

Committee(s): Planning and Transportation Committee	Dated: 16 May 2024
Subject: Rescission of city walkway at 125 London Wall (Alban highwalk)	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	Y/N
If so, how much?	£
What is the source of Funding?	
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	Y/N
Report of: Executive Director Environment	For Decision

Summary

This report recommends the rescission of part of the existing city walkway known as the Alban Highwalk City Walkway at 125 London Wall. The rescission is to enable the redevelopment of Alban Gate, 125 - 130 London Wall, London EC2 which is to be considered by the Planning Applications Sub-committee on the 9th of May 2024. If there is a resolution to approve this application (application reference no. 23/01115/FUL) it will be subject to the prior entry into a Section 106 Agreement which will secure the provision of replacement city walkway and ensure that any damage to Alban Highwalk City Walkway can be repaired. A security bond will also be provided to the City before the works commence.

Recommendation(s)

That your Committee:

- a) Conditionally on the grant of planning permission (Registered No. 23/01115/FUL) for alterations at Alban Gate, 125 London Wall and the linked Section 106 Agreement having completed, resolve to vary the resolution of Court of Common Council made on 1st April 1993 to alter the city walkway known as Alban Highwalk City Walkway so as to exclude the area shown shaded pink on the City Walkway Variation Drawing number D6228D0702 Rev12 (Appendix 2B to this report) in accordance with the resolution set out in Appendix 2A to this report.
- b) Delegate to the City Operations Director authority to insert into the resolution an appropriate date for the coming into force of the resolution at (a) above.
- c) Conditionally on the grant of planning permission (Registered No. 23/01115/FUL) for alterations at Alban Gate, 125 London Wall and the linked Section 106 Agreement having completed, approve the use of non-standard materials in line with the existing Alban Highwalk City Walkway for the new city walkway to be declared by the resolution at (d) below.

- d) Delegate to the City Operations Director authority to make a resolution declaring the replacement walkway shown shaded green on Drawing Number D6228D0902 Rev I3 in Appendix 3 to be city walkway on being satisfied that the new walkway:
- i. has been laid out or is otherwise suitable for a city walkway within the meaning of section 5 of the City of London (Various Powers) Act 1967,
 - ii. that access to it is available directly from a street or another way or place that is a city walkway, and
 - iii. that it has been laid out or rendered suitable for a city walkway in accordance with one of the provisions specified in subsection (1) of section 6 of the City of London (Various Powers) Act 1967.

Main report

Background

1. On 1st April 1993 the Court of Common Council resolved to declare as city walkway the newly constructed replacement upper-level pedestrian area above the junction of London Wall and Wood Street following redevelopment of the then Lee House as shown on the Drawing at Appendix 1 of this report and known as the Alban Highwalk City Walkway.
2. The Alban Highwalk City Walkway connects part of the larger network of pedestrian routes at ground level, and the upper-level walkway around the Barbican and London Wall.
3. An application for planning permission has been submitted for the redevelopment of Alban House, 125-130 London Wall and is to be considered by the Planning Applications Sub-committee on the 9th of May 2024. The application is for the:
‘the extension, refurbishment and alterations including: creation of a connection from the office reception to the Wood Street north escalator; reconfiguration of Class E uses and spaces at podium level to include extension of the office floorspace; formation of new seating areas at podium level; installation of new planters; refurbishment of the escalator surrounds (Wood Street south and north); formation of feature and art walls; re cladding of columns; alteration of the Alban Highwalk City Walkway and declaration of new areas of City Walkway; and provision of new lighting and wayfinding’.
4. Approval of the application will be subject to the prior completion a Section 106 Agreement to secure planning obligations relating to the replacement city walkway and conditions relevant to the replacement city walkway would also be attached to the planning permission.
5. Officers are working with the applicant/developer to agree phasing plans which ensure that city walkway routes both north and south and east and west can be retained as much as possible during the delivery of the scheme. If a route cannot be retained at any time this will need to be agreed with the City Corporation and officers would ensure that any such period is limited to that necessary.

Current Position

6. The proposed changes to the Alban Highwalk City Walkway as part of the redevelopment are illustrated in the drawing attached at Appendix 2B. The proposals will extend the office lobby at podium level, building onto the existing Alban Highway City Walkway.
7. 204 sqm out of the 220 sqm extension footprint at podium level will be located on city walkway. While the extension would build into a pedestrian desire line, altering the existing pedestrian routes on the podium, officers consider that movement around the podium would still be legible, and assisted by new signage to aid wayfinding. Furthermore, the dimensions of the routes around the podium and lobby are considered acceptable and to be fully accessible to all.
8. The proposed variation to rescind part of the Alban Highwalk City Walkway will be implemented when the Planning Permission has been issued at an appropriate point in the phasing of the works.
9. To accommodate the extension, the 250 sqm retail unit at podium level would be demolished. The applicant/developer has agreed to lay out some of the site of the demolished retail unit as city walkway forming part of the Alban Highwalk City Walkway to ensure that there would be no overall loss of city walkway at podium level as a result of the proposal. While navigation around the new extension will require a longer distance of travel for pedestrians specifically the West to East route and the North to West route) there is a small gain of city walkway overall of 20 sqm.
10. The new city walkway will be constructed using materials and paving used across the existing Alban Highwalk City Walkway. While the materials will not be in accordance with the City's city walkway standards it will integrate the new city walkway into the existing city walkway. The owner will be required to maintain the new City Walkway, in line with the existing agreement due to the use of non-standard materials. The provisions of suitable replacement walkway and ongoing maintenance will be secured through the entry into a Section 106 Agreement and by condition.
11. To enable the replacement city walkway to be declared as soon as the City Operations Director is satisfied that the replacement city walkway:
 - i. has been laid out or is otherwise suitable for a city walkway within the meaning of section 5 of the City of London (Various Powers) Act 1967;
 - ii. that access to it is available directly from a street or another way or place that is a city walkway; and
 - iii. that it has been laid out or rendered suitable for a city walkway in accordance with one of the provisions specified in subsection (1) of section 6 of the City of London (Various Powers) Act 1967,

members are being asked at this stage to delegate the decision on the declaration of the replacement city walkway to the City Operations Director. This will assist in phasing the delivery of the development in a way which ensures that

there is little or no time when a route on the highwalk both north and south and east to west is not provided over land which is City Walkway.

12. Appropriate wording for a resolution to effect rescission of the area of city walkway and declaration of the new area of city walkway, including plans, is appended to this report at Appendix 2A.

Financial implications

13. As part of the proposed Section 106 Agreement the applicant/developer is bound to cover the City's costs associated with placing notice in the City AM publication of the passing of the resolution altering the city walkway and the costs of the officer time in preparing this report and the resolution.
14. To mitigate any financial risk for the City associated with any need to carry out any works to the city walkway (existing or new) or to take over any works to the city walkway (existing or new), the proposed Section 106 Agreement also secures payment by the developer of all costs associated with:
 - the reinstatement of the rescinded walkway,
 - all remedial works required to the current and/or new city walkway; and
 - all works required to complete and dedicate the new city walkway,All such costs to cover the City should it need to step in and complete the works or reinstate the city walkway, are covered by planning obligations including the payment by the developer of a security bond.

Legal implications

15. Wording for the resolution is included at Appendix 2A for your Committee's approval. If the resolution is made, notice of the resolution describing the variation must be published in one or more newspapers circulating within the City and displayed for at least 28 days in a prominent position on the city walkway. The resolution will take effect from a date to be inserted by the City Operations Director. The same process will need to be followed when the resolution is made to declare the new area of city walkway.

Risk Implications

16. The alteration to the Alban Highwalk City Walkway is not considered to present any key risks that would not be dealt with by conditions on the planning permission and obligations as part of the Section 106 Agreement.

Conclusion

17. In order for the redevelopment of Alban Gate, 125-130 London Wall to go ahead, part of the Alban Highwalk City Walkway within the redevelopment site needs to be closed and subsequently removed. To enable this to take place the city walkway status must be rescinded, which will require variation of the Alban Highwalk City Walkway Resolution of 1993.
18. The proposed scheme includes provision of new city walkway and related improvements to the public realm which will retain the connection of the larger network of pedestrian routes at ground level, and the upper-level walkway around the Barbican and London Wall.

19. It is therefore considered appropriate to rescind this part of the city walkway. This will require the resolution of your Committee to vary the original resolution of the Court of Common Council, as well as the delegation to the City Operations Director to insert an appropriate date into the resolution to vary the walkways (once the Section 106 Agreement has been entered into and the Planning Permission has been issued).
20. Your Committee is therefore recommended to make a resolution varying the original Alban Highwalk City Walkway resolution dated 1 April 1993 and to delegate authority to the City Operations Director to declare the new city walkway once it has been laid out and an inspection has taken place to confirm that it has been laid out to an acceptable standard and to approve the use of non-standard materials.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – City Walkway Declaration Plan No. C.W.D.P.-2-93
- Appendix 2A – resolutions to vary the City Walkway Declaration
- Appendix 2B – City Walkway Alteration Plan D6228D0702 Rev I2 forming an appendix to the resolution to vary the City Walkway declaration
- Appendix 3 – the proposed replacement City Walkway D6228D0902 Rev I3

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