

To Danalee Edmund by email

ref; BCC 865 dmb
October 21 2019

Dear Danalee,

Proposed Development: Homebase Site and Tesco Sites.

I was recently invited to a meeting, chaired by Councillor Louki , where a presentation by Berkeley St Edwards was made of their preliminary ideas for the development of the Homebase and Tesco sites.

Further consultation arrangements have been made and other BCC members have attended. The current proposals were discussed at the last meeting of the BCC held on October 14th.

Although we appreciate that these schemes are at a very early stage it did seem that they will raise a number of issues and that some should be considered now. As these go beyond the application sites I am writing to you and to Mark Frost and copying this letter to the applicant.

1. The relationship between the new Tesco store and Brentford Town Centre.

The Local Plan (2015) includes policies to promote the vibrancy of Brentford Town Centre. To achieve this, it will be essential to ensure that the success of the new retail schemes in the town centre are not compromised by excessive local competition.

We ask that an update assessment is made of the viability of all the proposed retail floor space in the town centre with an allowance for the potential renewal of the northern side of Brentford High Street and the proposed new Tesco store together with any other retail capacity within the GWC review area.

We would expect this assessment to take account of the proposed public transport improvements, including the express bus along the A4 and the two rail links as well as the 400 space car park proposed.

As the viability of the town centre would have priority, the assessment should demonstrate whether the size and efficiency of the new Tesco store would prejudice the viability of the retail developments in the town centre.

2. The Gillette junction and access to the new Tesco.

The junction of the A4 and Syon Lane was recently improved to ease some of the traffic movements. This has significantly improved flows for some right turn movements.

If the Homebase site is developed as a new Tesco with a 400 capacity car park and the Tesco site is developed for 1700 flats new demands will be placed on this junction.

They will include the need for easy, at grade, pedestrian crossings to link the store with local housing and to enable express bus passengers easy access.

The present underpass is dangerous and inadequate. Over 2,000 additional cycles may use this junction regularly, increasing the problem for cyclists crossing the A4.

The junction also serves as the access to the Northumberland Estate.

It is noted that similar intersections on the A40 have grade separated junctions and we understand that TfL may wish to make further improvements which could affect the access to sites close by.

We would ask that the access to the Homebase site is reviewed to ensure that no tail-backs could occur at the entrance and exit to the site and that access for vehicles, cycles and pedestrians takes account of the long term plans for the junction.

3. The need to consider the implication of continued development in and around the Great West Corridor area beyond the Review period.

In responding to the regulation 19 consultation we noted that the London Plan, the Borough Local Plan and the GWC Review all have different end dates. We do expect the process of urban expansion to continue beyond all these dates unless major changes in regional strategy relieves the development pressure on Greater London.

If the pressure does continue it may be necessary to review the land uses in this area and to consider what further development may be required which respects the designation of MOLs.

A review at this stage would ensure the long term sustainability of any proposals for the Tesco site.

4. The impact of the applications on Heritage assets.

In responding to the GWC consultation we have drawn your attention to the possibility that the relatively tall buildings on the upper part of the Review area could cause serious harm to important heritage assets.

The proposal to take the Homebase development to 16 floors would cause unacceptable harm to the setting of the Gillette building, which is a substantial structure and a valuable listed building designed by Sir Bannister Fletcher. As you will note it would also cause harm to Kew Gardens and the Arcadian Landscape in Richmond, which is protected by acts of parliament and which has recently been enhanced with public funds.

Similar concerns were raised in our letters to you (BCC862a and 863) as they also apply to other tall structures close to the A4 on the higher ground at the west end of the GWC area.

5. Timing of Development.

It is understood that the important shuttle and orbital rail connections, on which sustainable development depends, are being brought forward so that, when funding is secured, the Shuttle could be operational on or after 2024 and the Orbital on or after 2026.

The BCC supports both the Shuttle and the Orbital projects so that development in the corridor can be built, but we are concerned that developments are not completed before the rail improvements are operational. This link will determine the phasing of major projects.

As the proposed timing for the Homebase site would place the redevelopment in an early phase of the Review programme it is particularly important that infrastructure is in place before any parts are complete and that it sets a precedent for designs which respect the character and scale of our heritage assets.

Yours sincerely

Denis Browne
Chairman, Planning Consultative Committee
Brentford Community Council.

Cc Mark Frost Cllr Tony Louki
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