

Advice to the local planning authority

Advice to the local planning authority (LPA) from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) as a statutory consultee for developments that include a relevant building.

To LPA	Gravesend
LPA planning ref no	20230366
Our ref	pgo-3450
Site address	Clifton Slipways, West Street, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 0BW
Proposal description	Application for variation of condition 2 and 7 attached to planning permission reference no. 20191122 for the erection of two buildings to provide residential units (Use Class C3) with associated vehicle parking, cycle storage, highway works, and landscaping. Building 1 comprises the erection of 23 storey tower on the north side of West Street to provide residential dwellings with B1a floor space at ground floor level; and Building 2 from four storeys to 12 storeys on the south side of West Street which will provide residential dwellings. The proposal includes the restoration and adaptation of the existing pier structure to provide public and private amenity space to include the erection of Business units (Class B1a) and a cafe (Class A1/A3); to revise the approved plans to reconfigure the layout of the West Street Block to provide for an additional staircase and increase the number of secure cycle spaces by 13; and to remove the basement at lower ground, relocation of bin store and plant, reduction of 23 car parking spaces and replacement of car parking at level 0 with 9 additional units (loss of 55 car parking spaces) within the Stuart Road Block.
Date on fire statement	N/A
Date consultation received	20/06/2023
Date response sent	18/07/2023

1. Substantive response for the local planning authority

Thank you for consulting HSE about this application.

Headline response from HSE

Headline Response from HSE ('Advice to LPA' - Concern)

Scope of consultation

- 1.1 The above application has been made under s73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for variation of conditions 2 and 7 attached to planning permission reference no. 20191122 for the erection of two buildings to provide residential units (Use Class C3) with associated vehicle parking, cycle storage, highway works, and landscaping.
- 1.2 Condition 2 sets out the list of the approved plans, to reflect changes to the scheme including a minor increase in the number of dwellings (by 4%), a reduction in the level of car parking and amendments to the internal layout to reflect updated fire safety requirements. Condition 7 is a highway condition, which refers to a plan, that needs to be amended to reflect the change to the approved plans under condition 2.
- 1.3 The proposal includes for:
- (a) West Street Tower:
 - Reconfiguration of the internal layout of the residential floors to incorporate an additional staircase for fire safety;
 - Increased number of secure cycle spaces to provide an additional 13 spaces, 240 in total at Level 00;
 - Residential mix and unit numbers remain as per approved scheme;
 - Rationalisation of façade to improve construction viability whilst retaining continuity of façade rhythm.
 - (b) Stuart Road Block:
 - Removal of full basement at lower ground floor (level -2); this level previously provided accommodation for the bin store and plant – to be relocated to Level 0 and Level -1 respectively;
 - Reduction of building footprint at Level -1 (no change to vehicular access position); this will result in a reduction of 23 car parking spaces at this level from 57 to 34; the changes to the basement levels reduce excavation and material removal cost;
 - Replacement of part of the car parking at Level 0 (loss of 32 spaces) with nine residential units; this would increase the number of dwellings from 227 to 236; total number of parking spaces at Level 0 is 22;
 - Access to Level 0 parking area moved by 1.5m to accommodate floor plan changes;
 - Relocation of bin store from level -2 to level;
 - Amendment to residential stair core positions to enable two stair cores to access the top storey of the building, improving fire safety;
 - Architecture to upper storeys of Stuart Road has been rationalised to visually relate to West Street tower architecture.

Consented scheme

- 1.4 Planning permission was granted on 4 December 2020 for the redevelopment of Clifton Slipways. HSE was not consulted as this was prior to the establishment of HSE as statutory consultee for relevant buildings, in relation to fire safety.

1.5 The description of development was recently (9th of March 2023) amended by way of a non-material amendment under s96a of the Town and Country Planning Act (as amended) (ref. 20230155).

Current consultation

1.6 Following a review of the information provided by the applicant, HSE raises the following concern:

Means of escape

1.7 It is noted that on Level 00 General Arrangement Plan for Stuart Road Block, both stairs discharge directly into a common corridor, connected with the bin store and final exit through a foyer. BS 9991:2015 (updated 2022) states: “*Protected stairways should discharge either: 1) directly to a final exit; or 2) into a protected corridor leading to a final exit which is itself lobbied from any accommodation.*”

1.8 BS 9991:2015 also states: “*An arrangement in which two stairs terminate in the same enclosure at final exit level should not be employed, because an outbreak of fire leading to penetration of the enclosure at that level would render both stairs simultaneously unusable.*” Design changes to resolve this issue are likely to affect land use planning considerations such as the layout and appearance of the development.

2 Supplementary information

The following information does not contribute to HSE’s substantive response and should not be used for the purposes of decision making by the local planning authority.

Summary of proposals, Design and Access Statement

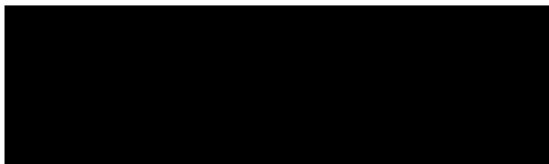
2.1 Addendum to Design and Access Statement (DAS) states: “*The materials will use a high-quality selection of durable materials which respond sympathetically to the site context and perform well in their riverside setting as well as creating an architecturally playful façade as was previously approved.*”

2.2 Also the DAS further states: “*Planning condition 19 states that ‘Notwithstanding the details shown on the approved plans and application form, before any above ground works commence within the relevant phase as approved pursuant to Condition 3, additional details (and samples where requested by the local Planning Authority) of all the external facing materials to be used in the construction of the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.’* However, for information, it should be noted that on 1st December 2022, Building Regulations were amended and now state ‘*Building work shall be carried out so that relevant metal composite material does not become part of an external wall, or specified attachment, of any building*’. This will be subject to later regulatory consideration.

Means of escape

2.3 The Level 21 General Arrangement Plan for West Street Tower shows that the only escape route is via the external terrace for plant access, and then back into the building. In an emergency, if the open terrace is compromised, this would impede the escape for the occupants of units 21.01 and 21.02, located on level 21.

Yours sincerely



Signed by: sorin.bucur

This response does not provide advice on any of the following:

- **matters that are or will be subject to Building Regulations regardless of whether such matters have been provided as part of the application**
- **matters related to planning applications around major hazard sites, licensed explosive sites, and pipelines**
- **applications for hazardous substances consent**
- **London Plan policy compliance**

