

**SOUTHERN GROVE LODGE
&
WILFRED REEVE CENTRE**
Southern Grove
Bow E3

**DRAFT
Planning Brief**

October 2003
Rev 0.07



**Southern Grove Lodge & Wilfred Reeve Centre
Preferred Use for the Site:**

***Mixed Use
(Predominantly Residential)***

Key Design Issues:

1. *Site suitable for high quality innovative redevelopment*
2. *Applicant should investigate retention of the Work House Building*
3. *Removal of mature trees from the site should be resisted*
4. *Quantum of green open space/amenity land currently on the site should remain*
5. *Courtyard appearance of site to either be retained or recreated*
6. *Improve pedestrian links to Mile End Underground Station*
7. *Relate the development to the residential properties to the rear and Tower Hamlets Cemetery to the south*
8. *Good design will dictate the built form*
9. *Affordable housing will be sought, in line with current policy*
10. *Parking provision only for essential use and special needs*
11. *Planning application shall be supported by a Design Statement and a Transport Impact Assessment;*
12. *The applicant will be expected to undertake consultation with the local community.*

CONTENTS

- 1 Introduction**
- 2 Site Description And Planning History**
- 3 Planning Policy Context**
- 4 Preferred Use And Planning Objectives**
- 5 Key Council Contacts**
- 6 Site Location Map**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Southern Grove site (Southern Grove Lodge and Wilfred Reeve Centre) is centrally located within the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and is situated within the Mile End East Ward.
- 1.2 Southern Grove is accessed from Mile End Road (A11), which leads directly into the City of London. The site is approximately 1.02 hectares in size and comprises council offices, a public resource and training centre, day centre for the elderly (Wilfred Reeve Centre), associated car parking and a small undeveloped area located at the rear of Tracy House, which is currently overgrown.
- 1.3 Within this draft development brief the term 'Southern Grove Site' refers to Southern Grove Lodge and Wilfred Reeve Centre.

Purpose of this draft Planning Brief

- 1.4 The purpose of this draft planning brief is to provide clear and positive guidance on the future use and development of the Council's site in Southern Grove. This site has been identified by the Council as surplus to requirement as part of the comprehensive review of the Borough's accommodation and work practices. The Council's key aspiration is to create a new Civic Headquarters for the Borough in Bethnal Green and to dispose of a number of surplus sites.

- 1.5 This brief deals specifically with the redevelopment of the Southern Grove site and sets out the key planning parameters which will need to be addressed when proposing new development.

- 1.6 This brief outlines:

- The relevant planning policies as set out in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets UDP 1998;
- The Council's planning objectives for the site; and
- The key planning issues which will need to be addressed.

Next Step

- 1.7 It is considered that the draft planning briefs should go out to public consultation in the light of the importance that the government attaches to public consultation as a vehicle to obtain local views early in the planning process.

2 SITE DESCRIPTION AND PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 The Southern Grove site is located in Southern Grove, to the south of Mile End Road. The site comprises council offices, located within two adjoining buildings on the northern part of the site, a former residential workhouse and a purpose built office development. The 1980s office building comprises 4-5 storeys of accommodation. The community facilities are located in two additional low-rise buildings on the southern part of the site.
- 2.2 The site has four points of vehicular access from Southern Grove. The site is bounded to the north by Tracy House, a purpose built residential development fronting onto Mile End Road, and to the east by residential dwellings comprising a Georgian terrace and a modern mews development. Whilst to the south, the site is bounded by Hamlets Way and the Tower Hamlets Cemetery.
- 2.3 It should be noted that part of the site, the former workhouse building, lies within the Tower Hamlets Cemetery Conservation Area.
- 2.4 The surrounding area is predominantly residential. To the west of the site is an area characterised by Local Authority housing dating from the 1960s, the residential blocks ranging in height from four storeys to approximately 20 storeys.
- 2.5 There are a number of local shops, facilities and commercial activities located on Mile End Road and Burdett Road. There is also a small local shopping parade located at the western extent of Hamlets Way.
- 2.6 The site is well served by public transport. Mile End Road Underground Station is located approximately 250 metres west of the site at the junction between Mile End Road and Burdett Road. To the east of the site, Mile End Road merges into Bow Road. Bow Road Underground Station is located approximately 500 metres from the site, with Bow Church DLR approximately 750 metres away, providing direct access to Canary Wharf. Mile End Road and Burdett Road are both served frequently by a number of bus routes. The site occupies a very sustainable location.
- 2.7 In terms of community facilities, St Clements Hospital is located to the east of the site, fronting on to Mile End Road. In addition Mile End Park is located on the western side of Burdett Road, providing open space and recreational facilities for the local community.
- 2.8 The London Borough of Tower Hamlets is the freehold owner of the site.

Planning History

- 2.9 The site is currently used as Council Offices and community facilities. The community facilities include a day centre for the elderly, a public resource centre and a training and resource centre

for people with impaired vision. It is understood the original Southern Grove Lodge was formerly a residential workhouse. In 1968 planning permission was granted for the change of use of part of the Southern Grove Lodge from residential accommodation to office floorspace not exceeding 8,597 sq ft (798.69 sq m) (Ref: TH/5840/971).

- 2.10 In June 1969, deemed consent was given for the erection of a day centre for the elderly; kitchen; administrative office; day centre for the physically handicapped with a boiler house at basement level, utility block and workshops for the physically handicapped, an ambulance access and three car parks (Ref: PB/116). Furthermore, deemed consent was given in April 1972 for the erection of a 35 bed home and social centre for the younger physically handicapped on the site of the Southern Grove Lodge (Ref: PB/16/2/2166). In addition the erection of a day centre for the elderly was given deemed consent in February 1973 (Ref:OP/39/4317). These three consents, we understand relate to the community facilities, which are provided on the site.
- 2.11 In 1988 deemed consent was given for redevelopment to provide office accommodation for Poplar Neighbourhood Centre (Ref: TH 5840).

3 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 Policies applicable to this site are provided by Tower Hamlet's UDP, National Planning Policy and Guidance Notes, and planning policies as set out in the Draft London Plan; the Mayor's spatial development strategy for Greater London.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 1: General Policy and Principles.

3.2 PPG 1 sets out the Government's approach to seeking sustainable forms of development, whilst reaffirming the importance of: mixed-use development; high quality design; and the planned system.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing (PPG3)

3.3 PPG3 provides guidance on residential development. It sets out the objective that everybody should have the opportunity of a decent home, a greater choice of housing, and that housing should not reinforce social distinctions.

3.4 PPG3 also sets out the Government's policy on how the planning system can contribute to the overall supply of affordable housing.

3.5 Consultations are currently taking place by the government on PPG3, which will become a material consideration before plans are reviewed.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport (PPG13)

3.6 PPG13 continues the sustainability theme. A major objective set out in the Guidance is to promote more sustainable patterns of development and make better use of previously developed land. PPG13 promotes accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services via public transport, walking and cycling, and seeks the reduction in the need to travel, especially by car.

The Draft London Plan

3.7 The Mayor of London has provided the first formal draft of the Strategic Plan for London, which sets out an integrated social, economic and environmental framework for the next fifteen to twenty year period.

3.8 The population of London is expected to grow by 700,000 people by 2015, and 40% of the growth in jobs will be in the East London area.

3.9 The Mayor seeks to maximise the potential of sites and will ensure that development proposals achieve the highest possible intensity of use compatible with the local context, design principles and with public transport capacity. The Draft London Plan supports large-scale buildings of the highest quality design in clusters.

UDP Policy

- 3.10 The adopted UDP provides the framework that the Council uses to assess planning applications. The primary intention of the UDP is to provide a firm basis for decisions on the development and use of land in the Borough, giving guidance about what types of development will be permissible.
- 3.11 When considering proposals for new development, consideration must be had to Section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This requires that proposals should be in accordance with the adopted development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. In this case the adopted development plan is the London Borough of Tower Hamlets UDP adopted 1998.
- 3.12 The Council's core objective in the UDP is set out in Policy ST2 which identifies that the Council welcomes investment and encourages public/private sector partnership proposals which generate employment, improve the environment, provide housing and social facilities, and brings derelict sites and buildings into beneficial use. Policy ST3 promotes sustainable development.
- 3.13 Policy EMP1 states that employment growth will be encouraged through the redevelopment and upgrading of sites already in employment use. The UDP also supports the provision of additional residential accommodation, Policy HSG2, on sites in non-

residential use where the land is not identified for alternative use, the environment is suitable for residential use and the locality is adequately provided with services needed by residents.

- 3.14 Policy DEV1 requires that all development is sensitive to the site and its surroundings, does not result in over-development, maintains the street frontage, and is designed to maximise access, safety and security. Policy DEV2 stresses the need for development proposals to ensure that they do not adversely impact upon the amenity of residents or the surrounding environment.
- 3.15 The UDP addresses the potential for high buildings in Policy DEV5 and DEV6. High buildings are defined in the UDP as a building that exceeds 20 metres in height. The UDP supports, in principle, high buildings located outside the Central Activity Zone subject to considerations of design, siting, the character of the locality and the effect on views. Any proposals for a high building on this site will need to be accompanied by a comprehensive visual impact appraisal.

Transport

- 3.16 The need for adequate transport provision is pivotal within the strategic policy of the UDP. The policy attempts to minimise detriment to the environment by restraining the unnecessary use of private cars and ensuring development is located to allow transport needs to be efficiently and safely

accommodated within the existing and proposed transport system. (ST27-29).

- 3.17 The UDP makes explicit that proposals for traffic management should improve the road safety of all road users (T10). The requirements for the application of comprehensive transport management systems are detailed (T14). Planning Standard No. 3: Parking Requirements also need to be accommodated as outlined in T17.
- 3.18 Policies T18 and T21 indicate that priority is given to the pedestrian. Tower Hamlets Cycle Strategy 'Going by Bike, Good Going' promotes cycling as an alternative sustainable mode of transport.

Employment

- 3.19 Policy EMP2 contains nine criteria where if one is met the loss of the employment site may be acceptable. EMP2 states that on sites which are currently or last used for employment generating uses, the Council will oppose the loss of those uses unless the loss is made good by the replacement with good quality buildings likely to generate a reasonable density of jobs on suitably situated land within Tower Hamlets not already proposed for employment development.
- 3.20 If the employment use from this site is transferred to the new Civic Headquarters on Cambridge Heath Road, EMP2 (criteria 1) is therefore addressed.

Density

- 3.21 Density should not determine the urban form. The proposed densities will be expected to be in excess of the maximum 247 habitable rooms per hectare as identified in the UDP. Densities should reflect those identified in the London Plan. The need for higher densities close to public transport and services is clearly articulated in all levels of planning guidance. However, high density is only permissible if the design is of sufficient quality.

Sustainable Development

- 3.22 The principle of sustainable development is a core objective of the UDP (ST3 and ST7, respectively). Energy efficiency in design is strongly encouraged by the Council, which requires energy efficiency in the design and materials used in development.
- 3.23 Developers will be expected to adopt a sustainable approach in the mix and relationship of different uses, the overall layout of the scheme, including accessibility to public transport and secure facilities for cycles.
- 3.24 The need to achieve a sustainable development is incorporated in Policy DEV2(4), Policy ST3 and ST7. These principles are reinforced by Central Government Guidance on the subject contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 1.

Equal Opportunities

3.25 Policies DEV 1(4), and HSG8 state that the Council will expect adequate access for people with disabilities to be provided in respects of the layout of sites and the provision of access to public buildings. Ground floor should be fully wheelchair accessible and the outdoor layout should be well lit and safe.

Planning Obligations

3.26 The Council will seek to enter into legal agreements to achieve amongst other things:

- affordable housing
- leisure/recreation facilities
- transport/pedestrian improvements

4 PREFERRED USE AND PLANNING OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 The Council has identified the Southern Grove site as surplus to requirement as part of the relocation of Council services to the former LEB site in Cambridge Heath Road as the new Civic Headquarters. The site is identified as being suitable for mixed use (predominantly residential) purposes.
- 4.2 The Council's policy is to resist the loss of employment sites unless it can be demonstrated that the employment lost will be re-provided elsewhere in the Borough. As part of the accommodation reorganisation, the Southern Grove function is to be relocated to either Mulberry Place or Cambridge Heath Road. The proposed redevelopment of the former LEB site at Cambridge Heath Road for a new Civic Headquarters will incorporate a significant increase in floorspace.
- 4.3 The site is located in a highly sustainable location, served by good public transport and in close proximity to local amenities. As such the redevelopment/reuse of this site for residential purposes in this location fully accords with the Council's planning policies as set out in the adopted UDP.
- 4.4 The key planning issues which will need to be addressed include:

A. Site Context

- Any proposals for the site will need to consider the context of the site, its relationship with the Conservation Area, the possible retention of the workhouse building, the impact of development on the terrace of residential properties to the rear of the site, and Tower Hamlets Cemetery to the south of the site.
- The preference is for the retention of the main part of the workhouse building. However, if this building is not to be retained, a statement providing a justification as to why this building cannot reasonably be retained, will be required as part of the planning application.
- A Design Statement/Visual Impact Assessment should accompany a planning application for the redevelopment of this site.

B. Design/Density of Development

- The density of development which will be considered appropriate on this site will be design led. The site is surrounded by a mix of 3-4 storey terraces to 15 storey tower blocks. The amount of residential accommodation which can be accommodated on the site will be determined by the

quality of the design solution proposed. Higher densities may be justified in this location due to the proximity of good public transport and local facilities.

- The site already benefits from an open green courtyard, with several mature trees. The Council's aspirations for this site are to retain the workhouse building, the mature trees and the principle of the courtyard feature. The Council would expect the proportion of green open space/amenity land to remain at the current provision.

C. Affordable Housing

- The redevelopment or reuse of this site for residential purposes will require the inclusion of an element of affordable housing. It should be noted that the current requirement is for the provision of 25% affordable units on site. However, it should be noted that the GLA is progressing a revised affordable housing policy which could require up to 50% affordable provision.

D. Access and Parking

- The site is located close to Mile End Road and is well served by public transport. The Council recognises that the development will need

to provide spaces for essential use and special needs parking.

- Any future development on this site will need to have regard of Tower Hamlets Sustainable Transport Strategy. The Strategy sets out the Council's objective to reduce the overall need for people to travel, and to provide as many journeys as possible by environmentally friendly modes such as public transport, cycling and on foot. Future developers would need to demonstrate how this strategy is incorporated into the proposed development.
- A comprehensive Transport Assessment should accompany a planning application for the redevelopment of this site.

5 KEY COUNCIL CONTACTS

- 5.1 Planning permission will be required and future applicants should be guided by this draft Planning Brief. All applications for planning permission will be subject to further consultation with the local community and statutory bodies.

Who can contact?

- 5.2 For more information specific to this draft Planning Brief please contact: Andrea Ritchie, Planning Projects Officer, telephone 020 7364 5324 or andrea.ritchie@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Development Control

- 5.3 Planning application for the Southern Grove site please contact Simon Dunn-Lwin, Team Leader Isle of Dogs Development Control, telephone 020 7364 5364 or simon.dunn-lwin@towerhamlets.gov.uk

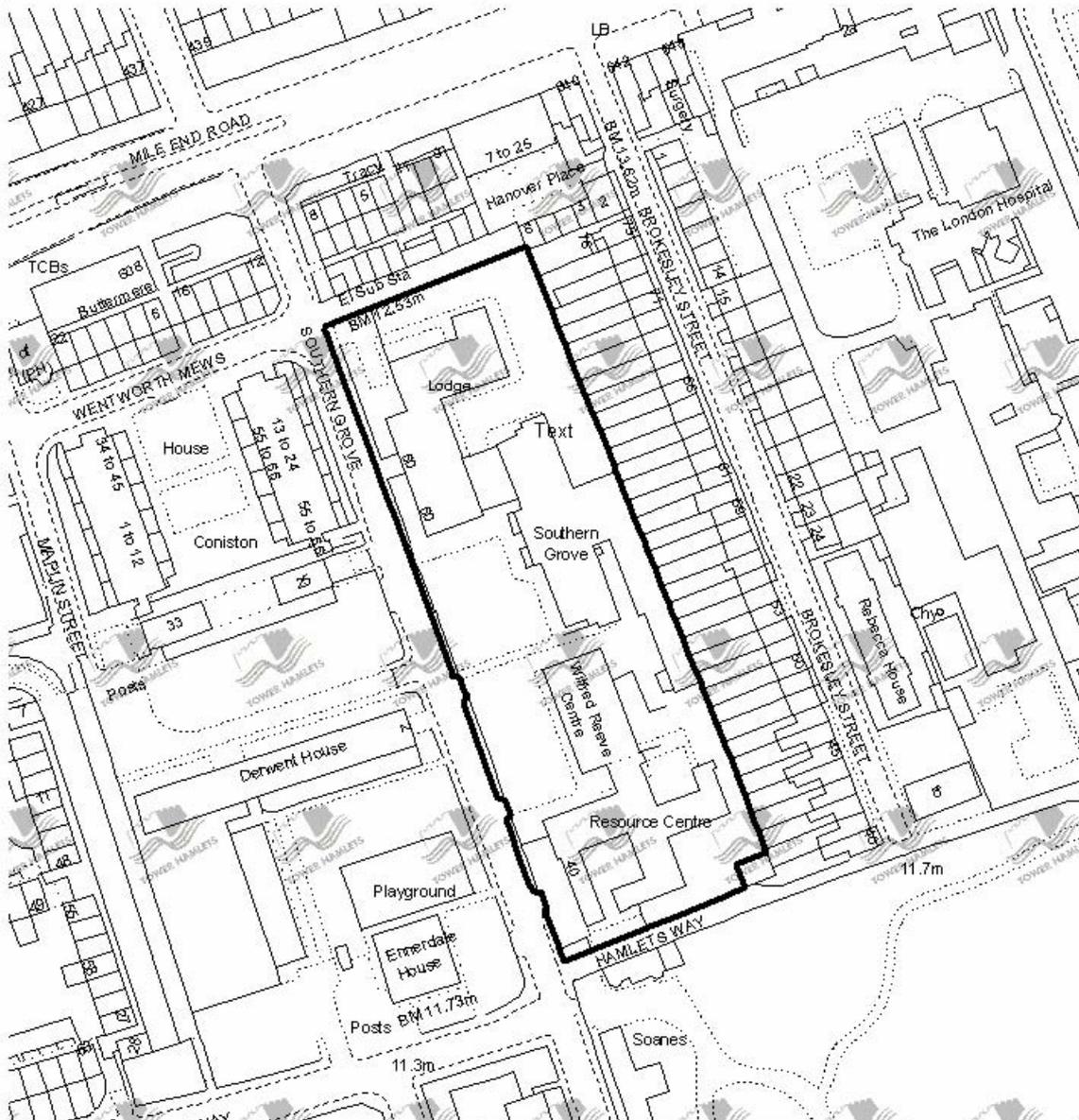
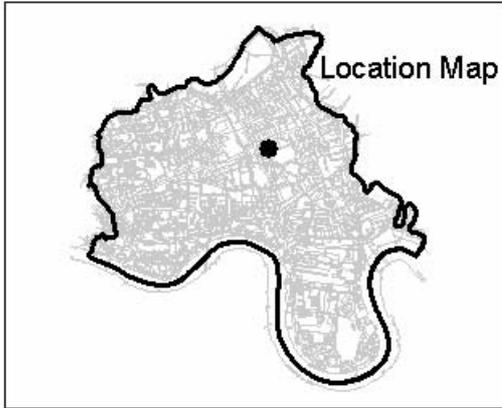
Urban Design

- 5.4 Further information can be obtained from Ludo Reid, telephone 020 7364 5375 or ludo.reid@towerhamlets.gov.uk

Traffic and Transport

- 5.5 For queries relating to transport and traffic please contact Bill Hunt, Transport Planner, telephone 020 7364 6877 or bill.hunt@towerhamlets.gov.uk

6 SITE LOCATION MAP



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. London Borough of Tower Hamlets LA086568