4

Southwark Council

Inquiry into
The London Borough of Southwark (Aylesbury Estate Sites 1b – 1c) Compulsory Purchase Order 2014

Proof of Evidence of

Catherine Bates

For the London Borough of Southwark

PINS Reference NPCU/CPO/A5840/74092

§2.1 reasons in AAAP
§4.7 Conditions not sufficient
§5.4 Stigma
§Appendix: Eng Heritage misrepresented

March 2015

Contents

1. Qualifications and Experience

1.1. My name is Catherine Bates and I am a qualified Architect. I have a BA Hons. Degree in Art History (1990), a BSc degree in Architecture (1994) and a Diploma in Architecture (1996). I have been registered with the Architect's Registration Board (ARB) since 1999.

1.2. I joined the London Borough of Southwark (the Council) in 2004 and my current post is Principal Design and Technical officer, Aylesbury Regeneration, a position which I have held since December 2011. Prior to this, I was the Design Quality Manager for Southwark's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme for four years, seconded to the Council's Local Education Partnership (LEP) and prior to that, Project Architect for three years in the Council's in-house multi-disciplinary design office, Southwark Building Design Service (SBDS). Before joining the Council I worked in private practice. In total, I have 17 years professional experience of design and construction across both the private and public sectors. Over my career to date I have received personal recognition with two awards: Partnership for Schools (PfS), Client Design Advisor of the Year 2009, and British Council for School Environments (BCSE), Advisor of the Year 2011.

1.3. My role on the BSF schools project included managing the LEP's design processes from inception to completion and the safeguarding of the Council's interest in its investment in the new school buildings, including two new schools on the Aylesbury Estate.

1.4. In my current role within the Aylesbury team, I led the Design and Technical work-stream of the OJEU Aylesbury Development Partner procurement. My day-to-day duties include stewarding the quality aspect of the design delivery across the Aylesbury area, working with the Development Partner Notting Hill Housing Trust (NHHT) and with the Site 7 developer London and Quadrant (L&Q); managing the Council's technical obligations with regards to the Development Partner Agreement (DPA); and overseeing delivery of other technical aspects across the Aylesbury area.

1.5. The nature of my current role means that I am aware of the background to the Aylesbury regeneration as well as the Council's vision for the regeneration. My professional experience means that I am well placed understand and evaluate how the development of the Order Land fits into the delivery of that vision.

1.6. I gave evidence as Design and Technical officer at the inquiry held in March 2013 for the Council's Compulsory Purchase Order no2 of Wolverton 1-59, Aylesbury (CD 29 Page 1937). This evidence was accepted by the Inspector at the inquiry, as set out in the Inspector's report to the Secretary of State (CD 11 Page 668). As the Order Land comprises all the physical features of previous CPO no.2 Order Land - and both are typical of the wider Aylesbury estate - it is therefore relevant, in this evidence, to refer my evidence given at the March 2013 Inquiry.

1.7. I confirm that I have made clear which facts and matters referred to in this report are within my own knowledge and which are not. Those that are within my own knowledge I confirm to be true. The opinions I have expressed represent my true and complete professional opinions on the matters to which they refer.

2. Scope of Evidence

2.1 My evidence covers the technical and design aspects to support the Council's decision to proceed with the development of the Order Land. This is in line with Aylesbury Area Action Plan (AAAP,CD 2), which, in the background section, sets out reasons why the Council concluded it would be better to demolish and redevelop the Aylesbury estate rather than refurbish it.. The key reasons cited are mostly technical and design points. In my evidence, I expand on these points and I demonstrate that they relate to the Order Land.

2.2 My evidence addresses specific paragraphs within the Statement of Reasons (SoR, CD 27) and Statement of Case (SoC, CD 28), which refer to

technical and design aspects of the Order Land as existing and to the new proposals for the Site, which covers the footprint of the Order Land, namely:

i. SoR paragraph 1.14, and SoC paragraphs 4.3: the Order Land in relation to the AAAP background to the decision to develop
ii. SoR paragraph 1.12 and SoC paragraph 4.8: the Order land in relation to the condition of the existing buildings and infrastructure
iii. SoR paragraph 1.12 and SoC paragraph 5.4: the Order land in relation to the existing urban environment
iv. SoR paragraph 5.4 and SoC paragraphs 5.3 and 5.6: the Order land in relation to the proposed new development

2.3 I begin with a summary of the AAAP statement setting out the background to the decision to demolish and redevelop, and why this is still relevant to the Order Land.

2.4 I go on to set out the technical aspects of the construction and condition of the existing flat blocks on the Order Land. These include: the inherent issues to do with the construction of the blocks, as well as the condition of the external and internal building fabric.

2.5 I then go on to set out the existing urban environment issues that pertain to the Order Land. These include: the estate layout, scale and character of the buildings, and access issues.

2.6 Finally, I set out the merits of the proposed new development in terms of good urban environmental features, design quality and the technical benefits of current design standards; this section includes evaluation on the proposed architectural and public realm design.

2.7 Neil Kirby's evidence provides additional background information in relation to the regeneration of the estate. Detailed information regarding Planning policy compliance is set out in Alison Squires' evidence.

3. Development of the Order Land

3.1. The Council's decision to demolish and redevelop the Aylesbury estate, rather than refurbish it, was made in 2005 and subsequently adopted as policy in 2010 with the Aylesbury Area Action Plan (AAAP). The AAAP, at paragraph 1.2 Background clause 1.2.4, sets out three key justifications for this decision:

- The structural condition of the estate
- The quality of the environment
- Costs of refurbishment (to bring existing blocks up to decent homes standard)

It then goes on to state that (clause 1.2.5):

- The built fabric is dated and cannot be retained in the long-term because of deterioration in quality
- The existing building fabric goes against good urban design principles

3.2. Since the adoption of the AAAP, the prevailing view is unchanged regarding the condition of the buildings and the estate as well as regarding the positive opportunities for creating a good new urban environment. This is borne out by the recent successful CPO no2 (CD29) on the Wolverton 1-59 site within the Aylesbury estate footprint, currently under construction. In his report to the Secretary of State, dated April 2013 (CD 11), the Inspector confirmed (CD11 para 26 Page 674) that the AAAP policy document is an adopted part of the Development Plan and sets out a strategy for the wholesale regeneration of the estate. Para 8 of the Secretary of State's (CD11 Page 677) decision letter agreed with the Inspector's conclusions and the Secretary of State decided to confirm that CPO.

3.3. The buildings and environment on the Order Land are typical of the rest of the estate and possess all the features and attributes that the AAAP highlights as the basis for the decision to demolish and redevelop. The following sections set out some background information to this; reference is made to my evidence for CPO no2 (CD29 Page 1937) as all the technical aspects of that Order land cited there - including the physical features of the

buildings, district heating network and urban environment - also pertain to this Order Land.

4. Condition of the residential blocks on the Order Land

4.1. The Order Land includes several of the characteristic Aylesbury residential concrete blocks constructed from Large Panel System (LPS) between 1966 and 1977. Across the 3.9 hectare site, these are: two 14-storey blocks, three 4-storey and two 5-storey blocks; many of these blocks are interconnected by high level walkways. There is also a red-brick 4-storey block, built in 1939.

4.2. In my evidence for CPO no2 (CD29 Page 1937)), I set out the key features of the condition of the existing residential concrete buildings on the estate, which demonstrated that those blocks present significant technical challenges, in terms of maintenance and service-life, and fall short of aspects of the current building standards. The issues covered in that proof of evidence included: the deteriorated condition of the external fabric of the buildings, particularly concrete panels, due to water ingress and corrosion of the steel reinforcement bars; issues relating to structural robustness of the 5- and 6-storey blocks; the poor condition of the internal fabric of the buildings due to severe internal leaks and the complexities of accessing internal services encased in the structure for on-going maintenance; the poor thermal performance of the buildings compared to current building standards; and issues with level access to dwellings.

4.3. All the evidence given in my evidence of the CPO no2 (CD29) is directly relevant to the concrete blocks on the Order Land and so the detail of that evidence is not repeated here. The CPO no2 Order land comprised two mid-rise LPS concrete blocks connected to the estate heating network; so, too, does the Order Land although this is larger, and there are more residential blocks. Indeed, some of the technical issues cited in the CPO no2 (CD29) evidence are augmented with respect to the two 14-storey blocks on the Order Land, particularly the complexities of maintenance of internal pipework and access issues.

4.4. In his April 2013 report to the Secretary of State (CD11), the Inspector confirmed (para. 26 page 674) that the structural condition of the blocks was well documented and noted their environmental inadequacies. The Inspector also found that the buildings on the estate were beyond economic repair and, even if they were repaired and refurbished, they would retain their appearance and would remain in conflict with modern building standards. A similar conclusion was drawn by the Inspector in 2009; in the AAAP Inspector's report (CD3 Page 222), who found that there were 'fundamental shortcomings' in the existing buildings and that refurbishment would be unlikely to achieve satisfactory living conditions in the long-term' (para 3.4).

4.5. The red-brick residential block within the Order Land is a different building typology to the characteristic Aylesbury concrete blocks and, as such, it does not present the all of same technical issues of those blocks. However it presents sufficient technical issues that could argue for it, too, being at the end of its service life; these include poor thermal performance in comparison with current building standards, small internal space standards (with flat sizes typically three-quarters of the size of current space standards) and no individual external amenity space.

4.6. Since the adoption of the AAAP, the Council continues to carry out major works as part of its programme of Planned Preventative Maintenance (PPM) works in order to comply with its statutory duty to keep the estate in a safe and operational condition; these works have been carefully managed in line with the phasing programme for development set out in the AAAP. On the Order Land, therefore, only necessary and limited work has been carried out to the buildings and infrastructure, in line with the required service life of these dwellings to the projected vacant possession date.

4.7. As set out in my evidence for CPO no2 (CD29), the condition of the buildings on the estate does not, itself, present a case for demolition and redevelopment, but it is one of the compounding factors cited in the AAAP. The other fundamental issue is the estate layout and the poor urban environment this presents; even if the condition of the building fabric were

addressed, many negative aspects would remain and only a compromised solution would result.

5. The existing urban environment

5.1. There are key aspects inherent to the physical environment of the existing estate, which go against recognised good practice urban design principles. These aspects all pertain to the buildings and layout of the Order Land and are summarised below. Reference to the Planning application Design and Access Statement (CD19 Page 9), Section 2, serves to illustrate and give further background information to these points.

5.2. It is worth noting that none of the buildings on the Aylesbury Estate, including the Order Land, are of sufficient architectural quality as to have attracted protection or preservation orders. In its response to the NHHT's scheme at Planning application stage, English Heritage made no comment on the existing buildings and concluded that 'the demolition of the slab blocks of the Aylesbury Estates (sic) provides opportunity for enhanced views from various heritage assets' (see Appendix CB01)

5.3. The key issues that contribute to the unsuccessful urban environment can be summarised as follows:

- The appearance and uniformity of the concrete blocks gives a character to this estate that is at odds with the surrounding context. This creates separation between communities and contributes to a sense of isolation.

- The scale and orthogonal formation of the blocks (some of the longest in Europe) does not correspond to the human scale, nor does it create opportunities for neighbourliness and local neighbourhood identity. This is particularly the case with the large 'barrier' blocks, of which there are two on the Order land; these serve to obstruct visual and physical connectivity.

- The concrete blocks are designed to separate traffic from pedestrians by creating high level walkways to access front doors and stair wells. This concept, peculiar to 1960s and 1970s urban planning, has been found to contribute to crime and antisocial behaviour as a consequence of severing pedestrians from the street and dispersing footfall. The garages lining the estate roads provide a blank facade at ground level and remove the opportunity for passive supervision usually offered by windows from ground floor accommodation.

- The estate roads, which serve to access garages, typically terminate in dead ends, and have little relationship to front doors of dwellings, create a confusing environment and the potential for misuse. Residents are deprived of a clear address, and identity, and experience various practical inconveniences i.e. deliveries finding it difficult to locate front doors.

- Whilst the estate presents generous green spaces, the lack of designated use and the lack of ownership of these spaces mean that they are under used.

5.4. Whilst some of these issues could be addressed through refurbishment, this would present only piecemeal and partial solution to the wider problems of the urban environment. In his CPO report to the Secretary of State, (ref CPO no2, CD11), the Inspector acknowledged the wider economic, social and environmental issues affecting the estate (CD11 para 8 page 670) and found that the appearance of the system built blocks, given their shape colour, form and materials, is monotonous. The estate is a drab urban landscape which lacks richness or differentiation. This, in contrast to the surrounding areas, serves to increase the stigma attached to the Aylesbury' (CD11 para 7 page 670). He goes on to note some of the negative features of the streets and walkways and concludes that the 'urban design and landscape of the estate is less than poor' (CD11 para 26 page 674).

6. Design merits of the detailed proposals for the Order Land

6.1. The detailed proposal for the Site, which covers the footprint of the Order Land, presents a high quality scheme designed in line with the key principles set out in the AAAP. Broadly, this presents the opportunity to redress the anonymity, uniformity and sense of dislocation of the existing estate and, under the new building standards, presents best-practice well-designed, efficient homes.

6.2. The proposed design for the Site is comparable in quality to the high standard of the other new residential sites on the Aylesbury Action area footprint; namely, the No.2 Order Land (Site 7), which is currently under construction, and the No.1 Order land (Phase 1a), which is now complete and fully occupied. This last development, completed in 2012, has been the recipient of numerous awards, including 'Best New Place to Live' category in the London Planning Awards in February 2013, and continues to be recognised, receiving a Civic Trust Award Commendation in March this year; the Civic Trust Awards are given to buildings and schemes across the country, which are considered 'architecturally outstanding' which have 'made positive differences to their local community' and each entry is judged by a panel including design and planning experts. A high standard of design is also to be found in the new Michael Faraday School, immediately to the N/E of the Order Land and which also lies within the Aylesbury Action area footprint. In May 2011, this school was the recipient of prestigious Royal Institute of Architects (RIBA) Award.

6.3. A pattern of delivering high quality design for the Aylesbury Action Area is, therefore, apparent. The Council and its development partner NHHT is committed to continuing this standard for the rest of the Aylesbury Action Area development and has put in place suitable provision; this includes my role, as a core member of the Aylesbury Regeneration team, the role of Design Director on the Development Partner side and the appointment of high quality design consultants.

6.4. The architect team selected for scheme design of the Site comprises three acclaimed architectural practices: HTA Design, Hawkins Brown and MAE Architects. The decision to select three practices to work as a consortium was made in order to encourage design variety across the development as well as to engender a quality scheme, with the designs from each practice benefiting from regular peer reviews.

6.5. Extensive consultation with residents has also been instrumental to testing and improving the design proposals (reference to Statement of Community Involvement CD 12 and section 3.3 of the Design and Access Statement CD 43). Throughout the process, the design team has presented the scheme design at consultation events, listened to resident comments and reported back on the design iterations. Residents have responded positively to the consultation process and to the proposals put forward.

6.6. Reference to the Planning Application drawings (CD 40) and the Planning Application Design and Access statement (CD 43) serves to give good visual illustration of the high quality proposals for the Site. Detailed information about the component content of the new proposals is also set out in the SoR Section 3 and SoC section 6 (CD 27 page 1823 and CD 28 page 1851 respectively).

6.7. In the paragraphs below, I highlight some key features that define the high quality of the design proposal for the Site:

- The new proposal reinstates a traditional street network connecting the six new perimeter blocks of flats and houses. This layout affords all the recognised benefits of the positive relationship of front doors to the street level and overlooking windows at street level. The new streets are the same scale and pattern as those in the surrounding area and, in this way, stitch back the area of the Order Land into the wider urban context. All the new streets are characterised by good practice design features, such as street trees, managed car park bays and good pavement widths.

- An excellent range of new open spaces is proposed across Site. These offer a variety of different types of green spaces as each with recreation equipment, as well as a hard landscaped public square. Careful positioning of these spaces serves to offer local character to the surrounding streets as well as presenting attractive routes through the development.

- High quality architecture features throughout the development proposal. The building elevations present a unified but articulated face to the street, using a carefully considered palette of materials and colour. Along a street façade, each flat block corresponding to an entrance core is expressed as distinct to its neighbour, thereby affirming a sense of address and identity to the future residents. A range of different bricks are used for the buildings, presenting a robust, durable and timeless aspect that responds to the brick facades of the buildings adjacent to the Site and helps to stitch the new development into its urban context.

- All the proposed new buildings will comply with current environmental standards, including energy efficiency, good daylight with a high percentage having dual aspect and BREEAM Communities' standard. Excellent space standards are provided and all dwellings will be built to Lifetime Homes standards.

6.8. There are key benefits to the proposed distribution of tenures, unit types, sizes and density across the new development:

- A range of different sized units and different types of units (flats, maisonettes, houses) are evenly distributed across the different tenures, offering real choice to residents. A high number of units are suitable for families, and two of the six blocks comprise mixed tenure family houses.

- All tenures are distributed evenly across the development, with some units of each tenure commanding a park frontage aspect.

- The intensified density of the development has been carefully managed through the design process to present suitable massing in terms of scale and variety. The tall blocks along the park frontage are slim and compact in footprint to enable good sunlight to penetrate into the development. The concentration of units in these blocks is contrasted by the low density houses and a number of open spaces.

6.9. In addition to the standard residential accommodation, the scheme includes other provisions, which will each serve to create a truly mixed community. These are:

- A purpose designed community space: this space, located in front of one of the proposed pocket parks, offers potential for a public function and focal point within the development.

- An Extra Care facility, with 50 residential units and communal space: this facility is part of a wider provision planned across the borough and will be critical to delivering much need accommodation for this sector. The facility has been carefully designed to be part of a larger urban block integrated with standard housing. This offers the potential scope for future flexibility, in terms of models for supported living. .

- A bespoke facility for people with Learning Disabilities, with 7 residential units: this is a pilot provision and innovative in the field, offering this client group the chance to live independently. This facility is located alongside family housing and it is hoped that this proximity will help foster tolerance and understanding.

6.10. All of the above points, at para 6.7 – 6.9 of this evidence, affirm, in my professional view, that the proposed development for the Order Land is of a high quality and will offer a positive and enriching physical urban environment for future residents.

7. Summary and conclusion

7.1 My name is Catherine Bates and I am a qualified Architect. I have a BA Hons. Degree in Art History (1990), a BSc degree in Architecture (1994) and a Diploma in Architecture (1996). I have been registered with the Architect's Registration Board (ARB) since 1999.

7.2 In my current role within the Aylesbury team, I led the Design and Technical work-stream of the OJEU Aylesbury Development Partner procurement. My day-to-day duties include stewarding the quality aspect of the design delivery across the Aylesbury area, working with the Development Partner Notting Hill Housing Trust (NHHT) and with the Site 7 developer London and Quadrant (L&Q); managing the Council's technical obligations with regards to the Development Partner Agreement (DPA); and overseeing delivery of other technical aspects across the Aylesbury area.

7.3 In my proof of evidence I have set out the reasons, from a technical and design point of view, which support the implementation of redevelopment with respect to the Order Land in line with the AAAP.

7.4 The technical aspects referred to in my previous evidence given for the 2013 CPO no.2 Wolverton 1-59 site (CD29), also pertain to the Order Land. This previous evidence was accepted by the Inspector at the inquiry, as set out in the Inspector's report to the Secretary of State (CD11), and I refer to that report in my evidence.

7.5 In my previous evidence I focussed primarily on the technical issues, in this evidence I give further information on the negative aspects of the existing urban environment of the estate and I also set out the positive features of the proposed design for the Site, which covers the area of the Order Land.

7.6 I begin my evidence with a reference to the AAAP background to the decision to develop in favour of refurbishment and I note that the reasons set out still pertain to the existing development on the Order Land.

7.7 I then set out the technical issues, referring largely to my evidence to CPO no.2 (CD29), to cover the condition and negative features of the existing concrete buildings on the Order Land. I note that one building on the Order land is a different typology to these and I set out why demolition of this building, in the context of the rest of the Order Land, is justified. I note that the condition of the buildings on the Order Land does not, itself, present a case for demolition and development but that it is a compounding factor; the other fundamental issue being the layout of the existing estate and the poor urban environment this presents.

7.8 I go on to set out the key issues relating to the existing estate layout and the reasons why this presents an unsuccessful urban environment. These include the aspect of anonymity, lack of animation and passive surveillance at street level, and the oppressive uniformity and monumental scale of the existing concrete slab blocks.

7.9 I then go on to explain the commitment to high quality design by both the Council and the Development Partner, Notting hill Housing Trust. I note that this commitment is in line with the already established high quality design delivered to date within the Aylesbury Action Area footprint. I then set out the key design merits of the proposed development for the Site.

7.10 I note that, in my professional view, the proposed development for the Site is of a high quality and will offer a positive and enriching physical urban environment for future residents.

7.11 In conclusion, my evidence sets out why, from a technical and design point of view, the Council is justified, in line with the AAAP, in proceeding with the demolition of the buildings on the Order Land and the redevelopment of the Site.

8 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Documents referred to in this proof of evidence

CB01 Letter from English Heritage dated 18 December 2014.

Southwark Council

Inquiry into
The London Borough of Southwark (Aylesbury Estate Sites 1b – 1c) Compulsory Purchase Order 2014

Proof of Evidence of

Catherine Bates

For the London Borough of Southwark

Appendix CB01

PINS Reference NPCU/CPO/A5840/74092

ENGLISH HERITAGE

LONDON OFFICE

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18 December 2014

Dear Mr McLellan

**Notifications under Circular 01/2001, Circular 08/2009 &
T&CP (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010
AYLESBURY ESTATE, LAND BOUNDED BY ALBANY ROAD, PORTLAND STREET, WESTMORELAND ROAD AND BRADENHAM CLOSE, LONDON SE17
Application No 14/AP/3843**

Thank you for your letter of 28 November 2014 notifying us of the application for planning permission relating to the above site. We do not wish to comment in detail, but offer the following general observations.

English Heritage Advice
This application for full planning permission relates to the redevelopment of part the Aylesbury Estate and involves the demolition of the existing buildings on site and the erection of a mixed use development comprising of a number of buildings between 2 and 20 storeys in height.

English Heritage has been aware of these emerging proposals for the Aylesbury Estate for some time, and recently provided comments on the scheme at scoping stage (our ref: PA00321234, 9 May 2014). We advised then that the development, which seeks an increase in height from the existing 14 storeys of the Aylesbury Estate to a maximum of 20 storeys, has the potential to impact on the setting of a wide range of designated heritage assets. These include Grade I listed *Church of St Peter*, various Grade II listed buildings within Burgess Park, as well as a number of conservation areas such as *Liverpool Grove, Addington Square, Sutherland Square* and *Grosvenor Park*.

On the basis of the information provided in the submitted Townscape, Built Heritage & Visual Impact Assessment, we are satisfied that the proposed development would not have a significant impact on the setting of these or any other designation heritage assets in the vicinity, particularly given the range of existing building heights in the

wider area. We also recognise that the demolition of the slab blocks of the Aylesbury Estates provides opportunity for enhanced views from various heritage assets.

Recommendation
Notwithstanding the above comments, we recommend that the application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of your specialist conservation advice. It is not necessary for us to be consulted again. However, if you would like further advice, please contact us to explain your request.

Please note that this response relates to historic building and historic area matters only. If there are any archaeological implications to the proposals it is recommended that you contact the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service for further advice (Tel: 020 7973 3712).

Yours sincerely

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