



North London  
Business Park  
LB Barnet

Proof of evidence  
of Peter Stewart

January 2024

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## 1.0 Qualifications and experience

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### **Peter Stewart** **MA (Cantab) Dip Arch RIBA**

- 1.1 My name is Peter Stewart. I am a registered architect and I practise as an independent expert adviser in architectural and planning matters, as a Board Director of townscape and heritage practice The Townscape Consultancy ('TTC') (formerly of Peter Stewart Consultancy ('PSC')).
- 1.2 I have a degree in architecture from the University of Cambridge and a postgraduate diploma in architecture from the Polytechnic of Central London (now the University of Westminster). I am a member of the Royal Institute of British Architects.
- 1.3 Between 1982 and 1996 I was employed in a number of architectural practices in London and was involved in the design and construction of substantial commercial and residential projects in central and inner London and elsewhere, many of which were on sensitive sites.
- 1.4 In 1997 I was appointed Deputy Secretary of the Royal Fine Art Commission (RFAC), which was a non-statutory consultee in the planning process. In 1999 the RFAC was wound up by the Government and I joined the staff of the replacement body, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE). Until 2005 I was Director of CABE's design review programme, which offers expert advice on major development proposals. CABE (now Design Council CABE) was a non-statutory consultee for significant projects in England.
- 1.5 My work at CABE involved me in advising on a wide range of projects, including many of the most significant projects in England during my time there. In many of these cases local authorities sought advice on questions of new architecture in historic contexts, and on the effects of tall buildings on the existing environment. My responsibilities included preparing CABE's case and representing CABE at a number of planning inquiries where these subjects were central to the issues considered.
- 1.6 I was the principal author of the original editions of a number of CABE publications, including 'Design Review', which sets out CABE's method for assessing projects.
- 1.7 In 2005, I founded PSC, a specialist consultancy advising on architecture, urban design and planning. Most of the projects on which I advised involved questions of the relationship between substantial new buildings and sensitive settings. The consultancy's clients included, in the public and third sectors, CABE, English Heritage, Transport for London, University College London, the Tate Gallery, and the Home Office; and in the private sector, British Land, Canary Wharf, Chelsfield Partners, Derwent London,



Hammerson, Land Securities, London and Regional Properties, Qatari Diar and Great Portland Estates.

- 1.8 In October 2021, Peter Stewart Consultancy was acquired by TTC, a new townscape and heritage consultancy.
- 1.9 As a consultant, I have given evidence on architecture, townscape and conservation matters as an expert witness at 35 or so planning inquiries and hearings since 2005.
- 1.10 I am a member of the Design South East design review panel which operates across London, the South East and East of England, and a member of the design review panel of the London Borough of Islington. Within the last 20 years or so I have served in the following capacities:
- Member of the London Advisory Committee of English Heritage
  - Chair of the regional design review panel for the East Midlands
  - Member of the Quality Review Panel (i.e. design review panel) of the London Legacy Development Corporation.
- 1.11 In each case the role involves or involved the provision of independent expert advice to planning authorities about the effect of major new development on sensitive contexts.
- 1.12 I have also served as Chair of the Planning Group of the RIBA, as a nationally elected council member of the RIBA, and as the Chair of a conservation area advisory committee in the London Borough of Hackney.
- 1.13 I have contributed essays and articles to the architectural and planning press, on a broad range of matters relating to my work at CABE and subsequently, including the relationship between new architecture and the historic environment, and the effect of tall buildings on their setting. I have spoken on these and related subjects at national and local conferences and seminars and have taught and lectured at universities and colleges. I have prepared and delivered training sessions on the relationship between new development and the historic environment for English Heritage. I have also prepared and delivered training in architecture and urban design for Urban Design London, and for council officers and planning committee members at a number of local authorities including the City Councils of Westminster, Newcastle, Nottingham, Cambridge and Norwich; and I have facilitated training sessions for several of the English regional design review panels. I have also contributed to training sessions for the Planning Inspectorate.



## 2.0 Introduction

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2.1 This proof of evidence considers matter of architecture, urban design, visual and townscape impact, and historic environment considerations.

2.2 My previous practice, Peter Stewart Consultancy ('PSC'), was appointed by the appellant in 2014 to provide advice to the client and the design team on townscape, urban design and visual impact during the development of the design of the Original Scheme, and to provide the townscape and visual impact assessment ('TVIA') which formed part of the environmental statement submitted with the Original Scheme.

2.3 I provided evidence on townscape and visual impact considerations, based on our work on the TVIA, at the 2018 planning inquiry which followed the refusal of planning permission by the local authority.

2.4 In 2020 the appeal in respect of the Original Scheme was allowed by the Secretary of State, who agreed with the recommendation of the Inspector. Salient points of the decision, in respect of the topics considered in my evidence, were:

- The North London Business Park (NLBP) has its own character, and its appearance is entirely different to that of the surrounding area; and this has been the case since the area was originally developed (IR64).
- The design approach of the Original Scheme was appropriate (IR65).
- High buildings in the scheme would only be glimpsed in the background from points in the surrounding area, and that glimpses of tall buildings are characteristic of London even in the suburbs (IR68).
- The buildings would be visible from some vantage points in the surrounding area but they would not be discordant or visually obtrusive, and would be set within substantial areas of complementary public landscaped open space. The Original Scheme, in terms of its appearance, scale, mass, height and pattern, would not adversely affect, and would thus preserve, the character and appearance of the area. (IR 69).

2.5 At paragraph 20 of the decision letter [CD04.001] the Secretary of State ('SoS') stated:

*The Secretary of State has carefully considered the Inspector's assessment of the impact the proposal would have on the surrounding area (IR64-69). He notes that the surrounding area is predominantly two-storey residential dwellings, while the site is currently occupied by a low-density campus-style business park. For the reasons given at IR64, he agrees with the Inspector that, as the existing character of the site is entirely different to the surrounding area, it does not*



*contribute to the character and appearance of the area. In considering the proposed site layout, he notes that the taller buildings would be located away from existing development, in the interior of the site (IR66, IR68) or adjacent to the railway lines (IR65) that provide a buffer to existing development; while the buildings proposed closest to existing development would be three storeys (IR65, IR66). He also notes that open space would be retained between blocks (IR67). For these reasons, he agrees with the Inspector that the proposal is appropriate to the current character of the site (IR65), and that the taller buildings would not be visually obtrusive (IR68) to those living around the site.*

2.6 At paragraph 22 of the decision letter the Secretary of State ('SoS') stated:

*... The Secretary of State agrees with the Inspector that the proposal is designed in such a way as to respect the existing character of the area while maximising the potential of the site (IR65), and that the appearance, scale, mass, height and pattern would not adversely affect the character and appearance of the area. For these reasons, the Secretary of State agrees with the Inspector (IR69, IR74) that the proposal is acceptable in terms of scale, massing and design, and would not harm the character and appearance of the area, thereby complying with DM01.*

2.7 In 2021, PSC provided an updated TVIA [CD01.237] which assessed the Appeal Scheme. From the point of view of townscape, visual impact and the historic environment, the differences between the Original Scheme and the Appeal Scheme are not great. The significant differences in the site layout and the form of the buildings are changes to the layout of Phase 3, and the increase in maximum storey height of a number of blocks across the Site. The changes to the layout and form, while noticeable in some of the views illustrated in the TVIA, did not lead to significantly different conclusions in the TVIA, and as with the completed Original Scheme, there were no cases where there were adverse impacts as a result of the completed Appeal Scheme.

2.8 My evidence is based substantially on the TVIA for the Appeal Scheme. As the Appeal Scheme has a great deal in common with the Original Scheme, and the reason for refusal that I consider has much common with the Council's reason for refusal in respect of the Original Scheme, my evidence has a great deal in common with my evidence for the 2018 planning inquiry, and I have noted where my evidence is much the same as for the Original Scheme.

2.9 My evidence includes images from the TVIA for the Original Scheme and from the TVIA for the Appeal Scheme. It also includes new images for a view from Denham Road, referred to in the reason for refusal, which were not included in either TVIA. Also provided are new images showing an illustrative scheme as seen from the relevant viewpoint locations, prepared under the supervision of the architects Plus Architecture; the scheme illustrated is consistent with the parameter plans and the Design Principles [CD01.236] document.

2.10 My evidence sets out the following:

- A section which identifies the main elements of planning policy and guidance relevant to architecture, townscape and urban design.
- A description and characterisation of the site and its setting as existing.
- A description of the Appeal Scheme and an assessment in respect of architectural, urban design, townscape and visual impact considerations.
- Consideration of the Council's reasons for refusal and comments from interested parties.
- Conclusions.

2.11 The evidence which I have prepared and provide for this appeal reference PP/N5090/W/23/3330577 in this proof of evidence is true and the opinions expressed are my true and professional opinions.



## 3.0 Planning policy and guidance

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- 3.1 In this section I identify the principal elements of planning policy and guidance that are relevant to my evidence.

### **National planning policy and guidance**

#### ***The National Planning Policy Framework, December 2023 [CD05.004]***

- 3.2 Section 12 of the NPPF deals with design. Section 16 deals with conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

### **Planning Practice Guidance:**

- 3.3 The national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) identifies considerations which may be relevant in terms of how buildings and the spaces between them should be considered.
- 3.4 The PPG includes a section 'Historic environment', which considers the factors that should inform decision taking about developments that would affect heritage assets.

### **Regional planning policy and guidance**

#### ***The London Plan – The Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London (March 2021) [CD05.003]***

- 3.5 The policies most relevant to townscape, visual impact and heritage are found in Chapter 3, 'Design'; and Chapter 7, 'Heritage and Culture.'

### **Local planning policy and guidance**

#### ***London Borough of Barnet – Core Strategy, 2012 [CD05.001]***

- 3.6 Policy CS5: 'Protecting and Enhancing Barnet's Character to Create High Quality Places' is the principal policy concerning the design of new development.
- 3.7 The Site and Oakleigh Road South are identified as a regeneration/ development area in the Core Strategy.





***The London Borough of Barnet Local Plan (Development Management Policies), 2012  
[CD05.002]***

- 3.8 Policy DM01: 'Protecting Barnet's character and amenity' includes a number of considerations relevant to new development.
- 3.9 Policy DM05 addresses the topic of tall buildings.
- 3.10 Policy DM06 addresses Barnet's heritage and conservation.

***Characterisation Study of the London Borough of Barnet Final Report, May 2010  
[CD07.001]***

- 3.11 The characterisation study was prepared as part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy.

***Residential Design Guidance SPD, October 2016 [CD07.002]***

- 3.12 The Residential Design Guidance SPD set out design principles.

***London Borough of Barnet - North London Business Park Planning Brief, 2016  
[CD07.003]***

- 3.13 The Council's 2016 Planning Brief envisages the redevelopment of the whole site for residential led development to include a secondary school.

***Barnet Draft Local Plan (reg 19) 2021 to 2036 [CD06.001]***

- 3.14 LB Barnet's Draft Local Plan policy CDH04 addresses the topic of tall buildings.



## 4.0 The Site and its setting

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- 4.1 The history and the character of the Site and its setting are set out in Appendix A, in the same form as provided in my evidence for the previous appeal. This section sets out a summary of that account and conclusions, also as provided previously and accepted by the case officer for the Original Scheme, the Planning Inspector, and the Secretary of State.
- 4.2 The Site is large and relatively self-contained in character, surrounded by railway lines to the west and back gardens to the north and south. The only meaningful street frontage addresses Brunswick Park Road, to the east.



Fig. 1: Aerial view of the site from the south east (from DAS p6)

- 4.3 The Site has been consistently developed in a manner different to that of the areas surrounding it to the north, south, east and west; while these areas were largely developed for suburban housing, the Site was occupied by uses linked to the North London Cemetery in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, then developed with large footprint factory buildings and sports grounds in the 1920s, and office buildings in more recent decades.
- 4.4 The buildings on the Site today are mostly large in footprint and accommodate office or educational uses, set within landscaped and open grassed areas. These buildings do not directly address any of the streets which border the Site. The rise in land levels across the Site, particularly towards the north and west, is a notable aspect of its character.

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- 4.5 The wider area around the Site is overwhelmingly suburban and residential in character. Two storey housing, most of it from the inter-war period, is the predominant form of development but there are examples of other building forms, including apartment blocks dating from the post-war and more recent decades. In some places, trees and other vegetation contribute to a character which is pleasantly leafy overall. The other defining characteristic of the wider townscape study area as a whole is its topography, which is varied, but the dominant aspect of which is a rise in the level of the land to the east and west of the Pymme's Brook valley.
- 4.6 The manner in which the Site is cut off from its surroundings is such that views of it from close range are limited, and there is generally little awareness of the buildings on it in the area immediately around the Site, despite their relatively large scale. There are opportunities for longer range views towards the Site, particularly from the east, due to the aforementioned topography.
- 4.7 There are a number of green spaces within the area surrounding the Site which are important as local amenity spaces and which provide opportunities for medium to long range views in the direction of the Site. The New Southgate Cemetery, laid out in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is the closest of these.
- 4.8 Other than the New Southgate Cemetery, which has no heritage designation, the area around the Site is of low heritage sensitivity. There are no conservation areas or listed buildings within 1km of the Site, except for Southgate Green CA to the east, of which a small part is just under 1km away, and no locally listed buildings in the streets surrounding the Site.

## 5.0 The Appeal Scheme and assessment of design

- 5.1 This section sets out a description and assessment of the Appeal Scheme, referred to below as the 'Development'. The description and the assessment are much the same as provided in my evidence for the previous appeal, amended as necessary to suit those parts of the scheme where the layout, form or height of the blocks has been amended. **My additions for the Appeal Scheme are in bold below.** Within the Existing Scheme, the school has been split out from Phase 1, into its own Phase, Phase 0. Therefore while I did not refer to the school as Phase 0 in my proof for the Original Scheme, where my analysis remains unchanged I also include those references in bold below.

### The Development

- 5.2 The Development is for the demolition of the existing buildings on the Site and its comprehensive redevelopment for residential and education accommodation. There are six Phases of the Development; Phase 0 and Phase 1 are subject to a detailed planning application, and Phases 2 – 5 are subject to an outline planning application. The combined phases are subject to an overall masterplan for the Site.



Fig. 2: Masterplan layout (from DAS p28)

- 5.3 A school building fronting Brunswick Park Road, with sports field, changing block and sports hall forms Phase 0.

- 5.4 The existing attenuating pond would be retained and remodelled to the west of the main school building. Phases 1B-1F would provide residential accommodation, located west of the pond and extending north. Phase 1B, adjacent to the southern Site boundary, comprises a row of houses in brick with back gardens set against those of the neighbouring houses on Brunswick Park Crescent, and would be a maximum three storeys tall. The other elements within Phase 1 would largely comprise apartment blocks, arranged in perimeter or U-shaped blocks, with internal courtyards. These buildings would reach a maximum 11 storeys tall.
- 5.5 The apartment blocks would vary to some extent in appearance but would all be largely in brick with inset windows, stone detailing e.g. string courses, and areas of render in some cases. Many of the blocks would have recessed balconies.
- 5.6 Phase 2 would occupy the northern part of the Site and would be residential in use. Phase 2D would be a linear plot located against the eastern Site boundary and would be a maximum three storeys in height. Phases 2E and 2F would be linear plots located adjacent to the northern Site boundary and would be a maximum three storeys tall. Phases 2A, B and C would be located further towards the centre of the Site and would take the form of perimeter blocks, up to six storeys in height.
- 5.7 Phase 3 would include linked blocks: Phase 3B up to 12 storeys in height close to the western edge of the Site, connected to Phase 3C, up to six storeys high. Close to the centre of the Site, Phase 3A comprises paired blocks up to 13 storeys high. These would be residential in use, other than the Phase 3A block, which would also incorporate retail, office and community uses and a nursery.
- 5.8 Phase 4 would be located at the southern end of the Site. Blocks 4A and 4C would take the form of perimeter blocks; Phase 4B would be a U-shaped block open to the south, arranged along the western side of the entrance road to the Site. Block 4B would be up to 10 storeys in height, Block 4A up to 12 storeys and Block 4C up to 13 storeys. They would be residential in use, other than retail ground floor uses within Blocks 4B and 4C, and incubator office in Block 4A.
- 5.9 Phase 5 would take the form of a perimeter block up to 13 storeys in height (Phase 5A) and a linear block also up to 13 storeys in height (Phase 5B). They would be residential in use, other than an incubator office use in Block 5A. and retail in Block 5B.
- 5.10 The principal entrance routes into the Site would remain those from Brunswick Park Road and Oakleigh Road South, which would lead to a new network of internal routes. An additional entry point would be opened up between Phases 2E and 2F, providing access from Weirdale Avenue/ Ashbourne Avenue.
- 5.11 The Development would provide three main areas of public open space – New Brunswick Park (divided into a southern and northern part), in the centre of the Site; Brunswick Lakeside Park, located around the pond on the eastern part of the Site; and Oakleigh

Avenue Gardens, adjacent to the southern entrance to the Site off Oakleigh Road South. New Brunswick Park (South) would be located within Phase 5, surrounded by buildings within Phases 1, 3, 4 and 5, and located at the end of the entrance road from Brunswick Park Avenue. New Brunswick Park (North) would be surrounded by the buildings of Phases 2 and 3. The Phase 3A buildings would be located between the two parts of New Brunswick Park.

- 5.12 A large number of the existing trees on the Site would be retained. While some existing trees are to be removed, a large number of new trees would be introduced, within main public spaces, private courtyards and along streets. The main street running through the centre of the Site, The Parkway, would be lined with trees set within landscaped strips located between 'inner' and 'outer' pavements, set at different levels.

### **Assessment of the Development**

- 5.13 The Development would be coherent and well ordered, with significant urban design, landscape design and public realm benefits.
- 5.14 The manner in which the height and massing would be distributed across the Site shows an appropriate response to the Site's context and character. The buildings close to the Site's boundaries close to existing residential properties – within Phases 1B, 2D, 2E and 2F - are the lowest on the Site, at three storeys in height, appropriately reflecting their location close to existing low scale housing near the edges of the Site.
- 5.15 Heights would then increase away from these boundaries, with the tallest buildings located in the centre of the Site, such that they would have less visual impact in the surrounding area and would be of a scale appropriate to provide enclosure to the routes and public spaces within the Site's interior. Taller buildings of up to 13 storeys would also be provided against the western edge of the Site, appropriately located against the open space created by the adjacent railway lines. The 10 storey building (4B) near the southern entrance would be of a sufficient height to mark a principal entrance to the Site, while being well set back from smaller scale housing beyond the green space of Oakleigh Avenue Gardens.
- 5.16 The manner in which aspects of the Development would work with the levels across Site - for example, in the distribution of the massing and the landscape design of the streets - would help to contribute to a distinctive character for the overall Development.
- 5.17 The Development would have a number of urban design benefits. The location of the main school building on the eastern part of the Site would help provide Brunswick Park Road with definition. The school building, and the buildings of Phase 4 at the Oakleigh Road South entrance, would help to enhance the sense of arrival at the Site. The access route from Ashbourne Avenue would improve permeability within the local area, allowing people living north of the Site quicker pedestrian access to Oakleigh Road South, and

from there to Friern Barnet, and public transport at New Southgate Station. Overall, the effect would be to open up the Site to a considerably greater degree than is currently the case and integrate it more closely with its surroundings.

- 5.18 The manner in which the taller elements of the Development are visible, to a limited extent and from a limited number of locations, would help to signal the location of the Site within the local area, while not being overly dominant.
- 5.19 The architecture of the Phase 0 and Phase 1 blocks would be of a high quality. The appearance of the main school building would have a regular, ordered quality, and the arrangement of the frame and bays would provide depth and articulation. The architectural approach, combined with the use of a small number of high quality materials, would result in a building with a calm and elegant appearance overall.



Fig. 3: Visualisation of Block 1B (from DAS p48)



Fig. 4: Visualisation of Block 1C and 1D (from DAS p49)

- 5.20 The elevations of the residential blocks would be similarly calm and measured in appearance, and the use of brick as the dominant material would relate well to the existing buildings in the surrounding area.
- 5.21 The new public spaces within the Development would be of a high quality and generous in size. The retention of a large number of existing trees, and the provision of new trees, would ensure the existing pleasantly leafy and suburban character of the Site is enhanced. The manner in which the streets would be lined with trees, and The Parkway would have a central landscaped strip separating 'inner' and 'outer' pavements, would reflect the character of the local area.

#### **Visual impact assessment**

- 5.22 The TVIA provides verifiable 'before and after' view images from 19 viewpoint locations agreed with Council officers. In each case there is a corresponding assessment of the view as existing and as proposed. No adverse effects were identified with regard to the completed development; in all cases effects were found to be either beneficial or neutral.

#### **Assessment of effects on townscape character areas**



5.23 My assessment of the effects of the Development on the townscape character of the Site and the townscape character areas identified in the TVIA is the same as for the Original Scheme, and is set out in Appendix B. I conclude that the Development would enhance the views in which it is seen and would have a beneficial or neutral effect in relation to the TCAs around it.

5.24 The Inspector reached a similar conclusion in respect of the Original Scheme, stating at IR69 that:

*The buildings would be visible from some vantage points in the surrounding area but they would not be discordant or visually obtrusive, and would be set within substantial areas of complimentary public landscaped open space. The proposed development, in terms of its appearance, scale, mass, height and pattern, would not adversely affect, and would thus preserve, the character and appearance of the area.*

5.25 In my view the same reasoning applies to the Appeal Scheme and the same point applies.

#### **Comparison with Original Scheme**

5.26 **The increase in density in the Application compared with the Original Scheme is achieved by a number of means, including changes in unit sizes. From the point of view of urban design, townscape and visual impact considerations, the significant differences in the site layout and the form of the buildings are changes to the layout of Phase 3, and the increase in maximum storey height of a number of blocks across the Site.**

5.27 **As explained in the DAS [CD01.235], the proposed buildings closest to existing residential buildings remain at the same storey heights (with a minor increase in floor to floor heights in some cases). The increases in height across the Site are achieved on those blocks that are further from existing housing, as shown in the diagram at Fig [x] below. This strategy was recognised as appropriate in the Inspector's report for the Original Scheme; at IR65 he states that:**

*The design approach to the redevelopment of the site, given the current character of the site, is appropriate. The taller buildings up to nine storeys high, predominantly, would be close to the west boundary of the site to the railway line, in Phases 3, 4 and 5. In Phase 2 the buildings would be no more than five storeys high, and along the north and east boundaries of this phase, close to existing two storey residential development, buildings would be, appropriately, only three storeys high. In this regard the proposed scheme respects existing development, and the outlook of existing residents of the area, but maximises the potential of the site in locations away from boundaries to existing development.*



The approach to massing in the Appeal Scheme is the same.

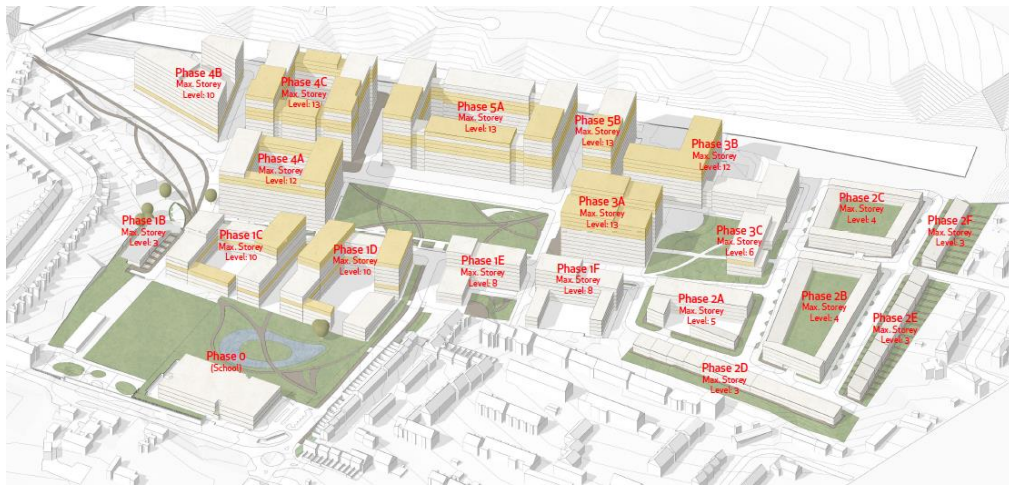


Fig. 5: Maximum building heights proposed in the Appeal Scheme (from Des Twomey's proof of evidence, section 3)

- 5.28** The increase in height to blocks 3, 4 and 5 increase the extent of development that will be seen in views from certain points east and west of the Site. When comparing the Appeal Scheme with the Original Scheme, there is no fundamental change in any of the views illustrated; the effect is of a background layer of new development that contrasts with the suburban development in the foreground, and is clearly different in character and scale. The difference between the two schemes, in considering the effects of the schemes on townscape and views, is a difference of degree, not a difference of kind. As a result, the assessment of the effects of the Appeal Scheme as set out in Appendix B is the same as set out in my previous evidence for the Original Scheme.
- 5.29** The resulting effect on the views, whether considering the Original Scheme or the Appeal Scheme, is not harmful in any way.

## 6.0 Reasons for refusal

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- 6.1 Planning officers of LB Barnet, in a report to committee dated 2 December 2022 [CD04.004], recommended that planning permission be granted (subject to conditions and subject to referral to the Mayor of London and subject to the satisfactory completion of the Section 106 Agreement).
- 6.2 The report described the masterplan (section 3.4) as based on a hierarchy of streets and interconnected open spaces framed by buildings of varying scale height and density, the streets forming a series of perimeter blocks with active ground floor frontages which provide clear and legible routes through the site.
- 6.3 In respect of height, bulk, scale and massing, the report notes (section 3.4) that the bulk scale and massing of individual blocks varies to account for the proposed uses and the scale of the spaces that they frame or relate to; and that this provides variation in character, visual interest, identity, place and wayfinding across the masterplan.
- 6.4 The report addresses tall building issues in section 3.4.
- 6.5 The report addresses housing density in section 3.2. It notes that the density is broadly considered appropriate by officers (subject to further assessment on design and highways, which are addressed elsewhere in the report); and that the GLA consider the densities proposed are appropriate.
- 6.6 In its conclusion (section 7) the report states that 'the proposed detailed design for Phase 1 is considered to be of high quality with appropriate levels of amenity space, public open space and residential standards.'
- 6.7 The planning committee went against officers' recommendation for approval and resolved to refuse the application. The accepted decision notice for refusal of outline planning permission dated 23 March 2023 [CD04.008] gives one reason for refusal referred to below as the RfR, and which is relevant to my evidence:

*The proposed development would, by virtue of its excessive height, scale, and massing, result in a discordant and visually obtrusive form of development that would demonstrably fail to respect the local context and established pattern of development when viewed from the west of the site on Fernwood Crescent, Denham Road, Oakleigh Close and Oakleigh Road North as well as New Southgate Cemetery to the East, to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area, and the visual amenity of adjoining residential occupiers. The proposal would therefore not create a high-quality development, not constitute a sustainable form of development and would be contrary to the provisions of the NPPF, Policies D3, D4 and D9 of the London Plan 2021 and policies CS5, DM01 and DM05 of the Barnet Local Plan Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.*

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- 6.8 This RfR is similar in its wording to the RfR in respect of the Original Scheme as set out in the decision notice for refusal of outline planning permission dated 15 September 2017 [CD04.010] :

*The proposed development, by virtue of its excessive height, scale and massing would represent an over development of the site resulting in a discordant and visually obtrusive form of development that would fail to respect its local context and the pattern of development in its context, to such an extent that it would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would therefore not constitute a sustainable form of development and would be contrary to policies CS NPPF, CS5, DM01 and DM05 of the Barnet Local Plan Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (September 2012), policies 3.4, 7.4, 7.6 and 7.7 of the London Plan (July 2011, October 2013 and January 2014).*

- 6.9 The significant differences between the earlier and the later RfR's are the reference to specific views, the reference to visual amenity, and the reference to not creating a high quality development. It is set out in the Statement of Common Ground that the Council are not pursuing the visual amenity of adjoining residential occupiers as part of the RfR.

- 6.10 The Council's Statement of Case ('SOC') of 22 November 2023 sets out further information in support of the reason for refusal [CD10.001].

- 6.11 In section 5 'Planning policy' the Council identify elements of policy that they will rely on in support of the RfR:

- (On p19) London Plan policy D.3(1) and D.11
- (On p20) London Plan policy D.9 Part C
- (On p25) Barnet Core Strategy policy DM05 criteria (ii) and (iii)

- 6.12 On p31 the Council note in relation to CS policies DM05 and CDH04 that:

*'as per the criteria requirements of DM05 and emerging policy CDH04 this appeal scheme would not make a positive contribution to the existing streetscape at this location.'*

And that;

*'The proposal involves increasing the height of the buildings from the existing and from the permitted scheme, to propose buildings ranging between 10 to 13 storeys, particularly to the blocks adjacent to the railway line. Due to their excessive height, scale and massing these buildings, in conjunction with the smaller buildings in the development proposal, will fail to successfully integrate into the existing urban fabric which are predominantly made of two, three and few 4 storey buildings.'*

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6.13 On p32 the Council describe the form of development around the Site and note that

*'The appeal proposal fails to reflect the height, scale, and pattern of these surrounding buildings resulting in a harmful juxtaposition between the proposed buildings and the surrounding area.'*

And that;

*'The proposed development would be out of character with the existing low rise suburban development in surrounding roads. In the context of these surrounding suburban streets, the proposed scheme would be highly dominant, discordant, and harmful, therefore it fails to have regard to local context.'*



## 7.0 Response to reason for refusal

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- 7.1 My response to the RfR is in many respects the same as given in my evidence for the previous appeal. I have put in bold text those parts of my evidence that address the Appeal Scheme specifically.
- 7.2 The Appeal Scheme is a well-designed and carefully considered proposal that is appropriate to its site and setting in respect of height, scale and massing. Officers of LB Barnet and the GLA also found the scheme acceptable in their reports on the planning application.
- 7.3 The reason for refusal states that the scheme would be discordant and visually obtrusive, failing to respect the local context and established pattern of development, when seen from specified locations to the west and east of the Site, because of excessive height, scale and massing.
- 7.4 Views from three of the four locations mentioned are provided in the TVIA, and the effects are assessed in that document:
- |          |  |
|----------|--|
| View 7:  | New Southgate Cemetery                 |
| View 16: | Fernwood Crescent                      |
| View 18: | Oakleigh Close and Oakleigh Road North |
- 7.5 The location of view 18 in the TVIA was described incorrectly. The list of viewpoint locations on page 24, and the view titles and the text on p60 and 61, refer to 'Oakleigh Road north, looking along Oakleigh Crescent' (title) , and to Oakleigh Crescent (in text). This description is incorrect – the title should read 'Oakleigh Road north, looking along Oakleigh Close', and the text should refer to Oakleigh Close, not Oakleigh Crescent. The view location on the map, and the photographs and the text, are correct apart from this. View 18 therefore shows the view relevant to these streets named in the reason for refusal.
- 7.6 The view locations in the TVIA were agreed with planning officers. No view was shown from Denham Road, a location named in the RfR. This lies between the viewpoints for TVIA views 15 and 16 and it was considered that the effect on the view down this road could be interpolated from views 15 and 16. An 'as proposed' view from Denham Road has been prepared for the Inquiry and this is provided below. It has been prepared by the same visualiser and using the same method as for the TVIA images.
- 7.7 The points raised in the RfR are considered below. The locations given in the RfR are specific, but the points are also considered in general terms.



## **'Excessive height, scale and massing'**

7.8 The NPPF uses the terms 'scale' and 'massing' but does not define them.

7.9 Paragraph 26 of the National Design Guide [CD07.004] states under the heading 'Scale':

*'Scale is the height, width and length of each building proposed within a development in relation to its surroundings. This relates both to the overall size and massing of individual buildings and spaces in relation to their surroundings, and to the scale of their parts.'*

7.10 Paragraph 24 of the National Design Guide says the following about massing under the heading 'Form':

*Form is the three-dimensional shape and modelling of buildings and the spaces they define. Buildings and spaces can take many forms, depending upon their:*

- *size and shape in plan;*
- *height;*
- *bulk - their volume;*
- *massing - how bulk is shaped into a form;....*

7.11 The heights of the buildings are not excessive. With a variety of building heights between three and 13 storeys, the proposed buildings sit comfortably on this large site without any harmful consequences.

7.12 The scale of the Development, considered with the regard to the attributes identified above, is comparable in broad terms with other recent large scale housing developments on major regeneration sites in London, as is the massing. Examples of other large scale redevelopments in London which are examples of contrasts in scale and form with lower rise surroundings include the area around Wembley Stadium in LB Brent; the area around North Acton Station in LB Ealing; the area around the Emirates Stadium in LB Islington; and East Village, the former Olympic Village, in LB Newham.

7.13 The whole Appeal Scheme is in my view carefully considered and, taken as a whole and in its detailed aspects, consistent with current good practice in urban design.

7.14 The result in this case is an attractive and well-designed scheme. While some of the building heights proposed are greater than those that prevail in the area today, this is a scheme that is very different from higher density schemes found in more densely developed contexts in inner London – the new buildings are set in generous green landscape that ensure that there is no sense of overdevelopment.

### **The Council's view that the result is discordant and visually obtrusive**

- 7.15 The scheme is certainly not discordant as far as considerations internal to the scheme are concerned – the layout and massing are calm, ordered and rational. As noted above, the scheme does not conform to the pattern of its surroundings for a number of sound reasons. That does not result in discordance but in appropriate contrast – a reflection of the fact that the scheme provides something different from its surroundings, contributing positively to the variety and choice of housing in the wider area as well as to housing numbers.
- 7.16 As noted above, the scheme is not very visible from most of its surroundings because of the existing character of the site, the topography and the mature landscape. It is not therefore obtrusive. The most prominent element of the scheme as seen from outside the site boundary is the new school building.
- 7.17 **In respect of the locations referred to in the RfR, views from these locations are illustrated in views 7, 16 and 18, from the TVIA, and the new view from Denham Road. A commentary on each of the views is set out below. Appendix C sets out a compendium of the relevant as existing and as proposed images.**
- 7.18 **With respect to the TVIA images, I draw attention to paragraph 3.45 of the TVIA for the Appeal Scheme which concludes: 'The 'as proposed' images are provided as a guide to the effect on views as they would be experienced on site; to act as an aide-memoire; and to assist site visits. The assessment provided in this TVIA represents a professional judgement of the likely effect of the proposed development on the view or the townscape, informed by site visits as well as the photographic images provided, rather than an assessment of the photographic images.' This applies also to my evidence in this proof.**





## TVIA view 7 - New Southgate Cemetery

- 7.19 Fig. 6 shows the effect on the view from New Southgate Cemetery. Fig 7 shows the illustrative scheme in the same view. The TVIA notes at para 6.41 that 'The proposed development would appear in the middle distance, forming a background layer of development within the view. While the apparent scale of the buildings within the proposed development would be greater than that of existing buildings, its overall scale would sit comfortably in the view, and there would be variety in the height and scale of the visible buildings.' The view illustrates the success of the strategy of stepping up building heights across the Site and the effect is pleasingly 'layered'.



Figure 6: TVIA view 7- New Southgate Cemetery, looking towards entrance gateway



**Figure 7: TVIA view 7- New Southgate Cemetery, looking towards entrance gateway - view showing illustrative scheme**

## TVIA view 16 - Fernwood Crescent

- 7.20 **Fig. 8 shows the proposed development, shown in outline, appearing in the backdrop of this view along Fernwood Crescent. Fig. 9 shows the illustrative scheme in the same view. Block 5B is seen on the right (facing), Block 3B in the centre, and the top of Block 2C on the left. The TVIA notes that the new buildings would appear at a lower apparent height than houses close to the viewpoint, and could be clearly understood as lying in the middle distance; and that they would appear as a coherent set of buildings, with variation in the heights and forms of the buildings providing visual interest on the skyline.**



**Figure 8: TVIA view 16 - Fernwood Crescent**



**Figure 9: TVIA view 16 - Fernwood Crescent – view showing illustrative scheme**



**TVIA view 18 - Oakleigh Road north, looking along Oakleigh Close**

- 7.21 **Fig. 10 shows the proposed development, shown in outline, appearing in the backdrop of this view from Oakleigh Road North, looking along Oakleigh Close. Fig. 11 shows the illustrative scheme in the same view. The TVIA notes that the new buildings would appear noticeably lower than the buildings on Oakleigh Road North and could be clearly appreciated as lying in the middle distance; and that the variation in the height and form of the buildings would provide visual interest on the skyline.**



**Figure 10: TVIA view 18 - Oakleigh Road north, looking along Oakleigh Close**



**Figure 11: TVIA view 18 - Oakleigh Road north, looking along Oakleigh Close - view showing illustrative scheme**



## View from Denham Road (not in TVIA)

- 7.22 **Fig. 12 shows the proposed development, shown in outline, appearing in the backdrop of this view along Denham Road. Fig. 13 shows the illustrative scheme in the same view. The new buildings would appear at a lower apparent height than houses close to the viewpoint, and could be clearly understood as lying in the middle distance; they would appear as a coherent set of buildings, with variation in the heights and forms of the buildings providing visual interest on the skyline.**



**Figure 12: view from Denham Road**



**Figure 13: view from Denham Road – showing illustrative scheme**



**The Council's view that the scheme would fail to respect its local context and established pattern of development**

- 7.23 'Respect' does not mean 'replicate' (if all development had to conform to the pattern of what adjoins it, then all development would be the same). Paragraph 44 of the National Design Guide notes that 'well-designed places do not need to copy their surroundings in every way. It is appropriate to introduce elements that reflect how we live today, to include innovation or change such as increased densities, and to incorporate new sustainable features or systems'. As has been noted above, the proposed development follows a different pattern from its surroundings - as does existing development on the site. In townscape and in housing provision, variety and diversity can be desirable and appropriate attributes. But the proposed development does respect its surroundings; it does so by a carefully responsive approach at each edge of the site where new buildings will be close to existing residential properties, with smaller scale development closest to the site boundary, unaltered from the Original Scheme, and larger buildings set beyond these, well into the site.

**The Council's view that the scheme would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area**

- 7.24 It follows from all of the above that the scheme would not be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area; on the contrary, it would add something positive to the area, replacing a rather ad hoc set of buildings on site today, with few positive qualities beyond some aspects of the green landscape, with a coherent, well planned, attractive scheme that seems likely to be a popular place to live.

**Comments from interested parties**

- 7.25 The December report to committee sets out consultation responses in section 1.4. In the 'Summary of main points raised by members of the public in objecting to the scheme', and in the account of the views of elected representatives, the substantial points relevant to my evidence are the points set out in the RfR: objections to height, scale and massing, and objections that the scheme is out of keeping with the local area. I have addressed these points above.

## 8.0 Summary and conclusion

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- 8.1** It will be evident from my assessment in section 5 above, based broadly on the TVIA, that I do not agree with any aspect of the Council's reasons for refusal. Nor did the Council officers who dealt with the planning application; nor did the officers of the GLA. Assessing designs against design policies is not a science but it is subject to professional judgement. In this case there is consensus. Professional opinion was consistent in considering that this was a well-designed and acceptable scheme.
- 8.2** The Appeal Scheme is substantially similar to the Original Scheme, which was also supported by Council officers and officers of the GLA. That scheme was granted consent by the Secretary of State, agreeing with the Inspector's conclusions.
- 8.3** I noted in section 2 above that the Inspector and the Secretary of State accepted in approving the Original Scheme that the NLBP has its own character, and its appearance is entirely different to that of the surrounding area; and this has been the case since the area was originally developed; that the design approach of the Original Scheme was appropriate; that high buildings in the scheme would only be glimpsed in the background from points in the surrounding area, and that glimpses of tall buildings are characteristic of London even in the suburbs.
- 8.4** All of these points remain true in the Appeal Scheme, which as noted is the same in many respects as the Original Scheme. The principle that the Appeal Scheme contrasts with its setting is established as being acceptable by the decision of the Secretary of State.
- 8.5** The case made in the RfR must therefore boil down to a contention that the changes in the effects on the local views identified in the RfR, as a result of the changes between the Original and Appeal Schemes, is the reason that an acceptable scheme has become an unacceptable scheme.
- 8.6** My assessment above explains in the case of each view why I consider the visual impact acceptable. While there is a contrast between the existing townscape and the new buildings, I do not consider the results discordant or visually obtrusive.
- 8.7** The Appeal Scheme would be a development of high quality – in my view, of a higher quality than much recent housing built in outer London.

**8.8 I have set out above my assessment of the project which I consider to be well designed and of a high standard in its own right, appropriate to its Site and its surroundings, and not harmful to its local setting. In respect of the matters considered in my evidence, there is no reason why planning permission should not be granted. I respectfully ask that the appeal be allowed.**



## Appendix A: The site and its setting

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### Location

- A.1 The Site is located in the London Borough of Barnet, in East Barnet. It is bounded to the west by railway lines, to the east by Brunswick Park Road, to the south by Oakleigh Road South / Brunswick Crescent, and to the north by Howard Close and Weirdale Avenue / Ashbourne Avenue.
- A.2 The Site is large and broadly 'L' shaped, with its 'long leg' set against the railway line to the west of the Site, its 'short leg' extending east to Brunswick Park Road, and a spur extending from the south-western 'heel' towards an access point from Oakleigh Road South. The Site accommodates a number of buildings, most of which are between two and four storeys tall and are occupied by office or educational uses. The buildings are set within large areas of open green and landscaped space in an informal 'campus' style arrangement. A man-made lake is located on the eastern part of the Site.
- A.3 The Site faces the backs of houses to its north and south, and railway lines to the west. The Site's only meaningful stretch of street frontage is to the east, along Brunswick Park Road, and this part of the Site is occupied by a landscaped area of land which includes a number of trees. None of the buildings on the Site directly address adjacent streets and the Site has a self-contained character overall.
- A.4 There is a noticeable change in levels across the Site; the topography is varied but, generally speaking, from the centre of the Site the land rises to the north (and to a lesser extent to the south), as well as to the west. There is an approximately 24m difference in height between the lowest part of the Site, adjacent to Brunswick Park Road, and the highest part of the Site, adjacent to Weirdale Avenue/Ashbourne Avenue.
- A.5 The immediate surroundings of the Site are largely characterised by suburban housing. There are streets of two storey housing directly north of the Site's boundaries, post-war in the case of Howard Close (north of the Site's shorter eastern 'leg') and inter-war in the case of Weirdale Avenue and Ashbourne Avenue (north of the Site's longer western 'leg').
- A.6 Two storey housing built in relatively recent decades lies directly east of the Site, set-back from Brunswick Park Road. New Southgate Cemetery lies immediately south-east of the Site. Two storey late Victorian terraced housing lies directly south of the Site, along Brunswick Crescent.
- A.7 The railway lines to the west of the Site are edged on both sides by vegetated areas which include a considerable number of trees. Beyond this to the west are streets of semi-detached housing and modern apartment blocks along Denham Close.



- A.8 In terms of the wider context of the Site, it is located approximately 1.2km north of New Southgate station and 1.3km south of Oakleigh Park, both of which are stops on the Moorgate - Welwyn Garden City railway line. While there are retail uses along major roads nearby, including along Russell Lane and Oakleigh Road South, there is little that could be considered a local centre of activity near the Site.
- A.9 The topography is a notable aspect of the character of the wider area, much as it is to a smaller degree across the Site. While varied, in general the land rises noticeably to the east and to a lesser extent to the west of a valley located to the east of the Site which contains a minor tributary of the River Lea, Pymme's Brook.

### **Historical development of the area**

- A.10 The area around the Site largely comprised open fields for much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. A map of 1878-79 shows the Great Northern Railway lines in place to the west of the Site and a station, marked as 'Cemetery Station', at the southern end of the Site (approximately in the location of the current car park). A tree lined boulevard is shown leading from the station to the 'Great Northern Cemetery', shown to the east of the Site, which was established in the 1850s as a private cemetery and is now known as New Southgate Cemetery. There is little other development apparent, other than scattered housing along Station Road (now Oakleigh Road South).
- A.11 By the time of a map of 1896, some of the terraced housing to the south of the Site, along Brunswick Crescent and Brunswick Grove, had been built out. By the time of a map of 1914, these streets are shown as completed, and further housing is evident to the west of Oakleigh Road South and further south.
- A.12 The Site was developed as the location for the 'New Southgate Works', owned by Standard Telephone and Cable, in the 1920s. Maps from the 1930s show large footprint buildings on the south-west part of the Site. Other parts of the Site remained open at this time, to the north and east of these buildings, and are marked as sports grounds. The local and wider area around the Site was subject to its most significant phase of development in the inter-war years, as is evident from the dramatic expansion in the number of streets of housing shown on maps from this time.
- A.13 A similar situation is evident on the Site in maps from the 1950s to the 1980s. By 1950, the housing around Linden Close to the east of the Site had been built out, and by 1981 housing is shown along Howard Close, immediately north of the eastern part of the Site.
- A.14 The Site was acquired by Northern Telecom (Nortel) in 1989. Building 3 was completed in 2001 and is a three-storey building clad in white aluminium panels and with extensive glazing, arranged around a central internal garden area. In the wider area, there has been relatively piecemeal residential development in recent decades but the broad pattern of development remains much as it was in the late 1930s.



A.15 The resulting townscape and urban grain in the wider area today can be divided into Townscape Character Areas ('TCAs') that have broad characteristics in common, as set out below (see Figure 1 for a map of townscape character areas). The Site is self-contained and does not easily fit within any of the TCAs around it; it is therefore not included in the TCAs below and the effect of the Proposed Development on the character of the Site, as assessed above and in more detail in Section 5, will be considered separately.

**Townscape character area**

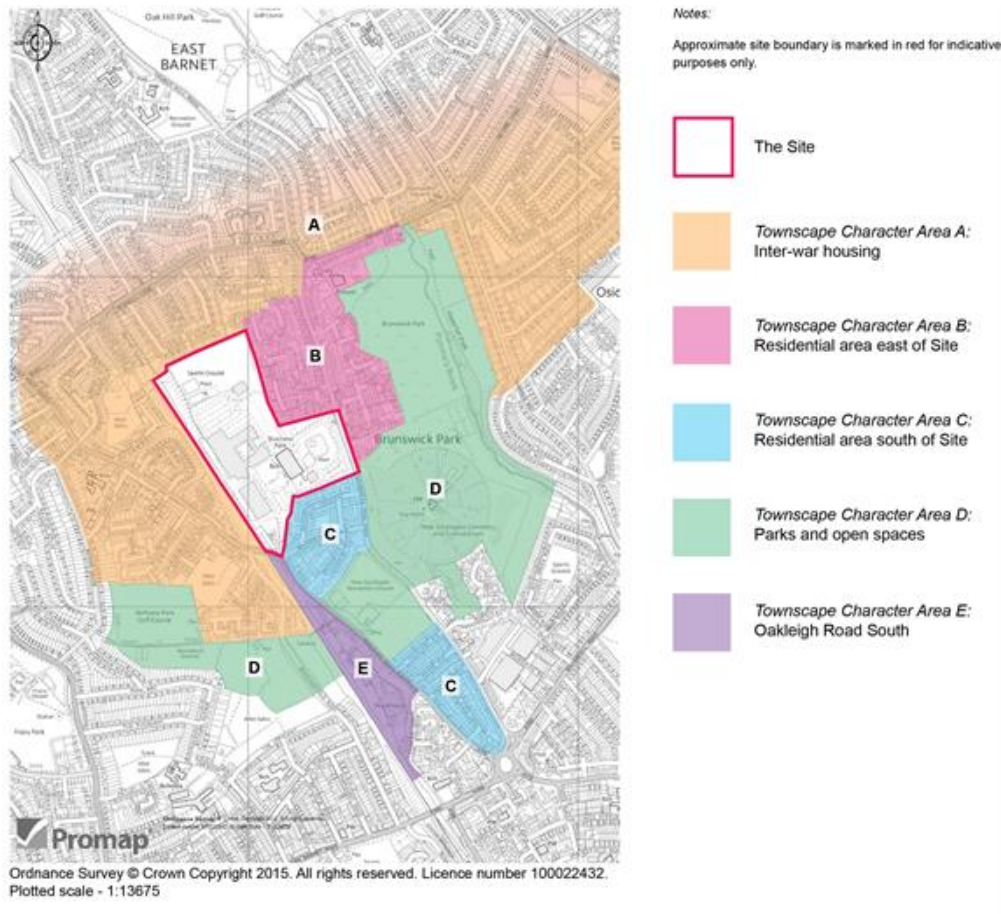


Figure A1: map of townscape character areas

**The Site**

A.16 The existing buildings are of no special architectural quality. Although the prevalence of open and landscaped areas is pleasant enough, and the trees on the Site contribute to an agreeably leafy overall character, the distribution of buildings and landscape across the Site is rather ad hoc. The Site feels cut off from its surroundings, and presents no significant definition to its only significant street frontage, to Brunswick Park Road.



### **TCA A – inter-war housing**

- A.17 This TCA stretches north, north-east and west of the Site and is dominated by inter-war two storey housing, generally semi-detached and set behind front gardens. There are pockets of older and later housing within the TCA, including stretches of late Victorian houses located along Oakleigh Road North, post-war housing near Bethune Park, and some modern development such as the apartment blocks along Denham Road. Commercial uses are found at ground floor level along larger roads, such as Russell Lane.
- A.18 The topography within the TCA is varied, but in general terms there is a particularly noticeable rise in the level of the land towards the east, such that long range views are possible from the parts of the TCA around Osidge Lane, and to the west, such that Oakleigh Road North is set at a higher level than the land between it and the railway lines.
- A.19 The architectural quality of the housing in this area is generally unremarkable and typical of the time of its building. The overall townscape character is relatively coherent, however, due to the broad similarity in the style, scale and layout of the housing. There are street trees set within pavements throughout the TCA and in some places, particularly main roads such as Russell Lane, there are generous grassed strips containing trees which contribute to a leafy, suburban character.

### **TCA B – residential area east of the Site**

- A.20 This TCA is bounded by the Site and Brunswick Park Road to the west, the western edges of New Southgate Cemetery and Brunswick Park to the east, Linden Road/Prevost Road and Osidge Lane to the north, and the northern edge of New Southgate Cemetery to the south.
- A.21 This TCA is characterised by post-war and more modern residential development, with some pockets of inter-war housing. The area between the Site and Brunswick Park Road is occupied by bungalows, two storey houses, and two storey apartment blocks built in the post-war period. These are often set back from the road behind front gardens or areas of open space, and arranged in short terraces with gaps between them, such that these streets have a relatively open but also fragmented character. The land rises slightly towards the west within this part of the TCA.
- A.22 The housing to the east of Brunswick Park Road was built in more recent decades. It is largely in buff brick, mostly two storeys high and arranged in closely grouped short terraces, with occasional three or four storey apartment blocks.
- A.23 There are street trees set within pavements in many places, and more substantial areas of trees and vegetation along streets which contribute to a leafy, suburban character within the TCA. Along the main road of Brunswick Park Road, there are generous



landscape strips including trees, some of them serving to separate 'outer' pavements adjacent to the road from 'inner' pavements, adjacent to houses.

- A.24 The housing in this area is of solid appearance but of no particular architectural quality, and the layout of the housing tends towards producing a fragmented character overall.

#### **TCA C – residential area south of the Site**

- A.25 This small TCA comprises the area between the Site and New Southgate Recreation Ground, and to the south of the Recreation Ground. It is characterised by older housing than in much of the rest of the area around the Site, with late 19<sup>th</sup> century cottage-style terraces set within a tight urban grain along streets such as Brunswick Crescent. To the south of New Southgate Recreation Ground, 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced houses set on a grid dominate the townscape. There are street trees set within pavements in places throughout this TCA.

- A.26 The consistent form and scale of the housing within this TCA is such that relatively coherent streetscapes are formed.

#### **TCA D – parks and green spaces**

- A.27 There are four major green spaces in the area around the Site. While not necessarily contiguous and directly accessible from each other, they are all located close to each other such that they can be considered together, albeit recognising the different characteristics of each one.

- A.28 New Southgate Cemetery was established in the 1850s. The plan of the cemetery is focused on an inner circle containing an impressive chapel, crematorium and adjacent war memorial, with a series of radial routes leading from it to an outer circle. Mature trees screen views in and out of the cemetery to a considerable degree, and it has a secluded character other than at its edges, particularly its northern edge, where there are fewer trees.

- A.29 Brunswick Park is more open in character than the cemetery. It has extensive open grassed areas, with the trees largely arranged in a line through the middle of the park and around its edges. As noted previously, Pymme's Brook runs through the park.

- A.30 New Southgate Recreation Ground is largely characterised by open grassed areas, much of it given over to use as playing fields. Trees surround the edges of the park, such that views out of it are screened to a considerable extent.

- A.31 Bethune Park comprises two main areas with different characters. The northern part of the park is landscaped with routes and trees within it and along its edges. The southern





part is somewhat sparser, with open grassed areas dominating and fewer trees. Medium rise post-war and modern apartment blocks are prominent on the northern edge of Bethune Park.

### **TCA E – Oakleigh Road South**

- A.32 This TCA is a broadly triangular area of land set between Oakleigh Road South and railway lines, to the east and west respectively, and Coppies Grove to the south.
- A.33 This TCA is occupied by light industrial and commercial uses. The buildings within the area largely take the form of warehouses and sheds in brick and sheet metal. Large areas are given over to hard-standing used for parking and storage. The buildings within this TCA are utilitarian in appearance and many of the uses are visually unattractive. The trees along Oakleigh Road South provide some screening of them.

### **Heritage assets**

#### **Conservation areas**

- A.34 The Southgate Green Conservation Area (in LB Enfield) is just under 1km from the Site at its closest but it is evident from a site visit that there is no possibility of any effect on its setting as a result of development on the Site. There are no other conservation areas within 1km of the Site.

#### **Listed buildings and registered parks and gardens of special historic interest**

- A.35 There is one listed building within 1km of the Site, the grade II listed Memorial to German First World War Internees, New Southgate Cemetery. This is seen in View 7 from New Southgate Cemetery. It is a small memorial, only appreciated when quite close to it. Development on the Site would have no effect on its significance and it is not considered further in my evidence.
- A.36 There are no other listed buildings or registered parks and gardens of special historic interest within 1km of the centre of the Site.
- A.37 A number of listed buildings were identified just beyond 1km of the centre of the Site. These buildings were considered in terms of the potential for their townscape settings to be affected to a significant extent by development on the Site at the scale envisaged, and they are as follows:
- Statue in Friary Park – Grade II
  - Parish Church of St. James – Grade II

- St. James's Primary School – Grade II
- Lawrence Campe Almshouses – Grade II
- All Saints Church of England – Grade II
- Parish Church of St. Mary – Grade II\*
- Water Tower – Grade II
- Clarke Family Monument – Grade II
- Group of 6 tombstones – Grade II
- Church Farm School – Grade II
- 2a & 3 Church Farm School – Grade II

A.38 Informed by site visits and map study, it is considered that the distance of these buildings from the Site and the nature of their locations is such that there would not be any significant effect on their townscape settings as a result of development on the Site at the scale envisaged. These buildings beyond the original 1km study area have not, therefore, been added to the scope of this assessment.

#### **Locally listed buildings**

A.39 There are no locally listed buildings in the streets immediately surrounding the Site.



## Appendix B: Assessment of effects on townscape character

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- B.1 My assessment of the effects of the Development on the townscape character of the Site and the townscape character areas identified in the TVIA is the same as for the original scheme, and is set out below.

### **The Site**

- B.2 The Development would redevelop the Site in line with a clear and legible masterplan. This would provide new routes based on existing access points, and a new connection to the north that would improve permeability, together with three new substantial public spaces. The residential accommodation would be provided largely as perimeter blocks, with taller buildings located towards the centre of the Site and along its western edge, and low scale housing located at the other edges of the Site. The proposed school would address the Site's only significant street frontage, to Brunswick Park Road, with a high-quality building.
- B.3 The Development would have an identity of its own, which is fitting for a Site that has previously been developed in a manner quite different from its surroundings, although it would also echo the character of the local area in some respects, for example in the landscape design of the streets (including the central landscaped strips within pavements along The Parkway), and the materials used in the buildings. While more densely developed than its surroundings, the Development nonetheless would be sensitive to its context; the massing strategy across the Site demonstrates a thoughtful response to the Site's surroundings, and the provision of improved permeability and areas of new high quality public space would benefit the local and wider area.

### **TCA A – inter-war housing**

- B.4 The location of lower scale buildings at the northern and eastern edges of the Development would represent an appropriately sensitive response to the two-storey housing neighbouring the Site, within this TCA. As a result, the Development would have little visual effect on the streets of inter-war housing close to the Site. In general, where visible the Development would be seen to a very minor extent in the background of the view, such as in the views from Weirdale Avenue and Ashbourne Avenue.
- B.5 The Development would be more visible from higher ground to the east and west of the Site. In these views, such as those from Osidge Lane to the east or Fernwood Crescent to the west, it would appear as a coherent development, with a varied skyline, which could be clearly appreciated as lying in the background of the view.

- B.6 The enhanced permeability provided through the new access point at the northern end of the Site, and the provision of new areas of public open space, would be of benefit to this TCA.

#### **TCA B – residential area east of the Site**

- B.7 The Proposed Development would be seen in some views from this area, most notably in relatively close-range views in which there are gaps between buildings in the foreground, and directly across and along Brunswick Park Road.
- B.8 Where visible, the scale of the Development would relate comfortably to that of the existing housing in this area. The high quality of the architecture, and the use of a simple palette of brick and stone, would relate well to the existing buildings in this TCA. The school would appear as an elegant and ordered building, enhancing the Site frontage to Brunswick Park Road.

#### **TCA C – residential area south of the Site**

- B.9 There would be little visibility of the Proposed Development from this TCA, due to its tight urban grain. Small parts of the Proposed Development, primarily Phase 4, would be seen from some places; this would generally be in a glimpsed or incidental manner, such as through gaps between buildings, or it would be seen to a relatively small extent in the background of medium and longer-range views.

#### **TCA D – parks and green spaces**

- B.10 The Proposed Development would not be seen at all from most points within the parks and green spaces within this TCA, and where it would be visible, it would generally be seen to a minor extent, in a manner consistent with the existing character of such views.
- B.11 The greatest visibility of the Development within this TCA would be from the New Southgate Cemetery (albeit this would be from the more open northern part of the cemetery, and there would be little or no visibility from the inner part of the cemetery). In such views, the Development would appear in the background, at an apparent scale that would appear comfortable in relation to existing buildings. The most visible building in most cases would be the main school building, and its regular and ordered appearance would allow it to form a calm backdrop in such views. The Development overall would appear as a coherent and high-quality scheme, and the retained and new trees proposed as part of the Development would maintain the Site's leafy character when seen in such views.

## **TCA E – Oakleigh Road South**

- B.12 The Proposed Development would be visible to a limited extent from this TCA. Visibility would be primarily of the Phase 4 buildings and they would appear as buildings of a different form and use to those within the TCA, clearly distinct from the TCA, and seen in the middle distance.

### **Summary of assessment**

- B.13 The Site is large and relatively self-contained in character, with its only meaningful street frontage addressing Brunswick Park Road, to the east. In the past it has been developed in a manner quite different from the areas surrounding it to the north, south, east and west, which were largely developed for suburban housing, particularly in the inter-war years. The buildings on the Site today are mostly large in footprint and accommodate office or educational uses, set within landscaped and open grassed areas including many trees, which provides the Site with a leafy character. The variation in land levels across the Site, particularly a rise in level towards the north and west, is a notable aspect of the Site's character.
- B.14 There is generally little awareness of the buildings on the Site in the area immediately around it, despite their relatively large scale. There are opportunities for longer range views towards the Site, particularly from the east, due to the topography of the wider area around the Site. Where visible, the similarity in scale of the existing buildings on the Site, and the generally horizontal emphasis of their elevations, is such they have a somewhat homogeneous and monotonous appearance.
- B.15 The wider area around the Site is overwhelmingly suburban and residential in character. Two storey housing is the predominant form of development, most of it from the inter-war period, but there are examples of other building forms, including apartment blocks dating from the post-war and more recent decades. Street trees and relatively generous areas of landscape are common and contribute to the leafy, suburban character.
- B.16 The Development would redevelop the Site in a comprehensive manner, in line with an ordered and logical masterplan. It would introduce a legible network of routes and spaces, including a new access point from the north which would enhance permeability, and it would enhance the sense of arrival at the other key entrance points to the Site. The Site would be significantly better integrated with the local area around it as a result.
- B.17 The scale of the buildings across the Site would respond appropriately to the Site's surroundings, by placing lower scale buildings at the northern, eastern and southern edges of the Site, where they would be adjacent to existing low scale neighbouring housing and stepping up the height of buildings towards the centre of the Site and along its western edge, set against the railway lines.



- B.18 The architecture of the buildings within Phase 0 and Phase 1, which are subject to a detailed planning application, would be relatively simple, and would have a calm, ordered appearance. The predominant use of brick and stone would relate well to many of the existing buildings in the area around the Site.
- B.19 There would be very little visibility of the Development in short to medium range views from the streets of inter-war housing to the north, such as along Ashbourne Avenue and Weirdale Avenue. There would be greater visibility from the streets of largely post-war housing immediately east of the Site, such as Howard Close, in which gaps between existing buildings allow direct views towards the Site from some places. However, the viewpoints in the TVIA were chosen in order to illustrate those points from which the Development is likely to be most visible; they are not typical of the general experience of views towards the Site from this area, and the visibility of the Development within this area as a whole would be much less than shown within the illustrated views from these streets. In those views where it would be seen to a considerable extent, the Development would appear as a coherent, high quality scheme, and its scale would appear comfortable in relation to existing buildings, with the lower buildings of the Development closest to existing buildings. Retained and new trees would maintain and, in some cases, enhance the leafy quality of the Site in such views.
- B.20 The Development would be visible in some medium to long range views from the east and west, as a result of the raised level of the land in these areas. It would clearly appear as part of a background layer of townscape and would provide visual interest through quality of the new buildings and the variation in the heights of proposed buildings across the Site.
- B.21 The quality of the Site would be substantially improved by the Development. In respect of the TCAs around the Site, the Development would be visible in some views from the residential area immediately east of the Site, TCA B, in which it would appear as a high-quality development. The Development would improve the definition and appearance of Brunswick Park Road through the main school building, and there would be enhanced permeability and new areas of public realm within the Site, both of which would be of benefit to this TCA. The Development would similarly be of benefit to TCA A (inter-war housing) and would appear as a coherent and high-quality development in the background of medium to long range views from this TCA.
- B.22 There would be little or no visibility of the Development from the parks and open spaces in the wider area around the Site (TCA D), with the principal exception of more open areas of New Southgate Cemetery. The form and architecture of the Development is such that it would appear as a calm backdrop in these views and retained and new trees and areas of open space would help to maintain the Site's overall leafy and suburban character in such views. The Development would have a relatively minor effect in relation to the other TCAs around the Site.
- B.23 The overall effect of the Development would be to open up what is currently a relatively self-contained Site and integrate it better with its surroundings. The character of the

Development would undoubtedly be different from that of surrounding areas, including in the density and scale of the development on it; this, however, is appropriate both in respect of a Site which has always been developed differently, and in respect of a major development opportunity that should seek to optimise the use of land. The Development would be neighbourly in its approach to the distribution of massing across the Site, and the enhanced permeability and new public realm it would offer would be of benefit to the local and wider area in which the Site is located.

- B.24 The Development would enhance the views in which it is seen and would have a beneficial or neutral effect in relation to the TCAs around it.

