

Mortlake Brewery Community Group

Notes of a meeting held at St Mary's, Mortlake High Street, SW14 8JA on Monday 5 March 2018

Approximately 100 people present.

Robert Orr Ewing, chair of the Group, welcomed everyone to the meeting. He explained that the Group is not opposed to the Mortlake Brewery site being developed but that it wants to ensure that the development is high quality and proportionate, and that it takes account of the area and its present and future residents. The plans were submitted to the Council on 19 February 2018, the Planning Department is now in process of validating. The volume of paperwork means that this will take at least another week or so.

The slides followed the basis of the agenda:

1. Initial assessment of plans
2. Outline timeline for application process
3. Reviewing and co-ordinating response to applications
4. Your involvement and next steps

Robert reminded the meeting of the five goals of the MBCG (slide 3), agreed by a public meeting in 2017.

Following the Community Liaison Group meeting set up by the Developers, we now have a much clearer idea of the plans that have been submitted although access to detail has not yet been made available. The developers have made their slides available to the Group which is the basis of the presentation tonight.

Peter Eaton, architect and resident, said 4 applications have been submitted, the overall masterplan, a detailed plan for the eastern part of the site, the school and the proposals for Chalkers Corner. He explained the master plan submitted by the developers (slide 4). Brown is retail/café/ restaurants, purple is 1 – 4 bed housing units, turquoise the school, green the all-weather pitch, green the cinema and grey the hotel and bottling plant. He pointed out the roads and green spaces, noting that the road to the north of the playing field is no longer for cars. All the parking for the east end of the site will be underground, there is no information about parking for the housing in the west end of the site or for the school.

Peter compared the master plan with the LBRuT Community Planning Brief from 2011 (slide 5). The height of some buildings has increased in the present plans, the primary school has been replaced by a secondary school, and the playing field is no longer open space.

Slide 6 shows the proposed phasing of the work, the first two phases will take at least a year from the time when planning permission is granted. The ground is contaminated from its industrial past, and there is some asbestos on the site. This will take some time for the developers to decontaminate the site.

Peter set out his initial assessment of the density and mix of the plans (slide 7). He expressed his concern that the siting of the retail, café and restaurants around the development means that it will be difficult to feel that it has a heart. The cinema is likely to have two or three screens, possibly too many given the proximity of cinemas on Richmond and Barnes. The healthcare provision is minimal, 4 consulting rooms but no plan for a proper primary care facility. The seven-storey buildings in the eastern end are very close together, so they will feel crowded and will take light from the ground below. There are no figures yet for the numbers of affordable or social housing units, this will be a matter for negotiation between the developers and the planners. There is an allowance of 0.75 parking space for each housing unit, which allows for 500 cars on the site.

The next slides set out the positives aspect of the plans and continuing serious concerns of the Group grouped according to the five goals of the MBCG.

1 A development that puts the heart into Mortlake (slide 8)

Peter talked the meeting through the points on this slide.

2 Housing density we can all live with (slide 9)

Peter noted that since the Planning Brief in 2011, the draft London Plan drawn up by the Mayor of London has identified that the borough of Richmond should provide 811 new housing units each year, the figure was 311. This greater density will help the borough reach its target.

3 Protect and enhance Mortlake's green spaces for all to enjoy (slide 11)

Max Millington, local resident and parent of young children, noted that the playing field now has less building on it, but noted that it is proposed to change much of it to an all-weather artificial pitch. This will bring with it high fencing and floodlighting which have their own disadvantages. The slide sets out the unanswered questions about protections on the green space of the playing field and at Chertsey Court.

4 Safe and sustainable transport solutions (slide 12)

Howard Potter, traffic planning consultant and resident, highlighted recent improvements in the plan but expressed his continuing concern over the changes proposed at Chalker's Corner. They will lead to an increase of traffic using this Mortlake/Barnes route as a short cut instead of the main trunk road. Network Rail is aware of the dangers to pedestrians from cars at the level crossing which will only increase, particularly with a large number of school children in the morning. There is no commitment to improving bus services which are poor, Mortlake is ill served by public transport.

5 Community, educational and NHS facilities for everyone (slide 13)

Kate Woodhouse, Mortlake Community Association, noted the proposal to include community space in the Maltings and this is hugely needed. But she pointed out that the space is obstructed by lift shafts serving the flats above. The changed position of the school to north/south at the edge of the field is an improvement, but there is still a lack of recreational space for students, parking and questions about the pitches. The provision of private retirement and nursing home facilities is not matched by a proposal to increase NHS health care provision for new and present residents.

Possible timeline (slide 14)

Robert explained that it is not possible to set out an exact time line yet. He had written to Cllr Paul Hodgins inviting him to this meeting and had hoped he could attend in person to explain how the Council intend to consult with residents. Cllr Hodgins sent his apologies on the day of the meeting but said plans would be put in place to ensure full consultation. It is highly likely that the usual times for consulting (ie 21 days) will be extended as this is such a big application and the plans will be displayed locally. MBCG will email everyone with information when they have it. The plans may not reach the Planning Committee until the end of the year. The developers have submitted four applications (slide 15), they will need to submit a detailed plan for the western end in due course.

MBCG's response (slide 15)

MBCG will be review the planning application in detail, as set out in this slide. There is a massive amount of reading, Robert asked if anyone with expertise in relevant areas could offer help to go through documentation.

Crowdfunding (slide 16)

Michael Fasosin, resident and parent of young children, thanked everyone for their generosity in giving to the fund. Which had exceeded its target of £10k to £11k. This money will pay for professional advice from town planners and other experts on the planning application, thus enabling MBCG to submit an informed and detailed response to the plans.

Your involvement (slide 17)

Francine Bates, secretary of MBCG and resident, urged everyone to respond to the planning application and to attend public meetings once they were announced. MBCG is asking the Council to arrange a series of public meetings and an exhibition in the area. We will also produce a list of specific points to respond to our major concerns about density green space, traffic, Chertsey Court and NHS facilities. Francine emphasised that the more people that write in to respond to the application the better, each reply is read and counted.

MBCG will put together a new communications campaign to raise awareness and encourage people to have their say – volunteers urgently needed to help write copy and distribute leaflets, all offers of help gratefully received.

Questions

What should we ask our local council candidates?

Robert suggested that people should ask candidates what their thoughts are and should tell them what they think of the plans. It may be possible to have a hustings meeting, if so MBCG will publicise this widely.

Information about all-weather pitches

Andy Sutch said that a single standard grass pitch can be used about 450 hours pa and an improved grass pitch about 750 hours pa. A single artificial pitch will deliver about 1500 pa, assuming some degree of floodlighting.

How do the changes to the traffic at Chalker's Corner improve traffic flow?

The extension between the left-hand turn into the A316 and the right hand turn into the South Circular will in theory shorten the wait in the Lower Richmond Road. It is likely that in the short term this may lessen the queues but once people know about it and use it, this will revert to current congestion.

What is the process for submitting comments on the plans? How do we engage the wider community?

The easiest way is to write an email or letter to the Council setting out your views. It is likely that they will post these on their website so it is possible to view other people's comments. We will ask the council to make the process of submitting comments clear and democratic.

It is important that we engage the wider community so that there are hundreds of comments on the plans. MBCG would welcome all offers of help with publicity at local events like the Boat Race, and with leafleting and with knocking on doors in Chertsey Court so all the residents are aware of what is proposed.

It would be lovely to have a Mortlake tapestry. It is important that the residents of Chertsey Court mobilise themselves to protest about the proposals to widen Chalkers Corner at the expense of open space on the estate (observation from a Chertsey Court resident).

How will the playing field look? At the moment although it is not accessible, it is open green space, will it be fenced and will there be a wall round the school?

This information isn't yet available yet.

Can the four applications be approved separately?

The applications are interdependent, figures in one will influence another, so all three applications will have to be approved.

Conclusion

We are entering a new and active phase now. It is extremely important that everyone makes their views known. MBCG will be in touch with information about the application as it becomes available, such as where the plans can be seen, the process for replying and important points in the plans. These will also be on www.lovemortlake.org.uk and www.mbcg.org.uk . We shall need help raising awareness and mobilising the community to take action. A further meeting of MBCG will be planned in the spring but we will directly email everyone on next steps.