



8th July 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Savills has been instructed by Commercial Estates Group Limited ('CEG') to prepare this statement and participate in the forthcoming examination of the London Borough of Ealing ('LBE') Local Plan 2024 to 2039 ('the Plan'). CEG commend the Borough progressing a new Local Plan in an effort to replace the out-of-date Core Strategy (2012), Development Management Document (2013), and Development Sites (2013) documents.
- 1.2. As a landowner within the Borough, CEG welcomes the opportunity to be involved in shaping the future of the LBE via the Regulation 22 consultation.
- 1.3. This hearing statement is written in response to Matter 9 – Development Sites, part 08EA – Craven House, questions 30 and 31, which state the following:

30. Is the proposed scope of uses justified, effective and consistent with national policy?

31. Does the scale of development optimise previously developed land in line with the London Plan?

- 1.4. CEG have a number of concerns around the DNLP and associated evidence base and considers that, as drafted, it is not positively prepared, justified, effective, or consistent with national or regional policy. Consequently, CEG consider that the DNLP is not sound in its current form.
- 1.5. This statement is set out under the following heads:
 - Introduction to CEG
 - Context of CEG's Planning Permission
 - Context of CEG's Engagement with LBE Emerging Local Plan
 - Matter Commentary

2. Introduction to CEG

- 2.1. CEG was established in 1989 as a privately owned business specialising in investments and development across the UK. They are office specialists, with an office portfolio of over 6 million square feet, home to 520 businesses across the UK which welcome 20,000 customers each day. CEG have a significant track record of delivering highly sustainable award-winning buildings which achieve credentials such as BREEAM Outstanding, BREEAM In Use Outstanding, and Net Zero carbon in occupation. Their collaborative approach to working with stakeholders and communities helps them create an enhanced public realm and facilitate high-quality places. CEG was appointed to act as property and development manager for the Site at 52-58 Uxbridge Road in 1997. Since being appointed



as managers, they have taken ownership of the Site, recently obtaining consent for its redevelopment.

3. Context of CEG's Planning Permission

- 3.1 This representation is submitted alongside the recent approval of planning application (Reference Number: 241397FUL) which permits the redevelopment of the Site to deliver a mixed-use scheme comprising Purpose-Built Student Accommodation and office floorspace within buildings ranging from 10 to 20 storeys.
- 3.2 The application was granted by LBE on 4th June 2025, securing consent for the following:
- Phased development for the construction of between ten and twenty storey mixed use development comprising: Part A - Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) with a ground floor flexible hub (Sui Generis); and Part B - Office floorspace with associated ground floor uses (Use Class E(g)(i)), together with related outdoor amenity spaces, landscaping, public realm improvements, cycle and DDA vehicle parking, refuse storage and ancillary and enabling works.*
- 3.3 As detailed in the Committee Report dated 31st July 2024, Officers acknowledged that the location of the site was appropriate for a mixed-use scheme, and that PBSA would be a suitable, supporting use that contributes to the vitality and viability of LBE. Officers also acknowledged the decline in the office market, recognising that a solely office scheme would not be deliverable in current conditions.
- 3.4 The development's height, ranging from 10 to 20 storeys, was found to provide an appropriate gateway presence as a key node along Uxbridge Road, without detriment to the townscape. This exceeds the restrictive 10-storey allocation, thereby demonstrating that the current height limit inhibits the effective utilisation of the Site.
- 3.5 The PBSA component was identified as addressing a clear local need for specialist housing, making a significant contribution towards both the specialist housing supply, and wider housing delivery objectives of LBE.
- 3.6 In summary, the consented scheme represents a well-designed, sustainable, and policy-compliant development which optimises the Site considerably more effectively than the current allocation permits.

4. Context of CEG's Engagement with LBE Emerging Local Plan

- 4.1. As a long-standing stakeholder within the Borough, CEG welcomes the opportunity to be heard in shaping the future of LBE via the Regulation 22 consultation.
- 4.2. CEG looks forward to continuing conversations with the Council regarding the Site and its potential contribution to the Strategic Objectives of the Plan. This Hearing Statement has been drafted further to CEG's previous Regulation 18 and 19 Representations on the DNLP (dated 9th February 2023 and 10th April 2024 respectively), where concerns regarding the DNLP's soundness were raised. CEG's previous representations remain valid and are supplemented by those set out herein pertaining to the relevant matters raised by the Inspectorate.
- 4.3. Local plans and spatial development strategies are examined to assess whether they have been prepared in accordance with legal and procedural requirements, and whether they are sound. Plans are 'sound', as set out by paragraph 36 of the NPPF (2024), if they are:
 - a) **Positively prepared** – providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;
 - b) **Justified** – an appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence;
 - c) **Effective** – deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground; and
 - d) **Consistent with national policy** – enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework and other statements of national planning policy, where relevant.
- 4.4. To be found 'sound', the Inspector will need to be satisfied that the draft Plan is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy which for this EiP will be the London Plan 2021 and NPPF December 2023 and so representations in this hearing statement will be made on those grounds, but where relevant and considered helpful to the Inspectors, other contextual matters will be drawn to their attention.

5. Matter Commentary

Question 30. *Is the proposed scope of uses justified, effective and consistent with national policy?*

- 5.1. CEG supports the principle of bringing forward the Site under a site allocation to provide clarity and promote the strategic delivery of key sites.
- 5.2. That being said, CEG considers the current proposed allocation 08EA being limited to office use only to be not justified, effective, or consistent with national planning policy. It is essential that the policy framework remains sufficiently flexible to accommodate changes in market conditions and viability over the plan period.
- 5.3. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) provides clear support for making effective use of previously developed land. In accordance with Paragraph 23 of the NPPF, sufficient sites and land should be brought forward to deliver the strategic priorities of the Borough in order to help address objectively identified need (i.e., housing) in line with the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This is reinforced in Paragraph 124, which requires that strategic policies must set out a clear strategy for meeting identified needs in a way that makes as much use as possible of brownfield land.
- 5.4. Paragraph 61 of the Framework requires a sufficient amount and variety of land to come forward where needed, meeting the needs of groups with specific housing requirements, and providing an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community.
- 5.5. Following the Labour Government's 2024 election and their renewed emphasis on accelerating housebuilding, Paragraph 125(c) requires substantial weight to be given to using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified needs, with proposals to be approved unless substantial harm would result.
- 5.6. Furthermore, Paragraph 125(d) directs authorities to support and promote the development of under-utilised land and buildings to help meet housing needs, particularly where land supply is constrained. Planning decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land. New development that optimises a site's potential is encouraged by making the best use of brownfield land in sustainable locations, subject to typical townscape, environmental and infrastructure capacity considerations.
- 5.7. Of critical importance is Paragraph 127 and 127(a), which states
- "Planning policies and decisions need to reflect changes in the demand for land. They should be informed by regular reviews of both the land allocated for development in plans, and of land availability. Where the local planning authority considers there to be no reasonable prospect of an application coming forward for the use allocated in a plan:*
- a) it should, as part of plan updates, reallocate the land for a more deliverable use that can help to address identified needs."*
- 5.8. In accordance with Paragraph 127 and 127(a), if there is no reasonable prospect of a site being developed for its allocated use, planning policies must be able to respond positively by allowing alternative, deliverable development to come forward.

- 5.9. Exchange Plaza (52-58 Uxbridge Road) remains allocated as a development site under new title, 08EA: Craven House. It is worth noting that while the draft Development Site comprises both Exchange Plaza and Craven House, only Exchange Plaza is managed by CEG and therefore comments in this representation do not refer to Craven House.
- 5.10. As set out in our Regulation 19 Written Representation, CEG do not agree with the grouping of Exchange Plaza (the CEG Site) and Craven House as one site allocation. The two plots have individual characteristics that should be considered on a site-by-site basis, with Cavalier House removing any relationship the plots. Further to this, 08EA sits across multiple ownerships which could impede the uniform delivery of the allocation as a whole. In respect of this, CEG maintain their position that the Site Allocation for 08EA should be separated into two individual site allocations; Exchange Plaza (08aEA) and Craven House (08bEA).
- 5.11. The amended draft allocation maintains the proposed use as solely 'Office' for the Site which, as set out in previous representations, CEG find to be overly restrictive in nature.
- 5.12. As evidenced in the recently approved scheme though both marketing evidence and market commentary, sole office use is neither viable nor deliverable. The change in working patterns following the pandemic has seen a decline in Ealing's office market. As such, CEG's view remains that the area should no longer be viewed as a solely office location, and to pursue a purely office allocation at Exchange Plaza would hinder the ability for a key and prominent development site to come forward.
- 5.13. The consented development comprises a mixed-use redevelopment of complementary uses comprising office floorspace and PBSA on brownfield land. The policy context strongly supports the redevelopment of the Site, given its brownfield status, and high level of connectivity to jobs, services, infrastructure and amenities by public transport, walking and cycling.
- 5.14. In line with the allocation, CEG actively sought to deliver the best office product to the Uxbridge Road market that was viable, and had the ambition to deliver a headquarter-style office building. However, market research supporting the application confirmed that at the time of the application, 60,000 sq. ft (circa. 5,500 sqm) was the maximum quantum of office floorspace considered to be deliverable at the Site. As such, an alternative enabling use was required to be delivered alongside the office use to secure the long-term future of the site.
- 5.15. As noted in the Committee Report, Officers agreed that office market conditions have changed since the adoption of LBE's Development Sites DPD (2013), further challenged by the increased popularity of home and hybrid working arrangements following the COVID-19 pandemic. This was demonstrated by the inability to market and deliver the previously consented office only scheme (Ref: 164805FUL), and the Office Market Report, prepared by Savills, that supported the application.
- 5.16. Furthermore, the Committee Report recognised that the location of the Site made it appropriate for mixed-use development, and that PBSA would be a suitable, supporting use that contributes to the vitality and viability of LBE. Officers concluded that the

combination of PBSA and office floorspace would support LBE's knowledge economy, and wider regeneration objectives.

- 5.17. CEG consider that the draft policy position set out in the draft allocation is overly prescriptive, minimising the ability to best optimise the Site given the quantum of office space required to be delivered, contrary to market evidence. In addition, limiting the uses within the application prevents the opportunity for development coming forward to sufficiently address objectively identified needs across the Borough.
- 5.18. LBE has recently failed to meet its housing targets, achieving just 84% in the 2023 Housing Delivery Test, and therefore triggering the 20% buffer. This sustained shortfall exacerbates affordability pressures and limits housing choice for local residents.
- 5.19. The Committee Report recognises that the delivery of 504 PBSA bed spaces makes a significant contribution towards meeting LBE's strategic housing targets. It also addresses a clearly identified need for PBSA in the Borough, in accordance with Paragraph 61 of the NPPF.
- 5.20. The PBSA element plays a significant role in addressing this issue of under-delivery of housing in LBE, and London-wide annual PBSA delivery requirements.
- 5.21. Consequently, to solely pursue an office allocation at the Site would hinder the ability for a key and prominent development site to come forward, and the allocation does not provide sufficient flexibility to address future market, political, or environmental changes that have been the cause of such historic uncertainty to date. To retain the Site under the sole office use would be ineffective and inconsistent with the NPPF's requirement to optimise brownfield sites (Paragraphs 124, 125, and 126), and fail to provide an effective policy framework for the delivery of this key site.
- 5.22. CEG therefore maintain their position from their Regulation 19 Written Representation that the council should introduce greater flexibility in the "proposed use" part of the allocation by adding 'Town Centre uses', including office, education, and housing and therefore allocate the Site for 'mixed-use'. This would ensure the Plan remains justified, effective, consistent with national policy, and capable of supporting timely delivery of development to meet local needs.

Question 31. *Does the scale of development optimise previously developed land in line with the London Plan?*

- 5.23. The draft allocation supports the principle of development in this location, as a highly sustainable, brownfield site. There is no objection to that principle, and accordingly, CEG supports the allocation of the Site in principle.
- 5.24. The DNLP sets a series of height caps on Site Allocations, including a 10-storey allocation on 08EA: Craven House, despite being originally identified as falling within an 'area potentially appropriate for tall buildings' with indicative heights ranging between 9 - 21 storeys (31.5 - 73.5 metres) in the Regulation 18 version of the Draft Plan.
- 5.25. CEG notes that the proposed maximum indicated heights as set out in the draft site allocation would fail to optimise the use of previously developed land, contrary to London Plan Policies GG2 (Good Growth) and D3 (Design-Led Approach). This is a reflection of the narrow nature of the current drafting of site allocation 08EA, which does not respond to the Site's opportunities, constraints, or the evolving market.
- 5.26. The Site is located in an area undergoing significant change and has seen the redevelopment and optimisation of nearby brownfield sites to create tall, high-quality, high-density mixed-use developments. In particular, the evolving skyline has been driven through the direction of growth and density along the Uxbridge Road Corridor - from Ealing Broadway down to West Ealing, with notable developments including CP House, Perceval House, 55 West and Ealing Filmworks, alongside the recent appeal decision at Waitrose, West Ealing. These developments have created an established context for higher-density development in this part of the Borough.
- 5.27. The consented scheme demonstrated that the Site can successfully accommodate greater height and massing on the Site. As part of the application, consideration of the appropriate building height, townscape impact, and architectural form were rigorously assessed. When evaluated against London Plan Policy D9, the application demonstrated that tall buildings up to 20-storeys were appropriate, a position accepted by LBE's own Design Review Panel who recognised the evolving context of the area.
- 5.28. Policy D9 of LBE's DNLP set outs the definition of a tall building in different parts of Ealing. The Site is located within Ealing E14 and tall buildings in this location are defined as 21 storeys (73.5m) or more.
- 5.29. As detailed in the Committee Report, the Site is located within Ealing Town Centre (Zone D), with guidance for prospective tall building heights ranging from 9 to 21 storeys (31.5m to 73.5m) under LBE's Tall Building Strategy (2023). As such, Officers agreed that the location of the Site would be appropriate for a tall building.
- 5.30. The consented development ranges between 10 and 20 storeys, with the highest element of the development at 20 storeys (59.45m). When assessed against Policy D9 (Tall Buildings) of the London Plan, Officers concluded that additional height would not result in significant adverse impact on the surrounding area and would optimise the site effectively, and was thus considered to be compliant with Policy D9.

- 5.31. Officers also considered that given the Site's location on the Uxbridge Road, the height of the development would serve as a 'gateway' building and aid wayfinding, with massing and scale found to appropriately respond to the local context.
- 5.32. Furthermore, the scheme was found to be consistent in height with recent approvals in the immediate vicinity, such as CP House opposite, which was approved with a height of 51.1m. The development was found to have acceptable visual impacts, and would be in accordance with London Plan Policy D9, and optimise the Site effectively in line with Policies GG2 and D3.
- 5.33. Notwithstanding the recent consent, the Draft Plan was informed by an evidence base, which includes LBE's Tall Buildings Strategy (2024), which set Draft Allocation 08EA's 10-storey limit. Within CEG's Regulation 19 submission, Montagu Evans prepared a supporting representation that fully and critically assessed the relevant evidence base in relation to Tall Buildings and the draft allocation.
- 5.34. Within this representation, Montagu Evans found the evidence base that has informed the building heights to not be sound. Part of their critique of the evidence base related to the lack of reasonable alternatives that were tested as part of the evidence base, namely different height scenarios to justify the proposed maximum heights. As such, the capped height at 10 storeys is not justified and it remains unclear from where that number has originated.
- 5.35. Given the above, it is evident that the allocation's maximum height of 10 storeys would not allow for the design-led optimisation as required by Policy D3 of the London Plan, and thus is not of an appropriate scale. Further to this, CEG do not consider that the maximum threshold of 10 storeys to the Site has been justified through a comprehensive evidence base. The unnecessarily restrictive and counterproductive height cap is not sound, and consequently, CEG consider it is not positively prepared, justified, effective or in general conformity with national and regional policy.