

**PART 5: Development Presentations****Item 5.1**

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**1 DETAILS OF THE DEVELOPMENT**

Ref: 18/04184/PRE  
Location: Land to the South East of Croydon College, College Road, Croydon, CR9 1DX  
Ward: Fairfield  
Description: Residential redevelopment of the site to provide circa 425 flats  
Applicant: Brick by Brick  
Agent: Jennifer Turner, Carter Jonas  
Case Officer: Katy Marks

**2 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The application site was previously included as part of a hybrid planning permission for the whole Fairfield Masterplan area, which secured detailed planning permission for 218 flats, mixed commercial space and extensions to and refurbishment of Fairfield Halls alongside an outline consent for (amongst other elements and parameter plans) a new college building (to replace the existing Croydon College and associated College Annexe building).
- 2.2 This new detailed proposal responds to the emerging context and changing circumstances, bearing in mind that several of the sites which were covered by the hybrid planning permission are now coming forward under separate planning permissions or separate emerging planning proposals (including 101 George Street, Mondial House, College Tower and College Annexe). The site boundary for the proposals is therefore now limited to land situated towards the eastern end of College Green and the site of the recently demolished multi-storey car park. The application site excludes Fairfield Halls, although access to basement accommodation would continue to utilise the existing access (off Barclay Road) which will be shared by others, including the future operators of Fairfield Halls.
- 2.3 In responding to the surrounding context and changing circumstances, the scheme seeks to provide an increased numbers of residential units (now proposing 425 apartments – compared to the previously approved 218 apartments) and re-appraises the layout and design of the approved blocks. It also seeks to respond to emerging densities of development coming forward within the Opportunity Area, but also seeks to enhance the viability of the scheme to ensure that a reasonable amount of affordable housing is deliverable as part of the scheme, whilst ensuring that the enabling function of the residential redevelopment continues to help deliver a state of the art cultural venue – at Fairfield Halls (helping to balance the costs of the refurbishment work which is due to be completed later this year).
- 2.4 The scheme has evolved through a series of pre-application meetings; several iterations of the scheme have been reviewed by planning officers, the Place Review Panel (PRP) and the Greater London Authority (GLA). Discussions have focused on the appropriate heights and massing, impact upon the locally designated Fairfield Halls, routes through the site, quality of accommodation, overall scheme viability and implications for affordable housing delivery.

- 2.5 The views of Members are sought on the proposals, with particular regard to the following key issues:

The Interplay between Viability, Fairfield Halls Refurbishment and Affordable Housing

- 2.6 The hybrid planning permission secured 15% affordable housing by unit (33 apartments) - 18% by habitable room, all of which were approved as intermediate (shared ownership). The relatively low level of affordable housing was justified at the time, in view of enabling requirement of the residential development, to help support the extensions, refurbishment and re-invigoration of Fairfield Halls and its associated cultural offer. The refurbishment of Fairfield Halls continues to represent a strategic aim of the Council, totally embedded within the Local Plan.
- 2.7 Although refurbishment is well underway, more resources have been expended than first anticipated, to deal with unforeseen issues and to ensure the delivery of a high quality venue and cultural offer. Whilst the amended scheme is still intended to balance the cost of the refurbishment work, the applicant has advised that despite the increased number of units, the scheme continues to be challenged (in terms of overall viability) despite of the current offer of increased affordable housing to 20% (by habitable room) albeit again, as intermediate. Officers are broadly supportive of continued cross subsidy, with the residential scheme continuing to help facilitate transformational enhancements to Croydon's cultural offer. Detailed analysis of the applicant's viability model is currently underway, to determine whether the current affordable housing offer is the maximum that can reasonably be provided. The Committee's view is sought on the affordable housing approach.

Access, Routes and Public Realm

- 2.8 One of the key aims of the Fairfield Masterplan sought to improve access and routes within the Masterplan area and the wider context. There are several locations where joint working between site-owners is required to bring forward improved public realm, including the relationship between sites situated towards the north-east corner of the Masterplan area; securing a step free access between College Green and East Croydon Station), College Road (north), the relationship between College Green and Hazeldean Bridge over the railway line (east), the relationship with the Magistrates Court (to the south), facilitating a future pedestrian link through to Barclay Road (to the south) and securing a seamless link to the remaining elements of College Green (to the west).
- 2.9 The ground level of the proposed development (and public realm) is intended to be provided at podium level, which will step up from the existing College Green podium level. The legibility of these access points and provision of step free access to the main public realm level is of strategic importance. The Committee's view is sought on the applicant's approach to these routes through the site and the way in which the scheme suitably engages with adjacent sites.

Design, Massing and Views

- 2.10 The increased height of Block "A" (tower element) responds to the changing context of the surrounding area and officers are broadly supportive of the increased height, footprint and emerging design. The increased heights to Blocks B, C and D are supported in design terms, subject to assessment of impact on neighbours and relationships with other blocks within the site (particularly sunlight/daylight and

privacy). Block E is taller than the approved outline parameter for Block 7 (with reference to the previous hybrid planning permission and the replacement college building). Some view studies have been undertaken but officers have some concerns about the townscape and heritage impacts of the proposed height of Block E. That said, Place Review Panel was supportive of the height and relationship with the Fairfield Halls (subject to the use of contrasting materials). Members' views are sought on the height of scheme, particularly Block E and its relationship to Fairfield Halls and College Green.

#### Relationship with Neighbouring Sites

- 2.11 The adjacent site to the south, College Annexe, has a site allocation in the Local Plan for redevelopment for mixed community, cultural enterprise and residential use. A planning application is anticipated from the new owners of this site. The site was previously owned by Croydon College and was approved to be redeveloped as part of the previous hybrid planning permission – as a replacement accommodation for the existing Croydon College as well as some residential apartments (Block 7). It is understood that the current owners are due to apply for planning permission for the conversion of the existing building as residential apartments although officers have also seen plans that promote an alternative redevelopment scenario for the site. The proposed conversion indicates some single aspect north facing units facing onto the side elevation of the proposed Block E (at a distance of minimum 8-10m). The Committee's views are sought on the potential relationships between Block E and a retained/converted College Annex Building and the general interplay between these two sites.

### **3 LOCATION DETAILS**

#### **Site and Surroundings**

- 3.1 The site is located towards the eastern end of College Green and is bounded by Mondial House, the College Tower site and Croydon College (to the north) and the Magistrates Court and College Annexe (to the south). To the east, the site bounds the railway line. Until recently, the site formed part of College Green with the eastern end of the site occupied by a multi-storey car park. The car park was demolished in 2018 along with the relevant part of the College Green podium slab – with the land now in a vacant state.
- 3.2 The land levels across the wider area are complex; heavily influenced by existing access and height restrictions. The land levels fall away from a higher level at the College Road/George Street junction and from Barclay Road to an existing basement. College Green itself was historically formed at raised podium level with basement parking below. The proposed development would be constructed at podium level with this level being the primary entrance level into the various buildings.
- 3.3 The basement level is currently accessed via ramps from College Road and Barclay Road. The Barclay Road ramp is located to the rear of Fairfield Halls and goes beneath part of the College Annexe building. This ramp also provides access to the service yard to the rear of Fairfield Halls, a public car park beneath the College Green podium



Photos from basement level within the site (Looking towards the Annexe building, College Green podium and College building)

(due to re-open later this year) and to an open car parking area attached to the College Annex site (situated immediately to the south of the site the subject of the current pre application submission). The College Road ramp also provides access to the Mondial House and College Tower open car park, as well as basement parking for Croydon College. Croydon College also has classroom/ workshop space at basement level.

- 3.4 There is presently no pedestrian access into to the basement level via a pedestrian subway/ramp (either off Park Lane or Queens Gardens) with previous links either having been closed off for safety and security reasons or as a consequence of development taking place. It is anticipated that in due course, the two Park Lane subways will be permanently closed off, although the ramp and step access on the eastern side of Park Lane will be retained, to provide access and ventilation to the refurbished basement car park.
- 3.5 The demolished multi-storey car park was accessed at about fourth floor level (off the Hazeldean bridge) which crosses the railway line (which linked the former car park to Hazeldean Road). The bridge remains, but the link has been removed (temporarily) and this is currently hoarded off from Hazeldean Road.
- 3.6 The site has a number of designations in the Croydon Local Plan 2018 including:
  - The site is located within the Croydon Opportunity Area
  - The site is located within the Croydon Metropolitan Centre
  - The site is located within the Fair Field Masterplan area
  - College Green is undesignated protected open space (under London Plan policy 7.18)
- 3.7 The Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) of the site is 6b, which is the highest level of accessibility.
- 3.8 The site is located with Flood Risk Zone 1. However, parts of the sites are modelled as being at risk from surface water flooding.

## Background: Fair Field Masterplan, Hybrid Permission and Emerging Context

3.9 The Fair Field Masterplan covers the area bounded by George Street, Park Lane, Barclay Road and the railway line and provides a framework for the redevelopment of the area as Croydon's cultural and learning quarter; focussing on a lively and sustainable mix of residential, cultural, educational and commercial uses as well as a well-connected and high quality public realm.

3.10 Key aims of the Masterplan which are relevant to this scheme include:

- Increased accessibility, legibility and activity to support enhanced potential for development sites
- Better connections particularly a step-free pedestrian route from East Croydon Station and further connections to the south towards Barclay Road
- Improvements to the connectivity between the podium (ground) and car park levels
- An animated and well used public realm which complements the surrounding spaces

3.11 The hybrid planning permission sought to deliver 218 residential units within four blocks (A-D) together with refurbishment of Fairfield Halls and improvements to College Green. The permission included the demolition of the College Annexe building to provide a pedestrian route from College Green to Barclay Road. The proposed blocks ranged from 4 to 21 storeys and included 500 square metres of flexible commercial space, primarily aimed for use by the NHS (at ground floor of Block C). The blocks were laid out to create new routes through the site together with a residential courtyard. Block A (a 21 storey tower) sat at the north eastern corner of the site and was abutted to the south by Block B which ran the length of the site (in parallel with the adjacent railway line). A new north-south pedestrian route separated these blocks from Block D which was an L-shaped block forming two sides of a residential courtyard with Block C forming the northern edge.



Drawing showing Blocks A – D and the outline footprint for Block 7 (labelled Croydon College Phase 1B)

- 3.12 Outline permission was granted for redevelopment of the buildings to the north and south of the site, including outline permission for new building (Block 7) which was intended for a replacement building for Croydon College; the scheme included the demolition and redevelopment of the existing Croydon College building for residential and commercial uses. This replacement educational building was to form the western edge of the approved residential courtyard and would have fronted onto College Green. It was designed to over-sail a pedestrian link (between College Green and Barclay Road) with an additional element of replacement educational floorspace approved to the rear of Fairfield Halls. The agreed Parameter Plan suggested that this building would have achieved a maximum height of around 7 storeys.
- 3.13 Under the hybrid planning permission, the College Annexe building (to the south of the current site and to the rear of Fairfield Halls) would have been demolished and the land would have accommodated the southern part of Block D (residential) and a pedestrian route from College Green to Barclay Road. Since that time, Croydon College has changed its plans and officers understand that it intends to remain in its current building (situated on the north side of College Green). Moreover, the College Annexe building (which was formally owned by Croydon College) is now controlled by a separate developer.



Plan showing location of College Annexe Site (red hatching)  
and impact upon the Hybrid Permission scheme

- 3.14 The College Annexe building is allocated in the Croydon Local Plan (2018) for residential led redevelopment with community uses and a creative and cultural industries enterprise centre (Allocation No. 294). The site is now subject to separate



pre-application discussions, with the new owners seeking to develop the site, either through conversion/refurbishment or redevelopment. There is a requirement that the site will need to accommodate a pedestrian route from College Green to Barclay Road (in line with the Fair Field Masterplan).

## **Planning History**

3.15 The following planning decisions are relevant to the application:

- (LBC Ref 16/00944/P): Outline planning permission for demolition and redevelopment to provide: flexible class A1 (shops) and/or class A2 (financial and professional services) and/or class A3 (food and drink); class B1 (business); class C1 (hotel); class C3 (dwelling houses); class D1 (non-residential institutions); class D2 (assembly or leisure); public realm and landscaping; and associated car and cycle parking, servicing, and access arrangements (with all matters reserved); and

Full planning permission for demolition including multi-storey car park and Barclay Road Annexe; extensions and alterations to Fairfield Halls including class A3 (food and drink); erection of buildings for flexible class A1 (shops) and/or class A2 (financial and professional services) and/or class A3 (food and drink) and/or class D1 (non-residential institutions) and/or class D2 (assembly and leisure) and class C3 (dwelling houses); change of use of basement car park (part) to class D1 (non-residential institutions); public realm and landscaping; and associated car and cycle parking, servicing, and access arrangements. Please note that this permission included comprehensive parameter plans, design guidelines and design codes to guide the development as it came forward over several phases. The site is located in close proximity to a number of recent development sites.

3.16 As noted above, development has commenced pursuant to the detailed elements of this planning permission – with extensions and alterations to the Fairfield Halls and the demolition of the multi-storey car park and parts of the College Green podium having either been undertaken or are underway.

3.17 Moreover, the following sites have planning permission for development and need to be fully understood and recognised, in view of the various links and relationships:

- 101 George Street (Essex House): Redevelopment of the site to provide a part 38 and part 44 storey building with 546 residential flats, with the ground floor to incorporate a flexible space including retail (Class A1), cafe (Class A3), business space (Class B1) and gallery space (Class D1) uses with basement accommodating parking spaces, cycle storage and refuse storage, and associated hard and soft landscaping including a public winter garden (LBC Ref: 17/04201/FUL). This is currently under construction.
- 102 George Street (Mondial House): Demolition of the existing office building; erection of a part 35, part 13, part 11 storey building comprising plus basement, to provide 220 flats, 1,787sqm B1 office space, and 490sqm A1 retail floor space with associated works (LBC Ref: 16/00180/P). Works have yet to commence.
- Land Adjacent to Croydon College (College Tower): Erection of part 16/38 storey building (plus basement and mezzanine levels) comprising 159 residential units, 225 bedroom hotel and restaurant (within use class A3); provision of associated amenity areas, landscaping and car/cycle parking and alterations/partial enclosure of access ramp (LBC Ref: 14/01603/P).

## 4 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The proposals seek an alternative approach to the previous detailed residential component of the previously approved hybrid planning permission, involving the erection of five blocks (Blocks A – E) ranging in height from 8 to 29 storeys, to provide roughly 424 flats and flexible commercial space at the base of Blocks A, C and E.
- 4.2 Block A (a tower of 29 storeys) would be the tallest element, situated towards the north-eastern corner of the site, closest to the Mondial House and College Tower schemes (which have been approved at 35 and 38 storeys respectively). To the south, this tower would be immediately adjacent to Block B, a 9 storey linear block which would run parallel to the railway line. This block would form the eastern side of a north-south route. To the western side of this route, Block D would be a further linear block of 9-13 storeys in height. Block D would also form the eastern edge of a proposed private courtyard. Block C, a 7/8 storey block would form the northern edge of the courtyard and would provide some double height ground floor commercial space. This space would primarily be designed for health related uses as it is anticipated that the NHS will require a new health centre in the area to support the development and other schemes coming forward in the immediate vicinity. Finally, Block E at 13 storeys would form the western edge of the courtyard and would provide a new block facing onto College Green. This block would provide flexible commercial space at ground floor with residential above. The commercial spaces within Block C and E are designed to allow for flexible use either as large units or following subdivision into smaller units.
- 4.3 The final floorplans for the proposed development are still under review, but current plans propose 44.6% family sized flats (made up of 7.3% 3b+ and 37.3% 2b4p flats). The scheme anticipates provision of 20% affordable housing by habitable room. All of the affordable units would be intermediate tenure units – although it is understood that a range of unit sizes would be included as affordable housing.
- 4.4 Amenity space would be provided in the form of private balconies for each flat (in line with London Plan standards) and a large shared amenity courtyard within the centre of the site (slightly reduced in size since the hybrid permission due to land ownership constraints). The courtyard would be roughly 750sqm in size and would provide the proposed play-space for the development in the form of a mixture of doorstep play, semi-formal play-space and playable areas of landscaping. The scheme would also provide additional amenity space and play-space to the southern edge of the site within the north-south route close to the boundary with the Magistrates Court. The applicant is also considering provision of additional space to the roof of Block C. It is the intention that the courtyard space would be for residents use only.
- 4.5 The proposed development would be broadly car free, apart from meeting blue badge parking requirements (located within the proposed basement). The remaining space within the basement would be set aside for additional public car parking (associated with the main public car park beneath College Green) and a small number of parking spaces for the commercial units. The parking would be accessed off Barclay Road ramp (through the main public car park).
- 4.6 Servicing for the commercial units is proposed within the basement and the applicant is working on a servicing plan for the potential medical centre use. The residential servicing and waste collection is also proposed at basement level and each core for the five blocks would contain communal waste and recycling stores at basement level (accessible by lift). The waste and recycling and other residential servicing would take



place at basement level. All servicing vehicles would enter the basement off the College Road ramp.

- 4.7 The site would provide secure cycle storage rooms within each block at ground floor, adjacent to the main core access points and is being designed to meet London Plan standards.

## **5 PRP RESPONSE**

- 5.1 During the course of the pre-application process, the scheme has been presented to the Council's independent Place Review Panel on two separate occasions (November 2018 and February 2019).

- 5.2 At the November review, the Panel suggested that further work was needed to understand the scheme as a whole and how the design responded to the current and emerging context and principles of the Fair Field Masterplan (rather than being presented as an amendment to the hybrid planning permission).

- 5.3 At the most recent PRP, the Panel was supportive of the improvements to the legibility of the site and design direction which considered the scheme as a more cohesive development.

- 5.4 The Panel's main comments were as follows:

- Landscape/public realm narrative shows a thoughtful approach; distinction between public and private spaces and routes more defined;
- Further consideration of transition between public and private spaces required; the interface with College Green is very important;
- Vertical circulation access (for pedestrians) from College Road ramp and Hazeldean Bridge. The north-eastern corner of the site could be designed with more conviction to ensure that the public realm is more than just a temporary solution;
- Relationship with College Annexe is important as what happens on this site will have an impact upon the quality of the amenity space and flats within the scheme as it lies to the south of the site (and courtyard);
- Given the consented heights and surrounding context of tall buildings, the proposed heights did not raise any heritage or townscape concerns;
- Some questions were raised about the privacy and light to flats within Block B and D given their increased height (and their proximity to each-other);
- The proposed tower height and how the volume breaks down was supported, but more work is required in respect of elevational details - to understand the elevation treatment and material choices;
- Discussion around the proposed materials and whether the approach was sufficient (questions raised over use of brick for Block A). Suggestion that the development should have a common language – but with Block E having a contrasting material colour to Fairfield Halls, to ensure it does not coalesce with this heritage asset.

- 5.5 Whilst it is noted that the Panel suggested that the height of Block A and E would not raise harm to the heritage asset (Fairfield Halls), officers have raised some concern about the additional height to Block E; its relationship with the surrounding heritage assets and its appearance within the wider townscape and Fair Field Masterplan area. The applicant is undertaking further view studies to seek to justify the relationship.

- 5.6 Otherwise, officers generally agree with and welcome the comments raised by the Panel and are seeking amendments and additional details to respond to the comments and progress the design development.

## **6 GLA RESPONSE**

- 6.1 The GLA provided formal pre-application feedback on a previous iteration of the pre-application proposals (for 380 flats). They were generally supportive of the proposals. Their main comments are summarised as follows:
- Principle of the proposed mixed use development supported in strategic planning terms;
  - The affordable housing offer (at the time 19% by habitable room) was not supported in isolation, but the link to the cross-subsidy of the Fairfield Halls refurbishment was acknowledged. Additional evidence requested to understand the wider benefits of the proposal to assess if they offset the low level of affordable housing;
  - Request for more details of the proposed routes through the site as well as to the station and town centre to understand the legibility and activation of the routes;
  - Generally supportive for additional height and architectural approach but further design development required to understand the scheme in context.

## **7 MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 7.1 The main planning considerations are:
1. Principle of development (land use, affordable housing and open space)
  2. Townscape and visual impact
  3. Housing Quality for future occupiers
  4. Impact upon Neighbours
  5. Transport
  6. Environmental Impact, Sustainability and Flooding
  7. S106 obligations

### **Principle of Development**

- 7.2 The proposed development is a residential led mixed use development which is similar to the previous scheme secured under the hybrid planning permission.

### **Residential**

- 7.3 The residential-led redevelopment of the site is supported. Planning permission has previously been granted for this general approach and is supported by the Fair Field Masterplan. The proposed layouts have rationalised the unit mix and together with the increased building heights and provision of an additional block (Block E), this has allowed the proposal to provide substantially more units. The development would contribute to the Borough's strategic housing targets and the overall town centre growth agenda.
- 7.4 The Council seeks to secure the provision of family sized housing and has an aspiration for 20% of all homes within the Fair Field area to have 3 or more bedrooms. The Local Plan recognises that the development market will need time to adjust to providing the quantum of larger family homes of 3 or more bedrooms and therefore accepts that for the first 3 years of the plan an element of family housing provision may

be provided as 2b-4p flats. Overall, 44.6% of units would be family sized units when including the 2b4p flats, which would significantly exceed the current minimum requirement.

#### Viability and Affordable Housing

- 7.5 The applicant is currently undertaking refurbishment works to Fairfield Halls (pursuant to the hybrid permission). The hybrid permission accepted that the residential scheme constituted an enabling form of development, cross-subsidising the refurbishment of Fairfield Halls and therefore, 15% affordable housing (by unit) and 18% (by habitable room) and all delivered as intermediate tenure was accepted.
- 7.6 The refurbishment of Fairfield Halls is a strategic policy of the Croydon Local Plan and as a cultural landmark for the borough, has significant cultural and community value. The applicant is currently undertaking the refurbishment work and has advised that the current residential scheme has a continued requirement to cross-subsidise the cost of the extension and refurbishment works. Officers have been advised that the refurbishment has been more costly than originally anticipated (especially costs in dealing with asbestos removal) and despite the increase in unit numbers, the scheme continues to be challenging in terms of scheme viability (bearing in mind the desire to deliver a reasonable quantum of affordable housing and the desire to realise a state of the art cultural venue for Croydon). Given that the applicant's role in provision of affordable housing and despite viability challenges, the applicant is committed to providing 20% affordable housing (all intermediate) within the scheme to meet (and indeed exceed) the obligations contained within the detailed element of the previous hybrid planning permission.
- 7.7 The Council has appointed an independent viability consultant to review the applicant's viability model. Whilst the analysis is at a relatively early stage, it is agreed that the appraisal process will need to demonstrate that the development is properly delivering value for money as an enabling development, whereby the resultant public benefits arising out of the Fairfield Halls refurbishment outweigh the shortfall in affordable housing. This means in effect, that the funds realised as a consequence of such a short-fall are being re-directed towards the refurbishment works and the delivery of an exemplar cultural offer. The Fairfield Halls refurbishment costs and any potential net benefits arising from the works will need to be seen as part of the planning application (despite it being outside the boundary of the site). This approach is consistent with the approach adopted in respect of the previous hybrid planning permission which has now been required to respond to changing circumstances (as outlined above).
- 7.8 In addition to a review of the development proposals themselves, the review will need to evaluate the following:
- Fairfield Halls costs, both financial (in terms of both the cost of refurbishment – including consideration of any opportunity costs) but also any benefits arising from the works to the Council (both financial and non-financial);
  - Net shortfall on affordable housing provision; the level of affordable housing that would have been expected, setting aside the costs directed to the refurbishment of Fairfield Halls;
  - Scale and density of development

- 7.9 The applicant has accepted that it is in the public interest for their viability appraisal (save for some minor commercially sensitive elements) to be made publically available at planning application stage – in line with standard policy and practice.

#### Commercial

- 7.10 The proposals include flexible commercial space (primarily intended as a café) within the base of Block A (linking to the Hazeldean Bridge at first floor mezzanine level) and flexible commercial space within the ground floor (and mezzanine levels) of Block C and E. The flexible uses would include A1, A2, A3 and D1 uses.
- 7.11 Local Plan policies supports the provision of A2, A3 and D1 uses within the Metropolitan Centre (subject to design requirements to demonstrate its future adaptability). A sequential test will be required for additional A1 use, as the site lies outside of the primary retail area. The sequential test will need to demonstrate that the retail offer would not detract from the retail offer within the primary retail area (it will need to demonstrate that the use cannot be accommodated on sites or in units that are both suitable and available within the town centre). As part of the hybrid permission, a sequential test successfully demonstrated that the introduction of retail uses within the Fair Field Masterplan area would be acceptable in policy terms. A full assessment will be required for the current proposals, but officers expect that the sequential test will support the provision of retail in this location.
- 7.12 The provision of commercial space at the base of Blocks A, C and E is supported in townscape terms. All three of these blocks would have public facing facades onto important areas of public realm. The provision of a café proposed for the base of Block A should improve wayfinding and legibility of routes into the site from the north-east corner (from College Road and Hazeldean Bridge). The provision of flexible commercial space within Blocks C and E should also activate this end of College Green and provide activity onto the new public route between Block C and the College building.
- 7.13 Given the location of the site within the Croydon's 'Cultural Quarter', officers' preference would be for some cultural uses to be included within the scheme. The applicant has requested flexible uses to ensure that the spaces are as marketable as possible. Officers are mindful that a too restrictive approach could result in empty units in this prominent location.
- 7.14 Under the hybrid permission, space within Block C was identified as a potential space for a new medical centre and a condition imposed required that the space should be initially marketed to the NHS. The applicant has been working with the NHS and has designed and modified the space to meet NHS requirements (in terms of internal space and design layouts and servicing arrangements). It is intended that a similar condition would be imposed, to realise this continued opportunity.

#### Open Space

- 7.15 The whole of College Green is protected as undesignated open space under the NPPF and London Plan. The policies seek to resist loss of open space unless equivalent or better quality provision is made in a suitable location (within the local catchment area).



Site plans showing a) area of designated open space and b) area of re-provision

- 7.16 The scheme proposes the reconfiguration of the eastern end of College Green (some 1,730sqm of public open space). The majority of the open space would be re-provided as part of a new public realm area and route to the north of the site, including new steps and pedestrian link to Hazeldean Bridge. The current calculations suggest that the proposed development would result in a loss of 165sqm of open space. Officers have advised the applicant that robust landscaping details will be required to justify the relocation of the public open space, to ensure that the scheme is providing equivalent or better quality provision of open space. The quality of the new spaces created will be a key consideration.
- 7.17 Whilst the context of the surrounding area has changed since the hybrid permission, officers continue to highlight/emphasise that the previous permission secured substantial improvements to the College Green (as a whole) including additional pedestrian links across the wider Fair Field Masterplan area. The relationship between the current scheme and the hybrid permission as a material planning consideration remains (particularly as the Fairfield Halls refurbishment and the residential scheme will benefit from wider enhancement of College Green). Officers consider that the previously approved improvement to College Green was a significant benefit of the previous hybrid planning permission, which should be fully recognised as a planning requirement arising out of the current pre-application proposal.
- 7.18 Since the hybrid planning permission, the Council has initiated a competitive tender process to procure a world-class public realm design for College Green which should go well beyond the proposals previously secured as part of the hybrid planning permission. However, given the on-going linkage between the residential proposals and the requirement to enhance College Green, officers consider that the residential scheme should contribute to the improved public realm works. An enhanced College Green (it is currently suggested that College Green should be re-named as “The Fair Field” to reflect its historic origins) would clearly provide significant benefits for future residents of the scheme including further open space, pedestrian access. It is currently the intention that the space would also be utilised to provide fire tender access (as part of the proposed fire safety strategy).
- 7.19 Officers are in discussion with the applicant about securing a financial contribution towards public realm improvements and it is expected that this should cover the value of the previously consented public realm (in line with details soon to be discharged

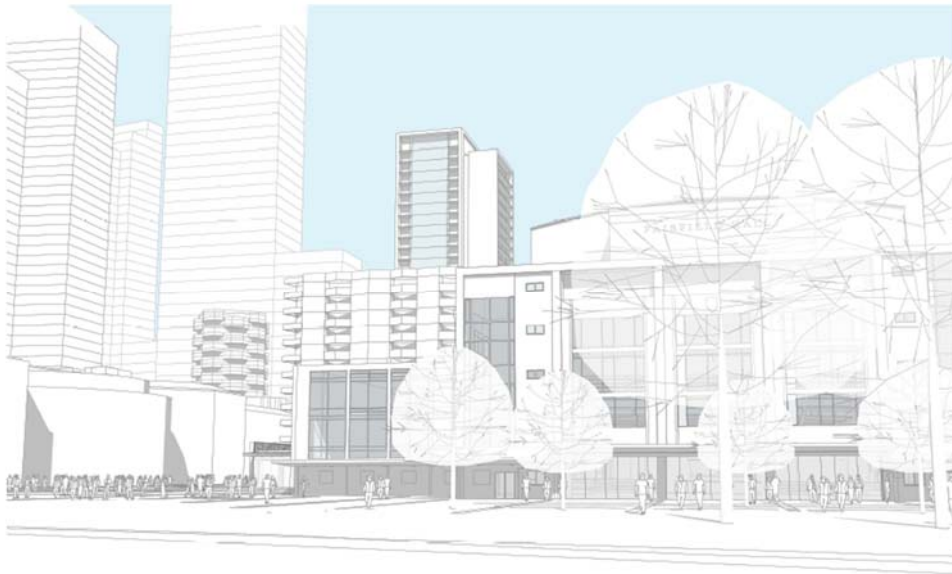
pursuant to Condition A26, pursuant to the hybrid planning permission). This financial contribution would provide the local planning authority with clear certainty that public realm improvements, equivalent to the quality of public realm previously approved, is delivered as part of the residential proposals, should the more visionary public realm scheme not come forward. This approach should also enable the Council to carry out interim public realm improvements in time for the re-opening of Fairfield Halls. If the new public realm scheme (pursuant to on-going procurement processes) progresses as envisaged, the public realm contribution could provide additional funding for these public realm improvements. The mechanism as to how this might be secured will need to be further explored in the run up to planning application submission.

## **Townscape and Visual Impact**

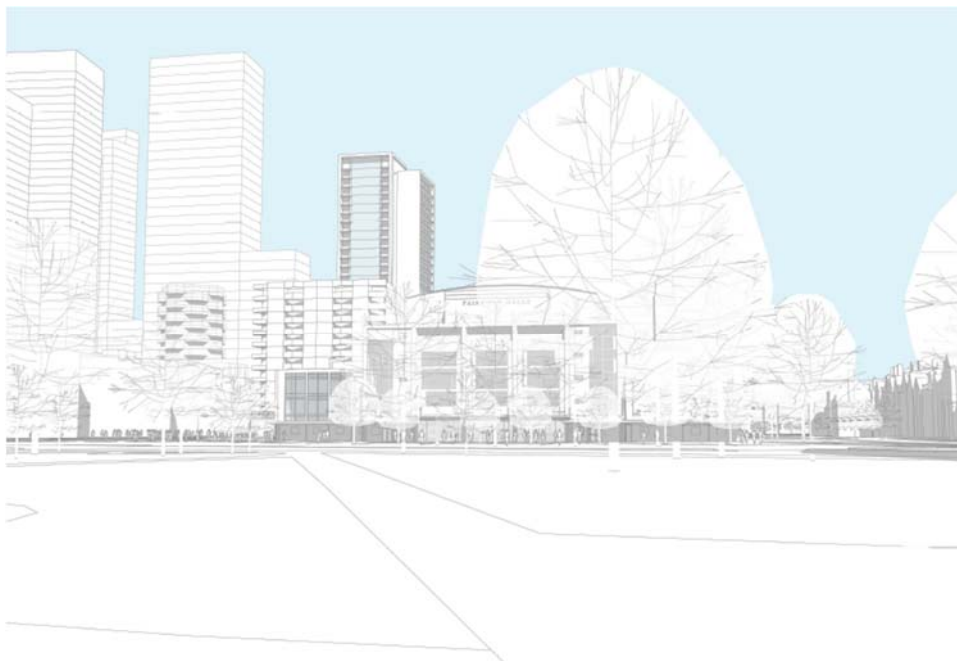
### Massing

- 7.20 The general massing approach is supported and goes some way to achieve the ambitions of the Fair Field Masterplan; stepping height across the site from the lower height of Fairfield Hall up towards the towers being constructed (or with planning permission) close to East Croydon Station and adjacent to the railway line.
- 7.21 A robust assessment of the townscape and heritage impacts is required as part of a planning application, including a townscape and visual impact assessment to test the scheme in the context of longer views (to assess any potential for coalescence) and with closer contextual views (to assess potential impacts on heritage assets particularly Segas House (Grade II listed), Fairfield Halls and Croydon College (both locally listed) and the Chatsworth Road Conservation Area to the south of the site.
- 7.22 Subject to further testing, the additional height to Block A (an increase of 8 storeys from the hybrid permission) should not give rise to townscape or heritage concerns; it maintains the height hierarchy across the Masterplan area. Further height (beyond the proposed additional 8 storeys) is not recommended as this could detract from this important Masterplan principle. The changes to the footprint (moving the tower further south and increasing its size/footprint, thereby increasing the number of units per floor) is generally positive although officers feel that the building articulation requires further resolution.
- 7.23 The general layout of Blocks A – D have been subtly altered from the layout previously approved. This has led to changes in the relationship between blocks, with the north-south route more articulated – which has been a positive move. However, this has resulted in the route becoming narrower in parts (at times, as little as 12 metres). The articulation of the elevations provides some relief with this relationship and could provide character to this space. However, the proposed heights and proximity does give rise to some concerns about the privacy and the daylight levels within the proposed flats and the quality of the public realm. Further testing is required to understand this space and the overall resident experience.
- 7.24 Block E has been designed to create a strong frontage onto College Green, respecting this important piece of public realm within the Masterplan area. However, officers feel that the height of this building gives rise to some heritage and townscape concerns. In the key views of the front of the Fairfield Halls when viewed from the entrance of Queen's Gardens and from within the Gardens, the height of Block E directly aligns with the shoulder of Fairfield Halls or appears taller and more dominant than Fairfield

Halls. That said, the Place Review Panel was less concerned about these relationships.



View from pavement outside Queens Gardens (Park Lane)



View from within the centre of Queen's Gardens

- 7.25 In wider townscape terms and as stated above, the Masterplan seeks a stepped hierarchy of building heights. The hybrid planning permission also established strong datum parameters for building heights surrounding College Green (and the wider Masterplan area) at roughly 7 storeys. The proposed Block E would be considerable taller than the previously approved replacement College building. Notwithstanding this and as noted by the Place Review Panel, the proposed height of this building would allow the building to provide a strong focal point when viewed from Park Lane (at the apron of College Green). Officers support additional height above the previously consented parameters but have suggested that the proposals should be reduced (be



a couple of floors) to maintain a clear hierarchy across the Masterplan area and respect the setting of Fairfield Halls.

#### Elevational Treatment, Fenestration & Materials

- 7.26 The elevation treatment, fenestration and materials palette need to be further developed. Officers feel that whilst the distinct blocks may take alternative approaches that respond to each particular setting, there is a need for an overarching logic to the elevational treatments and window detailing, particularly as the blocks are linked and of a similar scale (except for Block A). The applicant is currently reviewing elevational treatment approaches and further assessment of this will be required once fully developed. The articulation of several of the proposed blocks remains complex and whilst this provides interest to the elevations and relief within the public realm area, there may be a need to rationalise these in order to ensure that they do not result in significant construction costs.
- 7.27 The design logic to the choice of materials palette and window detailing requires further resolution and has not yet been fully assessed. However, it is expected that there would need to be some variation between the different elements of the scheme in terms of materials. That said, the different blocks need to tie together through a clear rationale and carefully curated material palette. The differentiation in design and materials to the front elevation of Block E (facing College Green) is supported, but further consideration is required to improve the proportionality of the banding and fenestration. It is also expected (and supported by PRP) that the materials for Block E would need to provide a contrast to Fairfield Halls, to avoid coalescence but to also help contain elements that tie it in with the remaining scheme elements.

#### Relationship to the Annexe Building & Magistrates Court

- 7.28 The termination of the public realm between Blocks B & D has been improved by the subtle shift of orientation of these blocks. Whilst the applicant is progressing a landscape proposal that can function as a landscaped terminus (including opportunities for children's play) the longer term aspiration is to open up a north-south link, if and when the Magistrates Court comes forward in the future in accordance with the Masterplan. Further evidence is required to understand how the space would facilitate this long term route.
- 7.29 Further layout consideration (particularly within Block D) is required to ensure that the orientation of some apartments does not prejudice the future development potential of the College Annexe or Magistrates Court site or result in poor quality apartments (within the current proposed development) which would themselves be compromised (in terms of limited light and outlook as a consequence of neighbouring site relationships). One also needs to be mindful of possible development proposed (as part of a future redevelopment of the College Annexe Building) which would inevitably enclose the south side of the proposed residential courtyard space. This issue was also raised by the Place Review Panel and will be a consideration for the developers of the College Annexe site.
- 7.30 Finally, one needs to recognise the proposed relationship between the proposed Block E and potential habitable room windows contained within an either converted or redeveloped College Annexe building; the flank elevation of Block B is currently shown as being sited between 8-10 metres from the front elevation of the College Annexe building which will need to be tested in terms of outlook and daylighting effects.

## Public Realm and Amenity Spaces

- 7.31 The scheme presents a clear logic as regards the hierarchy of spaces, including the scale and sequence of the spaces with good definition between public and private space and clear routes through the site and wider Fair Field Masterplan area.
- 7.32 Access onto the site represents a considerable challenge due to land level changes and varied land ownerships. The repositioning of Block “A” (further south) should provide more public realm towards the north-eastern corner of the site. The widened of the steps leading up to the Hazeldean Bridge represent a more generous intervention than previously accepted by the hybrid permission which is welcomed. However, further design development is required to understand the landscaping rationale for this space. The bridge itself is outside the application boundary (and is currently a vehicle bridge); how this might be re-imagined as a pedestrian route remains unresolved.
- 7.33 Officers also feel that the logical primary pedestrian access route from George Street and East Croydon Station should be via College Road. Currently, the proposal relies on pedestrians using the College Road ramp down into the basement car park and then taking stairs or lift up to the podium level to the base of Block A. Officers preference is for a more direct route via a high quality, temporary ramp which would provide a step free route adjacent to the College Road ramp. The applicant has modelled the potential for such a route but have advised that they are unable to bring this forward as part of their scheme (for viability reasons and potential ownership restrictions).
- 7.34 A permanent direct solution is indicated by the Fair Field Masterplan (key routes diagram) but much of this remains outside of the applicant’s control as it is reliant upon land within the College Tower site and the partial capping the existing College Road ramp. The proposed public realm design must safeguard the potential for the site to link into a permanent step free solution.
- 7.35 Officers are working with all land-owners (with land interest towards the north-east corner of the Masterplan area) to arrive at a workable long term solution to deliver step free access arrangements and the work undertaken by the applicant has been helpful in the process (to set a podium level as associated public realm where other sites are able to “plug into” when sites come forward in the future).
- 7.36 The temporary arrangements are likely to be in place for several years and will therefore need to be suitably robust. If a lift and stairs are brought forward at planning stage, the applicant should ensure that the road ramp into the basement, retaining walls, columns, stairs, lift shaft and road surfaces are treated in a manner that is suitably welcoming and high quality for pedestrians (with detailed consideration afforded to safety and security). Crucially, the space would need to be transformed from one which previously prioritised vehicles to one which prioritises pedestrians (although it is recognised that the access ramp would continue to provide service access and access to existing sub-station infrastructure). A detailed strategy is required to fully understand how this route might work in the short, medium and longer term. To date there has been limited design development that focusses on the likely pedestrian experience – when seeking to gain access via East Croydon Station and College Road.

- 7.37 The applicant has also begun to indicate how development may come forward on the Magistrates and College Annexe sites and how their scheme might tie in with possible approaches which is to be welcomed.
- 7.38 Residential cores and individual entrances for family accommodation have been located within the private courtyard and north-south route. This would help to activate both spaces and is considered a positive step. Further detailed design work is needed to understand how the courtyard would be gated along with the transition from public to private space. This is particularly important for the access point on College Green which would have a high visibility as part of the public realm.
- 7.39 Where the scheme faces onto public routes, it will be important to understand how these spaces are designed and activated, including consideration of the space needed for potential spill out from commercial uses. This is particularly important to the front of Block E where it would address College Green, which as noted above is currently the subject of a competitive design process managed by the Council. The scheme would need to marry up with a forthcoming public realm design and in the interim, consider provision of appropriately sized and designed spaces for the proposed commercial/cultural uses, should the scheme come forward prior to the re-opening of College Green. It is likely that the phasing of the various schemes will be suitably be aligned to ensure that they dovetail well and properly co-ordinated. Through the repositioning of the blocks, there would be greater space between Blocks A and C (at ground level) and whilst there might well be emergency vehicular turning requirements for this space, it has potential to be a high quality useable public realm, particularly given the adjacent commercial uses and its potential relationship to the longer term permanent pedestrian route from College Road (as highlighted above).

### **Housing Quality for Future Occupiers**

- 7.40 The flats would all be designed to meet National Technical Space Standards and are all being designed with outdoor amenity space in the form of private balconies or terraces. 10% of the units would be wheelchair accessible and 90% wheelchair adaptable in line with the London Plan. In addition, the scheme would provide a large private courtyard of about 750sqm to the centre of the site and additional semi-private amenity space to the end of the route between Blocks B and D which would be more than sufficient to meet the child play space requirement for the number of units.
- 7.41 The proposed layouts to the flats are generally supported, subject to robust daylight and sunlight testing. The flats within Block B and C are mostly dual aspect and whilst there are a number of single aspect units within the scheme, none of these would be single aspect north facing. The elevations of the buildings have been designed so that the majority of single aspect units would have some varied outlook. Officers have not seen the final internal layouts for the scheme and these will have to be analysed carefully to ensure that the flats provide suitable outlook and privacy for residents. The PRP raised some concerns about the additional height and resulting relationship between flats, particularly for flats within Block B and D where the separation distance narrows to just under 12m.

### **Impact upon Neighbours**

#### College Annexe

- 7.42 This adjacent site is allocated for mixed use including residential development. The College Annexe site now forms the southern edge of the residential courtyard and it is unclear at this stage how the proposed development might interact with a development which could come forward in this space and how the boundary might be treated/integrated in the medium to long term. Any future development to the south of the residential courtyard would need to respect the desire for adequate sunlight entering the courtyard space. Moreover, the applicant would need to further understand how the current proposals respect the development potential of the College Annexe site. Officers are currently engaged in pre-application discussions with the owner of the College Annexe site who is considering two potential development scenarios; one to convert and possibly extend the existing building; the other to redevelop the site with additional height.
- 7.43 Officers are concerned that there might well be a risk of an somewhat disjointed and unplanned approach when seeking to bring sites forward (in close proximity) which might well limit development potential, the legibility of future public realm, the provision of public routes and residential quality. Officers consider it important that the development interests work more closely together to ensure that emerging schemes do not prejudice development on either development site, particularly with regards to daylight/sunlight and outlook for flats, public realm and strategic public realm routes and access arrangements.

#### College Tower, Mondial House and Croydon College

- 7.44 The proposed additional height to the northern edge of the site might impact daylight and sunlight achieved in respect of the consented residential schemes at College Tower and Mondial House. These changes may also have micro-climate impacts and this will need to be further modelled (including cumulative effects) alongside any associated mitigation. This will require further resolution and technical reports will be required to address these impacts.
- 7.45 The increased podium level at the north-eastern corner of the site will need to be designed to safeguard a permanent step-free access to and from George Street – linking through to Hazeldean Bridge. The applicant has considered potential design solutions for this, but the permanent step free access is reliant upon other sites in the area coming forward (as highlighted above).
- 7.46 Further details are also required to understand the design solution for the treatment of the northern edge of the public realm where it meets the light wells adjacent to the existing Croydon College, especially as this building appears to contain classrooms and workshops at basement area.

#### **Transport**

- 7.47 Under the hybrid planning permission, the approved basement car park was intended to provide a mixture of general public car parking (including some allocated to Fairfield Halls and associated uses and the replacement college building) and residential car parking. The intention was for cars (and general parking circulation) to access the basement from the existing Barclay Road ramp (which was approved with a reduced width) with servicing taking place via the College Road ramp. These access arrangements are proposed to remain unchanged as part of the current proposals, although it remains unclear at this stage whether the Barclay Road ramp will continue

to use all 4 dedicated lanes. This will need to be considered as part of a subsequent Transport Assessment.

- 7.48 The proposed development would be car-free with only disabled “Blue Badge” parking available within the basement, in line with London Plan standards. Future occupiers would be restricted from having access to parking permits. It is anticipated that a number of car club spaces would be provided within the main basement car park (to be opened later this year) but additional car club spaces are likely to be required to support this development. In addition to residential parking, it will be necessary to provide further public car-parking beneath the residential podium (associated with the main public car park) as well as a small number of parking spaces for the commercial units in line with London Plan standards. It is understood that all spaces would be managed by a single car parking operator (managing both public and residential parking spaces). Officers are currently in discussion with the applicant as regards the overall basement car park management arrangements, including layout and car club provision.
- 7.49 Servicing for the commercial units would be via the basement and the applicant is working on a servicing plan for the potential health service use. The residential servicing and waste collection is also proposed to take place at basement level and each core would incorporate communal waste and recycling stores at basement level (accessible by lift). The waste and recycling and other residential servicing will take place at basement level and all service vehicles would enter the basement from the College Road ramp. Whilst this is generally considered to be acceptable, further technical details are required to ensure that this arrangement would be suitable for collection and servicing vehicles.
- 7.50 The site would provide secure cycle storage rooms within each block at ground floor adjacent to the main core access points and is being designed to meet London Plan standards.

### **Environmental Impact, Sustainability & Flooding**

- 7.51 The applicant has been made aware of the requirements for passive design, zero carbon development and connection to a communal heating network which was secured within the basement of Fairfield Halls as part of the hybrid permission. Discussions are forthcoming in relation to air quality, overheating, surface water drainage, micro climate and lighting impacts.
- 7.52 The site is within Flood Zone 1 (Low Risk) and partially within an area where there is potential for surface water flooding. The applicant has been advised that a flood risk assessment and drainage strategy would be required to support a planning application.

### **S106 Obligations**

- 7.53 At this stage it is envisaged that planning obligations will be required to mitigate the impacts. Discussions are forthcoming in relation to the heads of terms, but it is anticipated that these would include the following:
- Affordable housing (on site)
  - Open Space (public realm) contribution
  - Employment and Construction training
  - Air Quality

- Zero carbon off-set
- Car club
- Travel Plan
- Car permit restrictions
- Transport for London contributions

## **8 SPECIFIC FEEDBACK REQUESTED**

8.1 In view of the above, it is suggested that members focus on the following issues:

- The viability of the scheme and approach to affordable housing in relation to the works undertaken to Fairfield Halls
- The proposed quantum of development and proposed heights of the development, in terms of both townscape and heritage impacts and quality of accommodation and public realm
- The legibility of proposed routes into the site (particularly the north east corner) and public realm provision across the site and emerging landscape logic and design
- The relationship with neighbouring sites, particularly with the College Annexe site.

## **9 PROCEDURAL NOTE**

9.1 This is the first presentation of the scheme to the Planning Committee. The proposal is reported to Planning Committee to enable Members to view and comment on it prior to submission of a formal application. The proposal is not a planning application. Any comments are provisional and subject to full consideration, including public consultation and notification as part of any subsequent application.

9.2 A planning application for the proposed development would be referable to the Mayor of London under the Mayor of London Order 2008. The Mayor's views have not yet been formally sought, but the applicant has met with the Greater London Authority's officers through their pre-application advice service (including consideration by Transport for London), prior to the submission of a formal planning application.