

## 4 ALTERNATIVES & DESIGN EVOLUTION

### Introduction

4.1 Regulation 18 and Schedule 4(2) of the EIA Regulations require an applicant to provide “a description of the reasonable alternatives (for example in terms of development design, technology, location, size and scale) studied by the developer, which are relevant to the proposed project and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, including a comparison of the environmental effects”. This chapter, therefore, reviews the reasonable alternative options studied by the Applicant, including in relation to principal land use and siting, and the main reasons for selecting the chosen option, being the current design for the Development which forms the subject of assessment within the ES. Typical alternative options considered comprise:

- The ‘do nothing’ alternative where the Development is not progressed;
- Alternative Locations and uses; and
- Alternative Design/layout for the Development.

4.2 The form of the Development has been influenced by a range of factors, including location, surrounding uses and townscape character, environmental impact assessment and input from LBH, statutory consultees and stakeholders through extensive meetings, workshops and public exhibitions.

4.3 There are a number of environmental considerations and opportunities in developing the Site, including:

- Opportunity to create open space and green infrastructure through the creation of green links whilst also improving the ecology and biodiversity of the local area;
- Opportunity to create improve local connectivity by enhancing public realm, including along Syon Lane, as well as improving local public transport and deliver cycling routes;
- Opportunity to mitigate air and noise pollution from the Great West Road through good design and adherence to relevant standards and guidance, thereby improving the health and wellbeing of the local community;
- Opportunity to create a variety of uses that will deliver job opportunities for the local community, both during construction and operation; and
- Consideration of the surrounding heritage assets and ensure that development does not adversely affect these assets.

## The Alternative Options

### The 'do nothing' Alternative

- 4.4 Under the 'do nothing' scenario, the Development would not be progressed. In this situation, the existing configuration of the Site would not make the most efficient use of the Site, which offers capacity for intensification. The Applicant purchased the Site with a view to redevelopment and therefore the 'do nothing' option was not considered.

### Consideration of Alternative Locations and Uses

- 4.5 The Applicant owns the Site and no alternative locations were considered.
- 4.6 The Site falls within the Great West Corridor (GWC) Opportunity Area. A Masterplan and Capacity Study have been produced by LBH<sup>i</sup> which aim to reinvigorate the area. The GWC is a major commercial area that follows the A4 and M4 corridors between Brentford and Chiswick, known as the 'Golden Mile'. As part of the vision for the area, a spatial concept plan was produced which establishes Seven Quarters for the Great West Corridor, each with its own distinct role and character. The Site is located within the 'Golden Mile Station Quarter', which is located at the western end of the GWC and offers a major opportunity for improvement and intensification of development.
- 4.7 The GWC Masterplan Capacity Study March 2019 recognises the significant opportunity for residential intensification of the Tesco Osterley site and the crucial role of the Homebase site in this wider regeneration. The Study identifies the move as an alternative option for redevelopment, which would deliver benefits through comprehensive change, making more efficient use of land and delivering housing in accordance with the Mayor's objectives for the Opportunity Area.
- 4.8 The Site therefore plays a key role in the masterplan for the GWC, and the following Development Objectives are included for the Site:
- Enable regeneration of the adjacent Tesco site;
  - Deliver a new Tesco superstore along with new retail;
  - Deliver a substantial amount of housing;
  - Improve connectivity to and from Syon Lane Station; and
  - Deliver high quality public realm.

- 4.9 The Applicant's design team was set a number of key objectives from the outset, for the

regeneration of the Site, in order to deliver:

- A landscape-led placemaking strategy for the Site that puts people first;
- High quality urban design;
- High quality public realm;
- New dedicated spaces for the local community;
- Improved connectivity and way-finding;
- A new modern Tesco store where the current Osterley Tesco store can be decanted to;
- A range of homes of different size and tenures; and
- High quality architecture.

4.10 The vision for the Homebase site is to create a new modernised Tesco store, as well as new homes, public realm improvements and community space.

4.11 In consideration of the above, and due to its location on the Great West Corridor and proximity to Syon Lane Station, no alternative locations were considered. The potential of the Site coming forward for development has been recognised and the Applicant has therefore progressed on the basis of redeveloping the Homebase store for a new mixed-use scheme.

#### Consideration of Alternative Design/Layout for the Development

4.12 The early design process considered the creation of a residential development with a cluster of local retail spaces including a small local supermarket fronting onto the Great West Road, with associated customer parking in a podium level. This alternative option was discounted on the basis that it did not deliver the Development Objectives as set out above, including the delivery of a new Tesco Superstore.

4.13 An alternative scenario considered the relocation of the Tesco Extra supermarket at Osterley on to the Site, with residential development and retail use fronting onto the Great West Road. By moving a large supermarket to the Site, this would reinforce the Site as a local centre and support the vitality of other local shops and services. In combination with the proposed redevelopment of the Tesco Extra Osterley site for housing, this would deliver a positive change and realise the potential of the area. Key beneficial effects of combining these uses in this location would be to population and human health / socio-economic factors. This scenario was therefore progressed.

4.14 The key design principles of the chosen scenario are:

1. Public realm: Improving connectivity and way-finding;

2. Retail podium: animating public realm; and
3. A collection of buildings: reconciling the urban grain.

4.15 Further detail on the key design principles is provided in the Design and Access Statement submitted with the planning application.

#### Consultation and Engagement

4.16 Engagement with the local community has been fundamental to the evolution of the Development. Two public exhibition events open to the general public were held in October 2019 and February 2020 in which the general public could view the emerging proposals and express their views. A third public exhibition was also held virtually in July 2020. Consultation comprising a Walk and Talk format, in which local residents were able to do a comprehensive walk with the design team around the Site and understand the detail of the proposals, was also undertaken in November 2019. A summary of the consultation process undertaken can be found in Chapter 2: EIA Methodology. A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has also been submitted separately in support of the planning application.

4.17 Alongside the public consultation events, a series of workshops with representatives of key local community groups have been held throughout the design process, allowing members of the local community to feedback and raise any concerns on the proposals to the Applicant's design team. Topics discussed have included design, community, green space, play, traffic and transport. Where necessary, the design team then made design changes before formally presenting proposals to residents and the wider stakeholders at the relevant formal consultation events.

4.18 The Development submitted for approval is the result of a thorough analysis of environmental constraints and opportunities, access issues and market demand. Consultation with LBH and the GLA, the statutory consultees, the local community and other local stakeholders has been a key influence in design evolution. The consultation process has allowed the Development to evolve to suit their needs and ensure that the Applicant's objectives can be achieved.

#### Design Evolution

4.19 A number of changes have occurred over the course of the design evolution in relation to key environmental constraints and opportunities on and surrounding the Site.

4.20 The information pertinent to the choices made taking into account environmental effects is provided below. Chapter 3 of the Design and Access Statement provides more detail on the

evolution of the Development, which is not required for the ES.

### December 2019

4.21 An updated massing of the scheme was presented to LBH officers in December 2019 (refer to Figure 4.1). Lower heights were proposed to respond to concerns raised by LBH, GLA and local residents on the initial design presented in September and October 2019. The heights were amended to minimise the visual, daylight and sunlight impacts of the Development. The following design changes were made to improve environmental effects:

- The heights of Blocks D&E were lowered to reduce daylight and sunlight impacts on neighbouring houses;
- The building articulation on the buildings along the eastern edge of the Site was improved to respond to concerns over key views of the Development along Great West Road;
- The massing strategy was reviewed to carefully consider the visual impact of the Development in key local views, including from open spaces such as Syon Park to the south of the Site.

### June and July 2020

4.22 Following the second round of pre-application meetings and public consultations, further design changes were made in June and July 2020, the following of which were made to improve environmental effects:

- The width of Blocks D and E were reduced to increase the distance between facades, adding more shared amenity space at podium level to improve daylight effects; and
- The design of the proposed facades of Blocks D and E was changed to improve the visual impact on Syon Lane (refer to Figure 4.2).

4.23 The Development was chosen as it was considered that the alternative designs would lead to greater adverse effects on Daylight and Sunlight and Townscape and Views. Table 4.1 summarises the comparative environmental effects of the original design, the December 2019 design iteration and the Development submitted for planning approval (June/July 2020). As set out above, the key differences related to massing and appearance. Detailed assessments using EIA significance criteria were not undertaken by the technical consultants during the design evolution process. Therefore, the assessment in Table 4.1 is based on professional judgment and the iterative technical analysis for those disciplines dependent massing (built heritage, townscape and visual, daylight, sunlight & overshadowing). Assessment is made against the previous design alternative, demonstrating that effects are either comparable or

less adverse with each iteration.

**Table 4.1: Comparative Environmental Assessment**

| <b>Technical Discipline</b>                     | <b>December 2019 Design</b>               | <b>The Development (June/July 2020)</b>  |
|---|---|--|
| Population and Human Health                     | Comparable effects to the original design | Comparable effects to the December 2019 design   |
| Built Heritage                                  | Less adverse than original design         | Less adverse than December 2019 design (refer to Chapter 7 of this ES for detailed assessment of effects)  |
| Town & Visual Effects                           | Less adverse than original design         | Less adverse than December 2019 design (refer to Chapter 8 of this ES for detailed assessment of effects)  |
| Transport & Access                              | Comparable effects to the original design | Comparable effects to the December 2019 design   |
| Noise & Vibration                               | Comparable effects to the original design | Comparable effects to the December 2019 design   |
| Air Quality                                     | Comparable effects to the original design | Comparable effects to the December 2019 design   |
| Daylight, Sunlight, Overshadowing & Solar Glare | Less adverse than original design         | Less adverse than December 2019 design (refer to Chapter 12 of this ES for detailed assessment of effects) |
| Wind Microclimate                               | Comparable effects to the original design | Comparable effects to the December 2019 design   |

## References

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<sup>i</sup> London Borough of Hounslow. Great West Corridor Masterplan and Capacity Study. March 2019.