

## **Mortlake Brewery Community Group**

Notes of a meeting held at St Mary's, Mortlake High Street, SW14 8JA on Thursday 20 April 2017

Approximately 100 people were present.

### **1 Welcome**

Robert Orr Ewing, chair of the Mortlake Brewery Community Group (MBCG) welcomed everyone to the meeting. He explained the agenda for the meeting which would set out the present position and then concentrate on the density and design of the project and the proposed secondary school.

### **2 LBRuT Planning brief vs. initial design**

Tim Catchpole (Town Planning lead) reminded the meeting of the LBRuT Planning Brief for the site agreed in 2011: a new community hub, housing of 3 to 7 storeys, a primary school set away from the Lower Richmond Road, the retention of the playing field and the extension of Mortlake Green to the river via a wide corridor. The number of housing units was not specified but a document pre-dating the brief had indicated a maximum of 560. Tim contrasted this with the present proposal: a new community hub, housing of 3 to 7 storeys in 980 units, a secondary school replacing the primary school, the playing fields replaced by an all-weather surface, and a narrower extension of Mortlake Green to the river with the outside space distributed throughout the site. The all-weather pitches would accommodate five-a-side games, not eleven as the present field does.

### **3 Areas of concern and proposed groups**

At the end of the last meeting, following the exhibition the MBCG had asked people to list their areas of concern about the proposed plans. Robert showed a slide with a pie chart setting out the broad areas of concern: traffic and transport, green space, density, design, and community space.

The MBCG committee proposed setting up groups to look at these areas of concern, and was hoping to recruit people to join them.

#### **Traffic and transport – Howard Potter**

Howard outlined the developers' proposal for Chalker's Corner which he felt was not an adequate response to the predicted 50% increase in traffic. He explained that the developers would have to produce travel plans for residents and users of the site to submit with the planning application. Although people are encouraged to use sustainable transport this does not always happen, particularly if parking is available and public transport inadequate. Howard has asked questions of the traffic consultants appointed by the developers, he has not had any response. The consultants have been in touch with Transport for London (TfL) about an extension of bus routes, but not with Network Rail about the level crossing which contributes to the traffic gridlock and is dangerous for pedestrians.

#### **Protecting the green space – Saime Tanzi**

Saime said she is gathering a group to work on protecting the playing field and other greenspace. They are in touch with the Sports Council and other interested parties.

#### **Community Use – Kate Woodhouse**

The ground floor of the Maltings has been designated for the community, we need to ensure this is put to the best possible use. The non-residential uses of the site will be discussed at a later meeting, all offers of help to prepare for this would be welcome.

#### **Environment – Tim Catchpole and Ann Hewitt**

Tim explained that the developers will need to submit an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) with their planning application. The Council has set out the headings for this: socio-economics, transport and access, noise and vibration, air quality, ground conditions and contamination, surface water drainage and flood risk, ecology, archaeology (buried heritage) during construction, above-ground built heritage, townscape

and visual effects, wind microclimate, daylight, sunlight, overshadowing and light pollution, cumulative effects. The Council has asked for a response to these headings by 4 May. The developers will submit detailed information on these subjects, it will range from the likely effect on schools and healthcare to the impact of the noise of construction. Help to examine the EIA from people with relevant expertise would be most welcome.

Ann Hewitt said that she is working to upgrade the status of the sports field and Mortlake Green. She is looking forward to both spaces being enjoyed by new and present residents. There are Tree Preservation Orders on the trees on the sports field and she is working with residents in Chertsey Court to get them on the trees there. The Towpath Group looking carefully at the proposed plans, as is the West London River Group who are due to meet next week. Ann is also anxious that all building is done as sustainably as possible.

#### **Heritage – Helen Deaton**

Helen sent her apologies. Robert told the meeting that Helen has significant knowledge of the history of Mortlake and is a member of the committee of the Barnes and Mortlake History Society. She is keeping a watchful eye over this aspect of the development.

#### **Health Facilities – Una O’Brien**

Una noted that residents had made little reference to healthcare. This would become an issue as Mortlake does not have any healthcare facilities and the Sheen Lane practices are already overstretched. Space has been designated in the development but there is no detail on this. Una proposes a group to liaise with the local GPs and the Clinical Commissioning Group to design model healthcare facilities enabling patients to stay in the community as long as possible.

#### **Communications and Community engagement – Francine Bates**

Francine said that the group needs to ensure that the different issues are widely publicised to the community and a strategic communication plan is developed for example to reach 16–18 year olds on issues that affect them. She would like to have volunteers with skills in different media to reach out to all residents. Soundings, the firm engaged by the developers, are setting up their own Community Liaison Group, but this is a forum for the developers to consult with different groups whereas the work envisaged by MBCG group will be seeking to actively engage the whole community in a wider plan of action, using a variety of communication tools.

#### **Fund raising**

Robert said this will be developed when MBCG has a better idea of the funds it might need. However, he said it would be useful to hear from anyone if they were interested in raising funds for the Group and the activities ahead.

## **4 Discussion of emerging issues**

### **Design – Peter Eaton**

Peter said that it is important that we do all we can to make this a good development. The GLA is likely to be involved, as well as the LB Richmond Planning Committee. The developers have proposed a good mix of uses for the site, which is to be commended. The buildings are mainly north/south to give light to the towpath and access to the river. The Maltings, former hotel and bottling plant are staying. The majority of the site should be accessible to everyone, but there will be some private space. The model shows a variety of roof shapes which adds interest. Peter’s concerns were the

- lack of a ‘heart’, Mortlake lost its High Street in the 1960s, there is no obvious heart created in the development, it is dispersed
- space between buildings is small
- placing of the school and its all-weather pitch on the playing field
- loss of the green link from the station to the river
- lack of green space, the developers say it is 25%, there was 31% formerly largely in one place, we need to know the detail of the plan

- briefing plan proposed a scaling down of the height of buildings near the edge, this is not on the plans

Questions from the floor:

- The 2011 plan had houses of 2/3 storeys in the northern area, why are these now 4+1 flats? Noted.
- Where does calculation of the height start, at the towpath, at the higher level of some parts of the site? The developers have said parking will be completely underground, ground floor will probably be at a safe level from flooding, so above the towpath, and each storey 3m.
- Does the 25% of green space include the space between the buildings which is a necessity, this should not count towards the land taken from the field? There are strict guidelines on daylight in buildings. This is a question we must ask the developers.
- Why does the pie chart only show people's concerns not their positive responses? This chart was based on responses to MBCG's questionnaire from the last meeting, not the comment form devised by Soundings at the exhibition.
- Why is there a new plan in 2017, will there be another in five years' time? The gap was because the site was only sold after a postponement of five years, and it has taken two years to appoint developers and for architects to draw up plans.

Peter explained the time frame. There will be another exhibition by the developers in June hopefully reflecting the feedback from the community. The developers intend to submit full planning applications in the autumn for the eastern part of the site and for the school and outline planning application for the rest of the western part.

### **Density – Tim Catchpole**

Tim explained his table setting out a comparison with other riverside sites. The top end of the GLA density range is 450 rooms per hectare. The Teddington Studios site, the nearest and most recent equivalent, has 422 r/ha. If there are 980 housing units as proposed, the whole site has space for 393 r/ha, giving up land for the school it has space for 520 r/ha and giving up space for other non-residential use it has space for 615 r/ha. This demonstrates that the current plans are way above the top end of the GLA density range.

### **Where best to locate the school?**

There was much concern at the exhibition at the loss of the playing field and the all-weather pitch which is small and floodlit. This led the MBCG to consider the following suggestions:

- A further review of expanding existing schools; problem is that playing fields at Christ's and Grey Court are both sited on Metropolitan Open Land (MOL).
- A new secondary school at Barn Elms on the tennis courts; Barn Elms Sports Trust plans an indoor sports hall which could be incorporated into a school; problem is proximity to MOL and legal complexities as explained in a meeting between MBCG and Lord True, leader of the Council, councillors and officers
- A new secondary school on the Brewery site with the same footprint but east of the playing field; the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) will have to buy the land from the developer to build school and the developer will then have less space for housing units which may not be as profitable.

Questions raised were:

Could the school be taller with a smaller footprint? Possibly

Would the developer be responsible for the building of the school? Yes

Is MBCG in touch with the Sports Council? Yes

## **5 Secondary School – process steps**

Cllr Paul Hodgins, Cabinet Lead for Children's Services, said the planning of a school involves a constructive dialogue with the developer. The GLA can bypass the Council if it so chooses, which is not desirable. The Council has listened to the concerns about the loss of the field, it hopes to see revised plans from the developer soon. There has been a rise of 30% in the number of primary school children since 2010, this rise is starting to reach secondary schools. In 2011 there were no plans for Thomson House, setting it up has lessened the need for another primary school in Mortlake. Cllr Hodgins was keen for a new secondary

school at Barn Elms but understood the arguments against it. There is a shortage of secondary school places this side of the borough and the borough has a legal duty to provide adequate school places. The borough cannot exclude nearby students from other boroughs, for example Lennox Estate residents in Wandsworth attend Richmond Park Academy. RPA is fully subscribed for Year 7 in 2017/18.

Matthew Paul, who is responsible for School Place Planning, explained the Council's role.

- The council has a duty to provide school places but places cannot be reserved for in-borough children
- New state-funded schools must be free schools
- ESFA can fund expansion of existing schools and ensures free schools are opened where needed
- LB Richmond Council's cabinet approved the change from primary to secondary school in October 2015 based on increased popularity of Christ's, Grey Court and RPA and this was in the public domain at that time (appeared in Council papers on LBRuT website)
- The only spare capacity in the borough is in Hampton and Whitton but this is forecast to be full as are schools in neighbouring boroughs
- A free school application will be made in Wave 13 of the Free Schools programme this summer with the outcome likely to be known about six months later, although with the recently announced General Election all government departments are on hold so there may be a delay. If the application is approved it enters the 'pre-opening' stage which includes design/build and Ofsted visit before final approval to open. The ESFA is responsible for agreeing the design and build with the developers and successful bidders for the school.
- Travel data from Orleans Park shows that 67% of pupils walk, 22% travel by bus; 47% of staff drive, 13% walk.

Sarah Olney MP wondered if the need for a constructive dialogue with the developer overrode the importance of achieving a good development. She was also concerned about the risk of over-development. She asked if there is a Plan B if the proposal to build on the playing field does not succeed. Cllr Hodgins emphasised the need for constructive dialogue with the developer otherwise the plans could go to the Mayor of London who might decide to approve the density of the development.

Questions and comments:

Do we have any influence over building on MOL? One of the features of MOL is that it is a swathe of land and you cannot build around it. The land in Mortlake is not a swathe.

Could the car park at the Wetlands house a school? The Wetlands is in private ownership, the owners are unlikely to want to sell it.

The field could be named after the current owner of the land in an appeal to him.

The majority of teachers will come from a distance, and many will want to drive creating more traffic

Why has Mortlake been chosen for a new school? Finding space for schools is very difficult, one is above a shop, another is starting in one site and having to move to another.

A school would be a great benefit to Mortlake and confirm that it is an excellent place to live.

## **6 Any other business**

This was curtailed due to lateness of hour. Robert reminded everyone to speak to group leaders if they would like to help.

## **7 Date of next meeting**

This has been changed since the meeting to **Wednesday 14 June** at 7.30pm at St Mary's