

**Notes of a meeting of the Resident Steering Group for Alice
Shepherd House & Oak House with One Housing & PRP
held on 7th December 2020
Meeting held via Zoom**

Residents Present:

Habib Ahmod – Alice Shepherd House
Cynthia Owusu – Alice Shepherd House
Darren Brown – Alice Shepherd House
Sameena Raouf – Alice Shepherd House

Others Present:

Lee Page – Independent Resident Adviser – TPAS
Mike Tyrrell – Residents Advocate
Mynul Islam – One Housing
Emma Leigh Price – One Housing
Leila Arefani – One Housing
Paul Handley – One Housing
Spyros Katsaros – PRP Architects
Roumpini Perakaki – PRP Architects
Daniela Rodrigues – PRP Architects
Jonathan Finch – Lichfields Planning Consultants

Apologies:

Sharon Holmes – Oak House
Nadia Mahmoud – Alice Shepherd House

1 Welcome & Introduction

1.1 The apologies that were given are noted above.

2 Questions for PRP

2.1 ***The design (full regeneration) seems to be very densely developed.
Why is this?***

SK responded that this is one of the most challenging aspects of any project. In terms of the approach to the site, SK referred to a slide showing a map of the local area with the ASH/OH site outlined. There are a number of factors taken into account. These include the specific location of the site and the nature of the surrounding developments and who are the neighbours and the heights of their blocks. Isle of Dogs is changing a lot and referred to a new development (New Union Wharf) an emerging development with sites up to 16 stories. He then referred to another plan of the site showing ASH and the immediate neighbours. Need to ensure

minimum re-provision and the efficient land use is very important factor. Also need to look at deliverability and viability of the site. Need to re-provide all the homes quality homes together with new homes of good quality, Site gives itself to a more dense development but all needs to be constantly checked against daylight and sunlight, communal areas and open space and new homes.

JF came in and spoke to planning policy. Policy has shifted away from the previous strategic approach (London and local plans) which was quite a mechanical approach to density and looked at ease of accessing transport and has moved to a design led approach to density. Stems from the need to make the most efficient use of previously developed sites such as this. Its an amalgamation of looking at surrounding townscape, looking at the character and context and how can deliver open space for play facilities and public realm for residents and this can lend itself to a more compact type of development. A very detailed analysis will be undertaken at the planning stage by planning officers taking into account day and sunlight, their outlook and whether single or dual aspect how needs of residents such as play space (very high priority for TH) checked against detailed calculations in planning policy and supporting guidance and that will check if site is too dense or not. So PRP are trying to do this now to meet these requirements.

Another factor in terms of play and facilities – can we provide more affordable homes? Are we using the site in the right way? Can we deliver additional affordable homes? So, this is explored at this stage of the options appraisal.

DB, OK – but wondered about two building facing the water but taller? SR said it's hard to imagine without pictures. LP said that much will be quite basic at this stage but will be developed through the process.

PH this is very early in the process – 6 months of options appraisal left. Assuming redevelopment chosen then another 6-9 months detailed design leading up to a planning application and council planners become very involved in the process.

Numbers of units and density could still change significantly as the scheme develops in,light of this involvement.

SK absolutely can consider two, taller buildings. MT would like SK to explore this more. Density in terms of people not an issue it the density in the use of land which is a concern. Width between the blocks a concern. Proximity of looking into neighbour's property and light getting in. If just 2 blocks more chance if facing south therefore why can't it go that much higher and have more communal areas and more light can get in? It seems very claustrophobic, particularly for those who want full redevelopment. Not taking on concerns about light getting in. Why can't they be higher but 2 blocks.

SK – options will be continued to be explored can look at bigger buildings. Have core information on daylight and sunlight that can be shared. Current designs show good returns

Can views of the river be kept?

SK Yes absolutely. Another reason blocks east to west so that aspects maximised every resident can have views both towards the river and the other side.

Shared another slide (3) the orientation of the blocks shows sun passing east to west to the south of the block (bottom of page) so this manages to (with the open spaces) everyone looks east and west towards the river and the other direction.

MT asks about how this compares to the current (ADF) & (APSH) block?
SK design achieves amazing results cos light penetrates east and west and penetrates through the site. Direct sunlight that almost 100% achieved on all buildings. This alignment – if similar to existing will give more overshadowing of the surrounding area. In winter very good. PH to clarify in terms of overshadowing green area and play areas around it then the north south alignment casts a significant shadow each side of itself (depending on position of sun. If a narrow edge towards the sun then maximise light on surrounding – performs far better than existing.

SK difficulty with existing site is very thin so two buildings either side would cast more shadow on each other. East West more light into blocks and slight angle picks up more light and more views towards the river given slight twist. To ensure more light and more views.

LP queried if current ADF had been measured – SK no, only on proposed design will need to measure existing development. Testing proposals. MT agreed we need to know existing figures. Currently all morning then in afternoon on bedrooms. Sounds positive but What it doesn't take into account is very little space for it to get in. Figures show guaranteed 2 hrs sunlight on 50% properties in March. SK these are standard figures. Every time introducing new buildings it will change.

How big will any new build flats be?

SK all new homes as a minimum the same as existing. Most likely all bigger.

MT any chance of diagrams to show how big compared to current. SK this is planned for the next stage next exhibition.

How do the green spaces/play space fit together?

SK referred to slide 4 idea all spaces clarified that the green spaces relate to the design and how they are accessed how secure they are etc. All

spaces between blocks and alongside Oak House site are for residents only. Accessed by the blocks and the play areas exist within green footprints. Referred to slide 5 plan two main green spaces between the blocks then Stewart Street then a new play area to the south. Slide also has some examples of what it could look like in the green areas and courtyards – people's homes and private front garden Slide 6 & 7 examples of what it could look like. Important that it is controlled access and although (8 & 9 & 10) views from outside there is no access. Examples of ground floor apartments with their own gardens and landscaping. Communal areas different landscaping and play facilities. Slide 11 shows a similar arrangement as before where there is nothing between blocks (as per design. This shows a gap of 18m whilst ASH design is 21m). If open both sides then you have the skyline and views across neighbouring

JF policy terms TH consider 18m an appropriate distance between units that face each other. Consider it doesn't compromise security. There examples where this is tighter but where design mitigates this issues e.g, offset windows and way they're laid out. TH Local Plan start at 18m. SK important to exceed this and put in more. Early stages of design try not to work below 20m distance.

DB understands but thinks we're losing more than if there were two blocks facing the water. PH just to clarify SK thinking of two blocks facing each other – Sg two blocks one 'above' the other. MT 2 blocks one south of the other. Current height 12 storeys on 3 blocks (2 storeys higher). Planning position? JF it's difficult to say as they would be considerable masses of two blocks at this length to get higher so need to consider micro-climate issues. Could create a lot of issues of wind and overshadowing with that orientation. Greater implications to buildings next door as well as putting communal areas in shadow for large parts of the day.

SK slide 12 – shows site is very thin east to west so if imagine a similar block on east side? ASG is very thin by building regulations and putting a similar block along Manchester Road would reduce gap between the blocks to 10-15 m which is unacceptable. Hence east to west direction would achieve space as move south on the site (perhaps 2 blocks), If density maintained in terms of units would push 2 lateral blocks up to 18 storeys. DR looked at option of blocks side by side but only could achieve a small gap. In order to get density to make scheme viable then space doesn't give any quality of open space. Hence option discarded. If look at East West blocks then could be 2 blocks but would have to be much taller (like 1960s blocks) they tend to have towers. Edge/boundary to open space can become no mans land so enclosing it makes it feel better more private. LA looking at 2 blocks instead of 3 at 12 storeys would have to go taller.

SR are flats going to be maisonettes or single floor. SK maisonettes ground and first floors with apartments about this with private balconies. Maisonettes front gardens/balconies. MT is this because of flood plain – no bedrooms on ground floor. SK yes can't have any habitable rooms on

ground floor (although can have kitchens!). LP this is the case along the Thames through central London.

What level of commercial development is planned for the scheme?

LA none is planned at present apart from re-provision of community centre.

How will car parking be accommodated? How many spaces?

SK have allowed for re-provision of 12 spaces (no garages) based on the numbers currently allocated to ASH residents. DB queried garages, In the current designs only car parking spaces so only 12 garages/spaces occupied by residents. SK all spaces secure for residents only so controlled access could be undercroft parking or similar to open spaces as at present. No plans to re-provide for non-residents.

LP queried about 'car free developments' didn't think they work as new residents expect to be able to get parking. PH responded to say that the odd issue aside there hasn't been a great problem. It's expected as most people know that new developments are car free, and this is advertised and make sure that potential new residents are aware at all stages of the allocations process. Most understood and accepted.

DB queried about vehicles not in the name of resident. PH no, shouldn't be a problem. Permit connected to the space not the car. DB had had problems previously.

SR will charges increase? PH too early to say how monitored and policed but is possible that if no active policing of spaces then charges might go down as no need to pay for external security to monitor.

PH, Still designing the car parking but looking initially at fob access for the spaces. All answers are 'potentially' because still in early design stages.

Worried that OH won't be able to maintain any new development to a decent standard (they don't at present)

LA responded. Hard for regen team to answer. Disappointing that people feel services not up to scratch. Knows that changes have been made and are still settling in. Hoping that services will improve anyway.

PH, fair to say that accept maintenance service not been up to scratch at times but LA right that significant investment being made to maintenance team in IT and modernising ways of working. Pandemic has derailed some of this work but significant programme of change underway which should improve service delivery, New buildings at least 5 years away from completion so hopefully time for changes to bed in and for service to improve.

Will new build blocks have open or closed balconies to the front

entrance of flats?

SK design has access to flats enclosed. Benefits in terms of energy and insulation as you open front door into a closed environment. Nothing stops a design having an open deck balcony access. The challenge is around building regulations and safety when you come into the core with stairway and lifts then have to come out again. Not such a great solution for insulation but do have examples of this working. DR also said challenging to get open deck fire-proof as any windows onto balcony area as would need to think twice about tall buildings those windows would need to be fire proof and get to a level of complication to make sure that a fire wouldn't be able to spread. SK internal corridors would have sprinklers.

Each apartment would have balcony. Gave example of open balcony/deck access. When you look at the space they are not private but costly in space terms. People prefer this space to be allocated to private balconies, but nothing stops us from exploring it further.

Existing balconies just a more challenging option for modern buildings. MT – think question raised and ASH design replicated on many other sites but works as one block. People underestimate communal aspect 'street in the sky' community focussed community aspect. Increases community interaction. Also issues of smells in internal corridors and question asked are all flats dual aspect in current proposal obviously can only have where dual access. SK confirmed dual aspects on corners but depends on length of block. Central core. How easy to deliver numbers? Can achieve dual aspect around a core but both options have benefits and challenges. LP clarified still possible to explore it as an option. SR mentioned that balcony acts as playspace for children as well.

Difficult to visualise designs. Can models be built?

LP introduced that people were finding it difficult to visualise what's being proposed. LA responded and not against in principle but the difficulty is that there are still a wide range of models and the pandemic so would have to produce 6 fairly limited models which are expensive to produce and difficult to know where to locate them at the moment.

When down to 2-3 options could put in the community centre but can't have people in touching them due to pandemic and will consider how to do this once the restrictions around the pandemic have eased.

DR commented sometimes what PRP can do is use virtual reality so can send QR code and scan in. This can replicate standing in the blocks and works well as a tool as it progresses. LP felt that this would be an additional function not the only way. Some residents like to see something visual. PH would always expect to see models towards the end of the consultation. Challenged the feeling that it's easier to visualised the end result from an overview from above of a small model. There is still a part to play with £D computer models plus sketches/drawings to give people a sense of what it

would be like to be in a new room. Can mark out the room sizes of new flats in a hall. Different ways that people can get a sense of what it's like to be in a flat and experience them. Will definitely produce a model later but cautious that having a model in front of them will give people a sense of what it would be like to live in a building/. LP right about internal layout but the layout of the site is difficult to recognise what height and mass would feel like. It's not everything but gives a sense of scale and the relationship with existing blocks. PH accepted and OH would normally give people a sense of scale by taking people to other projects with similar attributes. CGY went to a couple of other PRP designed schemes in London. Really useful to demonstrate elements like what an 18m gap feels like or 10 storey next to 12 storey building and overshadowing and what an undercroft car park looks like. Hopefully be able to do this next year.

SK offered to improve the presentation by putting any sketches alongside a photo of the existing views from the same position.

DB asked when we're reducing the options down from 6 to 3?
LP stated that the next three questions on the list had probably already been answered

The blocks seem very close together. How will daylight levels be affected?

Why have the blocks been built at a different angle?

Would current residents who already have a garage be given an alternative option to get another garage or will garages be built within the new builds?

DB queried if they could be at more of an angle than currently? PH so rotating the block more so that they face more towards the Thames? Yes, you'd see more of the water. SK so explore the maximum angle they could be MT yes, so that the blocks longer. DB so you'd face the water more than other blocks. PH so might be able not to go so high by making longer?

SK, yes but we'd have to stop at Stewart Street we can explore the angle. DR not just a random angle but it reflects the street pattern around the block. SK yes what's the maximum we give a 'twist'. DR not sure how much benefit because want to keep to one core (lift/Stairs) rather than two (which would take up the space saved). Cores have a maximum distance. PH so once over a certain length you have to introduce another set of stairs and lifts. So, some constraints. PRP happy to explore more. DR said that earlier experiments had put the blocks too close together as the site is actually quite thin. SK, PRP will explore. MT if Stewart Street had to be moved further south then sure this could be negotiated with the borough. Concierge was introduced to manage ASB so not worried about the introduction of a second core as could save on housing management costs through reduced ASB.

JF added that best practice guidance steers to new developments not having more than 8 homes sharing a vertical core. The other point around the orientation you start to close off the east west views through the site so these are things that Planning Officers would see as benefits so could be a concern for planning applications. DR said that 7 from core at present so that helps in keeping ASB down

PH Bellamy Close scheme – planners after first pre-application meeting led to a significant re-design as borough wanted ‘permeability’ through site so led to a redesigning one of the proposed blocks. Needs to bear in mind as what the residents want Planners might change at some point.

Additional question about increasing height being an issue for leaseholders re-mortgaging. PH not aware of anything being a problem for leaseholders. Issues tend to be about redevelopment of existing rather than new build. *Can the option for infills get taken off the design list since no one sees this as a viable option.*

Returning to the question DB has just asked. PH – yes. We have to do a little bit more work but we are starting to get close to the point where we can exclude some of the options as being non-viable. Residents views are one part but also financial, planning viability considerations. So coming to the end of the second round of viability work so this could well see some options excluded after the next (round 3) so 3 or 3 options could be removed after this round.

Will the communal landing be as wide as it currently is as this is a family friendly block

Returning to an issue previously discussed. PH referenced child care and space as being child friendly. SR said children sent out when working at home, neighbours keep an eye on them and parents can hear them. *Will the new block be flats/apartment type or maisonettes?*

LP confirmed that lower levels will be maisonettes and above first floor will be apartments.

Will each building have their own open space/waiting area for residents (entrance hall) where the concierge would be?

All buildings will have individual entrances and letterboxes. MT why mailboxes? They don't work. PRP, all new buildings, because of safety, have them. Many don't allow post workers to enter. It gives a secondary protection (entrance door) for security. DR just to add that postal workers wouldn't want to deliver to each apartment that's why they are provided at the ground floor entrance. SK said that almost 100% of new developments have this design and he hasn't encountered any problems with them and they have to comply with new security regulations. Stated that no post workers would deliver to individual flats. PH said to be fair they have to at the moment. We need to check if possible and difficult to agree. MT all

developments he's working on at present have them and residents don't want them. They don't want vandalised letterboxes in entrance and they can use code to allow post in. Haven't heard of post office refusing to deliver. Letterboxes of ground floor don't work and are a nightmare. Residents don't want them. PH not disagreeing and accepts that residents don't want them, but would disagree that they are always a problem. Gave personal experience of where he lives and hasn't experienced any issues of vandalised mailboxes. SR asked about parcels. PH presumed delivery workers would ring on intercom as they do presently. It's overstating to say they are a complete nightmare this is not PH personal experience. MT said he will circulate photos. SK felt this was more of a maintenance issue and will check regulations in design terms. It's not an issue in design terms as it doesn't change the amount of space required. As a designer he doesn't need more space on ground floor. PH asked if we can we check if there are any regulatory issues if we didn't have mailboxes on ground floor? MT said that there are similar discussions at Kedge. MT/LP not aware of any regulations relating to this. LP can we check and then amend in design if needed.

Query on total number of properties SK 320 or 340? DR checked. LA 349 including re-provided flats. LA could go up or down slightly through design process.

LP checked if any other questions. HA showed the current Christmas decorations on balcony by way of an example of how it is used as a community space.

CO queried property numbers as being too high. LP pointed out that it was the total number across the site including ASH/OH and community centre site.

SK said the session had been really useful as this helps drive the options forward. Happy to do this again as the dialogue is constructive and will take away all of the suggestions and explore them and whilst can't promise they can do will understand why something might not be possible.

PH agreed and asked that suggestions, criticisms etc keep coming as all are really helpful and, yes, OH will provide more information on the leaseholder deal (in response to SR). Will be starting work on offer document in the New Year.

In terms of timing of next event will need to consider today's information and discuss with SG. OH in a position to hold next event from early January (virtually) if required. How this will be done will depend on restrictions from government in light of the pandemic. Could be by appointment?

OH are considering how best to get the information to the maximum number of residents. Still to be decided.