

## 4. Alternatives & Design Evolution

---

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The layout and design of the Proposed Development as described within the Development Specification and set out within the accompanying Parameter Plans has been influenced by many considerations. These include the Site's physical and visual isolation (the Site being enclosed between railway embankments and viaducts and only accessed via a handful of narrow and at times intimidating railway arches), environmental issues, adopted and emerging planning policy, and comments arising from discussions with LBL, the GLA, statutory consultees, the public and a wide range of other stakeholders, which have been taken on board in order to evolve the Proposed Development.
- 4.1.2 This Chapter of the ES outlines a summary of the evolution of the Proposed Development as now set out within the Parameter Plans and Development Specification.

### 4.2 Alternatives and Design Evolution

- 4.2.1 Environmental considerations have been central to the evolution of the design and have influenced many aspects of the Proposed Development. The design process has involved extensive consultation and engagement with relevant officers of LBL and the GLA, through regular pre-application meetings; the public through consultation; CABE through voluntary engagement; and statutory consultees through formal scoping and follow up discussions. Other factors which have particularly influenced the design evolution process include the LBL LDF Core Strategy (now at Submission Stage - October 2010), the existing Millwall FC Stadium and other development within close proximity of the Site, including the Silwood Estate. This Chapter reviews the alternatives to the Proposed Development that have been considered by the design team prior to, and during, the design evolution process.
- 4.2.2 The alternatives which have been considered include the following:
- Alternative Sites;
  - The 'No-Development scenario'; and
  - Alternative designs and layouts for the Site.

#### 4.2.3 Alternative Sites

Having regard to the Site's identification for regeneration within part of the New Cross-Lewisham-Catford Opportunity Area, and as a Strategic Site Allocation in the LBL LDF Core Strategy Submission Version, it was not considered necessary to consider alternative sites for the Proposed Development as part of the EIA process. It was considered that the delivery of the Proposed Development on an alternative site would not deliver the regeneration aspirations and benefits for the area, particularly the vital transportation, economic, health

and well being benefits to current and future generations. Other sites are therefore not considered to be an appropriate and reasonable alternative.

#### 4.2.4 No-Development Scenario

The 'No-Development' scenario would leave the Site in a semi-derelict and under-utilised state and would not act as a catalyst for the future regeneration and development of this area, which is an aspiration of policy. The Site would remain under-utilised, with vacancy rates growing ever higher and local people being denied the opportunities to jobs appropriate for all ages and sectors. Planning Policy seeks significant levels of regeneration in this area in order to deliver economic, environmental and social benefits.

4.2.5 The 'No-Development' scenario is therefore not a realistic option in terms of planning policy.

#### 4.2.6 Consideration of Alternative Designs and Site Layouts

The Proposed Development has evolved and been constantly modified and improved over a number of years. This has arisen from extensive public consultation, as well as through regular meetings between Renewal, the design team and LBL in order to provide the most appropriate development on Site. There has also been meetings and correspondence with the GLA CABE and others to ensure that the Proposed Development meets all needs. Through the evolution of the design proposals, the Proposed Development has also been subject to rigorous and extensive testing against planning and other policies established by LBL, the GLA, and others.

4.2.7 The Proposed Development has significantly responded to guidance from the extensive specialist consultant team throughout its evolution. This has included advice on accommodating sustainable design principles such as a sustainable drainage strategy, achieving and seeking to exceed the required sustainability and energy standards, establishing good quality internal amenity within the buildings, as well as an enjoyable and appropriate pedestrian environment within streets and open spaces.

#### 4.2.8 Summary of Design Evolution

During the design process the Proposed Development has taken many shapes and forms. Some of the initial concepts are still intrinsically embedded, others changed during the progression of the design and in direct response to the critique received from the wider team and the project consultees.

#### 4.2.9 North Lewisham Masterplan 2007

The starting point was the 2007 North Lewisham Masterplan. HKR architects had tested the capacity of the Site on behalf of LB Lewisham and suggested an appropriate scale of development with 2,500 new homes and 2,000 jobs.

4.2.10 During the early design phases, the team explored a series of iterations through quick modelling exercises, in order to develop a better understanding of the potential scale and massing of the Site in relation to the development quantum and the type of place it would make. The alternatives included:

- Clusters of high-rise towers maximising the area of open space at ground level;
- A perimeter scheme of consistent height where the development was pushed to the edges of the Site to accommodate a generous landscaped park around the Millwall FC Stadium at the centre;
- Beams of development stretching across the Site with an extensive and continuous landscape running underneath at ground level; and
- A lower-rise, super compact urban fabric that resulted in a slightly too intense, too dark and overlooked street scene.

4.2.11 The team felt that the approach that warranted further testing was the perimeter scheme.

4.2.12 Spring 2008

The first iteration of the framework established some of the key moves that are still fundamental to the Proposed Development. The scheme acknowledged the dominance of the enclosing railway embankments and sought to transform these into parks for people and wildlife alike. Development was located towards the embankments, utilising the level change to embed car parks and provide space for perimeter gardens atop. The proposal was for high points at the two stations, stepping down towards and matching the height of the Millwall FC Stadium.

4.2.13 Winter 2008/09

A second major iteration of the framework sought to make a clearer differentiation between public and private space within the Site and to organise the development into five distinct neighbourhoods, a collection of large-scale courtyards each with a different communal space.

4.2.14 The perimeter blocks served to enclose the space around the Stadium which lay at the heart of the new urban district and to bring activation in the form of mixed use with a focus on sport.

4.2.15 Autumn 2009

In the third iteration the scheme was adjusted to current site ownership boundaries to facilitate a phased delivery of the project. Following prolonged discussions with various local and national sport providers, the scheme consolidated with sports and healthy living at its core. The various sports elements of the scheme were further investigated, the accommodation amended to meet the specific requirements associated with indoor sporting

facilities, replacing the perimeter block structures with large volume sports structures along Surrey Canal Road. Additional uses were identified: a hotel, a conference centre, community and sports related health facilities and a large-scale place of congregation.

4.2.16 With an overall review of the ground floors and podium levels, a remodelling of the taller residential elements above followed. The landscape developed to include a series of distinct character spaces forming a green armature from South Bermondsey Station to Surrey Canal Station, with Bolina Gardens, Stadium Avenue and Stadium Square. Stockholm Road was brought out as an urban street, and Excelsior Works as the creative quarter of the new village.

Summer 2010

4.2.17 The fourth and last iteration sought to comprehensively address and incorporate the final critiques received from the GLA, CABE, LB Lewisham Planning and their Urban Design Team, Millwall FC and their architects.

4.2.18 Some of the development footprints within the plots were tightened up, increasing their efficiency whilst still retaining the mixed-use elements at ground floor. The crucial move was the placing of a landmark hotel on the triangular site immediately opposite the Stadium. Having worked through numerous evolutions of the scheme the “design freeze” was achieved which is presented in the subsequent chapter of this ES.

4.2.19 In terms of land uses, the general principles of the Proposed Development have remained broadly consistent throughout the evolution of the proposals. This consistency reflects a vision for the creation of a new neighbourhood that will secure the regeneration aspirations for the area, including the delivery of circa 2,500 homes, at least 20% employment floorspace and public open space. The quantum of floorspace proposed as part of the Proposed Development has also remained largely consistent at 250,000 sq m, seeking to achieve the full potential of the Site.

4.2.20 With 50,000 square metres of non-residential space on offer, the key to creating a successful, viable and self-sustainable mixed use development lay in finding a unique identity with a distinct offer developed out of its specific location and local needs. Considering Millwall Football Club’s long history in the area it seemed logical to explore the extension and expansion of the sporting offer.

4.2.21 Extensive and regular discussions with LBL have taken place throughout the evolution of the Proposed Development, particularly in relation to layout, height, scale, massing and disposition of uses. Specific site characteristics have informed the design and determined the building location and layout of the public spaces. Buildings are generally located close to the surrounding embankments and the former towing path of Surrey Canal Road.

- 4.2.22 A tripartite approach to the vertical organisation of the buildings has been adopted: The lower levels generally utilise the level differences to provide an opportunity for semi-sunken car parking accessed and ventilated towards the railway embankments whilst allowing for active frontages towards the public realm. The middle level or public facing ground level consists predominantly of non-residential uses, including sports, employment and community spaces; and at the upper level above ground floor or podium, are the domestic spaces which allow spectacular views past the viaducts, across London and the River Thames. The residential buildings seek to provide a vertical rhythm more akin to traditional London streets. These buildings have the potential to respond to distant views and sun orientation. The residential buildings should have textured facades that break down the uniformity of the building through the use of windows, balconies, colour and material choices, while maintaining a consistent approach that retains the identity of each building.
- 4.2.23 Existing routes to and across the Site will be upgraded and where possible extended, and a series of new links introduced to increase site permeability. New and safe pedestrian and cycle routes are proposed that will connect the Site (also through the use of other land) with the existing South Bermondsey Station, the future Surrey Canal Road Station on the East London Line and Bridgehouse Meadows beyond, Southwark Park, Surrey Quays Station, the new development at Canada Water, the docklands, the Thames waterfront, as well as other leisure and shopping destinations.
- 4.2.24 The Proposed Development adheres to a clear site hierarchy in respect of height and massing, with a series of tall buildings acting as landmarks. Their role is to define important routes and access points, to aid wayfinding and announce the area to its surroundings, to imprint Surrey Canal on the London skyline and to place this previously under-utilised part of Lewisham firmly on people's mental maps.
- 4.2.25 The public realm follows the concept of creating a 'serial vision', in which environments are experienced as a dynamic, emerging, unfolding temporal sequence. Each character area or place has its own unique quality and focus of activity, be it sports, health, faith, creativity or hotel/conference.
- 4.2.26 Renewal seek to deliver a major new regional indoor sports centre as part of the Proposed Development to serve not only the local community, but local schools, local clubs, the Governing Bodies and the wider areas of South East London and beyond. The sporting offer is intended to focus on basketball, netball, badminton, football, hockey, cricket, climbing, boxing, gymnastics and table tennis. Other facilities are expected to include a leisure centre with pool and a day spa. Surrey Canal is conceived as a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Village within a world-class city. This will be a place where people actively chose to live, a place to visit after work and at the weekend – a destination in its own right - London's Sporting Village.