

Sara Chiong

From: Ryan Caldon <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 20 September 2024 16:38
To: Local Plan
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Representations to the Newham Reg 19 Consultation on behalf of Dominus Stratford Limited
Attachments: 240920 - Representations to the LBN Reg 19 Plan - Final.pdf; 302 - 312 High Street Stratford Student Need Assessment 20.12.2023.pdf; co-living-report-2024-11304.pdf
Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Good afternoon,

Please find attached representations (with two accompanying attachments) to the Newham Reg 19 Consultation submitted on behalf of Dominus Stratford Limited.

I would be grateful if you would confirm receipt.

Kind regards



Ryan Caldon (Assoc. RTPI)

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Planning Policy
The Planning Department
London Borough of Newham

Date: 20 September 2024

Dear Sir or Madam

Representations to the Regulation 19 Proposed Submission Document Consultation of the Newham Local Plan Review.

On behalf of Dominus Stratford Limited (hereinafter 'the Client'), Knight Frank hereby submit representations in respect of the Regulation 19 Consultation on the Newham Local Plan Proposed Submission Document (dated June 2024), which is running from 19th July 2024 to 20th September 2024.

The Client has a major land interest in the borough as owners of 302-312 High Street, Stratford, London, E15 1AJ (hereinafter 'the Site').

The Site is located within the London Legacy Development Corporation ('LLDC') which serves as the Local Planning Authority ('LPA') until 30th November 2024 after which the LPA will be the LB Newham. Under the LLDC's Transition of Power Arrangements the LLDC Local Plan will remain the relevant Local Plan until the policies are superseded by those contained within a new Newham Local Plan. Therefore, the Site will be affected by the new policies and allocations contained within the emerging new Newham Local Plan, and our Client would like to influence these as far as possible.

The Client supports the preparation of the Newham Local Plan Review however, it is considered that a number of the policies are not sound. Within this representation we provide comments on a range of draft policies and consider these against the tests of soundness, and where necessary, make specific reference to our Client's Site. Specifically we comment on policies:

- Policy BFN1: Spatial Strategy;
- Policy BFN3: Social Value and Health Impact Assessment - delivering social value, health and wellbeing;
- Policy D1: Design Standards;
- Policy D2: Public Realm Net Gain;
- Policy D3: Design-led Site Capacity Optimisation;
- Policy D4: Tall Buildings;
- Homes Chapter Introduction;
- Policy H8: Purpose Built Student Accommodation; and
- Stratford and Maryland Neighbourhood.

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The Site and Background

Our Client owns 302-312 High Street, Stratford which is located on the northern side of Stratford High Street (A118) and immediately adjacent to the south-western boundary of Stratford Metropolitan Centre.

The Site comprises a crescent-shaped parcel of land which is occupied by hardstanding and a series of 2-3no. storey buildings comprising several former commercial buildings (use class E); and a public house (Sui Generis) with 3no. residential units (use class C3) at the upper floors. It should be noted that all buildings are in a poor/declining state of repair and all buildings are currently vacant.

The Site comprises previously developed and underutilised land in a highly sustainable location with Public Transport Accessibility Level ('PTAL') 6b which is considered 'excellent'.

As per the adopted LLDC Local Plan (2020) the Site is located within the Lower Lea Valley Opportunity Area; Stratford High Street Policy Area; and the Greater Carpenters District Site Allocation.

The Client secured full planning permission at the Site in May 2023 for a part 12, part 25 storey building comprising 465 student accommodation rooms, 786sqm workspace (Class E), a new public house consisting of 141sqm (Sui Generis) (LLDC ref. 22/00098/FUL).

The permission is not deliverable, primarily due to changes in market conditions significantly increasing build costs, and fire safety regulatory changes meaning the extant permission requires significant reconfigurations to ensure compliance. As such a new planning application was submitted in December 2023 for a part-12, part-34 storey building comprising 700 student accommodation rooms, 801sqm workspace (Class E), a new public house consisting of 177sqm (Sui Generis) (LLDC ref. 23/00456/FUL). The Client continues to pursue this proposal which is to be determined at Appeal in Q1 2025.

It is in this context that our Client submits this representation. Our Client wishes to ensure that the Newham Local Plan, which will shape the future of the Borough and the regeneration of the Site, is positively worded, robust, flexible, and capable of ensuring that this previously developed and highly accessible site can be optimised. Furthermore, our Client has many development sites across London and the UK, and would like to continue to invest into LB Newham, they therefore have an interest in ensuring that planning policy for the Borough is positively worded so as to enable viable development to come forward across the Borough.

Regulation 19 Proposed Submission Document

Paragraph 35 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') which the Local Plan will be considered against requires that any Plan submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination must be capable of being found both legally compliant and sound. This places various duties on the Council including, but not limited to, ensuring the Plan is:

- Positively prepared – seeking to meet objectively assessed needs, including unmet needs from neighbouring areas where it is practical to do so;
- Justified – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
- Effective – deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters; and
- Consistent with national policy – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.

If the Newham Local Plan Proposed Submission Document fails to accord with any of the above requirements, it is incapable of complying with the NPPF, which as a result of Section 19 of the Planning and Compulsory Act 2004, is a legal requirement.

Draft Policy BFN1: Spatial Strategy

Policy BFN1 sets out the Borough's spatial strategy for meeting identified needs for new homes and jobs.

The identification of Stratford and Maryland (Neighbourhood 8) as a location for directing significant levels of growth by BFN1 Part 1 a) iii) is understood and supported; however, we question why this part of the policy does not identify an indicative number of new homes and jobs to be located there as per Parts a) i) and ii).

The identification of a potential number of new homes and jobs will drive development towards measurable goals and therefore this should be added to the policy.

To improve this policy we would like to see minimum targets installed into the policy wording, and phrases like “the council will seek to exceed...” or “as a minimum, the council will seek to deliver...” This would help the policy to be clear to its expectations and be drafted in a positive and pro-growth way.

Overall, we support the policy’s ambition (see BFN1 Part 2) to make the best use of land, optimise sites and deliver sustainable development in accordance with the London Plan (2021) by applying the design-led approach; identifying tall buildings zones; conserving and enhancing the borough’s heritage assets and settings; and delivering zero carbon, climate resilient and nature-friendly developments. This reflects our Client’s ambition at 302-312 Stratford High Street which would significantly contribute towards the goals of the Local Plan.

It would also be a helpful addition to encourage growth if BFN1 Part 2 made clear its intention to support the approach in the London Plan, whereby all areas in London within 800m of a train station, or boundary of a town centre, or within PTALs 3-6 will be considered appropriate locations for residential development.

BFN1 Part 2 could also be improved by explicitly acknowledging the benefits of mixed use and mixed tenure developments. Para 69 of the draft NPPF encourages mixed tenure developments, specifically in the context of residential development. More broadly, mixed use development as supported by London Plan Policies GG2, SD1 and H1 should be encouraged as this is an essential way of optimising the use of land in sustainable locations.

It would also be useful and positive to clarify that the term “residential” includes all forms of residential formats such as PBSA, co-living, Build to Rent, later living, and so on. As acknowledged in the London Plan at para 4.1.9 PBSA contributes towards housing supply on a 2.5:1 basis, and co-living contributes on a similar 1.8:1 basis. Such housing types are essential to the successful functioning of the London Housing Market and should be encouraged.

Given that the Newham Strategic Housing Market Assessment (June 2022) identifies a significant need for PBSA to be delivered over the plan period, it is important that this need is recognised through the policies and sub-text of the Local Plan.

Draft Policy BFN3: Social Value and Health Impact Assessment - delivering social value, health and wellbeing

The ambition of draft Policy BFN3 Part 1 states that all developments in Newham should maximise social value and make a positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of communities. This is fully supported by our Client.

The Client shares these values and embeds these into the developments which they bring forward including their aspirations for development at 302-312 Stratford High Street.

Consideration within the draft policy of protected characteristics is also supported. The list of protected characteristics set out at BFN3:3 ‘Implementation’ on page 42 should include Care Leavers, which we recommend is added.

More broadly we consider that the list of protected characteristics set out at BFN3:3 should be included elsewhere in the draft plan rather than singularly under the supporting text of this specific part of a policy. Doing so would more clearly demonstrate the range of protected characteristics that planning has a statutory duty to give due regard to in decision-making under the Equality Act 2010. This should either be set out in a footer, within the policy justification, or perhaps a defined term in the Glossary.

Draft Policy D1: Design Standards

The general requirements of the policy and the high standards of design are being strived for are supported. However, specifically noting the Newham Characterisation Study (2024) at Part 1 raises questions as to the place that other important design guidance has in the decision making process and design. For example, there is a range of other SPDs/SPGs prepared by both Newham and the GLA that would be material considerations in decision making and design. As drafted, Policy D1 could be read to put the Newham Characterisation Study as the primary design document to take into account. This is unlikely to be what Newham intends. If it is, what is the justification for this approach, none appears to have been provided.

Furthermore, as drafted, the reference to “*council-led*” design guidance and codes at Part 1 appears to diminish the role of the GLA design documents in design and decision making. Again, this is unlikely to be what Newham intends.

We suggest that the reference to specific design documents is removed from the policy text, or at best noted as a key document (but one of many) in the sub-text. We would also suggest that the reference to “council-led” is removed entirely to avoid the confusion/conflict with GLA guidance.

Similarly, the supporting text references a select number of design guidance documents. The risk of noting some documents but not others, in the context of how the policy and sub-text is worded, seems to give weight to some but not others. Again, this is unlikely to be what Newham intends.

Overall our Client would prefer to see the policy and sub-text simplified to either use generic language like “should be designed in accordance with the design guidance SPG/SPDs prevailing at the time of the application...” rather than emphasising one specific document. If one specific document is to be more important than others, then this should be explained as to why this is the case, and wording amended to make this clear but still recognising the role of the other guidance.

The general requirements of the policy appear to be sufficiently flexible with the use of phrases like “where applicable” before listing the various requirements. This is supported.

Draft Policy D2: Public Realm Net Gain

The broad content and ambition of policy D2 is supported. In our Client’s view it is right that major developments look beyond the site ownership boundary and consider how the development can enhance the public realm. This must though be proportionate to the scale, nature and viability of the development.

Our Client would like to ensure that there is flexibility in this policy to encourage developers to create well designed public spaces, but also to ensure that the list of requirements at Part 2 is applied “where applicable”. The list of requirements will not be appropriate in every case, and would also introduce a significant cost to developments.

In addition, Part 3 then seeks financial contributions to be made. There must be flexibility in the application of the policy to ensure public realm enhancements are delivered but keeping in mind development viability. Again, it is suggested that the wording is softened to be “where applicable, major developments...” It is noted that such payments are to be proportionate to the development as a whole which is encouraged.

We note that in the supporting text the Council suggest that the Net Present Value method is the best means of calculating cost of public contributions. Whilst supported that a method is identified which adds to transparency and clarity for developers, we question where the evidence is for that choice of method, and what alternatives have been considered? The methodology is likely to constitute a significant increase in the obligations paid which will harm overall scheme viability. The Client would like to see the justification for this method being used and why alternatives are discounted, and also ensure that policy and subtext are suitably flexible so that a developer can either deliver the public realm scheme themselves, design it and cost it themselves and then make the equivalent contribution, and opt out of making such a contribution if scheme viability shows this to be necessary.

Draft Policy D3: Design-led Site Capacity Optimisation

The principle of the policy which follows the design-led approach to optimising site capacity as set out in London Plan Policy D3 is supported. However we consider that the policy should better explain what optimisation of a site means in practice aligning with the definition set out in London Plan Policy D3.

The draft policy should be explicit that optimising site capacity means ensuring that development is of the most appropriate form and land use for the site in accordance with London Plan Policy D3 Part A.

Likewise, the draft policy should be explicit that in accordance with London Plan Policy D3 Part B higher density developments should generally be promoted in locations that are well connected to jobs, services, infrastructure and amenities by public transport, walking and cycling, services, infrastructure and amenities by public transport, walking and cycling. The London requires that where these locations have existing areas of high density buildings, expansion of the areas should be positively considered by Boroughs where appropriate, including expanding Opportunity Area boundaries where appropriate.

Our Client wishes to ensure that the policy context suitably demonstrates that development in the Borough benefits from the London Plans’ design-led approach to site optimisation. This should be more clearly articulated in Part 1 of the policy.

The Newham Characterisation Study (p153) identifies the Site as within an area of ‘enhancement’. Areas of enhancement are defined at p152 as to “*Enhance the character and deliver a moderate uplift and intensification of built density*”. This definition is reflected in draft Policy D3 part 5.

Given the extant planning permission at the Site for comprehensive redevelopment to provide a building of up to 25 storeys this would not represent simply a moderate uplift and intensification of built density, and therefore identification of the Site as within an area of 'enhancement' is inappropriate.

Placing the Site within an area of 'enhancement' is also inappropriate given the surrounding context. The Site is located along the northern side of Stratford High Street which has been transformed over recent decades with the construction of tall, modern buildings.

Furthermore, the adjacent Carpenters Estate has resolution to grant outline planning permission for substantial redevelopment and densification to provide up to 2,022no. new, refurbished and replacement residential units and other uses in building heights up to a maximum of 30 storeys (LLDC ref. 22/00360/OUT), however is also included within an area of 'enhancement'. Again, this does not represent a moderate uplift of built density.

To the north of the Site is the Stratford Assembly development for which planning permission has been granted for a building of 36 storeys (LLDC ref. 21/00483FUL) within an area identified for 'transformation'. We consider that the adjacent Stratford Assembly site and our Client's site have equal capacity for redevelopment and growth yet they have been identified as different 'character areas'.

In summary, the evidence base seems to be detached from the reality on the ground. Bearing in mind extant planning permissions, the allocations and draft policies in the plan should undoubtedly encourage higher density development in this highly accessible and sustainable location.

Given the planning history of the Site and the existing and emerging built form context, as well as the excellent public transport accessibility and the Opportunity Area designation, evidently the Site is located within an area of 'transformation' and our Client recommends that the Site should be identified as such.

In relation to this, the definition of 'transformation' and 'enhancement' areas must be more clearly defined to clearly set out the type and scale of development that will be expected in these areas.

Notwithstanding, we question the emphasis placed on density and character by draft Policy D3. The primary driver of new development should be the design-led approach to site capacity and optimisation, and this should be made explicitly clear in the policy wording. This point is emphasised further given that paragraph 130 of the NPPF which discusses character and density is proposed to be deleted.

Draft Policy D4: Tall Buildings

Draft Policy D4 locates the Site within Tall Building Zone ('TBZ') 18: Stratford High Street. Within the sub-area of the TBZ where the Site is located the maximum height is defined as 40m.

The evidence base for Policy D4 (TBZ18: Stratford High Street) was established through two elements of research, as shown on the Evidence Base page of Newham's website. These two pieces of research were the Newham Characterisation Study and the Tall Building Annex 2024. These are included within an overarching 'Design' category which contained four sub-categories. The Newham Characterisation Study, revised following Regulation 18 Consultation, sets out an account of the character of Newham. The Characterisation Study is designed to help inform the spatial strategy for the new Local Plan. The study was compiled using data and existing reports, building upon the 2017 Newham Character Study. It has a co-purpose in this regard with the Tall Building Annex outlined below.

The Newham Tall Building Annex 2024 supplements the Newham Characterisation Study and was designed to provide a more detailed explanation of where tall buildings might be most appropriate within the borough. The methodology for the Tall Building Annex used a sensitivity screening assessment and scoping exercise to identify suitable areas for tall buildings and inform a tall building spatial hierarchy. The Tall Building Annex was also informed by the revised Newham Characterisation Study.

Page 61 of the Tall Buildings Annex includes a map that shows the Proposed Tall Building Zones. The Site is located within the boundaries of TBZ 18, which contains a number of sub-areas with different proposed maximum heights. The Site is situated within an 'up to 40 metres' sub-area of the Tall Building Zone.

We note that a sub-area of TBZ19, which sits to the immediate north of TBZ18 and approximately 70m to the north of the Site, would permit tall buildings of up to 100 metres. This sub-area appears to encompass just three sites, two of which are occupied by existing tall buildings (Stratosphere Tower and Unex Tower) whilst the third is the site of the Stratford Assembly development for which planning permission has been granted for a building of 36 storeys (LLDC ref. 21/00483FUL).

Both of these tall buildings sub-areas sit in close proximity to the Stratford St John's Conservation Area, and both are located in areas that are 'not sensitive to change', as shown on map 2 on page 96 of the Tall Buildings Annex. We consider that there is an inconsistency in the approach to these two contiguous proposed tall building sub-areas with regard to the proposed maximum heights.

Given that buildings of up to 100 metres are proposed to be appropriate close to the conservation area, and further bearing in mind that 302-312 Stratford High Street has a planning permission for a building significantly above 40 metres at 82.66m AOD (approx. 76m above ground level) (LLDC ref. 22/00098/FUL), we consider that the Site has a comparable status to the adjacent TBZ19 and should be recognised as part of this – i.e. the Site has the same status as the site of the Stratford Assembly.

The fact that consent has been granted for an 76m tall building is evidence - because by definition the matter has been carefully considered by a decision maker - that the Site should be in the 'up to 100m' zone. There is no explanation of why it has been allocated to an 'up to 40m' zone'.

Similarly, as set out above, while the Newham Characterisation Study (p153) identifies the Site to an area of 'enhancement', the extant planning permission means that the Site should be considered as being within an area of 'transformation'. We consider that this would not disrupt the spatial hierarchy informed by the Characterisation Study and the findings of the Tall Buildings Annex set out in the Evidence Base.

The currently drafted 'up to 40m maximum height' fails to deliver optimisation of the Site in accordance with London Plan Policy D3, as well as draft Policy D3 and draft Policy BFN1.

Based upon an assessment of the evidence, our Client considers that TBZ18 should incorporate the Site into the defined 100 metre area immediately to its north and that the Tall Building Zones map should be amended accordingly. Furthermore, the Site should be included in an area of 'transformation' rather than an area of 'enhancement' to better reflect the redevelopment potential of the Site for a tall building.

Homes Chapter Introduction

Page 206 provides an introduction to future housing delivery within the borough and emphasises the need to deliver more homes; in particular affordable and family-sized homes. The need for specialist housing products is also included.

The NPPF requires that housing needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed including the needs of students.

NPPG 'Housing Needs of Different Groups' requires that "*Strategic policy-making authorities need to plan for sufficient student accommodation whether it consists of communal halls of residence or self-contained dwellings, and whether or not it is on campus ... They will also need to engage with universities and other higher educational establishments to ensure they understand their student accommodation requirements.*"

The draft NPPF introduces further support for such forms of housing stating that mixed tenure sites, including housing designed for specific groups such as student accommodation, should be supported by local planning authorities through their policies and decisions.

The London Plan at Para 4.1.1, the GLA's draft PBSA LPG and the GLA's PBSL guidance recognise the important role that these special forms of housing can make in increasing housing supply and supporting the London economy.

Similar emphasis should be set out in the Newham Local Plan (at page 206) to make clear that such forms of housing are welcome in the Borough in the right locations, in accordance with the London Plan and national planning policy and guidance.

Paragraph 3.172 explains that the borough will also ensure that delivery of specialist housing does not reduce or limit our ability to deliver general needs housing.

It is not clear whether this paragraph would encompass PBSA, notwithstanding we disagree with the premise of this paragraph. The needs of different groups should be considered equally and there should not be prejudice against the delivery of specialist housing. Not every site should be considered for traditional forms of housing as a first priority, and if policies for PBSA and co-living have a geographical dimension to them i.e. requiring them to be in a town centre, close to HEI or transport infrastructure, then of course there is going to be a prevalence of this form of housing in those locations.

It is clear that there are thousands of students living in the private rented sector at present (the Newham Strategic Housing Market Assessment (June 2022) confirms this), and this will increase further over time if PBSA is not built, and bearing in mind the growth in HEI's in the area. This housing product has the potential to take students out of the private rented sector and into PBSA, freeing up housing for the wider community. The more PBSA built, the higher the positive impact of this will be. PBSA should be encouraged in the right locations. The GLA's draft PBSA guidance at Para 2.5.4 also includes reference to the delivery of C3 affordable housing as part of mixed tenure schemes, where appropriate, and we note that draft policy seeks a similar approach. PBSA should be encouraged in the right locations as a key means of housing students and also delivering affordable housing.

Specialist residential housing products such as PBSA have a crucial role to play in assisting boroughs in meeting housing needs which should be acknowledged at page 206. This benefit of PBSA should be better reflected throughout the plan.

Likewise co-living is an important housing product that is able to house greater numbers of people at higher densities. Again, in the right locations, and with the right design controls in place, this product should be encouraged. It has been found (see attached Knight Frank Co-living Report 2024) that co-living houses ordinary people across a wide demographic. Good quality co-living in the right locations is taken up very quickly proving it is a popular housing choice. Policies should more proactively encourage this type of housing.

Notably also, the GLA's PBSL Guidance Para 2.2.7 enables the delivery of on-site C3 housing instead of a payment-in-lieu as part of co-living schemes, and this is a key factor for Councils. Encouraging co-living in Newham will lead to an increase in affordable housing provision.

Draft Policy H8: Purpose Built Student Accommodation

Paragraph 3.188 states that the borough seeks to support the delivery of PBSA. Whilst we support Policy H8 in principle the wording of the policy is not supported, as it is overly restrictive and significantly exceeds the wording contained within London Plan Policy H15.

There is a strong demand for PBSA across London and the London Plan had identified a requirement for 3,500 PBSA bedspaces per annum.

Specifically, there is a strong demand for PBSA within Stratford, with the recent opening of the new UCL (East) campus and the London College of Fashion (UAL) campus within the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park adding to the existing student population primarily from the University of East London. Alongside these representations we submit a Needs Assessment prepared by Cushman & Wakefield which was prepared to support application ref. 23/00456/FUL. The assessment clearly demonstrates a considerable need for PBSA in Stratford/Newham more widely.

Indeed the Newham Strategic Housing Market Assessment (June 2022) – which is now rather dated – estimates that as a minimum there is an annual need for 210 beds (Para 6.127). At Paragraph 6.129 it notes that student numbers in Newham will increase by 60% with the opening of UCL (East) campus and the London College of Fashion (UAL) campus but doesn't go on to say what the annual number of PBSA beds will be to keep pace with this. Considering this 60% in student numbers this increase this could potentially require a further 126 units as minimum beyond the 210 equating to a need for 336 beds per annum. These figures should be inserted into the sub-text to indicate that the Council accept there is need and have tried to plan for it.

Paragraph 6.130 of the assessment explains that *"there has been and will continue to be a very significant growth in the number of students occupying private sector dwellings in Newham, which will have increased the pressure on the housing stock of the Borough particularly as there has also been a growth in households renting privately"*.

Evidently, there is a strong demand for new PBSA in the borough owing to the expanding HEI's and to ensure that the pressure on the private renting housing stock from students is relieved.

This forms the context for our response below.

Part 1 of policy H8 states that:

"New purpose-built student accommodation in Stratford and Maryland will only be supported where:

- a. it is located within or adjacent to an existing campus development in the neighbourhood; or*
- b. it is solely providing a replacement facility with no net increase in bed spaces."*

The draft wording of Part 1 a. constrains the spatial location of new PBSA in Stratford and Maryland to being within or adjacent to an existing campus development in the neighbourhood. The term “adjacent” is ambiguous and unclear. It is also unclear what is meant by “campus”. Many of the institutions in Stratford do not have campuses.

Whilst the premise of the draft policy to locate PBSA close to university buildings is recognised, this will significantly constrain the ability to find appropriate sites to meet the identified needs for PBSA. This draft policy wording is therefore not supported.

The location of PBSA should be informed by assessments of supply and demand within a catchment area which allow the market to establish where new PBSA should be located, not just the adjacency to a HEI. Needs Assessments are typically based on catchment areas created by travel times to/from a location.

London Plan Policy H15 Part B encourages PBSA in locations well-connected to local services by walking, cycling and public transport. The wording of the draft policy should reflect the London Plan. In this respect, it would be better to reference specific town centre locations, or locations with high PTAL ratings etc., and/or in less than 30 min travel time to an HEI (other travel times may be considered appropriate depending on context). We would suggest that there are appropriate locations for PBSA that are not “in-centre” but are still well connected and suitably close to transport, services and facilities. The policy wording should be amended to create this flexibility and encourage supply in the right locations. This would have the effect of ensuring PBSA is in the right location for the students, and should also mean that the type of building created for PBSA is appropriate to its context i.e. in central areas, not in lower density suburbs.

It is unclear what Part 1b is trying to achieve. Part 1 b. does not allow for an increase in bedspaces at sites which already provide PBSA. This does not allow for the best use of previously developed land, a design-led approach, optimisation of development, or for the redevelopment of PBSA to meet identified needs. Most significantly, it is wholly unviable to redevelop a building to exactly the same capacity as the existing. We cannot find any evidence to support or justify this approach and recommend it is deleted. The wording of the policy is not in conformity with the London Plan or the NPPF.

Part 2 of the policy should also be redrafted because:

For the reasons outlined above, Part 2a is not supported. This is too restrictive and will constrain supply.

2b is broadly supported and should actually apply to all PBSA not just those outside of Stratford and Maryland. It should be amended to be more flexible though, noting our points above.

2c is not supported as “over-saturation” is a negative term and is not defined, nor the consequences of over-saturation appropriately assessed and explained. There is no evidence to suggest what is the “right” level of PBSA in an area, or any evidence to suggest alternatives have been tested. This phrasing suggests a prejudice against student population and that they are “unwelcome”. This is inappropriate. Equally, if policy directs students to a specific area such as Stratford, then clearly the amount of PBSA supply would increase in this location. This again supports our point that directing PBSA to Stratford and/or other town centres, and/or close to transport, amenities and services is a successful way of spreading out PBSA developments rather than having them all focussed in a small number of areas. If there is a harm of having a high number of students in a location (there’s no evidence of this harm) then spreading students to these locations would mitigate that consequence.

2d is not supported for the same reasons noted above.

Part 3 of the policy requires that new PBSA should provide 60% affordable student accommodation subject to financial viability assessment.

Whilst the premise of seeking to maximise affordable student accommodation is supported, the provision of 60% (subject to viability) which is being proposed by the plan significantly exceeds the 35% requirement (via the Fastrack Route) as per the London Plan. A clear justification is therefore needed.

The Local Plan Viability Assessment Evidence Base report makes no consideration of PBSA developments or their financial viability. As such, the 60% figure is not based on any evidence base or assessment of alternative scenarios. The majority of such proposals considered by the planning system in recent years would surely be found to be unviable should a 60% affordable student accommodation figure have been applied. The clear consequence of seeking 60% affordable student accommodation (subject to viability) is that PBSA developments will be discouraged from coming forward and so supply will be further constrained. For any schemes which may come forward it will also undoubtedly lead to protracted viability negotiations further delaying the provision of much needed PBSA. This is not positively planning for this housing type; this approach will hugely restrict supply.

Rather than this policy approach, we would suggest that the London Plan 35% minimum target for affordable student accommodation is introduced, alongside the option for developers to deliver C3 affordable housing instead of affordable student. The GLA's draft PBSA LPG at para 2.5.4. considers this point, as does the draft NPPF at para 69. Rather than seeking to constrain supply, the Council should consider how it can help to deliver other plan objectives such as regeneration, housing delivery and affordable housing delivery.

Part 4 of the policy requires that new PBSA should:

- a. *Secure the majority of the bedrooms in the development, including all of the affordable student accommodation bedrooms, through a nomination agreement, for occupation by students of one or more higher education providers; or*
- b. *in areas of over-saturation, secure all of the bedrooms in the development through a nomination agreement, for occupation by students of one or more higher education providers; and*
- c. *where purpose-built student accommodation is being delivered within or adjacent to an existing campus development in the borough in accordance with H8.1.a or H8.2.d, the nominations agreement should be secured for occupation by students of the higher education provider that the development is located within or adjacent to.*

Part a. accords with the London Plan and is agreed. The cascade mechanism set out in the Implementation section of the draft Plan at page 233 should a nominations agreement not be secured is agreed as it aligns with the GLA's draft PBSA LPG.

Part b. goes significantly beyond the London Plan. A suggested definition of 'over-saturation' is set out in the Implementation section of the draft Plan at page 233. Whilst the efforts to quantify over-saturation are noted and seek to align with the GLA's draft PBSA LPG, the proposed definition is arbitrary and requires justification. Within the policy implementation, there is a lack of clarity as to what is meant by "*net residential approvals and completions*". Is this the number of permissions, habitable rooms, units or other? Secondly, limiting student developments to only 800 beds within 300m of existing PBSA is not effective, and is unjustified. What is considered to be an existing PBSA? Would a scheme of 799 beds be acceptable? Equally would 3 schemes of 500 beds be acceptable? This wording needs to be deleted and reconsidered based on evidence.

For the reasons noted above, we are concerned with the language used in respect of "saturation" and do not consider it is the right approach to take. Impacts of student accommodation, if that is what the Council is concerned with, can be dealt with in a different way such as management plans, as partly outlined above. If the concern is about mixed and balanced communities, then again, the use of policy to encourage on site affordable housing, or a range of uses to be delivered through development should be considered.

Part c. goes beyond the London Plan. It is appropriate for PBSA to seek a nominations agreement with the higher education provider that the development is located within or adjacent to however should this not be possible alternative HEI's must be persuaded. The use of the word 'should' in the draft policy should be altered to 'in the first instance...'. The approach set out hands an unfair commercial advantage to the adjacent HEI which will again lead to a constrained supply.

Stratford and Maryland Neighbourhood

The Site is located within the Stratford and Maryland Neighbourhood (Neighbourhood N8). The vision recognises that the neighbourhood will continue to benefit from high levels of growth including new housing and recognises the presence of the higher educational facilities.

Given the vibrancy and diversity of Stratford Metropolitan Centre we consider that the vision should state that "a range of new housing will be delivered to meet identified needs" to be clear that specialised housing products including PBSA and co-living will be encouraged in this neighbourhood.

Given the presence of the higher educational facilities in the neighbourhood we consider that the vision should acknowledge that new PBSA will be provided and recognise its contribution to housing supply.

Conclusion

Dominus Stratford Limited support the preparation of the new Newham Local Plan and broadly agree with the objectives and aspirations set out within the Regulation 19 Proposed Submission Document. In particular, the Client supports the identification of Stratford as a location for directing significant levels of growth.

However, the wording of the design policies requires further consideration with a greater emphasis required on ensuring the design-led approach to site optimisation of the London Plan is a priority for guiding development. In relation to this, the tall

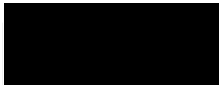
building zone within which our Client's site at 302-312 Stratford High Street is located should have the maximum height of future development increased from the currently proposed 40m to ensure site optimisation in this highly accessible location is realised and to reflect the extant planning permission at the site for a building which considerably exceeds this. Furthermore, the Site and the immediate surrounding area, should be identified as an area of 'transformation' and not an area of 'enhancement' to promote design-led optimisation.

Furthermore the benefits that specialist housing products such as PBSA (and co-living) have in meeting housing needs must be more strongly acknowledged through wording which is more positive. Similarly, the draft wording stipulating the spatial location of these housing products is overly restrictive and should provide significantly greater flexibility than currently proposed to ensure identified needs can be met and to not hinder such development from coming forward. Furthermore, such developments should also not be hindered from coming forward by a requirement to deliver 60% affordable housing (subject to viability). We would suggest that the London Plan 35% minimum target for affordable student accommodation is introduced, alongside the option for developers to deliver C3 affordable housing instead of affordable student.

It is considered that in its current form the draft Local Plan would not be legally compliant or sound and the Client suggest that the Council review a number of the policies discussed above.

Should you have any queries or require further information at this stage, please feel free to contact Chris Benham ([REDACTED]).

Yours faithfully,




Knight Frank LLP

The background of the slide features a photograph of four students in a classroom or study setting. On the left, two female students are smiling and looking towards the right. On the right, two male students are also smiling and looking towards the left. They appear to be engaged in a collaborative learning activity. The image is partially covered by a dark blue diagonal overlay on the left side, which contains the text.

STUDENT NEED ASSESSMENT

302-312 HIGH STREET, STRATFORD

Dominus Stratford Limited

DECEMBER 2023

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OBJECTIVES

This Student Accommodation Need Assessment has been prepared for Dominus Stratford Limited in relation to the proposed development of a Purpose-Built Student Accommodation-led development with workspace (Class E(g)) and a public house (Sui Generis) at the lower floors, at 302-312 High Street, Newham, Stratford London . It assesses the following areas:



Stratford Student Accommodation Need

1	Site Location
2	Demand
3	Investment & Performance
4	Supply
5	Private Rented Sector
6	Development Pipeline
7	Demand & Supply



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

01



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Demand



London is the UK's largest student market and one of the most popular global education destinations with 342,830 full-time and sandwich students studying at a Higher Education institution. Full-time student numbers in London have grown by a significant 38,095 students between 2012/13 and 2021/22.

Our analysis shows that the development site is located within a 45 minute commute of 26 London based universities, including internationally renowned universities such as; Queen Mary, University of London (which is supportive of the proposed development) King's College London, LSE, UCL and Imperial College London. As well as a further 15 satellite campuses, belonging to universities primarily based outside of London. Stratford is home to eight of these campuses.

Supply



In 2023/24, there are a total of 4,755 purpose-built student accommodation beds operating in the combined area of the LLDC Planning Area and adjacent London Borough of Newham. Of these, 74% are located in Stratford. Unite Students is the primary private sector operator in London's Newham Borough, controlling 37% of supply. Novel Student's Wick Park is the latest Private Sector entrant to the market, in 2023. The remainder of bed spaces are provided by the various universities operating in the area. Demonstrating that Stratford is a growing and popular student accommodation area.

Development Pipeline



The London Legacy Development Corporation area contains seven student accommodation developments (including the previous application for 302-312 Stratford High Street for completeness). Six of these fall within the London Borough of Newham and one in Hackney and total 3,430 beds with 2,171 with full planning approval. Just the one scheme in the area is under construction, CA Ventures "Piano Factory" scheme which will be operated by their brand Novel Student and is earmarked for a 2024 opening but is not currently marketed.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Student to Bed Ratio



In 2021/22, London had a student-to-bed ratio of 2.52:1, leaving 139,830 students without purpose-built accommodation, a 30% increase since 2019.

The area focusing in and around LLDC (and Newham) only has a student to bed ratio of 2.88:1, above C&W's nationally observed average of 2.12:1. 6,737 students with a requirement for a bed cannot access one in the immediate area.

Stratford faces a high demand for new purpose-built student accommodation with a commutable demand pool of 143,080 student and an SBR which currently stands at 3.97:1. Therefore, 106,995 students with a requirement for a bed at these institutions are unable to access one through their respective university.

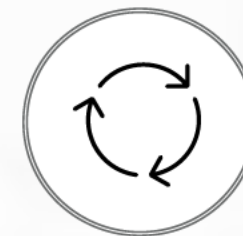
In terms of the supportive institution, Queen Mary's student to bed ratio currently stands at 4.79:1 with over 10,000 students with a requirement for a bed unable to access one in PBSA.

Location



The proposed development site at 302-312 High Street, Stratford, benefits from its location in East London, with easy access to educational institutions and the growing critical mass of students studying in and around the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) boundary, as well as excellent transportation connections, making it attractive to students.

Proposed Development



Dominus Stratford Limited plans to deliver 700 high quality purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) bed spaces. Queen Mary, University of London, has a significant requirement for additional accommodation, and is supportive of both the site and the proposed development.

University College London and the University of the Arts new campuses are located within easy reach, as well as the University of East London. The site is also within easy reach of the Olympic Park, transport connections (including Stratford Underground) to central London and Westfield Stratford City.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Affordability



Dominus is introducing an affordable housing option in London that stands out for its pricing, which is notably below both university and private sector averages. Moreover, the proposed rental rates are considerably lower than the averages observed in Stratford. Dominus aims to provide high-quality accommodation, ensuring that affordable beds are priced significantly below comparable high-quality options not only across London but also in the specific area of Stratford. This proposed development reflects Dominus' commitment to offering affordable yet high quality living spaces in comparison to the prevailing standards in both the university and private sectors, as well as in the local Stratford market.

SITE LOCATION

LOCATION & AREA CHARACTERISTICS



PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Proposed Development

Dominus Stratford Limited plans to deliver 700 high quality purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) bed spaces, with workspace (Class E(g)) and a public house (Sui Generis) at the lower floors, to serve Stratford's growing student population. There is an agreement in place to provide accommodation to Queen Mary, University of London.

Development Site and Local Area

The proposed development site is located at 302-312 High Street, Stratford, London. Stratford, located in East London, hosts a significant student population, primarily due to the presence of institutions like the University of East London and UCL's East Campus. Students benefit from excellent transportation connections and easy access to part-time job opportunities, notably at Westfield Stratford City. Stratford's vibrant student community and educational institutions make it an appealing destination for those pursuing higher education in London.

The development site is within a 5 minute walk of Stratford Train Station, which will allow residents to easily commute to many of the Capitals most prestigious universities and other higher education institutions. These institutions have the potential to create a strong demand pool for the new scheme. This is explored in detail throughout this Assessment.

A full map of the site location in the context of London is shown overleaf.

Site location

