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AVONMOUTH HOUSE

Design and Access Statement

Addendum May 2022



TRIBE

1. OPTIMISING SITE CAPACITY THROUGH THE DESIGN-LED APPROACH

The following points demonstrate how the Avonmouth House proposal meets the requirements of London Plan Policy D3 - Optimising site capacity through the design-led approach. The comments correlate with the policy's summary of the key requirements.

The design-led approach

The site is located within the Central Activities Zone and the Elephant and Castle Opportunity Area in the Southwark Plan. The site and neighbouring properties are also identified within the Southwark Plan 2022 and are allocated for mixed-use redevelopment, which could include taller buildings. (Reference NSP46, 63-85 Newington Causeway).

The site is in a highly accessible location, well connected to jobs, services, infrastructure and amenities which are conveniently accessed by foot, bicycle or public transport.

The existing 2-storey conference and training centre on the site offers little architectural merit with an inactive and uninviting face to the street. This site therefore presents an excellent opportunity for a high-quality mixed-use development to positively transform the area.

The design evolution for Avonmouth House considers this wider opportunity area that does not hinder development on the adjacent land parcels and creates a coherent and appropriate scale of development for the site.

Form and layout

1. From the outset the varied local context of the site has informed the design proposal to provide a positive addition to the neighbourhood which ties into the vision for the further regeneration of this Opportunity Area.

The height of the proposal is the result of several massing studies that concluded development to south should respect the existing scale and outlook of the neighbouring Rockingham Estate buildings with any taller elements orientated to the north of the site.

As highlighted in the Southwark Plan 2022, development of the site could include taller buildings. Therefore in parallel with these massing studies, townscape assessments from a series of viewpoints established 16 storey as a comfortable overall height proportionate to the location and size of the site which would contribute to the emerging skyline and clusters of taller buildings in this part of Elephant and Castle.

The site has an important role as a backdrop to the Newington Gardens, so the design offers a an elegant proportion and massing that does not overshadow the neighbouring park but complements the height of the mature trees at the park entrance.

The form of the proposal has therefore been carefully crafted to create a highly articulated building which responds to the local context and acts as a comfortable intermediate scale between the 25 storey Kite building to the southwest and the 2 storey listed Crown Court building to the north.

At ground level the building frames the street edge to provide an attractive and active pedestrian experience which significantly enhances the existing context.

2. Active travel is encouraged, with the development significantly improving pedestrian access to the site with widened footpaths, active frontages and legible entrances contributing to a smart and clearly defined streetscape.

The student accommodation is easily accessed from the street, signposted by a generous entrance recess with level access into the lobby space.

The commercial space bookends the site with a generous and inviting covered entrance facing Tiverton Street with level access into the main entrance space.

The landscape is designed to uplift the streetscape with the greening of the corner the site encouraging pedestrian movement from the busy thoroughfare of Newington Causeway south towards the green amenity of Newington Gardens.

Access to cycle parking for the student accommodation is given prominence alongside the main entrance with a generous lobby space in front of the lift leading to secure basement level storage, making cycling to and from the site an easy and attractive option. Cycle parking for the employment space is also conveniently accessed from the street.

3. The scheme generally improves the streetscape and provides clear public and private environments.

The proposal promotes wider street based public realm works which reduce impact of the carriageway by extending raised table and providing integrated parking and street trees. The design also improves the setting with views along Tiverton Street with a new pocket park with tree planting, extending the existing green character of Newington Gardens into and across the street with new street trees and ground level planting.

4. The site will be predominantly car free to promote sustainable journeys to and from the site. The ease of movement for pedestrian and cyclists has been prioritised to ensure that there is no conflict with servicing operations.

The existing access off Avonmouth Street will be retained to provide access to the onsite disabled car parking space and facilitate deliveries by smaller vehicles within the site, clearly separated from the main pedestrian routes.

An onsite management company will assist with deliveries and the incorporation of a concierge area at ground level will aid a swift and efficient delivery from suppliers reducing the time vehicles need to be on the street.



An improved public realm and pedestrian experience with legible and welcoming entrances creating a clearly defined streetscape which is easily accessible for all.



The stepped form and proportions relate well to the massing, form and character of the emerging cluster of taller buildings and to the surrounding mid-rise buildings.

1. OPTIMISING SITE CAPACITY THROUGH THE DESIGN-LED APPROACH

Experience

5. The design concept aims to improve the current streetscape and enhance connection through the wider public realm to create a welcoming and inclusive addition to the neighbourhood.

Both the student accommodation & employment / education spaces facilitate ease of maneuverability throughout the spaces and aim to cater for a variety of user needs.

The design adheres to Secure by Design principles with the scheme providing a safe and secure environment.

6. The new employment/ education space has large windows offering liveliness and activity at street level. The student entrance is welcoming with a visual connection from the street into the building lobby to create an inviting entrance and connection to the public realm.

7. The building layout takes advantage of the unobstructed aspect towards the Newington Gardens with a layout that allows all cluster flats to benefit from dual aspect with the communal kitchen dining rooms positioned at the end of the building.

All students will have access to an external amenity space and cluster flats provide internal space for students to cook and socialise.

All student rooms and studios have a good outlook and daylight amenity within the scheme will be very good. The level of compliance with BRE targets is excellent for this density of scheme. The building envelope is sufficiently positioned to mitigate the impact of future development on overlooking or privacy.

8. Students are provided with a landscaped external communal terrace for recreation and social interaction orientated to benefit from sunlight throughout the day. This complements the adjacent Newington Gardens park which provides convenient green open space with a variety of areas for relaxation and physical activity.

9. Closed but not sealed windows will be provided to control internal sound levels. Alternative means of ventilation, such as trickle ventilation, will be provided. Windows are not sealed shut and residents will have a choice to open them for ventilation whilst accepting slightly higher internal sound levels.

External sound levels at the shared amenity area will be monitored and limited opening hours will mitigate any disturbance to the residents within the new buildings or surrounding environment during nighttime.

Concentrations of pollutants at sensitive locations within the proposed development are predicted to be well below the relevant objectives and, therefore, new residents are anticipated to experience good air quality.

10. The employment / education space is designed for flexibility and with tall floor to ceiling heights it can meet current and future working requirements adaptable for a variety of uses allowing for an inviting and comfortable environment for all.

Quality and character

11 & 12. The building form and elevational treatment has evolved to respond to the context and provide a unique and distinctive design to complement the park and provide an attractive backdrop and gateway to the green space. The proposed palette of brick tones will pick up on the local traditional brick and stone buildings, creating a solid and textured response to the context as a counterpoint to the surrounding new developments featuring glazed tower blocks. As such the development will create a sensitive transition from the tower block scale of the main road and transport hub to the quieter setting of the housing estate and gardens one layer back from Newington Causeway.

13. The building aims to meet high sustainability standards with the principles of the circular economy adopted. It will use renewable and low carbon systems to produce energy using the roof space to accommodate communal air source heat pumps and solar photovoltaics.

14. The design makes efficient use of the available street level and roof areas to maximise urban greening and achieve a Urban Greening Factor score of 0.4. The communal terrace offers new trees and planting, and intensive green roofs are provided to increase biodiversity on the site.

Please refer to the specific submission documents for further information and detail on each of these points.



The employment / education space at first floor is a high quality open space with generous ceiling heights and large windows overlooking the park.



At the corner of Tiverton Street the entrance to the employment / education space opens out onto the street bringing activity to the public realm with large windows at ground and first floor creating a distinctive and lively character to the street scene.



The approach towards the building along Tiverton Street with the colours and tones of the lower building reflecting the character of the Rockingham estate buildings while the taller elements beyond recede with their paler tones. A potential new pocket park in front of the building at the end of Tiverton Street, as well as the communal gardens on the terrace above, invite pedestrians towards the green space beyond.

2. DESIGN OF PLACES & DESIGN QUALITY

The following points demonstrate how the Avonmouth House proposal meets the requirements of **Southwark Plan 2022 - P13 Design of place and P14 Design quality**. The comments correlate with the policy's summary of the key requirements.

P13 Design of places

1.The varied local context of the site has informed the design proposal to provide a positive addition to the neighbourhood which ties into the vision for the further regeneration of this Opportunity Area.

The height of the proposal is the result of several massing studies that concluded development to south should respect the existing scale and outlook of the neighbouring Rockingham Estate buildings with any taller elements orientated to the north of the site.

As highlighted in the Southwark Plan 2022, development of the site could include taller buildings. Therefore, in parallel with these massing studies, townscape assessments from a series of viewpoints established 16 storey as a comfortable overall height proportionate to the location and size of the site which would contribute positively to the emerging skyline and clusters of taller buildings in this part of Elephant and Castle.

At ground level the building arrangement frames the street edge to provide an attractive and active pedestrian experience which significantly enhances the existing context.

2.The local historic context of the area has been carefully considered as part of the proposals. The Heritage Townscape Visual Assessment (HTVA) describes the site's context as having some degree of sensitivity, but this is limited to the locally listed Newington Gardens to the southeast and the Grade II Listed London Sessions Court to the northeast.

The site has an important role as a backdrop to the Newington Gardens which is a key part of the local setting. The building form and elevational treatment has evolved to provide a unique and distinctive design to complement the park and provide an attractive backdrop and gateway to the green space. The distinctive taller element of the building, with its articulated and textured 'top', signals the entrance to the park from Newington Causeway.

The HTVA concludes that both the present semi-sensitive context and in the future context of a fully built-out regeneration site, the proposed development is of an appropriate scale and height such that it contributes positively to the townscape and adds to the architectural quality of the area overall.

3. The site layout and design significantly improve the current streetscape and enhances connections through the wider public realm to create a welcoming and inclusive addition to the neighbourhood.

The landscape is designed to uplift the street experience with the greening at the corners of the site encouraging pedestrian movement from the busy thoroughfare of Newington Causeway south towards the green amenity of Newington Gardens.

The proposal is considerate of the wider NSP46 site allocation and the site layout anticipates how future development and connections through the wider site allocation could be delivered, as demonstrated in the suggested masterplan of the area earlier in the Design and Access Statement.

4.The building is planned to ensure the public entrances to the building are always legible given priority on the site. The student accommodation is easily accessed from the street, signposted by a generous entrance recess with level access into the lobby space.

The commercial space bookends the site with a generous and inviting covered entrance facing Tiverton Street with level access into the main entrance space.

Secondary servicing functions and vehicle access on the site is positioned to the rear and do not detract from the main sense of arrival and primary routes to the building.

5&6. The site will be predominantly car free to promote sustainable journeys to and from the site. The ease of movement for pedestrian and cyclists has been prioritised to ensure that there is no conflict with servicing operations.

Active travel is encouraged, with the development significantly improving pedestrian access to the site with widened footpaths, active frontages and legible entrances contributing to a smart and clearly defined streetscape.

The proposal also promotes wider street based public realm works which reduce impact of the carriageway by extending raised table and providing integrated parking and street trees.

The Tiverton Street is also improved with a new pocket park with tree planting, extending the existing green character of Newington Gardens into and across the street with new street trees and ground level planting.

7.The landscape has considered surface water run off using street level planting and tree pits as rain gardens to aid site wide drainage.

8.The design concept from the outset aims to improve the current streetscape and enhance connection through the wider public realm to create a welcoming and accessible addition to the neighbourhood.

Both the student accommodation & education spaces facilitate ease of maneuverability throughout the spaces and aim to cater for a variety of user needs. Every part of the building can be reached via lift and level access.

9&10. The public realm designs offer a new pocket park at the end of Tiverton Street providing new street trees and informal seating which can be used by the wider community for informal play. Street level planting along Avonmouth Street also provides opportunity for integrated benches for student residents and visitors.



The proposal set against an illustrative masterplan demonstrating how the design for Avonmouth House site does not compromise adjacent development and considers the wider NSP46 allocation.



Landscape plan illustrating the wider potential public realm improvements, extending the existing green character of Newington Gardens into and across the street with new street trees and ground level planting

2. DESIGN OF PLACES & DESIGN QUALITY

Policy P14 Design Quality

1&2 The form of the proposal has been carefully crafted to create a highly articulated building which responds to the local context and acts as a comfortable intermediate scale between the emerging cluster of taller buildings around to the south of the site and the 2 storey listed Crown Court building to the north.

The existing context offers a plethora of architectural styles, which contribute to an eclectic mixed character. The proposals use high quality materials, carefully selected to accentuate the different forms of the building.

The uppermost two storeys and lowest two floors, which express the employment space and entrances, are proposed in a deep aubergine red brick cladding whereas the middle height section is in a white brick. Secondary detailing in the form of spandrels, lintels and string courses adds richness to the façade and the proportioning of the different elements. The proposed building's stepped profile and articulated upper parapet mean that an overtly horizontal silhouette is avoided and a harmony with the treescape of Newington Gardens is achieved.

Despite the constrained site active frontage has been maximised and the incorporation of basement levels reduces the area at street level required for service access to create a welcoming and inviting face to the street.

Townscape views in the HTVA illustrate how well attuned the form of the development is to both the neighbouring Rockingham Estate and Newington Gardens. The approach to the design is imaginative and uses innovative and modern building techniques which results in an exemplar building of the highest standard.

3. The building layout takes advantage of the unobstructed aspect towards the Newington Gardens with a layout that allows all cluster flats to benefit from dual aspect with the communal kitchen dining rooms positioned at the end of the building.

All student rooms and studios have a good outlook and daylight amenity within the scheme will be very good. The level of compliance with BRE targets is excellent for this density of scheme. Closed but not sealed windows will be provided to control internal sound levels. Alternative means of ventilation, such as trickle ventilation, will be provided. Windows are not sealed shut and residents will have a choice to open them for ventilation whilst accepting slightly higher internal sound levels.

External sound levels at the shared amenity area will be monitored and limited opening hours will mitigate any disturbance to the residents within the new buildings or surrounding environment during night time.

Concentrations of pollutants at sensitive locations within the proposed development are predicted to be well below the relevant objectives and, therefore, new residents are anticipated to experience good air quality.

4. The proposed palette of brick tones will pick up on the local traditional brick and stone buildings, creating a solid and textured response to the context as a counterpoint to the surrounding new developments featuring glazed tower blocks. These materials are high-quality offering a robust and durable addition to the neighbourhood.

5. The building aims to meet high sustainability standards with the principles of the circular economy adopted. Following the energy hierarchy, the “fabric first” approach is implemented, which includes well insulated walls, very airtight construction and accredited thermal bridging details, and high-performance double glazing. The proposed development will be zero carbon overall and achieve a 60% improvement over the building regulation gas boiler baseline, which meets the London Plan target for on-site carbon savings. The employment/ education/health floorspace space will achieve BREEAM ‘Excellent’ rating.

The building will use renewable and low carbon systems to produce energy using the roof space to accommodate communal air source heat pumps and solar photovoltaics.

6. The proposal uses active design principles to promote daily physical activity for building users and the local community

The improved public realm significantly improves pedestrian access to the site with widened footpaths and upgraded hard landscaping. The proposals to “green” the street and link the immediate public realm to the entrance of Newington Gardens, student residents and the wider community may be encouraged to use the park more frequently for recreation and exercise.

Access to cycle parking for the student accommodation is given prominence alongside the main entrance with a generous lobby space in front of the lift leading to secure basement level storage, making cycling to and from the site an easy and attractive option. Cycle parking for the employment space is also conveniently accessed from the street.

7. The proposals would markedly improve how streetscape and the public realm.

At the corner of Tiverton Street, the entrance to the employment / education space opens out onto the street bringing activity to the public realm with large windows at ground and first floor creating a distinctive and lively character to the street scene.

The entrance to the student accommodation is clearly marked by a generous lobby at street level on the north-east corner of the building, opposite the entrance to Newington Gardens. The entrance provides a covered space to meet friends and neighbours, activated by views into the concierge.



This study of the main elevation facing the park illustrates how by creating a woven brick effect the scheme is given a distinct identity. The varied palette of materials and brick tones reflects the mix of architecture surrounding the scheme.

2. DESIGN OF PLACES & DESIGN QUALITY

8.The site will be predominantly car free to promote sustainable journeys to and from the site. The ease of movement for pedestrian and cyclists has been prioritised to ensure that there is no conflict with servicing operations.

The existing access off Avonmouth Street will be retained to provide access to the onsite disabled car parking space and facilitate deliveries by smaller vehicles within the site, clearly separated from the main pedestrian routes.

An onsite management company will assist with deliveries and the incorporation of a concierge area at ground level will aid a swift and efficient delivery from suppliers reducing the time vehicles need to be on the street.

9&10.Both the student accommodation & education/ employment spaces facilitate ease of maneuverability through out the spaces and aim to cater for a variety of user needs. Every part of the building can be reached via lift and level access.

5% of student bedspaces are designed to accommodate wheelchair users meeting the requirements of Approved Document M(4)3 Volume 01.

Shared kitchens in the student accommodation are designed to ensure enough circulation and space for wheelchair users and the amenity space has level access.

There is level access to the outdoor amenity space.

The employment space has been designed with space to plan layouts flexible enough to cater for a range of individual and community needs.

The pedestrian experience is significantly improved with widened footpaths and upgraded public realm to create an inviting environment for residents, workers and visitors. The large and regular windows at street level ensure the education/ employment spaces and student entrances are visible from the outside and make for a lively and positive pedestrian experience.

11. Basements that do not have adverse archaeological, amenity or environmental impacts.

Basement Impact Assessment states that the overall assessment of the site is that the creation of a basement for the existing development will not adversely impact the site or its immediate environs, providing measures are taken to protect surrounding land and properties during construction.

Please refer to the specific submission documents for further information and detail on each of these points.



A new pocket park outside the employment/ education entrance promoting a pedestrian priority landscape, softening the street setting.