). It considers:
 - The local character; and
 - The qualities of the application scheme and how they relate to the above.

2. LOCATION AND CONTEXT

- 2.1 The site is located to the north of Victoria Road (A110) at the edge of New Barnet town centre. It comprises land formerly part of a British Gas Works site and is currently vacant with the former buildings, structures and hard surfacing removed.
- 2.2 The site area is 3.03 ha and is rectilinear in shape with clearly defined boundaries. It lies within an established urban area of a mixture of uses including residential, retail and commercial.
- 2.3 To the north is the residual Albert Road Gas Works with a right of access provided from Albert Road running through the site. Adjoining the site to the east is Victoria Park, beyond which are the New Barnet Leisure Centre and housing areas. Victoria Recreation Ground is a public park and is one of Barnet's 'Premier Parks', it includes a children's playground and football pitches. South of the site is New Barnet town centre and New Barnet Station is some 200m to the south west. Along the western boundary is an embankment and above a railway line. The embankment is wooded and beyond the railway line is a housing area.
- 2.4 Vehicular access to the site is from Albert Road which connects to Victoria Road. To the north at the boundary to the retained gas works is a raised pedestrian walkway 3-4m above the site which via a tunnel beneath the railway lines connects west into the adjacent housing area on Cromer Road and east to Victoria Park.
- 2.5 The site is located within Flood Zone 1.
- 2.6 The site is not within a conservation area and there are no statutory or locally listed buildings on site. There are no identified views of significance across the site.
- 2.7 The site is within a mixed grain area, with the courser grain of the High Street area to the south and the finer residential grain to the east.
- 2.8 Within the town centre on East Barnet Road, building heights generally range from 2 to 4 storeys. Beyond the railway embankment is a mixture of office, retail and residential buildings varying in height from 2 to 8 storeys around the district centre. To the west of the railway bridge on Station Road the height and massing increases with a number of large blocks extending up to 11/12 storeys in height. Directly adjacent is the existing gas holder structure at approximately 39m and the railway bank is elevated to around 10m.
- 2.9 The site is derelict, a somewhat blighted and underutilised part of the New Barnet town centre context. The proposals will regenerate this site, presently isolated in its context, to bring activity to this part of the town centre, with residents moving through the site and the wider area, which is welcomed. Furthermore, the residential land use will likely offer vitality throughout the day and the week, extending activity beyond the site to the town centre and park, which will be of particularly benefit during the week and evenings when there will be less footfall. The space and park will feel safer and more attractive.
- 2.10 The site is part of a wider regeneration area which includes the Tesco site to the south.
- 2.11 The principle of regeneration and for a high density scheme of tall buildings (relative to the surrounding context) has been accepted by the Council.

- 2.12 The site has planning permission for 305 residential units including 15% affordable, 674sqm mixed use commercial space, public open space; alteration and additions to the existing highways arrangements, the removal of the existing elevated footbridge and creation of new pedestrian routes together with associated works including landscaping, provision of basement and surface car parking, servicing and plant area (Application Ref: B/04834/14 - The first permission was granted in May 2015 - following completion of the legal agreement). The permission has been formally implemented.
- 2.13 A second permission was granted in July 2020 (following completion of legal agreement) Application Ref 16/7601/FUL) to cover an additional piece of land to the front of the site as well as part of the existing site (southern part of the site). This was for an additional 104 residential units (net increase of 52 units), 623sqm of mix use commercial floorspace (A1/B1/D1/D2), the creation of new publically accessible open spaces, pedestrian routes and car parking, cycle parking and landscaping.
- 2.14 A third application Ref 17/5522/FUL was granted in July 2020 (following completion of legal agreement) relates to the southern area of the site to construct 39 residential units and 265sqm of commercial/retail/office floorspace (Use Class A1 – A4/B1/D1/D2), the creation of new publicly accessible open spaces and pedestrian routes together with associated access, servicing, car parking, cycle parking and landscaping.
- 2.15 The extant planning permissions result in a combined scheme which provides a total of 371 units; 18% affordable by habitable rooms; 618m² of mix use commercial floorspace; and 396 car parking spaces along with the other improvements to the surrounding area secured via legal agreement. This position was understood to be acceptable also to the community (New Barnet Victoria Quarter Appraisal of Design Proposals for the Save New Barnet Group June 2020.) Building heights within the extant permissions were up to eight storeys and as such those at eight storeys were contrary to Policies DM05 and CS5 which identify the locations and criteria for tall buildings in the Borough.
- 2.16 An application was refused planning permission September 2020 (20/1719/FUL): Redevelopment of the site to provide 652 residential units (Use Class C3) within 14 buildings ranging from 1 to 10 storeys and a single storey Plaza Kiosk building, with 327.6sqm of retail/commercial space and 111.3sqm of community space (Use Class A1/A2/A3/A4/B1/D1/D2) at ground floor; new public realm with communal landscaped amenity areas; alterations and additions to existing highways arrangements plus the removal of existing elevated footbridge and creation of new pedestrian routes; 392 car parking spaces (including car club and accessible provision) with basement and surface level provision; secure cycle parking; servicing and other associated development. The scheme had d been reviewed by the GLA which had confirmed through the formal stage 1 process that the proposed heights and massing are acceptable. The GLA noted: Urban design and heritage: *The proposal seeks to optimise the site and there are no strategic concerns raised in respect of the height and massing of the proposed development.* And, commenting on urban design matters the Committee report noted *no objections.*

3. THE SCHEME

- 3.1 The application is for:

“Redevelopment of the site to provide 544 residential units (Use Class C3) within 13 buildings ranging from 4 to 8 storeys, with 267.1sqm of retail/commercial space and 112.7sqm of community space (Use Class A1/A2/A3/A4/B1/D1/D2) at ground floor, new public realm with

communal landscaped amenity areas, alterations and additions to existing highways arrangements plus the removal of existing elevated footbridge and creation of new pedestrian routes, 334 car parking spaces (including car club and accessible provision) with basement and surface level provision, secure cycle parking, servicing and other associated development”

- 3.2 This application therefore represents an increase on dwelling numbers of the extant permissions of 173 units. Building heights remain up to eight storeys.

4. ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The following assessment has been informed by a site visit and a review of the current and previous application and supporting material - principally the Design and Access Statements (DAS). The assessment covers the features and merits of the appeal scheme and how they relate to the local context as described by the various contextual documents and submission materials to the applications described above.

USE

- 4.2 The number of homes and supporting uses are considered to represent an optimum use of land in a sustainable town centre location close to local amenities and services as well as public transport. The provision of affordable housing promotes mixed tenure communities.

- 4.3 Considering the increase in dwelling numbers from the extant permissions, matters of design that usually imply ‘overdevelopment’ have demonstrably been addressed in the submission material. Such matters include qualitative considerations such as dwelling sizes, amenity, privacy and outlook, refuse and parking. For these matters to be resolved and agreed as acceptable, and having appropriate regard to context, it generally follows that a site has been optimised and therefore is compliant with the NPPF. Considering matters of dwelling size, privacy, amenity, outlook and parking: :

1. All of the proposed apartments meet the London Plan Housing Standards and Building Regulations requirement M4 ‘Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings’.
2. The scheme provides private and communal space in accordance with policy, giving every resident private outdoor space.
3. The siting of buildings and within apartments through separation and siting of windows, secures appropriate privacy consistent with the recommended separation distances.
4. There are no north facing dwellings, and all dwellings have an outlook over public street and open spaces or private communal spaces. Many dwellings are dual aspect.
5. The sunlight daylight appraisal concludes that the scheme will achieve appropriate levels for buildings and spaces. 89% of habitable rooms (1451) meet or exceed the recommendations for daylight quantity (ADF). 99.9% (1623) of all habitable rooms have been designed with good proportions for uniform daylight distribution in accordance with BRE’s RDC, where applicable.
6. Refuse stores are accommodated within the built form and do not dominate the street scene. They are located to serve individual buildings.
7. The underground car park removes a significant amount of parked cars from the public street spaces and parked cars, where provided on street, are accommodated with landscaping such that they will not visually detract from the public realm. Cycle parking is provided for each Building and close to entrances to encourage sustainable travel.

RESPONSE TO CONTEXT

- 4.4 The following paragraphs consider the appropriateness of the scheme's response to context.

PATTERN AND GRAIN

- 4.5 As described by the Characterisation Study of London Borough of Barnet 2010 the site lies within an area defined as 'Box Development' which includes Victoria Park. In this context, the typology refers to industrial development located in close proximity to large infrastructure and rail lines and located around a town centre.
- 4.6 The surrounding areas beyond the site and Victoria Park are characterised as 'Residential Streets' - the predominant form of development in Barnet and most often associated with interwar housing - and Town Centre Core – describing New Barnet town centre which lies adjacent to the southern boundary (Figure Primary Typologies page 59 and page 97 - New Barnet Character Area).
- 4.7 The wider 'New Barnet Character Area' breaks the nearby residential typologies into urban terraces to the south, suburban to the east and suburban terrace to the north. In terms of references for pattern, grain and character the Characterisation Study of London Borough of Barnet 2010 note that:

"The street layout in New Barnet generally follows a linear form with a well-connected street pattern. Building plot sizes vary but are generally of a standard semi-detached size. The character of housing types remains relatively consistent and responds to the topography. The undulating topography enables many streets to get views of the wider surroundings. While much of the housing is inter war semi-detached, there are pockets of earlier Victorian development, especially in the northern parts, and some areas of more recent development. There is an overall consistency of massing within the built form, with most residential units rising to two or three storeys at most. Areas of a greater density exist along streets such as Station Road, Lyonsdown Road and Somerset Road, with built form rising to more than five storeys in places. There is limited provision of green and open spaces within the character area, although large areas of open space lie to the north, southwest and southeast."

- 4.8 The characterisation study concludes:

"It is vital that any new development within the borough, whether large or small, works with the existing block structure. Larger developments need to demonstrate that they create a coherent network of streets and spaces with active frontages rather than cul-de-sacs and courtyards and that they enhance pedestrian connectivity. Smaller infill schemes need to demonstrate that they understand and respond to the context by providing active frontages along the prevailing building line. This is the single most fundamental element of good design, without which even the best architecture and detailing will fail."

- 4.9 The combined extant permissions provide an indication of the anticipated height, density, form and scale of development; which is a significant increase upon that of the surrounding two storey suburban residential context as identified above, but is considered appropriate to the accessibility of the town centre, park and transport nodes.
- 4.10 The containment of the site by existing features, its setting adjacent to the town centre core and separation from the Residential Streets typology also affords the opportunity for a form of development that optimises the re-use of the site, rather than one which replicates the prevalent residential patterns of Victorian and inter-war suburban housing beyond. A flatted development

capitalises upon accessibility and ‘balances’ the existing wider mix of housing – the Victorian and interwar suburban areas are typically characterised by family houses. This flat led approach has been consistent through previous schemes for the site.

- 4.11 The proposed pattern and grain of the scheme is of dense, urban/perimeter blocks to the south and apartment pavilion/finger blocks to the north. The transition from perimeter blocks to the south, through to finger/pavilion blocks to the north is considered an appropriate response to mediate the pattern of the Town Centre Core (of coarse grain blocks) to a residential linear pattern of streets and blocks within the site (of finer grained blocks). This pattern also provides enhanced connectivity through the site.
- 4.12 The proposed linear pattern is considered to relate successfully to the wider street pattern and to the particular constraints and opportunities of the site, knitting Albert Road into the fabric of the town centre at Victoria Road and affording new north-south and east-west routes within the site. The raised footway will be brought to ground level, improving the attractiveness of this route.
- 4.13 To the south there are two perimeter blocks that reflect in scale and form the prevalent dense pattern at and around the town centre and along Victoria Road. To the north and into the site the north-south aligned ‘pavilion buildings’ respond to the alignment of the park, the railway embankment, the footpath/bridge and Albert Road, creating a highly legible framework of connected routes. This transitory approach to density, pattern and grain is a consistent feature of the previous schemes.
- 4.14 Space between blocks has increased to a minimum of 20m. The reduced footprint subsequently reduces the long horizontal building form of the refused scheme and achieves a building footprint pattern which provides additional benefits in terms of orientation, improved separation, sunlight/daylight benefits and greater visual permeability of the east west ‘finger approach’.
- 4.15 Consequently, it is considered that the proposed approach is as valid in terms of pattern and grain as the extant permission.

LAYOUT

- 4.16 The proposed Buildings A – G and J are aligned with regard to the linear shape of the site, the setting of Victoria Park, the railway embankment and Victoria Road – which define a general grid pattern as described earlier. This approach is in principle consistent with the extant permissions the difference being only the execution of the grid for the finger blocks. The May 2015 consented scheme (Application Ref: B/04834/14) proposed four finger blocks aligned east west, providing links from Albert Road to the park – as opposed to north-south aligned – and a similar perimeter block pattern to the south on Victoria Road and along the embankment. The difference in the alignment of the north eastern blocks is inconsequential upon the appropriateness of the pattern and grain as the present pattern also affords convenient and legible east-west links to the park, all be it fewer. Permeability through the site is improved through reducing the building footprint and removing massing to leave simple rectangular footprints.
- 4.17 The urban/perimeter block buildings H and J relate to Victoria Road and will enhance the otherwise nondescript immediate surrounding townscape at the edge of the town centre and creates a community use/commercial frontage onto Victoria Road.
- 4.18 The central Building A and the surrounding civic plaza space provides an entrance into the scheme with discernible links to Victoria Park and into the scheme to the north along Albert Road. The play space within new public realm also seeks to act as an extension of the park facilities.

- 4.19 The buildings along the edge of the embankment (E, F1/2/3 and G) part frame Albert Road.
- 4.20 The six pavilion buildings within the scheme provide frontage to Victoria Park, Albert Road and the intermediate private spaces.
- 4.21 Buildings address public spaces and there are clearly defined boundaries between public and private space. The use of courtyard and street blocks define the private spaces, guarded by the mass of the blocks that defines it. The arrangement of buildings to address principally Albert Road – the primary access /spine road, Victoria Road – the main entrance, and Victoria Park – the western edge is considered an appropriate approach having regard to the pattern and grain as described above. The approach elevates Albert Road and Victoria Park as the important public spaces, and subjugates the internal secondary spaces between Buildings A, B1/2, C1/2 and D1/2. There remains a strong east-west connection to Victoria Park through the Plaza, and a link to north.
- 4.22 The managed paths across the podium spaces between blocks A1/2, B1/2 and C1/2 will afford additional east-west permeability for residents and their visitors.
- 4.23 The ground floors of buildings have entrances in sensible locations in relation to the principal public routes and spaces. Ground floors of the blocks are activated by apartments and a commercial space. There are very limited bin and bike store entrances making for more residential ground floor active edges along the street space. Buildings also have multiple entrances onto the streets – communal and for individual apartments.
- 4.24 Between most of the buildings the exception being Buildings F4 and G are areas of privately accessible green space, including local play areas and green corridors. Between Buildings F4 and G is a parking courtyard. Between the parking / play areas and buildings there is sufficient separation and planting to help mitigate potential nuisance. Generally, between public street spaces and dwellings there is sufficient separation for buffer planting and where appropriate private amenity space to safeguard the amenity of ground floor dwellings.
- 4.25 The layout ensures there are no single aspect north facing apartments and maximises sunlight for the properties.

LANDSCAPE AND OPEN SPACE

- 4.26 The landscape proposals include a significant number of benefits including: new street trees, local play areas, a plaza and green spaces. These proposals will undoubtedly improve the site and the wider area, encouraging pedestrians into this underutilised part of the town centre and edge of the park, to appreciate that it is cared for, overlooked and therefore safe.
- 4.27 The landscape spaces will provide an outdoor space for residents to meet, vegetation for shade and biodiversity, and play space for children; all of which will create a green framework within the site which connects east into the park. However, many of these spaces are principally private areas with the exception of the Plaza and streets.
- 4.28 Compared to the simplicity of the built form, the landscape spaces within the scheme – the plaza and private courtyard are particularly animated with strong geometric lines in the paths that connect the entrances between B1, B2, C1, C2, D1 and D2. The geometry in the plaza space that integrates levels creates an interesting and dynamic space that contrasts well with the simplicity of the park.

MOVEMENT AND PARKING

- 4.29 Limited car parking is provided and this is considered the correct response to a town centre site with excellent access to local services and public transport. There is very limited on street parking, and that which is evident on Albert Road / the spine road is aligned parallel, consistent with the on street parking within some of the residential areas, and landscaped with street trees such that parked cars will not significantly detract from the quality of the street scene.
- 4.30 The limited parking that is provided seeks to ensure 60% parking requirement is met and that the scheme is compliant with this.
- 4.31 Cycle parking is provided in a sensible locations related to the buildings

BUILDING FORM, HEIGHT, SCALE MASSING AND ELEVATIONS

- 4.32 The apartment blocks are modulated to some degree in plan form to creating small set-backs and projections. The modulation principally occurs to the elevations addressing the primary public spaces – Victoria Road, Albert Road and Victoria Park. The modules are further articulated by balconies. The use of corner balconies and setbacks to the upper floors seeks to signify key views and routes through the masterplan whilst creating visual interest. The primary frontage of the scheme in terms of the articulation of the elevation is that to Victoria Park (Buildings B2, C2 and D2).
- 4.33 The proposed building heights of predominantly four – seven storeys are not considered unusual in the context of a town centre and there appear to be no amenity issues with the new buildings and existing.
- 4.34 Only Building A is at part eight storeys, consistent with the extant permissions.
- 4.35 The proposed siting of the taller buildings within the scheme and a reduction in scale (height and proportion) to Victoria Road is considered an appropriate design response to transitioning the scale and pattern beyond the site, and would be perceived as from walking into the scheme from Victoria Road.
- 4.36 From the park the proposed buildings will be background to the existing trees and frame the edge of the space.
- 4.37 The architectural ‘reference/typology’ for the scheme resembles the early 20th century brick mansion block, reflected particularly in the proportion (height/width and depth) of Buildings B1/2, C1/2 and D1/2; the simplicity of the basic rectilinear form, elevation and fenestration; the subtle differentiation of base, crown and floor levels; and material. As detailed in the DAS the treatment of the elevations have been simplified, reducing the intensity of the brick detailing which is aligned with a more contemporary brick and metalwork palette, whilst seeking to maintain the initial narrative from the local area.
- 4.38 The single architectural approach and in particular the uniformity of Buildings B1/2, C1/2 and D1/2 tie in all the buildings except for those at Victoria Road (Buildings J and H) creates a strong, coherent sense of place within the site and at the edge of the park. The variation of Buildings J and H – expressed by greater modulation and reduced height – provides an appropriate transition to the reduced scale of the immediate buildings on Victoria Road.
- 4.39 Buildings E and F1/2/3 break away from the proportion of the mansion and respond to the embankment and railway line proving a buffer. Along the embankment, Building E and F4 are

better articulated and proportioned than F1/2/F3. F1/2/3 reads as a single block principally through the asymmetrical façade, single material and lack of regular arrangement of features in the elevation. Notwithstanding this, the commonality of style, features and detailing across the street scene will provide an attractive backdrop to the site. The introduction of expressed bays and setbacks to form roof terraces in addition to the inset of the roof line also helps to reduce the scale and visual impact of this block on the street scene.

- 4.40 The flank elevations of B1/2, D1 and D2 would benefit from refinement, (elevation drawings 11); particularly Block B2 which terminates views north into the scheme and provides a backstop to an interesting visual stop for views into the Plaza from Victoria Road.
- 4.41 The projecting flank balcony to Building F1-3 sits oddly in the elevation, a lone feature.
- 4.42 The pitched roof community building serving the underground car park within the plaza appears a little incongruous and would benefit from a familiar flat roof to better integrate with the surrounding build form and style.
- 4.43 The proposed materials and palette of colours are considered to reinforce the overall sense of place within the scheme, noticeably drawing on the local residential palette. The prevalent brick colour in the residential areas is red and it is queried whether a red/orange palette would be more appropriate than buff.

INTERNAL ARRANGEMENTS

- 4.44 All apartments are served from centrally located cores with lift and stairs with short corridors to individual units. All cores with the exception of A, G and F4 are part naturally lit to the main stair.

TABLE 1

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	
Paragraph 8: Achieving sustainable development	Scheme will foster well designed, beautiful and safe places.
Paragraph 92(a,b,c): to achieve safe and inclusive places that provide opportunities for people to meet, street layouts that allow for easy, attractive and well-designed clear and legible pedestrian and cycle connections and active street frontages; high quality public spaces and enable and support active lifestyles	The scheme provides attractive and clear pedestrian and cycle routes connecting into the existing wider network. The scheme affords attractive landscaped spaces and useable private amenity spaces, to help promote social interaction. Also the use of balconies creates active frontages and creates a transition between public and private spaces. The use of an apparent grid structure between the buildings of pedestrian a vehicular routes across the site helps to creates safe and accessible routes across the site.
Paragraphs 104 and 105: Promoting sustainable transport	The scheme is at the edge of the town centre and encourages walking with direct links from the entrances to the surrounding streets.
Paragraph 106 (d) Provide high quality attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks with supporting facilities such as secure cycle parking	Compliant
Paragraph 110 (c) The design of streets, parking areas...reflects current national guidance including the National Design Guide.	Compliant
Paragraph 123 (a, b): Making effective use of land, using employment land for homes in areas of high housing demand and for schemes that provide community services such as schools.	Compliant
Paragraph 124: Appropriate densities, development to make the efficient use of land.	The scheme has a proposed density which is considered appropriate to its context.
Paragraph 125: Area based character assessments and design guides can be used to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating beautiful and sustainable places. Where there is a shortage of land for meeting housing need it is especially important to avoid homes being built at low densities and ensure that development makes optimal use of the potential for each site.	The scheme has been informed by a framework of masterplans and previous schemes.
Paragraph 126: Which underlines that the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve, being clear about design expectations.	This is a high quality building informed by the local context. The architectural response of the appeal scheme in terms of a new character area that relates to the site and park is considered to be appropriate.
Para 127: Engagement and vision	Planning groups have played an important role in identifying the special qualities of the site and explaining how this should be reflected in development through support of the initial plans. The underlying principles are consistent with the application.
Paragraph 128: Local authorities should prepare design guides or codes consistent with the principles set out in the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code, and which reflect local character and design preferences; which provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places	The site has a number of masterplans and a consented scheme. The framework for the masterplan is consistent with good design principles.
Paragraph 130: Which sets six qualitative design criteria	Compliant.
Paragraph 131: Trees	The site currently contains one tree. The DAS acknowledges the importance of tree planting within the development for not only the aesthetic benefits but also the ecological benefits. The proposed scheme incorporates street trees along Albert Road / the spine road, Victoria Road and within the open spaces. A variety of specimens has been proposed to characterise each area and seeks to provide an appropriate scale to suit its purpose and place.

Paragraph 133: Improving design	The scheme creates a high quality place informed by previous engagement and mindful of previous iterations. Notwithstanding the design officer and GLA support for the refused scheme, the proposals have taken on board a reduction in scale across the site. As part of the engagement process there was a two day exhibition.
Paragraph 132: Design quality and engagement	The site has a history of engagement to resolve the proposed scheme.
Paragraph 134: Design quality and character Innovation, sustainability and raising design standards	The scheme demonstrably improves the character and quality of the area. The sustainability study summaries that the overall the proposed development achieves an excellent standard of sustainability which seeks to minimise its impact on the local environment and provide scope and encouragement for the future residents to adopt a sustainable lifestyle. This is achieved through both social-economic credentials and environmental credentials including: The sites close proximity to local amenity. Providing local housing need on a brownfield land with minimal impact to the local area. Providing suitable dwelling density given its urban location. All dwellings will be designed to reduce their emissions to exceed the minimum mandatory requirements. Recycled, responsibly sourced and sustainable manufactured building materials will be used for the main building elements. The scheme will include good practice design standards for air quality, light, and noise pollution.
National Design Guide	
The National Design Guide sets out ten characteristics of well-designed places which contribute towards the themes for good design set out in the NPPF. The Design Guide lends some objectivity to the inherently subjective issue of 'good design'.	
1. Context	The previous DASs and supporting appraisals demonstrate an understanding of the site and context.
2. Identity	The scheme is informed by the analysis of the area, with materials within the palette informed by the local context. The scheme has a strong identify.
3. Built form	The built form of the scheme has created active frontages. The proposals will allow for a flow of activity from the new residents, creating a natural surveillance of the street and surrounding space. The proposed heights and massing have been taken into consideration with regard to site features, the setting of Victoria Park and the opportunity to optimise the capacity of the site. The scheme seeks to optimise density with a mix of development and open spaces across the site.
4. Movement	The site is in a sustainable location. The scheme is structured from a legible network using Albert Road and footpaths that promote walking and cycling into the scheme. Wheelchair, buggy and cycle friendly movement throughout the site has been considered, and made accessible through the primary routes in the site. Streets incorporate green infrastructure.
5. Nature	A soft and hard landscaping strategy with a tree planting strategy is provided within the Landscape DAS. The scheme seeks to achieve a diverse ecosystem.
6. Public spaces	The scheme provides high quality shared green space for residents of the apartments and includes play spaces for children.
7. Uses	The scheme provides mixed tenure residential uses and public open space (Plaza and street spaces).
8. Homes and buildings	With reference to the floor plans, the layout of the apartments and homes provides good quality internal and external living and amenity space.

9. Resources	<p>The scheme seeks to conserve natural resources and optimise energy consumption through a good compact design.</p> <p>As described by the DAS, the energy strategy exceeds the minimum policy requirements carbon abatement and will continue to abate carbon at greater rates as the grid decarbonises and should meet the governments' ambitions for nearly zero carbon buildings by 2050.</p> <p>There are a number of initiatives as part of the sustainability strategy that will manage energy resources across the development and follows the updated energy hierarchy. These include:</p> <p>Be Lean – seeking to use less energy through passive design and the performance of the buildings envelope including reducing heat loss.</p> <p>Be Clean – using efficient energy supplies through efficient ventilation mechanisms and future proofed energy systems.</p> <p>Be Green – using renewable energy sources such as air source heat pumps, running on low grid electricity and using highly automated management systems and smart metering.</p> <p>In addition there is a commitment to monitor and report on the energy performance for at least 5 years post-completion.</p>
10. Lifespan	<p>As described in the Sustainability Statement the scheme will be well managed to maintain the quality of the built form and open spaces. Material will be designed to minimise maintenance requirements. The maintenance strategy is to provide a comprehensive resident led estate service through a Resident Association with the maintenance and upkeep of communal areas to be the responsibility of an appointment management company.</p>
National Planning Policy Guidance - Design: process and tools	
The NPPG establishes that 'good design' can be described with the ten characteristics of the National Design Guide	
Enhance the quality buildings and spaces	The scheme enhances the quality of buildings and spaces within the site and at the edge of the Park.
Promote character in townscape and landscape	<p>The site seeks to establish its own distinct character in scale and architectural language making it distinctive and memorable whilst establishing a dialogue and familiarity within its context.</p> <p>The proposed scheme is considered to be compliant and responds to existing local character through the reinforcement of local features in detailing, brick pattern, materials and palette (brick of a red/buff hue).</p>
Natural features and local heritage resources can help give shape to a development and integrate it into the wider area	The development has been shaped by the site constraints and opportunities afforded by the Park, the structure of Albert Road and the containment of the site.
High quality hard and soft landscape design ...improves the overall quality of townscape or landscape	The scheme demonstrably improves the landscape of the site and surrounding area through both hard and soft proposals.
... The use of local materials, building methods and details can be an important factor in enhancing local distinctiveness...	The proposed buildings utilise brick, a contextual material in the local context. The use of recycled, responsibly sourced and sustainably manufactured building materials for the main building elements ensures materials are sourced locally wherever practical.
The London Plan 2021	
Policy GG1: Building strong and inclusive communities	The policy states that good growth is inclusive growth. To build on the city's tradition of openness, diversity and equality, and help deliver strong and inclusive communities. The scheme promotes a mixed tenure community with access to the communal open spaces of the plaza and the park.

<p>Policy CG2: Making the Best Use of Land</p>	<p>Policy CG2 states that to create successful sustainable mixed-use places that make the best use of land that those involved in planning and development must:</p> <p>A) Enable the development of brownfield land...and sites within and on the edge of town centres...Considered to be compliant</p> <p>B) Prioritise sites which are well-connected by existing or planned public transport... Considered to be compliant</p> <p>C) Proactively explore the potential to intensify the use of land to support additional homes and workspaces, promoting higher density development, particularly in locations that are well-connected to jobs, services, infrastructure and amenities by public transport, walking and cycling.... Considered to be compliant</p> <p>D) Applying a design-led approach to determine the optimum development capacity of sites...Considered to be compliant</p> <p>E) Understand what is valued about existing places and use this as a catalyst for growth, renewal, and place-making, strengthening London's distinct and varied character...Considered to be compliant</p> <p>G) Plan for good local walking, cycling and public transport connections to support a strategic target of 80 per cent of all journeys using sustainable travel, enabling car-free lifestyles that allow an efficient use of land, as well as using new and enhanced public transport links to unlock growth... Considered to be compliant</p>
<p>Policy D1: London's Form, Character and Capacity for Growth</p>	<p>Policy D1 states that in defining an area's character to understand its capacity for growth Boroughs should undertake area assessments to define the characteristics, qualities and value of different places within the plan area to develop an understanding of different areas' capacity for growth.</p> <p>The Council's Characterisation Study of London Borough of Barnet 2010 provides assistance in defining the local character. The DAS demonstrates awareness of the local character and the qualities of this to inform the layout and appearance. The DAS references the sites location and edge conditions in addition to the sites history and heritage. Whilst the local context is acknowledged it also recognises the site is unique in its scale and positioning within the neighbourhood, suggesting that it is able to determine and establish its own distinct character,</p>
<p>Policy D2: Infrastructure Requirements for Sustainable Densities</p>	<p>Policy D2 states that the density of development should be proportionate to the site's connectivity and accessibility. As noted in the context appraisals, the site is well connected and within easy walking distance of the town centre facilities. Considered to be compliant.</p>
<p>Policy D3: Optimising site Capacity through the Design-led Approach</p>	<p>Policy D3 states that all development must make the best use of land by following a design-led approach that optimises the capacity of sites. Higher density developments should generally be promoted in locations that are well connected to jobs, services, infrastructure and amenities. Considered to be compliant.</p>

<p>Policy D4: Delivering Good Design</p>	<p>Policy D4 states: “B Where appropriate, visual, environmental and movement modelling/assessments should be undertaken to analyse potential design options for an area, site or development proposal.... D) The design of development proposals should be thoroughly scrutinised by borough planning, urban design, and conservation officers... Development proposals referable to the Mayor must have undergone at least one design review early on in their preparation before a planning application is made, or demonstrate that they have undergone a local borough process of design scrutiny, based on the principles set out in Part E if they: 1) include a residential component that exceeds 350 units per hectare; or 2) propose a building defined as a tall building by the borough (see Policy D9 Tall buildings), or that is more than 30m in height where there is no local definition of a tall building. E) The format of design reviews for any development should be agreed with the borough and comply with the Mayor’s guidance on review principles, process and management, ensuring that...6) planning decisions demonstrate how design review has been addressed.” The scheme has demonstrably been informed by a process of scrutiny to resolve the proposed height and therein scale of development. As confirmed in Pre App the extant scheme comprises a building of up to 8 storeys therefore the principle of tall buildings in this location has been established and Council officers have previously supported the provision of up to 10 storeys on the site and considered its townscape impact acceptable. The GLA have supported a previous higher density scheme.</p>
<p>Policy D6: Housing Quality and Standards</p>	<p>“3.4.8 For residential development it is particularly important to scrutinise the qualitative aspects of the development design described in Policy D6 Housing quality and standards. The higher the density of a development the greater this scrutiny should be of the proposed built form, massing, site layout, external spaces, internal design and ongoing management.” The DAS demonstrates the improvements that have been made to the previously refused scheme including the treatment of the elevations which have been simplified, reducing the intensity of the brick detailing which is aligned with a more contemporary brick and metalwork palette, whilst seeking to maintain the initial narrative from the local area. Permeability through the site has also been improved through reducing the building footprint and removing massing to leave simple rectangular footprints. Space between blocks has subsequently increased to a minimum of 20m. The reduced footprint subsequently reduces the long horizontal building form (of the rejected scheme) and achieves a building footprint pattern which provides additional benefits</p>

<p>Policy D9: Tall Buildings This requires boroughs to define tall buildings (with a minimum height of six storeys or 18 metres) and identify specific locations where these may be appropriate. Development proposals will need to take into account the four following impacts: visual, functional, environmental and cumulative impact of their development.</p>	<p>Tall buildings can form part of a plan-led approach to facilitating regeneration opportunities and managing future growth, contributing to new homes and economic growth, particularly in order to make optimal use of the capacity of sites which are well-connected by public transport and have good access to services and amenities.</p> <p>Considering the location for tall buildings the policy states that: 1) Boroughs should determine if there are locations where tall buildings may be an appropriate form of development, subject to meeting the other requirements of the Plan...</p> <p>Not considered to be compliant in that the site is not identified for tall buildings, but addressed through consideration of the plan as a whole as set out in the Planning Statement.</p> <p>As confirmed in Pre App and DAS the extant scheme comprises a building of up to 8 storeys therefore the principle of tall buildings in this location has been established and Council officers have previously supported the provision of up to 10 storeys on the site and considered its townscape impact acceptable.</p> <p>The scheme has considered the visual impacts of the proposal. Only Building A is at eight storeys. The buildings form and arrangement seeks to act as a transitional element within the masterplan stepping from 5 (echoing the height of the surrounding buildings) to 8 storeys (framing the public space).</p>
<p>Barnet's Local Plan Core Strategy Adoption Version 2012</p>	
<p>At paragraph 10.5.5 – High Quality Places – the LP sets a number of overarching principles to promote and assess successful new development. Relevant design principles are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Character: to promote a sense of place by responding to locally distinctive characteristics and patterns of development •Continuity and enclosure: to promote places where public and private spaces are clearly defined and building frontages positively contribute to the urban fabric •Legibility: promoting recognisable routes, landmarks and entrances <p>At paragraph 10.5.12 the LP states that: “High quality design also takes account of its surroundings and what is distinctive and valued about the local area...”</p>	<p>Complaint.</p>
<p>Policy CS1: Policy CS1 (page 47) states that the Council: “...The council, along with its partners, will focus major housing and economic growth in the most suitable locations and manage it to ensure that we deliver sustainable development, while continuing to conserve and enhance the distinctiveness of Barnet as a place to live work and visit...”</p>	<p>Considered to be compliant.</p>
<p>Policy CS5: Policy CS5 seeks to protect and enhance Barnet's character to create high quality places by setting out how high-quality design will be secured.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • protect important local views from places within Barnet (as set out in Map 8); • enhance the borough's high quality suburbs and historic areas through the provision of buildings of the highest quality that are sustainable and adaptable” <p>The 'Heritage and Character' section of policy CS5 (page 69) confirms that: “The Barnet Characterisation Study forms the baseline for the identification of places with a consistent and coherent architectural character.”</p>	<p>Policy CS5 is clear in mandating that new development should improve the quality of buildings, landscaping and the street environment and in turn enhance the experience of Barnet for residents, workers and visitors alike</p> <p>Considered to be compliant. No impact on local views and the scheme provides high quality new buildings.</p>

Barnet's Local Plan (Development Management Policies)	
<p>Policy DM01: Protecting Barnet's character and amenity</p> <p>The Barnet Residential Design Guidance SPD states there should be a minimum distance of about 21 metres between properties with facing windows to habitable rooms to avoid overlooking, and 10.5 metres to a neighbouring garden. Shorter distances may be acceptable between new build properties where there are material justifications.</p> <p>Policy DM01 also requires that all developments should seek to ensure a high standard of urban and architectural design for all new development and high quality design, demonstrating high levels of environmental awareness of their location by way of character, scale, mass, height and pattern of surrounding buildings, spaces and streets. Proposals should preserve or enhance local character and respect the appearance</p>	<p>The scheme responds to the character of the local area, understanding history and connections. The proposals have regard to adjoining street proportions, building lines and forms. The proposed brick and hue reflects the local context.</p> <p>a. All development should represent high quality design...Considered to be compliant</p> <p>b. Development proposals should be based on an understanding of local characteristics. Proposals should preserve or enhance local character and respect the appearance, scale, mass, height and pattern of surrounding buildings, spaces and streets. Considered to be compliant as relevant to do so on Victoria Road</p> <p>c. Development proposals should ensure attractive, safe and, where appropriate, vibrant streets which provide visual interest, particularly at street level and avoid blank walls. Considered to be compliant as appropriate</p> <p>e. Development proposals should be designed to allow for adequate daylight, sunlight, privacy and outlook for adjoining and potential occupiers and users." Considered to be compliant</p>
<p>Policy DM05: Tall buildings</p> <p>Core Strategy Policy CS5 of the Barnet Core Strategy identifies tall buildings of 26 metres or 8 storeys or more and those areas of the borough where tall buildings will be suitable. Policy DM05 of the Local Plan also identifies certain criteria which tall buildings would need to adhere to. The application therefore represents a departure from development plan policy.</p>	<p>Not considered to be compliant, in that the site is not identified in current local plan for a tall buildings, however covered in Planning Statement</p> <p>As confirmed in Pre-App and DAS the extant scheme comprises a building of up to 8 storeys therefore the principle of tall buildings in this location has been established and Council officers have previously supported the provision of up to 10 storeys on the site and considered its townscape impact acceptable.</p>
Barnet's Draft Local Plan Regulation 19 June 2021	
<p>Policy CH04: Tall Buildings</p> <p>Draft Policy CDH04 Tall Buildings states that tall buildings (8 to 14 storeys) may be appropriate in a number of strategic locations including Major Thoroughfares. Proposals will be assessed on the following criteria:</p> <p>i. Provide an active street frontage where appropriate.</p> <p>ii. Integrate within the existing urban fabric.</p> <p>iii. Have regard to the topography, with no adverse impact on Locally Important Views (as shown in Map 4).</p> <p>iv. Respect heritage asset significance and the related setting.</p> <p>v. Ensure that the potential microclimatic impact does not adversely affect levels of comfort in the surrounding public realm, including wind, daylight, temperature and pollution.</p> <p>vi. Consider any possible negative impact on digital connectivity in compliance with Policy TRC04</p>	<p>Buildings in the proposed masterplan range from 3-4 storeys on Victoria Road to 5-7 storeys across the remaining masterplan with heights responding to their context and wide townscape.</p> <p>Building A is the one exception which ranges in height from 5-8 storeys and sits on the new public square (Park Plaza). This massing aligns with the extant consent which established the principle of up to 8 storeys in this location. The buildings design and massing has been orientated to ensure you are greeted on arrival by a 5 storey block which complements the surrounding buildings G and J with the 8 storey element behind.</p>

<p>Policy GSS11: Major Thoroughfares Proposals for tall buildings (8 storeys or more) must be assessed with reference to Policy CDH04.</p>	<p>Considered to be compliant in respect of Building A in context. The draft policy states that development proposals will be supported in these locations where it can be demonstrated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to walking and cycling networks will enable active travel; The thoroughfares on the site seek to promote active travel through from and to the site through the use of cycle paths and bike storage, pedestrian route to the west of the site, wide walkways and proximity to public transport. • Density relates to the context and character of the surrounding area; Density aims to maximise the potential of the site whilst respecting its setting. • Achieves a high-quality design that enhances visual amenity and does not contribute to a continuous 'wall like' corridor of medium rise buildings between town centres; Articulated and active frontages creates animated facades. • Contributes to an improved and more active streetscape and facilitates delivery of healthy streets approach; the use of planting and treatment of surfaces characterises different landscape typologies. • Avoids unacceptable levels of air and noise pollution for the new residents; TBC The sustainability statement suggest that appropriate mitigation can be provided that all relevant standards and guidance for noise are met. • Supports and, where appropriate improves, access to open spaces and play spaces, as well as ensuring their continued maintenance; and TBC that the play spaces now satisfy the concerns raised in the Pre App statement. • Provides car parking in accordance with Policy TRC03.
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Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Design Guidance 2016

The Residential Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document provides design guidance for residential proposals within Barnet. Each section ends with a series of principles to achieve good standards in residential design

1.62. In terms of designing at higher densities, the SPD states at 5.5:

“5.5 The quality of design is important for all developments, but particularly for higher density developments and all proposals should respond positively to reinforcing or improving local character...”

Section 6 ‘Enhancing local character’ sets out principles which are relevant to the consideration of townscape and visual effects. These include:

- Pattern of development: “6.6. The design and layout of new development should be informed by the local pattern of development. The continuity of building lines, forecourt depths, road layout, space about the building and rear garden areas are all likely to be significant factors when redeveloping sites within existing residential areas, or at the interface of larger development sites and existing housing”
- Building line and setbacks: “6.10. The setback of dwellings from a street is a key consideration. It can define the character of the street, determine the degree of privacy to ground floor rooms and can accommodate storage and service requirements at the front of the dwelling...”

With regard to scale, massing and height the SPD states at 6.13: “6.13. New development should recognise the scale, massing and roof form of surrounding buildings and reflect these where they are a positive attribute of the area’s character. Consideration should be given to the grouping of buildings, roof pitches, the detailing of eaves and gables, chimney stacks and the size/siting of any dormer windows. New development should reflect the existing building lines and rhythm of the street. Where uniform building heights form a distinctive character, major variations will not normally be appropriate, in particular in the middle of a row of buildings.”

And with regard to edge of town centre developments the SPD states at page 40:

“Encouraging greater housing development within or on the edge of some of Barnet’s town centres is an option that allows mixed uses which add vibrancy and greater all round activity. This can provide attractive locations for people who want to live close to services, jobs and public transport...”

And with regard to developments that cannot meet a 21m separation, at paragraph 3.5:

“13.5 In the case of higher density developments where less distance is provided (as compared to the distance highlighted in Table 2), applicants will be asked to include innovative design solutions to avoid overlooking such as angled windows, careful choice of window locations, obscured glazing, use of level changes, staggering of windows, screening and single aspects dwellings.”

As described earlier the scheme is considered to be compliant in these regards

Characterisation Study of London Borough of Barnet 2010	
<p>The 2010 Characterisation Study of London Borough of Barnet provides a basis for understanding the townscape character of the area</p>	<p>The DAS references the context of the site and character of the area but also acknowledges that the brownfield site is unique within the context of the surrounding area, as it is broadly considered an island site; sitting some distance from the nearest residential dwellings, which are separated to the west by a raised and heavily planted embankment, an existing industrial gasworks site to the north and the expanse of the Recreation Ground to the east. As such the scheme acknowledges the opportunity to create its own identity and character whilst respecting/complementing its setting and seeking to improve the character and quality of the area,</p> <p>In terms of characterisation the site is a 'box' primary typology across from the sub typologies 'suburban housing to the east, suburban terrace to the north and to the west beyond the railway line – residential streets. The overriding aim for the suburban areas is to enhance and conserve high quality areas and grow by exploiting opportunities for strategic regeneration of brownfield sites. The scheme is consistent with the objective of 'growing' and through design – the resolution of scale and height, is not considered to harmfully impact upon the nearby suburban areas</p>
Barnet Tall Buildings Update 2019	
<p>The Tall Buildings Update 2019 reviews and updates the 2010 Tall Building Study referred to in Policy DM05. It re-considers the definition of tall buildings in Barnet and the strategic locations where new tall buildings will be supported. When considering proposals for tall buildings we must scrutinise the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport accessibility levels (PTAL) and potential to reduce the need to travel by offering a range of uses. • Existing and permitted building heights adjacent and around the site in question. • Siting within an Opportunity Area or designated Regeneration area. • Protected views that should be considered. • Conservation areas and the impact of height <p>The height, form and proportions of any tall building should respect and respond to the existing character and surrounding context. Proposals should use the Characterisation Study as a starting point for a 360° appraisal of the impact of the design of tall, medium-rise and very tall buildings on their surrounding area.</p>	<p>The principle of tall buildings in this location has been established and Council officers have previously supported the provision of up to 10 storeys on the site and considered its townscape impact acceptable.</p> <p>The height and proportions of building A have been carefully considered to be consistent with the architectural language of the whole masterplan whilst also adopting form and detailing including well-proportioned horizontal bands of brickwork to the elevations, which seeks to respect and echo the detail of surrounding area</p>
Character and Context SPG 2014	
<p>In describing character the SPG underlines the importance of understanding the wider character of an area. Understanding the character of place should not seek to preserve things in a static way but should ensure an appropriate balance is struck between existing fabric and any proposed change.</p>	<p>The design respects its proximity to the railway line and the setting adjacent to Victoria park. The linear design reflects the contours of the site and the linearity of these neighbouring uses, whilst the perpendicular secondary connections form a simple grid pattern.. It also reflects the 'New Barnet Character area' which generally follows a linear form with a well-connected street pattern.</p> <p>The commercial element is located near the main entrance to the site fronting onto Victoria Road which provides a community use/commercial frontage and the play space within new public realm also act as an extension of the park facilities.</p> <p>As commented above the site also acknowledges that scheme presents the opportunity to create its own identity and character bringing positive change to the area.</p>