

Appendix 7

7. Harrow Regeneration Unit (HRU) Watkins House Design Guidance

7.1 HRU has undertaken a preliminary feasibility study of the site in relation to option 3 (complete redevelopment).

7.2 Challenges and Opportunities

a) General site description:

The total site is approximately 4800m² (including the Sea Cadet Hut site). It is surrounded by two/three storey residential development, with an industrial estate to the Eastern edge. There are a number of mature trees on the site, but none with TPOs.

b) Site layout:

The current layout is inefficient, with a limited relationship between internal and external spaces. Landscaped areas around the perimeter of the site are not easily accessible by all residents, resulting in a low level of usable external amenity space.

c) Density:

The high-level feasibility study carried out by RDU indicates that approximately 70 units could be provided on the total site (including Sea Cadet site). A more detailed feasibility study, and engagement with Harrow planning team, will be required to confirm precise unit targets and set out urban design principles.

d) Town centre impact:

The site is in the Harrow Opportunity Area, near to the town centre. Provision of an exemplary scheme will make an important contribution to Harrow Council's regeneration programme for the area. The GLA launched the 'Ageing London' report at the start of 2016, which highlights the benefits of providing housing for older people in close proximity to town centres.

e) Building Heights:

Projected unit numbers are based on a three storey development. Subject to conversations with the planning team, this is likely to represent a lower planning risk. However, the adjacent industrial estate on Crystal Way may provide scope to increase the height, and unit numbers, on the part of the site adjoining the estate.

f) Public realm:

Redevelopment of the site would provide opportunities to improve pedestrian access and experience around the site. The existing footpath between Crystal Way and Rosslyn Crescent is in particular need of an upgrade.

7.3 Development

Building type:

Detailed testing of appropriate building types will be required. The 70 unit scheme was based on a courtyard block layout. This building type maximises unit numbers on the site, whilst providing secure outdoor space.

Accommodation:

It will be necessary to provide improved accommodation which meets current residential standards, including the 'London Housing Design Guide', and aligns with recommendations made by the HAPPI 2 report on assisted living developments.

Communal space:

There is an under provision of internal and external communal and private amenity space in the existing scheme. A new development will need to comply with residential guidance, as well as following principles set out in the HAPPI 2 report, on the design and organisation of private amenity, and communal space and services.

Consultation:

Continuing a thorough consultation programme through the design stages will be essential in order to tailor the design to the specific needs of the residents.

7.4 Phasing and buildability

Phasing options should be further investigated, including constructing a first phase on the Sea Cadets area of the site prior to demolition of the existing building. However, there are associated buildability issues that need consideration, including limitations on site access. It may be difficult for the current facility to remain completely operational while a first phase is constructed.

7.5 Summary:

A new development has the potential to maximise the use of the site; delivering increased unit numbers, improved accommodation and private and communal amenity space.

The site is within the Housing Zone. While it is not a HZ site, all development within this area is of particular interest to the GLA. The GLA's 'Ageing London' report promotes high quality design for older residential communities. This is an objective shared by the HAPPI 2 report. If the redevelopment option is chosen, development partners should be required to uphold these standards, with the Council retaining a role in the selection of any associated design teams.