

Planning Board	Agenda Item: 7
7 April 2021	Reference No.: 20/3588/F

Applicant: Linden Hill - Capital Homes- SDG L
Agent: Atlas Planning Group

Site Address: Development Site at Former 3, Tunnel Avenue, Greenwich, SE10	Ward: Peninsula Application Type: Full Planning
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I.0 Recommendation

I.1 The Board is requested to grant temporary Planning Permission, as outlined below:

- Change of use for a period of no more than 2 years from student accommodation to 61 room serviced apartment block (Use Class C1).

I.2 Subject to:

- (i) Conditions set out in Appendix 2 of this report;
- (ii) The prior completion of an agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) containing the planning obligations as summarised in the heads of terms set out in this report (Section 17), any addendums and the minutes of this Planning Board meeting;
- (iii) To authorise the Assistant Director of Planning & Building Control to:
 - a. make any minor changes to the detailed wording of the recommended conditions as set out in this report (Appendix 2) and its addendums, where the Assistant Director of Planning & Building Control considers it appropriate, before issuing the decision notice; and
 - b. finalise the detailed terms of the planning obligations pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), as set out in this report (Section 24) and its addendums.
- (iv) In the event that the Section 106 Agreement is not completed within three (3) months of the date of this Planning Board meeting, to authorise the Assistant Director of Planning & Building Control to consider whether permission should be refused on the grounds that the proposals are unacceptable in the absence of the benefits which would have been secured, and if so, to determine the application with reasons for refusal which will include the following:

In the absence of a legal agreement to secure the development as car free the development fails to mitigate its impact on local services, amenities and infrastructure contrary to policies H3, IM1 and EA(c) of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (Adopted July 2014) and the Planning obligations (s106) Guidance SPD (Adopted July 2015).

2.0 Summary

2.1 Detailed below is a summary of the application:

The Site	
Site Area	0.1085ha
Local Plan Allocations	Flood Risk Area
Flood Risk Zone	Flood Zone 3 (benefits from flood defences)
Heritage Assets	Site lies within the settings of Grade II Listed East Greenwich Library and Grade II Listed Former East Greenwich Fire Station.
PTAL	5
Local Parking Restrictions	Site is located within the Caletock (CT) Controlled Parking Zone, which is in operation Mon-Sat 09:00-18:30.

Public Consultation	
Number in support	0
Number of objections	1
Number of comments	1
Main issues raised by objectors (addressed in main body of this report)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Parking – Out of keeping with the area

3.0 Site and surroundings (in detail)

3.1 The application relates a part three/part four storey building located on the southern side of Tunnel Avenue. The existing development was approved in 2019 (ref. 18/2899/F) as purpose-built student accommodation, comprising 61 single-occupancy student flats and shared ancillary recreational areas.

- 3.2 The site on Tunnel Avenue is accessed off Woolwich Road, with the A102 Blackwall Tunnel Approach a short distance to the west. The surrounding area comprises a mixture of commercial and residential uses, with traditional, two-storey dwellings located on the opposite side of Tunnel Avenue.
- 3.3 The site is not located with a conservation area and is subject to no relevant Article (4) Directions. A Grade II Listed former library bounds the site to the east, whilst a separate Grade II Listed five storey former fire station (now residential apartments) is positioned to the north-west.
- 3.4 The PTAL rating for the site is 5, on a scale of 0 to 6b, with 6b having the highest access to public transport. The Caletock controlled parking zone is in place at the site and operates between 09:00-18:30.

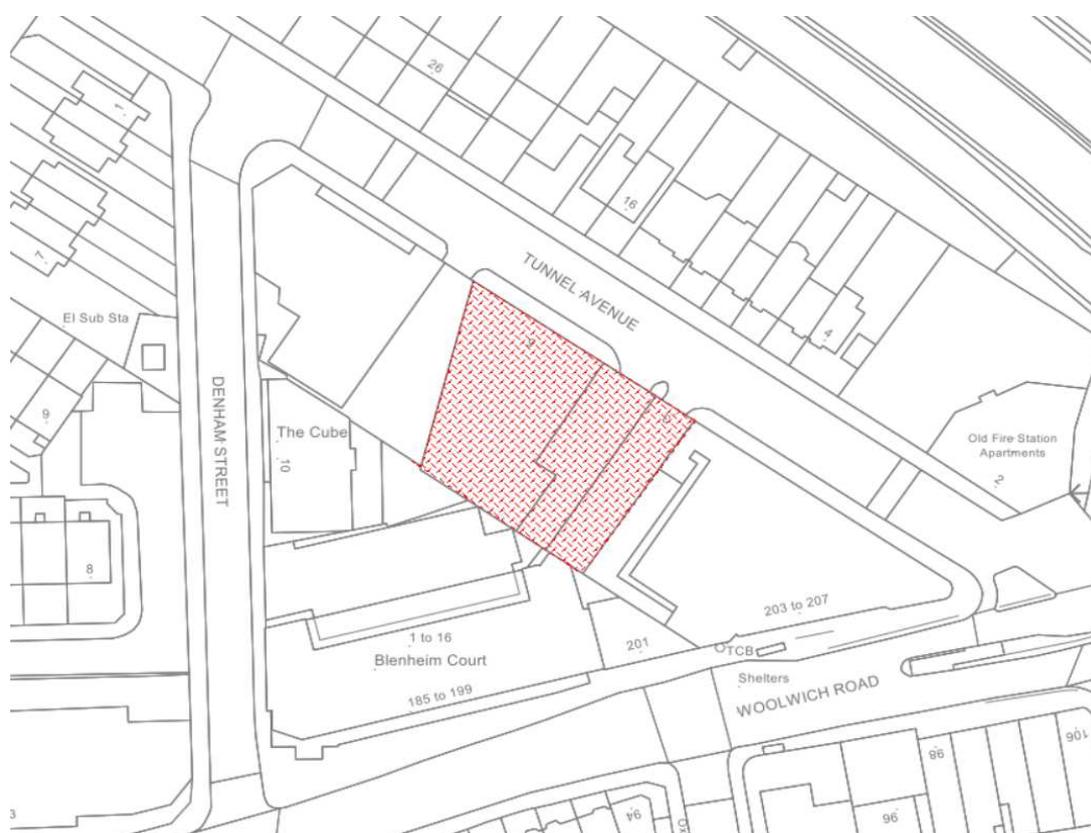


Figure 1: Site Plan

4.0 Relevant Planning History

- 4.1 The site has an extensive planning history. The following are of note:
- 4.2 **I6/2063/F** - Demolition of existing commercial buildings and construction of a 4-storey block of 23 Flats, of various sizes and types. **No decision issued.**
- 4.3 **APP/E5330/W/I6/3161025** - Appeal for non-determination concerning the above. **Allowed, 18 Jul 2017**

- 4.4 **I6/3858/F** - Demolition of the existing building and construction of a 4-storey block comprising 23 self-contained flats (12x1-bed, 10x2-bed and 1x3-bed). **No decision issued.**
- 4.5 **APP/E5330/W/17/3172801** - Appeal for non-determination concerning the above. **Allowed**, 18 Jul 2017
- 4.6 **I8/2899/F** - Demolition of the existing commercial buildings and construction of a four-storey building, accommodating 61 units for student accommodation including the provision of 2 car parking spaces, bike stores, hard and soft landscaping and associated works. **Approved**, 03/07/19.

5.0 Proposals (in detail)

- 5.1 The current proposal seeks planning permission for a temporary change of use of the building (no more than two years) from purpose-built student accommodation to 61 room serviced apartment block (Use Class C1).
- 5.2 The serviced apartments would be managed as short-term accommodation to distinguish them from C3 use and the following services would be provided:
- 24-hour concierge;
 - Rooms will not be occupied for a period of 90 days or more;
 - Rooms will be charged out at daily or weekly rates;
 - The use will be secured in the form of a licence rather than a lease; and
 - The management will have access to the room for the provision of services such as room cleaning.
- 5.3 No changes are proposed to the first, second or third floor layouts. However, the ground floor will be repurposed based on Government guidelines related to COVID-19.
- 5.4 No external changes are proposed.
- 5.5 Two wheelchair accessible car parking spaces were consented for the student accommodation. These will be retained as part of the current proposals.

6.0 Consultation

- 6.1 Since being submitted in November 2020, the application has been subject of public consultation comprising of site and press notices, together with 79 individual letters sent to residential properties in the vicinity of the application site. Consultation with statutory and non-statutory bodies was also undertaken.

6.2 Statutory Consultees

A summary of the consultation responses received along with the officer comments are set out in table below:

Details of Representation	Summary of Comments	Officer's comments
Local Ward Councillors	No comments received.	N/A

6.3 Council Departments

A summary of the consultation responses received along with the officer comments are set out in table below:

Details of Representation	Summary of Comments	Officer's Comments
Environmental Protection	No response received.	N/A
Waste Services	We are happy with the waste arrangements. We recommend that the electrical and textiles bins are replaced with an extra refuse and recycling bin.	Plans have been updated in line with comments.
Highways	No response received.	N/A
Sustainability	No objection.	Noted.

6.4 Amenity Groups

A summary of the consultation responses received from local amenity groups, along with the officer comments are set out in table below:

Details of Representation	Summary of Comments	Officer's Comments
Greenwich Society	We recognise that the demand for student accommodation is currently limited because of COVID but question whether this justifies switching it to open market letting for two years. We suggest that any consent should be limited to the academic year 2021-22, which would be 18 months from now.	Given the temporary nature of the proposed change of use, it is in the applicant's interest to reinstate the original use as soon as is possible. However, as it is unclear when this

		will be possible, Officers are content that the proposed two years can be accepted.
East Greenwich Residents Association	No response received.	N/A

6.5 Local Residents

A summary of the consultation responses received from local residents, along with the officer comments are set out in table below:

Summary of Comments	Officer's comments
Support this planning application. Due to Covid-19 occupying the development with Students isn't going to realistic option for the vendor, therefore given the circumstances application considered a sensible alternative.	Noted.
The Council should reconsider the parking situation this end of Tunnel Avenue. Currently 2 hours no return, however given the potential increased number of vehicles on the road, which cannot be services by onsite parking, I would consider permit parking more appropriate for this end of Tunnel Avenue.	Development is within a CPZ and therefore subject to parking restrictions. It is recommended that a requirement for future residents to be unable to obtain on-street parking permits is secured.
The Serviced apartments provide no provision or protection to the local residents. If a Hotel had originally been proposed the parking would have been much more seriously considered.	Parking issues are considered as part of the assessment of the current application.
Tunnel Avenue is a residential street, the addition of student accommodation would have fitted in with the character of the area, daily and weekend schedule.	This is discussed further in the design section of this report.

<p>A hotel has a different clientele, different arrival and departure times and amenities. This will have a significant impact on the character of the area and local residential amenity.</p>	
<p>The applicant states that "the site is also located in an appropriate area for serviced apartments" however, this totally overlooks the actual location of the site, on a residential street, surrounded by residential streets. There is no commercial activity on this street at all - a hotel is a direct contraction to this.</p>	<p>This is discussed further in the design section of this report.</p>
<p>This site is on a dedicated walking route to schools towards the new crossing at the end of Tunnel Avenue. This again is not covered in any detail in the planning document.</p>	<p>The proposed development would have no impact on this.</p>

7.0 Planning Context

7.1 This application needs to be considered in the context of a range of national, regional and local planning policies and Supplementary Planning Guidance / Documents.

- National Planning Policy Framework (“NPPF” – 2019)
- The London Plan (March 2021)
- The Royal Greenwich Local Plan: Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (“Core Strategy” – 2014)

7.2 For full details of specific relevant policies and SPDs / Documents refer to Appendix 3.

8.0 Planning Considerations

8.1 The planning considerations relevant to this application are as follows:

- Principle of Development
- Design and Heritage
- Neighbouring Amenity
- Highways

- Sustainability
- Refuse
- Secure by Design
- SI06 Legal Agreement

9.0 Principle of Development

- 9.1 Planning permission was granted in July 2019 for the construction of a 61-unit student accommodation. Construction on the building is nearing completion. The supporting documents submitted outline that due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and government guidance and legislation which has seen higher education move online, the consented development as purpose-built student accommodations risks lying vacant until such a time when the relevant restrictions have been lifted.
- 9.2 The proposed temporary change of use for up to 2 years as serviced apartments seeks to avoid this, while ensuring that the original and intended use of the site as student accommodation can be re-established as soon as reasonably practical. It is considered to represent a resilient response to the pandemic which would ensure maximum output from the site.
- 9.3 Paragraph 38 of the NPPF states that local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. This involves working proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.
- 9.4 Officers also have regard to Policy E10 of the London Plan which seeks to strengthen the visitor economy and supporting infrastructure and Policy EA5 of the Core Strategy which supports developments which would serve to increase the number of visitors staying overnight in the borough by encouraging the development of hotels. Whilst at the current national lockdown limits the number of visitors the Royal Borough hosts, as restrictions begin to be eased the number of visitors will inevitably begin to increase, with hotel uses such as that proposed promoting them to stay longer. It is noted that the ground floor of the development has been altered to ensure it would be Covid safe.
- 9.5 It is noted that Policy EA5 states that such uses are particularly sought in town centres and the waterfront area. In this instance the application site is not directly located within such an area, however, it is in close proximity to both Greenwich Peninsula and Greenwich Town Centre.

9.6 Comments have been received by the Greenwich Society in which they suggested that the change of use be limited to the academic year 2021-22. This was put to the applicant, who asserted that they did not consider this reasonable given the pandemic and the level of uncertainty which still persists. They also highlighted that their predominate market for this accommodation is overseas students (which was a large part of the market), and whilst they are confident this will return, they are not confident this will necessarily happen by the end of the 2021-22 academic year for the following reasons:

- Vaccine rollouts programmes and their effectiveness in different countries is uncertain;
- Possibility of variants which may be immune to current vaccines;
- Home Office Visa Delays and uncertainty on whether a vaccine passport will be required;
- Airline industry has been badly impacted by the impact and this is likely to see costs increase to get to UK; and
- Unclear how many students will opt for solely online offering until pandemic is truly over.

9.7 Finally, they asserted that the certainty from student lets and associated financial return is far greater as purpose-built student accommodation opposed to the maximum three months stay permitted under the proposed serviced let apartments. The temporary CI use is therefore just to generate some rental revenue in the intervening period, which will help them survive and make use of a brand-new building. Officers are minded to agree with this and note that this is far more preferable than having the building vacant and contributing nothing to the local economy.

9.8 On this basis no objections are raised to the proposed temporary change of use, subject to the acceptability of remaining planning considerations.

10.0 Design and Heritage

10.1 Policy DH1 of the Core Strategy and Policy D4 of the London Plan require that all new development be of a high standard of design and should respect the character and appearance of the surrounding area in terms of the scale, bulk, massing, layout, including landscaping and the use of materials.

10.2 Policy DH3 also seeks to protect and enhance the borough's heritage assets, including listed buildings.

10.3 No external changes are proposed to the external appearance of the previously approved building which consists of a part 3, part 4 storey building with a mixed materials palette of brick, render and aluminium cladding. The

previous development was considered acceptable with regards to impact on the streetscene and neighbouring listed buildings, and whilst the new London Plan has since been adopted, there have been no material changes to the objectives of design related policies. No objection is therefore raised to the proposed design of the building.

- 10.4 Objections have been received which outline concerns that the proposed use would be out of keeping with the residential character of the area. To this end, Policy DHI does state that developments must take account of patterns of activity, movement and circulation. However, given no increases are proposed to the number of rooms, the proposed use would see the same number of people using the development as previously approved. On this basis it is considered that the proposed use as serviced apartments is likely to result in the same or similar levels of comings and goings as the originally approved student accommodation. Furthermore, it is noted that a short distance to the west of the site is the Angerstein hotel. The site is also in reasonably close proximity to both Greenwich town centre and The O2 on Greenwich Peninsula, both of which attract a large number of visitors to the borough. As such it is not considered that the proposed use would be out of character with the existing surrounding area.

11.0 Neighbouring amenity

- 11.1 Royal Greenwich Local Plan; Core Strategy with Detailed Policy (2014) Policy DH(b) states that developments will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposal does not cause an unacceptable loss of amenity to adjacent occupiers by reducing the amount of daylight, sunlight or privacy they enjoy or result in an un-neighbourly sense of enclosure.
- 11.2 Similarly, Core Strategy Policy E(a) outlines that Planning permission will not normally be granted where a proposed development or change of use would generally have a significant adverse effect on the amenities of adjacent occupiers or uses, and especially where proposals would be likely to result in the unacceptable emission of noise.
- 11.3 The proposed change of use would see no major alterations to the external appearance or size of the consented building. As such the development would not cause any loss of amenity to adjacent occupiers by reducing the amount of daylight, sunlight or privacy they enjoy or result in an un-neighbourly sense of enclosure.
- 11.4 In regard to noise and disturbance, the proposed development would not see any increase in the number of rooms/occupiers. As such, it is considered unlikely that the proposal would result in any significant increase in noise from

associated comings and goings from the site in comparison to the consented scheme.

- 11.5 Overall, the development is considered to have an acceptable impact on neighbouring amenity and therefore complies with Policies DH(b) and E(a) of the Core Strategy.

12.0 Highways

- 12.1 London Plan Policy T4 states that the cumulative impacts of development on public transport and the road network capacity including walking and cycling, as well as associated effects on public health, should be taken into account and mitigated. It also states that development proposals should not increase road danger.
- 12.2 Policy T6.4 of the London Plan sets out parking restrictions for Hotel and leisure uses, stating that for locations of PTAL 4-6, any on-site provision should be limited to operational needs, disabled persons parking and parking required for taxis, coaches and deliveries or servicing.
- 12.3 The current proposal would maintain two accessible parking spaces on site, which is considered acceptable given the above.
- 12.4 The applicant asserts that as future guests will only stay at the site for short periods, they would not be eligible for parking permits. However, given guests can stay up to 90 days, in order to ensure that no permits are issued incorrectly the Road Traffic Order in place at the site will need to be updated, which has a financial cost associated in doing so. As such, it is recommended that the development is secured as car free through a S106 legal agreement. Officers also note that this is a requirement of the original permission for student housing.
- 12.5 Paragraph 10.4.3 of the London Plan also states that the use of travel plans can help reduce negative impacts and bring about positive travel outcomes. Officers consider that the proposed development would benefit from a travel plan, which would be utilised to ensure guests and employees travel to and from the site in sustainable ways.
- 12.6 No details have been provided in respect of deliveries or servicing the development. Officers therefore consider it appropriate to condition a delivery and servicing management plan be provided to ensure the development would have an acceptable impact on the local highway.

12.7 Policy T5 of the London Plan sets out cycle parking standards. As a CI Use, the development would be required to provide 1 long-stay space per 20 bedrooms and 1 short-stay space per 50 bedrooms. That equates to 4 spaces total for this development. A cycle store is shown on the submitted plans and whilst this is large enough to host the required cycle spaces, full details will nevertheless be secured by condition to ensure cycle provision is acceptable and secure.

13.0 Sustainability

13.1 Policy SI 12 of the London Plan sets out that Major developments should be net zero-carbon, with a minimum on-site reduction of at least 35 per cent beyond Building Regulations.

13.2 The development has been built to comply to relevant standards, in line with the approved Energy Strategy (May 2020) submitted as part of conditions 25 and 11 under planning application with reference 19/4060/SD. The Council's Sustainability Officer has therefore advised that there are no more measures that could be incorporated to comply with Building Regulations Part L1B. They also noted that, given the short timeframe for which the use is proposed, it would not be worthwhile pursuing any carbon shortfall through a carbon offsetting contribution, as it is unlikely that this would pay for any meaningful energy efficiency measures elsewhere in the borough. However, it was outlined that if the applicant were to seek to extend the CI Use in the future the development would have to demonstrate compliance with the zero-carbon target over Building Regulations Part L1A 2013 and address any carbon shortfall through a carbon offsetting contribution to the Council's Carbon Offset Fund. An informative will be added to the decision notice to make the applicant aware of this.

14.0 Refuse

14.1 Policy DHI of the Core strategy outlines that all developments are expected to demonstrate on-site waste management including evidence of waste reduction, use of recycled materials and dedicated recyclable waste storage space.

14.2 The Council's Street Services team were consulted and raised no objection to the proposal. They did however request that the electrical and textiles bins are replaced with an extra refuse and recycling bin. The applicant was informed and updated the plans accordingly.

15.0 Flood Risk

- 15.1 Policy SI 2 of the London Plan states that development proposals should ensure that flood risk is minimised and mitigated, and that residual risk is addressed. This is supported by Core Strategy Policy E2.
- 15.2 It is noted that flooding and drainage issues were conditioned as part of the previous permission (18/2899/F), with the details of a final drainage strategy conditioned and approved under 19/4349/SD. The applicant has confirmed that the approved details have been installed on site, and as such it is considered that drainage arrangements are acceptable and thus no further conditions are required. All ground floor areas of the current submission and non-habitable spaces.

16.0 Secure by Design

- 16.1 Policy D3 of the London Plan states that developments should achieve safe and secure environments. This is further emphasised in Policy D11, which states that boroughs should work in partnership with the Metropolitan Police Service 'Design Out Crime' team to maintain a safe and secure environment and reduce the fear of crime. Policy DHI of the Core Strategy also outlines that developments should contribute to a safe and secure environment for users and the public.
- 16.2 A Secure by Design (SBD) strategy has been submitted in support of the current application, with Officers noting the document was approved as part of a condition of the previous permission (ref. 19/4349/SD). However, during the course of the current application the SBD Officer at the Metropolitan Police has highlighted that the wrong doors were installed to each of the residential rooms in the development meaning that the certification cannot be awarded for the student accommodation use.
- 16.3 Notwithstanding the above, the SBD Officer has outlined that the development would pass SBD as a CI Use, as there would be a lower expected level of security within individual rooms for a hotel. This is primarily due to guests being aware that the rooms are accessed by staff on a regular basis for cleaning purposes. It was therefore agreed that the SBD condition be reapplied to the current permission, which can then be discharged when the certification is awarded. The applicant will then have up to two years to remedy the issue of the internal doors and discharge the SBD condition on the original permission, which will be required before implementing the student accommodation use.

17.0 SI06 Legal Agreement

17.1 Policy IM1 of the Royal Greenwich Local Plan sets out that all qualifying developments will provide for the infrastructure, facilities, amenities and programmes that are considered necessary to support and serve the development and offset any harm.

17.2 The development of this site will require a legal agreement, and the following Heads of Terms have been agreed between the Royal Borough of Greenwich and the applicant:

- Highways
 - Alteration of Traffic Order controlling the CPZ (at developer's expense) to ensure that future occupiers are not eligible for parking permits
- Legal Costs

18.0 Conclusion

18.1 The proposed temporary change of use for a period of no more than 2 years is considered acceptable. It is therefore recommended that permission be granted for application reference 20/3588/F, subject to the conditions outlined in Appendix 2.

Background Papers:

National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

The London Plan (2021)

Royal Greenwich Local Plan; Core Strategy with Detailed Policies (2014)

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