**Purpose of the Project**

Waterman EED were appointed by Workspace 14 Ltd to co-ordinated the EIA, undertake technical assessments and prepare an Environmental Statement to accompany the planning application for the redevelopment of Marshgate Business Centre and 14 Marshgate Lane (the Site), located near Stratford in London Borough of Newham (LBN).

While the Site is located within the administrative boundary of LBN, it also falls within the Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) area surrounding Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. The LLDC acts as the determining planning authority for applications in this area.

The suitability of the Site for Development is acknowledged within a number of planning documents, and lies within local and strategic planning policy designations for the local area. The Site forms part of the Whole Legacy Communities Scheme (PDZ8 site) within which the Development would help to realise this Masterplan and would form an important role in delivering regeneration in this part of Stratford.

**Key Issues**

The Site lies in close proximity to the Bow Back River and City Mill River (both tributaries of the River Lea) and within the Environment Agency (EA) Flood Zone 3, which has a high probability of flooding. Appropriate consultation and design consideration was undertaken to ensure the design met the EA criteria. This included positioning buildings with an appropriate ‘set back’ from the adjacent rivers and ensuring ‘more’ vulnerable uses such as residential were located above the flood breach level therefore reducing potential flood risk to future occupants.

**A Site Investigation (SI) for ground contamination was undertaken pre-submission due to the Site’s historical industrial use. This was reported in the ES and a Remediation Strategy was provided post-submission, to be implemented prior to construction.**

As part of the EIA, a desk-based archaeology assessment was undertaken, which acknowledged potential for palaeo-environmental, prehistoric and post medieval archaeological assets within the Site. In agreement with English Heritage, a watching brief was undertaken during the SI, which identified high levels of truncation on Site and a layer of preserved peat. Accordingly, a targeted programme of archaeological watching brief and geo-archaeological investigation will be required (by condition) prior to and during all intrusive ground work.

The existing Site provides poor ecological value and habitat potential, therefore a key aim of the development was to provide ecological enhancements and open space for future residents through landscaping. Our team provided input to the landscaping design suggesting biodiversity measures such as bird boxes, living roofs and native plant mix for the amenity spaces. Consultation with the EA and River and Canal Trust resulted in additional requests for in-river enhancements. Despite the potential ecological benefits of providing in-river enhancements such as reed beds, our team had to consider the implications of introducing river works to the development. In particular whether we would trigger a Water Framework Directive assessment and how river vegetation would affect the navigation for boats and access and maintenance. It was subsequently agreed to only provide terrestrial enhancement measures and to provide riverside sand martin boxes and wildflower meadow (behind the river wall) to encourage species to the river corridor.
Description of the project

The Site comprises an area of 1.33 hectares and is currently occupied by active and disused storage, general and light industrial businesses with associated areas of hard standing surface car park which form Marshgate Business Centre together with a vacant plot of land to the north on the Site.

The Site has a history of industrial use dating back to the 1860s with evidence of mills, factories and chemical works.

The proposals comprise a residential led mixed-use development, requiring the demolition of existing light-industrial units and the erection of 8 new buildings up to 12 storeys in height, providing 268 new homes. Of these, 32% are proposed for affordable housing. A number of landscaped open areas would link each of the proposed buildings. Basement car parking, plant rooms, refuse storage and an energy centre would be provided on Site.

The expectation is that the demolition and construction for the Development would span approximately 32 months, with the Development being completed in the second quarter of 2018. All the existing structures on the Site would be demolished.

Lessons Learnt

As the determining planning authority, the LLDC were heavily involved in providing input into the design process to ensure the development met their wider vision for the area. This resulted in several design iterations throughout the programme and highlighted the importance of early consultation through transparent and open discussions. It was also noted that early environmental input to the design for optioneering testing may have reduced iterations at a later stage. This also provided a learning process for the design team to understand the need for the EIA to assess the ‘final’ scheme and that abortive work can result from commencing assessments (particularly modelling work) prior to scheme fix.

A Water Framework Directive (WFD) Assessment was requested by the EA through the Scoping Opinion due to the potential impact of the development on the Bow Back River. In determining that there would be no hydro-morphological impacts on the river, Waterman were able to establish at an early stage that the project would not compromise the objectives of the WFD for the waterbody, and therefore scoped out the need for a WFD Assessment.

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