

STAG BREWERY EXHIBITION OF DESIGN PROPOSALS

Mortlake Brewery Community Group Comments on Proposals

30 March 2017

This summary is an initial response to the design proposals displayed via boards and a model at the Public Exhibition at the Stag site. It has been compiled following input from members of the MBCG and from comments expressed by attendees to the Exhibition and from comments and observations made by residents and members of the community who attended the MBCG's monthly meeting on 27.03.17. There remain a number of questions related to the design proposals which would help assess the scheme more in detail and some of these are raised in this summary. We have generally used the adopted Planning Brief for the site as a basis for the subject headings covered in this summary together with other associated key subject headings as follows:

VISION AND LAND USES

- The designs provide a residential led development proposal with a mix of land uses.
- The residential component proposes a very high density of units and the affordable content is not quoted or explained where it is provided in the layout.
- The commercial B1 element is fairly restricted but the proposed locations seem appropriate facing Mortlake High St, and in the eastern zone of the site, anticipated for Phase 1 implementation. These commercial elements should be aimed at the businesses anticipated in the adopted Planning Brief. Items 5.12 and 5.13
- The other commercial elements of retail units, restaurants, cafes, bars etc are concentrated in the eastern zone of the development, and are located in four main areas: along the riverside, along the north-south 'green link', around the 'town square', and along the east-west route called the 'high street'. This extent of commercial uses could be considered rather too dissipated, and the plan depth of many of the units look too narrow. The locations should perhaps be more concentrated and further thought will need to be given to servicing these units, particularly those on the riverside.
- Two Community use locations are proposed in the lower levels of the Maltings and adjacent Bulls Alley. The Community has already prepared initial ideas for the space needs and internal uses/functions for such space and will develop these with the developer over the coming months.
- It is anticipated that health care facilities will need to be expanded in the area and with the development of the Stag site the healthcare demands of the area will further grow. We encourage consultation with the LA and providers to make suitable provisions in the scheme.
- We note a 'care village' is indicated in the west zone alongside Ship Lane although it is contained in just one residential block.
- The re-use of the Maltings is supported naturally. Is the intention to locate residential uses above the community uses? If so how many residential units are proposed and are these within the total numbers quoted (980) or additional. Where is it intended to locate parking for any residential uses?
- The re-use of the old hotel/bottling plant for a 96 room hotel is supported in principle but how would the building be suitably serviced given the intense use of hotels, and where will the car parking be provided so as not to erode the concept of the 'town square' which is potentially a positive focal feature of the scheme?
- The small cinema use is a positive element at a mid point location between the standard offers in Richmond and the boutique offer in Church Street, Barnes. We assume that the developer anticipates viability via a largely local clientele otherwise parking provisions would represent a congestion/environmental problem. Some explanation of operator expectations would be helpful to understand.

- The Gym/commercial unit alongside the cinema is a positive element. Keeping these as two distinct massing elements is preferable to one very large combined unit facing the Mortlake Green
- The description on Panel 06 mentions creation of -‘a new village heart and retail area’. It seems the design has shifted the focus from the riverside and the green link from Mortlake Green to the riverside, as envisaged in the adopted Planning Brief. As such there seems to be a distinct differentiation between the western and eastern zones, with a wholly residential and school focus to the west and Ship Lane remaining somewhat un-animated. It seems that the nature and intended character of some of these key focus areas needs further consideration. There is a danger of dissipated effect, set against a realistic assessment of what will be commercially viable in terms of shops, cafes, restaurants and small local businesses in the new community, whilst still successfully creating ‘a heart to the community’ - currently so sadly lacking.
- The secondary school now replaces the primary provision. This is shown on the playing fields. You are already aware of the strength of feeling in the community about any loss of the sports fields. The current proposed location would be very vigorously opposed by residents and the community. The adopted Planning Brief protects this open space which is designated OoTI and is part of the character of the area and is an important visual amenity. We understand you are exploring alternative locations on the site. We too are liaising with Richmond Council on this fundamental matter. We therefore urge you to integrate the school elsewhere therefore and retain the grass sports fields in accordance with the Planning Brief. We do still question Richmond on the validity of locating the secondary school at the Stag site where it may be difficult to adequately provide the right external environment and air quality given proximity to what will be a very busy infrastructure route on Lower Richmond Road.
- We note a new bus turn-around is shown. Have TfL been consulted on the bus depot change for the 209 service, and do they support relocation or alternatively extended services as far as Richmond?

LAYOUT

- The geometry and disposition of the overall layout pattern has responded to our earlier comments and the existing context positively, and the residential units benefit from east/west orientation.
- Your team’s earlier context analysis highlighted the local streetscape grid pattern and it seems have used this to some extent to influence the latest design. The existing pattern is however one of mostly two storey residential properties. The proposed layout does illustrate a very tight grain of north south orientated blocks and streets/landscape links. Some of the widths between blocks appear very narrow even with some of the blocks of lower height. The sheer number of proposed residential units demonstrate the very high density and grain. The model in the Exhibition illustrates this very clearly.
- The green link between Mortlake Green and the riverside is a fundamental element of the adopted Planning Brief and a feature which emerged from more than 2 years of community consultation. The link is now very narrow and combined with the kink along its length does emasculate the original concept. We have pointed out this item previously, and it does seem that with some careful geometrical re-alignments that the original concept could still be maintained and incorporated into the other features of the emerging design. However one aspect of the green link requires a re-think, and this is vehicular access and the crossing of the new ‘high street’. This is covered in the later section on Transportation & Access.
- The new ‘high street’ in particular looks very narrow indeed (10.0m). building to building. The ‘garden’ area in the west appears to be just 14.0m between residential blocks and these are between 4to 6 and 3to 7 storeys in height. On a north south orientation this will also be in almost permanent shade.
- At the moment there is no information on levels. Will building entrances be at grade or elevated for reasons of flood protection or with undercroft parking?
- The hierarchy of internal roads is unclear and what is one way and two way. A diagram to explain vehicular routes and pedestrian/cycle routes would be helpful to further assess the design.
- Does the layout respect all the protected trees on the site?

MASSING & SCALE

- Setting aside the massing and scale of the school which is covered under other headings, the overall massing is very dense with 11/12 north/south linear block configurations which demonstrate a very dense development.
- The storey heights towards the north west boundary are 4+1 and 3 to 5 storeys in height where a mix of heights up to only 3 storeys and the primary school were indicated in the adopted Planning Brief.
- The building heights of 6 and 4 to 5 storeys at the east end of the site adjacent Bulls Alley do not accord with the Planning Brief which indicated a maximum height of 7 floors on the site and buildings no taller than the Maltings, but with height diminishing towards the riverside. Buildings adjacent Bulls Alley would be more comfortable in scale and massing if 3-4 floors, then rising progressively in a gradation to the highest buildings of 7 floors.
- The tall building of 14 floors is not supported and is in conflict with the Planning Brief.
- The visuals on Panel 09 illustrate residential buildings with steep pitched roofs and upper accommodation incorporated into the roofscape. This assists the overall scale and massing and provides a blend of traditional and contemporary external appearance which seems a positive concept to be developed further in the Phase 1 detailed proposals.
- If the secondary school is re-located and remains within the development it still represents a very large mass in terms of accommodation required. It would need to be articulated in some manner to diminish its visual impact on a site, an aspect of development which was roundly rejected by consultation in 2010-2011 - namely a single large-scale destination use.

DENSITY

- The combined effect of the secondary school and over 1000 residential units plus the other uses proposed create a very dense scheme which does not integrate positively with the surrounding context.
- The overall site density in terms of units/ha and habitable rooms/ha very significantly exceeds the planning guidelines set out in the GLA's Supplementary Guidance on Density (2016). It also vastly exceeds total residential limits of 400-500 units for future provision for East Sheen, Mortlake, Barnes Common and Barnes area -LP34 in the Local Plan.
- The display model very demonstrably highlights the very dense nature of the proposals particularly when viewed in the context of the surrounding environment. The west half of the site is extremely dense with blocks arranged very close to one another.
- Could the developer please confirm the total floor area of the individual non-residential uses in the current scheme?
- The combined effect of the exhibition scheme is un-sustainable in terms of traffic movement and congestion. See section on Transportation & Access.

LANDSCAPE

- The Planning Brief for the site includes the retention of the sports fields and the creation of a strong green link and visual connection to the riverside from Mortlake Green. The proposed scheme builds over the fields with the school, and its hard MUGA external sport/recreation space. The green link is diminished in width and concept and is crossed by an east west vehicular route, further eroding the intent in the Planning Brief.
- Panel 10 states that 'the proposals distribute open space throughout the site (something that the SPD proposals didn't)'. This is a misleading statement to the public. Plan 1 in the SPD and the text of the SPD indicate the two main areas of open space - the sports fields and the green link. This was not to the exclusion of other high quality open space, play areas, etc. Item 5.39 does envisage "new green space providing leisure opportunities" and "use of green infrastructure and multi-functional open spaces as part of addressing open space, access, nature, biodiversity and recreation".
- The scheme quotes 25% of the total development in green space. This is far below what is envisaged in the SPD with the retention of the sports fields and the green link. The combined area

of the sports fields and the green link in the SPD represent 6.695 acres which is 31.58% of the total site, so 25% in the proposals scheme is woefully inadequate and again highlights the sheer density of the proposed scheme.

- It would be useful to have a diagram which indicates truly public open landscape space. It is not clear if any space is intended as private and segregated from public access.
- Can you confirm that all existing protected trees are retained in the scheme?
- Please highlight the dedicated play areas for the residential units
- Some of the open spaces shown will be overshadowed for long periods due to the width of these spaces and the height of adjoining buildings.
- We understand that the vast majority of the car parking will be in basements. The proposals will need to provide adequate depth, (min 1.0m) above the basement structures, and drainage, to permit the level of tree planting, root depth and soft landscape treatment illustrated in the exhibition scheme. An indicative cross-section to show the main principles of the scheme would be helpful to assess the design more fully.
- The Malting Plaza seems very diminutive and does not create a community hub area as envisaged in the Planning Brief. The retail /restaurant/bar spaces here, shown on Panel 07 seem rather small and shallow in plan to accommodate uses which would successfully form a community hub around the Malting.
- The boundary walls to the east are not sacrosanct. Some are historic and should be carefully integrated into the scheme, but some are much more recent and could be removed to allow the level of visual and physical permeability sought through the Planning Brief.
- Improvements to the towpath as shown on Panel 11 are welcomed, but the developer should liaise with the many riverside Groups to develop the detailed proposals. A play area shown on the riverside close to Bulls Alley may present safety issues.

TRANSPORTATION & ACCESS

- The cumulative effect of density with the school, the number of residential units and the other land uses will have a very negative effect on the local road network and add to existing congestion. The proposed junction works at Chalker's Corner have been assessed by members of our Group with considerable transportation experience and fear the proposals will potentially encourage new increased traffic rather than alleviate matters.
- Residents in Chertsey Court are very concerned about the road junction works proposed near their properties and have not been consulted to date either by the developer or the RHP.
- Our transportation representative met with one of your team at the exhibition and was encouraged to pose questions not covered by the displays/boards. We have issued a series of technical questions related to traffic, public transport etc. and are awaiting responses from PBA.
- The presence of the river to the north and the specific local constraints created by the level crossings at Mortlake, White Hart Lane, Vine Road Barnes and Manor Road create a very constrained 'pocket' of Richmond with considerable access and traffic movement problems.
- On points of further detail it would be helpful to understand the hierarchy of the internal road and routes together with pedestrian and cycle route provisions and means of servicing access to the various land uses/buildings.
- We await to hear the feedback on the option of extending the CPZ.

HEADLINE ISSUES

- Location of the secondary school on the sports fields
- Cumulative site density
- Resultant impact on open space and quality of the overall environment
- Traffic impact and congestion/gridlock
- Location of the 'heart' of the scheme.
- Community provisions.