

Item No.

City of Westminster

PLANNING AND CITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	Date 5 October 2006	Classification For General Release
Report of Director of Planning and City Development	Wards involved Churchill	
Subject of Report	Chelsea Barracks, SW1	
Proposal	Revised planning brief for adoption.	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 On 27 April 2006, the Planning and City Development Committee agreed that the Draft Chelsea Barracks Planning Brief be released for public consultation. This report summarises the results of that consultation and proposes amendments to the brief in response to the issues raised by the consultees. The report recommends that the revised planning brief (Appendix 1) be adopted for development control purposes.
- 1.2 The consultation period commenced on 15 May 2006 and ended on 7 July 2006. There were 3 strands to the consultation: a standard consultation exercise with a web notice, press notice and mailout to all relevant consultees and local residents; two workshops at the South Area Forum held on 23 May 2006; and an 'information and consultation stall' at the SouthWestFest on 1 July 2006. The results of these exercises are detailed in Appendices 2, 3 and 4. Changes to the draft brief made as a result of the consultation are shown in underlined text in Appendix 5.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the principal issues raised through the public consultation exercise on the draft planning brief as set out in Appendices 2B, 3 and 4.
- 2.2 That the Committee agrees that:
- a. the draft planning brief be amended as proposed; and
 - b. the revised planning brief be adopted for development control purposes.

3. PLANNING OBJECTIVES OF THE BRIEF

- 3.1 The objectives for the redevelopment of the site remain largely the same as in the consultation draft of the brief. These are that any scheme for the site should:
- (i) Ensure that all new development should achieve an architectural and public realm/townscape standard worthy of the site's importance. At the same time it should relate sensitively to the context provided by the surrounding townscape.
 - (ii) Provide the maximum amount of residential accommodation, including 50% affordable housing (including residents in housing need and key workers) on the site, reflecting needs across the market and affordable housing sectors
 - (iii) Achieve a sustainable development in terms of design and construction, community facilities, waste, water and energy use, and other environmental considerations, utilising the very latest environmental and sustainability

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practices and technology. It should also incorporate best practice in terms of adaptation to climate change.

- (iv) Ensure that any adverse effects on the amenity of the surrounding area are minimised, with particular regard to the existing residential accommodation abutting and facing the site.
- (v) Take into account the City Council's Open Space Strategy (currently in draft) by providing a substantial element of public open space, reflecting local need and deficiency and the large proportion of open space currently on the site.
- (vi) Ensure that any impacts of the development, for example, utility, transport, and social and community infrastructure to meet the needs and impact of the development, are provided as part of the development itself, or, in appropriate circumstances, off-site through a Section 106 agreement.

4. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

General Consultation Exercise

- 4.1 Following the Committee's resolution to agree the draft planning brief for consultation purposes, the draft brief was placed on the Council's website, and at the Victoria One Stop on 15 May 2006, and consultation letters were despatched throughout May which sought responses by 7 July 2006.
- 4.2 50 specific consultation organisations were consulted, such as English Heritage, local amenity societies and residents associations, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, the Mayor of London and Transport for London. Other interested parties were the MoD, GVA Grimley (acting on behalf of the MoD), and Grosvenor. 1074 letters were also sent to Westminster residents and businesses within one street block of the planning brief area.
- 4.3 40 responses were received, many quite extensive. These are listed in the table in Appendix 2A. A summary of the responses are in the schedule in Appendix 2B, with officers' comments on the responses and recommended changes to the brief where appropriate.

South Area Forum

- 4.4 Two workshops were held at the 23 May South Area Forum meeting, each with about 10 people, including some Members. A summary of the discussions can be found in Appendix 3.

SouthWestFest

- 4.5 Two officers from the City Planning Group staffed an 'information and consultation stall' at the SouthWestFest on 1 July 2006. There was a substantial amount of interest in the display, with many seeking more information. People were asked to fill in a card giving views as to what the three main problems in the area were, what were the three things they would most like to see on the site, and any other comments on the draft brief. 22 'comment cards' were completed, plus one drawing attention to a factual error in the brief. A summary of the results of this exercise is attached as Appendix 4.

Overall Results

- 4.6 All 3 exercises revealed considerable support for the draft brief. There was strong support for a major residential development, support for affordable housing (particularly for 'local' people, sons and daughters etc.), with many expressing a wish to maximise key worker housing within this element. Sustainability was generally

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considered important, and there was very strong support for an element of green open space large enough to accommodate sporting facilities, a children's play ground, and quiet garden areas. Leisure/sporting facilities (including provision of a swimming pool) also featured prominently. There was strong demand for a community centre (including a hall). There was a general concern that the local infrastructure should be improved to ensure sufficient school places, medical facilities, nursery facilities. Many respondents highlighted the lack of affordable local shops in the area and there was substantial support for new retail units to combat this, and in particular a small supermarket such as a Tesco Metro/Sainsbury's Local type outlet.

- 4.7 Other issues raised were the lack of parking, existing traffic problems, and road safety issues. There was very strong support for the protection of the trees on the site (these are now all subject to TPOs), and for the retention of the chapel, and the railings along Chelsea Bridge Road. There was also strong support for the reinstatement of the historic view from Chelsea Hospital to Ranelagh Grove, by creating a pedestrian access route through the site. Residents of Ranelagh Grove and St Barnabas Street sought assurances that access to Ranelagh Grove would be for emergency vehicles only.

The GLA

- 4.8 The Mayor welcomed the comprehensive nature of the brief and in particular the housing policy aspects (50% affordable housing) which it considered 'clearly London Plan compliant'.

- 4.9 The Mayor's other comments related to the status of the document, its conformity with the London Plan, and its lack of acknowledgement of the proposed draft alterations to the London Plan, particularly that which would place the site within the Central Activities Zone, thereby allowing commercial uses on the site. The Mayor was concerned about that the brief's negativity towards tall buildings, and suggested that this was not in general conformity with the London Plan.

- 4.10 In response to these concerns:

- i) At present the draft further alterations to the London Plan are just proposals, and as recognised by the Mayor in his comment:

'Should a planning application be submitted prior to the formal publishing of the further alterations to the London Plan then the development plan status as it stands shall of course have greater weight.'

Although the City Council acknowledges that there may be a planning policy conflict, it welcomes the Mayor's conclusion that:

'The delivery of more residential dwellings on-site and the required 50% quantum of affordable housing will, in my opinion, secure more strategic planning benefits.'

- ii) Regarding general conformity with the London Plan, the RUDP is in general conformity with the London Plan, and the contents of the brief are consistent with RUDP policy. It is therefore not accepted that changes to the brief are required to ensure general conformity with the London Plan.
- iii) In response to the Mayor's comments on the brief's negativity towards tall buildings, it is the City Council's view that the existing tall buildings are not an integral part of existing landscape; rather they are an unsightly 'add-on' that have a negative impact on the surrounding townscape. The brief's stance on tall buildings on this site reflects RUDP policy DES 3. The RUDP is in general conformity with the London Plan, and it is not accepted that changes to brief are required to ensure general conformity with the London Plan.

- 4.11 TfL requested a more restraint based approach to car parking, bearing in mind the site's high public transport accessibility (PTAL) rating, including some 'car free' development.

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

- 4.12 The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBK&C) requested that the brief acknowledges that the development will have impacts in the Royal Borough as well as in Westminster, and that these impacts will need to be addressed. In terms of design, RBK&C reiterated the sensitivity of the site, adjacent to the Grade I and II Royal Hospital and the historic Ranelagh Gardens, and its opposition to any high buildings. It also requested that the new development should consist of formal network of streets and spaces reflecting the surrounding Belgravia and Chelsea estates, rather than monolithic blocks. They also expressed concern about traffic generation, and lack of primary school places in the local area which would be exacerbated by the new development.

Ministry of Defence

- 4.13 GVA Grimley, on behalf of Defence Estates requested that the brief should be amended to go beyond the normal parameters to allow a higher density (above 1100hrh) development with taller buildings than set out in the brief, subject to high quality design. They stressed the importance of viability when assessing housing mix and tenure. They also requested that the brief clarify that the provision of community facilities will be considered in the round taking into account other scheme requirements, and requested that the opportunity for pooled funds should encompass all requested planning obligations.

Grosvenor

- 4.14 Grosvenor, whose Belgravia estate lies adjacent to the site, was of the view that small scale commercial uses, such as small hotels, might be acceptable. It asked that the key worker element of the scheme be raised above the 15% set out in the draft brief. Also that equal importance should be given to the upgrading of existing open space as to the provision of new space. It also requested that the brief acknowledge that any S106 obligation should meet the test of reasonableness etc., and that any S106 requirements over and above impact mitigation should be offset against other on-site S106 requirements, including the provision of affordable housing. Grosvenor also requested that the City Council should agree a cascade mechanism of the revocation of obligations in the event that Planning Gain Supplement is introduced.

5. AMENDMENTS TO THE BRIEF ARISING FROM THE CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Most of the responses to the consultation on the brief supported the approach set out in the brief, but the following are the most significant changes that have been made to the draft brief as a consequence of the consultation:
- 5.2 Octavia Housing requested that the section pertaining to affordable housing provision should be made more detailed as to the requirements of that provision. Consequential amendments to the brief have been made specifying that the affordable housing must be truly affordable for RSLs/occupiers (including addressing the issue of services charges), and also that the extra care units will require associated support facilities.
- 5.3 GVA Grimley, on behalf of Defence Estates, asked that the brief should say that the mix of units will reflect needs across the different sectors.

- 5.4 Cllr Moss was concerned that the open space provided should be substantial, reflecting the Open Space Strategy and the substantial amount of existing open space on the site.
- 5.5 In response to South Area Forum, comments from SouthWestFest, Grosvenor, South Westminster Renewal Programme, and Cllr Blois, reference has been made to the possible acceptability of a small supermarket on the Ebury Bridge Road frontage, subject to traffic and retail impact studies.
- 5.6 In terms of design the following amendments have been made:
- i) inclusion of a formal public square on the site of the parade ground (in addition to more active recreational space in the north east of the site) – *in response to RBKC, the Thorney Island Society, and several local residents*
 - ii) commitment to preserving the chapel – *in response to Pimlico and Knightsbridge Labour Party, RBK&C, and numerous local residents*
 - iii) an expectation that the Chelsea Bridge Road frontage will be broken up by streets – monolithic blocks will not be acceptable – *in response to RBKC and The Chelsea Society.*
- 5.7 In terms of social and community facilities expected as part of a S106 agreement consultees at the SouthWestFest and South Area Forum were asked what they would like to see on the site. These views together with comments received from the general consultation have enabled the social and community uses referred to in the draft brief to be given some degree of priority in terms of residents' wishes. The request for green open space on the site had widespread support from the consultees. A community centre with a hall to house a wide variety of community activities including youth club, childcare facilities, and facilities for Friday prayer was widely requested, as were sporting facilities – in particular a leisure centre with swimming pool.

6. OTHER CHANGES MADE

- 6.1 The Housing Commission has now reported and the revised brief has been updated accordingly.
- 6.2 In response to the Committee's comments at draft stage, the City Council's Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment Officer has refined the sustainability requirements of the brief to be more specific about what will be required to ensure a truly sustainable development.
- 6.3 The new Housing Needs Study, although still not finalised, has revealed a greater need in the social housing sector, than the 5% set out in UDP policy, for larger family units of 4 or more bedrooms. The brief has therefore been amended to reflect this and to allow the City Council the option of seeking a greater proportion of larger units in the social housing element, within the 33% requirement for family units.
- 6.4 Reference to the provision of a new primary school on the site has been deleted. On the advice of the Education Department the latest predictions (based on GLA population and school roll projections undertaken in August 2006), and likely child yield projection for the site, it was concluded that the level of additional demand did not appear great enough to sustain the build of a new primary school; potential demand could be met by adding places at existing schools, eg St Barnabas or Millbank. The brief now states that funding will need to be secured for additional

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school provision (for both primary and secondary age children) by applying the formula set out in the (currently emerging) SPG on Planning Obligations.

7. SITE CAPACITY EXERCISE

- 7.1 GVA Grimley on behalf of Defence Estates have prepared a site capacity exercise for the site, in order to aid the marketing process, and in response to the draft brief. The Site Capacity Exercise addresses height, bulk, massing, and density, with two options for the site (A and B). Option A is medium high density - yielding about 1300 residential units; Option B is high density - yielding about 1600 units. The Capacity Exercise was sent to the City Council without knowledge of the revisions made to the draft brief that are the subject of this report. Officers will be assessing the document and will request some amendments, before the Site Capacity Exercise is published, to take into account revisions to the draft brief. However, the Site Capacity Exercise is indicative of the likely scale of development and broadly follows the contents of the draft brief as published for consultation.

8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 Drivas Jonas, on behalf of the MoD, intend to commence the marketing of the site as a development opportunity in October. The adopted planning brief will be included in the publicity material for prospective buyers and developers as a guide to the opportunities and constraints of the site.

APPENDICES

- 1 Revised Chelsea Barracks Planning Brief, October 2006
- 2a List of respondents
- 2b Schedule of Consultation Responses
- 3 Summary of discussions at South Area Forum workshops
- 4 Results of the SouthWestFest consultation
- 5 Revised Chelsea Barracks Planning Brief showing changes for consultation draft

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 1 Replacement Unitary Development Plan, 13 December 2004
- 2 Revised Affordable Housing policies as agreed April 2006
- 3 The London Plan, February 2004
- 4 Site Capacity Exercise (prepared by GVA Grimley for Defence Estates)

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES ABOUT THIS REPORT OR WISH TO INSPECT ANY OF THE BACKGROUND PAPERS PLEASE CONTACT MARGARET HANDOVSKY ON 020 7641 1818 OR BY FAX 020 7641 3050 OR BY E-MAIL – mhandovsky@westminster.gov.uk