



LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

APPEAL NO: APP/C5690/W/23/3321935

COUNCIL'S REF: DC/22/129789

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PROOF OF EVIDENCE OF ANTIGONI GKIZA, MSc

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1. QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE AND SCOPE

Qualifications and Experience

- 1.1 I am Antigoni Gkiza, and I am a Planning Officer within the Planning Service of the London Borough of Lewisham (LBL). I have a MSc in Urban Regeneration (University College London, 2020) and an Integrated Master's Degree in Spatial Planning and Development Engineering (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece, 2019).
- 1.2 I have two years of experience within the planning profession, including experience of development management in the public sector.

This Proof of Evidence

- 1.3 I have prepared this proof of evidence on behalf of Lewisham Council (hereafter referred to as the "Council") who as the local planning authority, refused the appeal application (Council Planning application reference DC/22/129789) at on 23 March 2023.

Scope of Evidence

- 1.4 I will be presenting evidence in relation to the relevant planning matters associated with the reasons for refusal. My evidence has full regard to the information submitted to date in relation to the application.
- 1.5 The evidence presented in this proof should be read alongside the separate proofs prepared by Joanna Ecclestone, Senior Conservation and Design Officer, Beth Stevens, Senior Urban Design Officer and Melissa Vento, Principal Transport Planner.

Statement of Truth

- 1.6 The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) has published a Practice Advice – Planners as Expert Witnesses (September, 2018), which outlines the principles of good practice.
- 1.7 The evidence I shall provide to the Inquiry as contained in this Proof of Evidence has been prepared and is given in accordance with the guidance of

the RTPI. The opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions. In providing expert evidence to the Inquiry, I am fully aware that my duty is to the Inquiry and to provide my honestly held professional view, irrespective of by whom I am employed.

2. SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT OF MAIN ISSUES 1, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9

- 2.1 Site Allocation SA48 in the Site Allocations Local Plan allocates the Willow Way site as a Local Employment Location (LEL) to enable its protection of B Use Class Employment Uses. The introduction of 60 residential units (Use Class C3) would constitute a departure from the adopted development plan. If the proposed 479sqm of mezzanine floorspace is discounted, the Proposal would only provide 922sqm of commercial floorspace, which would represent a net loss of industrial capacity contrary to the provisions of DM Policy 10. In addition, the evidence base documents demonstrate that the proposed floor to ceiling heights beneath and at mezzanine level would be significantly insufficient for the range of employment uses that could be reasonably accommodated and the lack of dedicated yard space or back of house space, and the associated reliance on an on-street bay for all servicing and delivery requirements (serving both the employment units and the residential units) represents a significant constraint on the attractiveness of the proposed employment floorspace. The absence of at least a basic internal fit-out would significantly restrict the provision of flexible workspace that could be adapted to the needs of a wide range of employment uses and would be contrary to LP Policy E2 and DM Policy 10. Given there is no end user identified for the commercial floorspace, it is considered that its attractiveness would be significantly impeded.
- 2.2 Similarly, with regards to the Proposed Submission Local Plan, the Proposal would result in a net loss of industrial capacity, and that there has been no demonstration that the amount of industrial capacity has been maximised as much as reasonably practical, or that the proposal has sought to optimise the use of land and maximise opportunities to increase job densities, through evidence of a development options appraisal considered through the design-led approach. In addition, no exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated to show that the co-location of uses on the LSIS site that would result in the net loss of industrial capacity would be compliant with the direction of the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The proposed design of the commercial units would not be attractive to potential future occupiers and it would likely reduce the marketability of the commercial units for industrial uses.
- 2.3 The proposal fails to demonstrate that it would provide an affordable housing mix in line with the requirements of the borough's Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the applicant has provided no design feasibility or viability justification for this. A total of 8 units would have 3 or more bedrooms out of the proposed 30 affordable units, which represents 26.6% of the affordable housing units. Part 9 of Core Strategy Policy 1 requires that 42% of affordable housing

units have three or more bedrooms. In relation to the proposed development, this would equate to a requirement of 13 affordable units with three or more bedrooms. Therefore, the proposed development is characterised by an under-provision of 5 affordable housing units with three or more bedrooms. The applicant has not demonstrated through a viability assessment why additional family sized accommodation to meet the policy requirement cannot be provided within the affordable tenure as the scheme does not meet the requirements to follow the Fast Track Route of the threshold approach.

- 2.4 In addition, it has not been satisfactorily demonstrated that the Proposal would not fetter or compromise the development of the remainder of the Willow Way LEL (/ LSIS) and the objectives of the wider site allocation and masterplan area. The Proposal has not been thoroughly considered and informed by the requirements of policies and guidance related to the masterplan process and as such it is likely that it would prejudice the future development of other parts of the site and adjoining land or compromise the delivery of the site allocation and outcomes sought for the wider area.
- 2.5 The analysis in this Proof has concluded that limited weight can be attributed to the policies of the emerging plan due to the significant unresolved objections to the emerging policies, the harmful impact of the Proposal to the emerging plan and the fact that the emerging plan has not been yet formally part of the Borough's development plan.
- 2.6 It has been demonstrated that the Proposal would result in loss of industrial capacity, unacceptable internal layout and arrangements for the proposed commercial units, lack of potential end users, insufficient provision of number of jobs and marketability of the proposed commercial units. In addition, there would be lack of sufficient affordable three-bedroom units, unacceptable design, a harmful impact on heritage assets and inadequate delivery and servicing provision. The Proposal would also fetter or compromise the development of the remainder of the Willow Way LEL (/ LSIS) and the objectives of the wider site allocation and masterplan area.
- 2.7 In terms of public benefits, it is recognised that the Proposal would deliver 60 new homes of which 30 would be affordable tenure. In addition, the scheme has the potential to result in job creation associated with the commercial floorspace and would generate planning obligations and CIL that would contribute to wider improvements in the borough, together with benefits to the local economy during the construction phase. In addition, the scheme would provide wheelchair accessible dwellings in compliance with M4(2) and M4(3) and the proposed residential units would provide passive surveillance, increasing safety and security.

- 2.8 However, the aforementioned benefits are moderated by the concerns regarding the extent to which the Proposal would result in a net loss of industrial capacity rather in a maximisation of employment uses; the lack of a context-based design approach; a degree of harm to the significance of key surrounding heritage assets which varies between low to moderate (less than substantial) due to the scale, bulk, massing and footprint of the proposed building, and the lack of trees and vegetation; the inadequate delivering and servicing arrangements for the commercial uses that would not be suitable to meet the needs of a range of future occupiers, and that this could impact the uptake of employment floorspace and undermine the continued function of the Willow Way LEL; the inadequate footway width solution will directly impact existing servicing for other commercial units located on the Western side of Willow Way; and that in the absence of a convincing and robust masterplan approach, that the Proposal has the potential to adversely impact on the function or effectiveness of the LEL (/ LSIS) to accommodate commercial and industrial uses.
- 2.9 The benefits of the proposal, which include the provision of housing, affordable housing, wheelchair accessible dwellings, improvement of air quality, construction opportunities and planning obligations and CIL and passive surveillance do not outweigh the harm that has been identified above in the balancing planning exercise. As set out in the evidence, the proposed development is clearly in conflict with the Development Plan. The relevant policies for considering the application are considered to be up to date and therefore, in accordance with the NPPF, the Development Plan is given full weight. In view of this, the conflict with the Development Plan outweighs any benefits to the scheme.