

Briefing Note

DATE	28 July 2022
SUBJECT	New City Court (Public Inquiry): Statement by Philip Villars MRTPI of behalf of Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust Appeal Refs: APP/A5840/W/22/3290473; APP/A5840/W/22/3290477; APP/A5840/W/22/3290483 and APP/A5840/W/22/3290490

Introduction

1. I represent Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust (GSTT) regarding the public inquiry in relation to the redevelopment proposals at New City Court, London Bridge. I am a planning director at WSP. GSTT covers four of London's best known teaching hospitals, including Guy's Hospital which is located to the east of the appeal site. In addition, Francis House is located to the south of the appeal site on the opposite side of Kings's Head Yard. It is occupied by GSTT for administrative purposes and is about to be opened as a Covid vaccination centre.
2. Given the appeal site's proximity to Guy's Hospital, GSTT are an interested party at this inquiry who, whilst not objecting to the principle of the redevelopment of the New City Court site, wish to safeguard their operations, particularly through the construction phase and secure appropriate public benefit for the hospital from what is a significant and important development. We ask that the points raised here are taken into account by the Inspector and Secretary of State in reaching a decision and through appropriate conditions to be attached to any consent.

Original Representations by DAC Beechcroft

3. Representations were submitted by DAC Beechcroft on behalf of GSTT on 1 March 2019 to the 2018 Scheme in respect of the 2018 Scheme (application refs 18/AP/4039 and LBC18/AP/4040) to ensure that Guy's Hospital's operations are not unduly harmed by the construction of the development, in terms of noise, dust, vibration and traffic, as well as post construction benefits, through the relocation of the Florence Nightingale Museum.

Subsequent Engagement between GSTT/KCL and the Appellant

4. Following the submitted representations by DAC Beechcroft, discussions took place between GSTT and the applicant, and this included further consideration of whether part of the site could accommodate the relocation of the Florence Nightingale Museum (FNM), currently located at St Thomas' Hospital, within the 'restored' Keats House building.

5. A meeting also took place with the Council and local councillors to discuss this in July 2019. There was general support for the idea although it didn't result in any changes to the planning application. We understand that a decision from the Council in respect of the application wasn't forthcoming.
6. More recently during 2021, and in respect of a revised planning application 21/AP/1361 and LBC 21/AP/1364, discussions continued between GSTT/KCL and GPE regarding the enhanced affordable workspace (see letter dated 17 September 2021) demonstrating a willingness of both to work together, with Southwark Council, to support the idea of an Innovation District and to secure such affordable space for use by the University and/or hospital and related SMEs. Recent conversations between GSTT and GPE have also recognised that the space could be used to accommodate the FNM and that these conversations could continue post a planning decision.
7. We request that the Inspector and Secretary of State considers securing this opportunity for enhanced affordable workspace within the planning balance when determining the appeals.

Construction and servicing

8. One of the most important issues for the Hospital, and its proper and efficient functioning, bearing in mind the site's proximity, is the construction stage of the proposed development. Safe and accessible pedestrian, vehicular and disabled access for all users needs to be maintained at all times, to and from the Hospital and in the vicinity of the site. Safe access for cyclists should be considered as cycling is encouraged as a mode of transport to the hospital to promote sustainable transport and has become increasingly popular.
9. Furthermore, the construction works will also implicate the operations at Francis House. Francis House has a lease agreement in place to operate as an administrative centre, with the ground floor to be used as a vaccination centre for staff and members of the public.
10. Consideration is therefore required for clear and straightforward routes that are signposted for users to be able to navigate to and from GSTT's sites. To the east of the appeal site is Old Guys House and courtyard. The wing on the west side incorporates a chapel in the middle of the block and on either side clinical administration. This includes consultations with patients via phone and other more routine calls with patients to diarise appointments. There is sleeping accommodation of approximately 50 beds on each floor (second and third) for doctors and nurses and for patient overnight stays before operations take place. Doctor and nurse accommodation can be utilised during the day or night depending on shift duties.
11. The decision to amend the proposals through appeal 22/3290483, so that servicing post completion is to an off-street facility from St Thomas Street rather than Kings Head Yard is welcomed in principle subject to appropriate conditions to keep deliveries and other vehicle movements to a minimum.

12. In addition, the care provided at the Hospital is highly sensitive to external environmental conditions, including dust, noise, vibration and traffic. For example, the filters from the air handling units and filtration systems at Guy's Hospital may likely need to be changed more often. Recognition of these impacts and mitigation through a suitable Construction Management Plan (CMP) secured by condition is vital.
13. Traffic management is an important factor in this area of St Thomas Street. Capacity on the local bus services are already a concern, with lengthy queues regularly occurring at the bus stops that serve the hospital, resulting in delays and congestion.
14. Capital House at 40-46 Weston Street was granted planning permission in 2020 for the erection of a 39-storey student accommodation-led building. A 27-storey office building at 60-68 St Thomas Street, known as Edge London Bridge was also granted in 2021. If New City Court is also granted, then there would potentially be three major developments being constructed simultaneously/at a similar time on St Thomas Street, increasing the likelihood of dust, noise, vibration and traffic in the area.
15. Therefore, we request that engagement with GSTT is required to ensure that there are no negative impacts on the Hospital's and Francis House's own arrangements and operations, and this can be secured through a condition in relation to the preparation of the Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

Concluding remarks

16. In conclusion, GSTT is supportive of the principle of the redevelopment of the NCC site, but regard has to be had to the Hospital which is a particularly sensitive receptor and its operation and proper functioning needs to be fully taken into account as part of the consideration of the appeal.
17. We request the Inspector ensures that appropriately worded conditions are attached to the permission, if granted, to safeguard the safe and efficient operation of Guy's Hospital, and that the affordable workspace is delivered in a way that can benefit the local area as well as life sciences associated with the hospital and University.