

# **Mortlake Brewery Community Group Comments on the Publication Local Plan**

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## **The Mortlake Brewery Community Group**

We are a voluntary umbrella group of local residents and local associations, clubs and businesses, formed to channel views to the planners and developers. We were formed originally in 2010 and collaborated with the Council in preparing the development brief for the site which was published in 2011. We have now come together again following the news that the site has been sold and that a planning application will be expected from the new owner this year.

We did not make a representation as a group concerning the Council's Pre-Publication Local Plan last year but supported the representation made by the Mortlake with East Sheen Society who are represented in our group. However, following the growing interest among local residents in the prospects for the Brewery site during the last six months we have seen the need to respond in more detail to the Publication Local Plan, as below.

## **SA 24 Policy Statement**

It is noted that the policy statement mentions: "the provision of an on-site new 6-form entry secondary school, plus sixth form, will be required" .... and "the Council will expect the provision of high quality open spaces.... as well as a new publicly accessible green space link to the riverside."

The statement is followed by supporting text in 12 bullets. We have no argument with nine of these bullets but have comments on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> bullets as follows:

## **Development Brief**

The 1<sup>st</sup> bullet states that "the Council has produced and adopted a development brief in 2011 for this site, which sets out the vision for redevelopment and provides further guidance on the site's characteristics, constraints, land use and development opportunities." Our concern is about a disconnect between the policy statement and the development brief with regard to the 4<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> bullets below.

## **The Secondary School**

The development brief clearly states (para 5.20) that "the Council will support the provision of a two-form entry Primary School" and that "the preferred location for any school facilities is adjacent to the existing sports fields in the south west area of the site."

The 4<sup>th</sup> bullet (DSA 24), however, re-iterates the need for the secondary school "as set out in the Council's School Place Planning Strategy" and adds that "the Council expects any redevelopment proposal to allow for provision of this school."

We can understand the need for a new secondary school somewhere in the eastern part of the Borough (the current population in the state primary schools in this part being some 6,000 while the current

population in the three state secondary schools is about 2,700). Our concern, however, is that the provision of a new 6-form entry secondary school, plus sixth form – in order to be comparable with the other secondary schools – will require a site of about 4 ha including the existing sports fields, leaving only 4.6 ha for the housing development and new village centre for Mortlake (the total site area being 8.6 ha).

Whilst we accept that the appropriate location for a new secondary school should be on the north side of the railway serving Barnes, Mortlake and Kew, which have no secondary school, we are of the opinion that there is an alternative location on this side of the railway worth exploring. We are also of the opinion that the Brewery site is more suitable for a primary school, rather than the site proposed at Barnes Hospital (SA 27) which has such poor access.

### **The Sports Fields**

The development brief states (para 5.38) that “the existing sports recreation ground on the site is allocated as Other Open Space of Townscape Importance. Future proposals for the site will need to ensure that the development adjacent to the area of open land has regard to the visual impact on the character of the open land. The Council will seek the retention of the two existing football pitches/one cricket pitch for increased public use.”

We note, however, that the 10<sup>th</sup> bullet (SA 24) states: “links through the site, including a new green space and high quality public realm link between the River and Mortlake Green, provide the opportunity to integrate the development and new communities with the existing Mortlake community.” While we support this aim we are concerned that there is no mention of retaining the existing sports fields contrary to the above statement contained in the development brief.

We have not yet seen the emerging plans but we are much concerned that, in order to allow more space for the housing development and village centre, these sports fields may be sacrificed and/or possibly be replaced with a single all-weather football pitch. These sports fields are a valuable local asset, they have never been built on and they were used as a training ground by the England team before they won the World Cup in 1966.

### **The Housing Development**

We have heard that the developer is proposing to provide some 850 apartments plus 200 sheltered units. We have also heard that the majority of the apartments will be 3- and 4-bedroom family units. We have calculated the density to be in the region of 420 habitable rooms per hectare. This is higher than the density of comparable recent developments on the Barnes and Kew Riversides and is similar to the density of the recently approved redevelopment of the Teddington Studios. It is also within the upper limit of 450 habitable rooms per hectare for development in an urban setting with limited public transport accessibility (as here) as given in the Greater London Authority’s Supplementary Guidance on Density (2016).

However, part of the site has to be excluded from the calculations, namely the existing sports fields and the land required for the secondary school and village centre, and this could result in a significantly higher density (possibly twice as high). Such an increase in density would result in a significantly higher and more massive housing development which would reduce the quality of life for its residents and for the existing community.

The increase in density will also have an adverse impact on traffic in Lower Richmond Road which is already congested in the peak hour due to constraints at the Chalkers Corner junction at one end and the Sheen Lane junction and level crossing at the other.

### **Overall Development**

We are concerned that the emerging plans will show a serious overdevelopment of the site. We accept there is a need for more housing – in particular affordable housing – and for a secondary school but we are of the opinion that the two cannot be provided together on the same site. We have identified an alternative site for the school and have already made a separate submission to the Council in this regard.