

# Warehouses of Harringay Association of Tenants (W.H.A.T.)

## Consultation response Form

### About:

W.H.A.T. (Warehouses of Harringay Association of Tenants) is a residents' group open to all residents of the warehouses located on sites S2 & S3. We have formed to maintain our unique community in the face of the changes taking place across the borough and wider London. We are diverse mix of residents from across the income spectrum working in a range of employment, including a large population of people employed in a variety of creative industries. As well as a mix of residents, many of our members are small business owners. We use the sites to live, work or live and work.

### Contact:

Warehouses of Harringay Association of Tenants (W.H.A.T)

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### Address/ Site Reference

Site S3: Vale Rd/ Tewkesbury Road

### Size (Ha)

7.15

### PTAL Rating

2 to 3

### Timeframe for delivery:

2015-2020 2020-2025 2025-2030

### Comments on the Draft Site Allocation

We believe that the planning framework for this site should protect the mixed-usage currently operating here, which provides significant space for employment land under a live/work arrangement, as well as affordable residencies.

The existing mixed (live-work) use of residences is vital to the livelihoods of the many residents who rely on the unique space and arrangement of the properties in order to sustain their small and micro businesses, and pursue professions which require the space and flexibility these residencies grant us. We fully support efforts to improve and enhance the design of existing buildings that ensure residents' safety, and the enhancement of the site as a whole in a way that benefits existing residents and businesses on the site as well as the wider area and environment.

However as residents of this site we would strongly oppose development which would jeopardise the livelihoods and homes already sited here.

### **Existing Policy Designations ( if known )**

Seven Sisters Corridor (Local Plan: Strategic Policies 2013)

Local Strategic Industrial Site (Local Plan: strategic Policies 2013)

Haringey's Local Plan: Strategic Policies (2013) identified specific challenges around the decline in manufacturing in the borough and the need to promote a successful and inclusive economy which benefits residents living and working in Haringey:

“1.4.13 Haringey has a relatively large amount of industrial land. In the past, this land provided many jobs for manufacturing. But manufacturing has declined and we need to plan for new jobs to replace those being lost and to provide jobs for the increasing population. Travel to work patterns have become increasingly complex. It is accepted that many working residents in Haringey travel to work outside of the borough.

1.4.14 Promoting a successful and inclusive economy is particularly challenging given the current economic situation. The Council will take into account these circumstances and take measures to support our residents and businesses during difficult economic times.”

We consider the preservation and enhancement of existing businesses located on this site to be crucial to these objectives.

Preserving and enhancing the existing mixed-use nature of the site including the live/work designation of many of the residences, as well as the workshop space afforded by the design of many of the residential properties, would support truly local enterprises and self-employed residents who would otherwise be forced out of the borough because of the need to rent workspace in addition to their home.

Site Specific Proposal 16 (Unitary Development Plan 2006)

We believe that the units meet the requirements of the EMP7: LIVE/WORK UNITS in the Unitary Development Plan specifications.

### **What is the site and surrounding area like?**

This area includes, as indicated in the SAC document, some Victorian houses and an estate as well as some commercial buildings, but this is also one of the key areas of what has become locally known as the “warehouse district”. This includes most of Eade Road, Overbury Road and Tewkesbury Road. There is an entrance on Overbury Road to Catwalk Place. This is an ensemble of living spaces of various sizes and styles which consists of: Stone House, Old Button Factory, Cutting Rooms and Ribbon factory. On Eade Road there is Cara House, almost directly on the corner of Seven Sisters Road. This building, which was originally the offices of the surrounding industrial area, is currently having works done to comply with fire safety regulations that make it 100% safe for residential use. Further down Eade Road (in and around ex-Fed Ex) there is another ensemble of warehouse spaces. Overbury Road is constituted almost entirely of these, too. On Vale Road there is Chilli Works, a cluster of similar but smaller spaces. The block on the Western side of Tewkesbury Road is also a group of warehouse living spaces.

“Warehouse district” tenants are mainly, but not only, young adults working in the arts and creative industries. This has contributed to create a very lively community-like atmosphere; creative projects such as Haringay Arts are based on this site, as well as events such as Open Warehouse Day, several Catwalk Fayres, exhibitions, music events, car boot sale style markets and much more. Warehouse residents have been independently regenerating the area by putting art in accessible, open spaces, such as the corners of Overbury road, and encouraging dialogue between residents to create a safer environment.

The average warehouse allows suitable space to both live and work, which is one of the main attractions for the residents, who need space to work (paint / sculpt / dance / sew / hold small meetings / photoshoots / store musical instruments etc). The size and structure of the buildings on the site encourages this creative enterprise. In all of warehouses in the area the living conditions reflect those of an average household. The only difference is the larger space, and a strong shared sense of community that is hard to find anywhere else in London.

The concentration of creative talent and potential arising from our community is an asset to the area, and we as a community would like to invite the Council to look to preserve the unique nature of the site as it is currently being used when considering their planning policy framework. We at “S3” would welcome a meeting with a planning representative to discuss this further. The warehouses could be an important asset for Haringey in the wake of its regeneration, due to their significance in London as a unique site of affordable residencies, commercial spaces and creative potential. We therefore encourage the council to consider a planning framework for the area that allows the current mix of uses to continue – providing vital work space for a growing creative community as well as affordable residencies for low income residents.

### **Comments on the design principles**

On the understanding that the development of this site is dependent on the decision on the future of its current usage, we wish to make the following comments on the design principles to be considered.

The buildings within Site Three: Vale Rd/Tewksbury Rd, create not only a rich diversity of live/work culture but also contain active commercial factories. These buildings, irrespective of use, are part of the rich industrial heritage of the area and provide for a much valued community; we urge you to maintain and support the restoration of the current buildings as far as possible.

We would also like to put forward the view that the basketball site on Tewksbury Rd should be maintained/restored. This is a brilliant site for community sport, bringing together residents from our site and surrounding sites such as the Tiverton estate, and should be used to the best of its ability.

As a mixed use area, this site maintains both much needed residences and employment for the community. In particular, live/work warehouses provide affordable housing, which contributes to the target of 50%, *and* space to develop small businesses. The network of public routes and spaces within the site need improvement. In particular, the stairway from Seven Sisters Rd to Tewksbury Rd needs development. The stairway is dangerous and unsanitary. It needs work to prevent late-night crime and misdemeanors and would benefit from changes to its left side, which is currently used to dispose of litter and reduces visibility from Seven Sisters road.

Bordering the stairway is an enclosed, largely vacant green space which also collects rubbish. We would like to propose a community use of this space. Either as an open green space, or for growing food, or as development into a children's play area or other community facility. The community on the site are very keen to create or support better community facilities both to better engage other local communities with ongoing arts and community projects and to support our own community development. We would be pleased to engage further with the council on areas of the site with potential for community use.

There are a large number of cyclists who reside in this area and site would benefit from easy access routes to amenities, such as Arena Shopping Centre, for cyclists, pedestrians and motorists. Parking is also an issue around this site, Tewksbury Rd especially; the site would benefit from either free parking or better parking facilities.

The heights of the buildings on this site are currently suitable. The businesses on the ground floor of Seven Sisters Rd are used by many residents of the area and greatly benefit from our custom. We would like to express how much these businesses contribute to our way of live in the community; we have developed relationships with the businesses and would like to maintain these.

The Seven Sisters Rd south eastern corner is in need of development. Currently an unused site this could be used for many community based things. A notable landmark building or a site to promote the benefits of the New River would make use of this space.

### **Comments on the potential development capacity**

We do not believe that this site can be developed beyond its current mixed-usage without causing significant harm to the existing community of residents and commercial users. The site currently operates as a unique economic eco-system, accommodating residents and small businesses on the site, often operating from the same spaces, and supporting other small businesses in its surrounding area, particularly on Seven Sisters Road and the neighbouring Tiverton estate.

To change allow re-development of this site would undermine the council's objectives by reducing places of employment for small businesses, many of which operate in the creative industries and currently provide a unique economic and cultural asset to the borough of Haringey.

Should the site be re-developed the Council would have a responsibility to re-house many of our low-income residents, who live on the site at social or near social rent equivalents, in an overheated housing market, at huge effort and expense.

### **Comments on the implementation considerations**

#### **CIL and S106 estimations:**

Further to the above, implementation considerations must take account of the high number of low-income residents of this site, who the council may have responsibility to provide temporary accommodation for should the sites be developed. This is in light of the social or near-social equivalent rents operating on the site, that provide affordable accommodation for a diverse mix of tenants, many of whom are on low incomes working in the creative industries and other low income employment. This would have serious implications on the

net income the council would make from CIL or S106 development contributions, once the costs of providing for some displaced residents, plus the additional costs of an increase in housing benefit required by residents forced to move to affordable or full market priced accommodation are accounted for.

### **Council's Affordable Housing targets:**

As outlined above, the site is currently occupied by residents and live/work space at social-equivalent or affordable rents. It is already operating as a mixed use site of affordable housing. To develop the site with a 50% affordable rent condition would serve to reduce the capacity of affordable rented properties units on this site, and therefore in the borough more widely. A re-development, even if it includes 50% affordable housing would be a regressive step. Furthermore, to build a financially viable developer-led residential site on S3 with 50% affordable rental properties is likely to require a reduction in the space available for employment, further regressing from the council's own stated aims of maintaining land for employment usage.

The concerns raised regarding the implementation considerations above highlight that the best usage for the land is mixed-use, which is already providing affordable rental, albeit on an informal basis, and employment land in the form of live/work and commercial for a large, diverse community of residents and small businesses.

### **Additional comments:**

This site provides an exciting opportunity for Haringey Council to shape part of their planning framework around a unique live/work usage that is an asset to the community, both in terms of its vibrant eco-system of small, worker owned businesses and small-medium creative and manufacturing industries, as well as a distinctive cultural asset.

The community living on this site have built successful art projects that engage with neighbouring communities and plans to continue to actively develop itself and further engage with them to provide cultural activities and community spaces. W.H.A.T has already formed a 'Community Engagement sub-group' that will look to build on these activities and ensure that they are accessible to the diverse neighbouring communities, including those local sites considered by the council to be high on their deprivation indices.

The current planning framework's commercial/residential binary does not accommodate for this modern way of living, so Haringey Council have the opportunity to push their planning framework forward in an exciting direction, that recognises the need to retain mixed usage spaces for artistic and low income communities (a need also recently recognised by the Mayor of London - <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/news/mayor-to-investigate-as-artists-fear-being-driven-out-of-london-by-rising-costs-of-studio-space-9120150.html>), that will add to the richness of the borough and the lives of those who live here.

We have serious concerns that proposals for the site future developments could damage this community. These concerns include a fear that the council's development and reclassification of the site would eventually benefit the existing freeholders at the cost of the current residents. And in the process displace a large number of low income residents, who are dependent on the spaces to work or on having an affordable space to live.

The small businesses that have emerged from the sites demonstrate that this environment can support the objectives of the council by underpinning a growing economy. The consultation has raised a number of issues which we believe should be clarified before proposals are drafted to enable the existing community living here to have an informed response. We would like clarification on any existing projections of figures for residential development and whether these numbers take into account the existing number of residents living across this site.