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Mr. Sunny Desai
Development Control
London Borough of Hounslow
By email.

BCC651
LsoHS 2013 Response
9th September 2013

Dear Sunny

**Land South of the High Street, Brentford:
Views of the Brentford Community Council September 2013.
Reference 00607/BA/P2**

The BCC has written previous letters of comment on this scheme, and we currently respond to the amended proposals under Reference **00607/BA/P2** and others, which have recently been put out for consultation.

Please record that we would like to speak at the planning meeting when this application is considered, although I am aware that it has not yet been put on an agenda.

1. Density.

Even as amended, the density still significantly exceeds the London Plan Guidelines. This predictably results in proposed dwellings with inadequate public transport links, daylight, privacy and amenity space. The applicant has put forward no convincing reason why these guidelines should be ignored.

As it is a mixed scheme the plot ratio (which for example is nearly twice that of the landmark GSK building) should be significantly reduced.

2. Height and massing.

The emergent Local Plan has at long last some policies on townscape heights and massing. All the consultation we are aware of supports the Plan's approach that new tall buildings should be in areas adjacent to existing buildings of similar mass and height. There are no such existing buildings near this site, and many of the architectural and planning problems of the

proposal spring from the excessive heights proposed, not only in the tower of block K, but also the longer and more massive forms of Blocks B, C and D.

The amended drawings succeed somewhat in reducing the impact of Blocks B and C on the High Street itself, but do little to improve the townscape elsewhere.

3. Spacing, Daylight and Privacy

The distances between the windows of single aspect flats facing each other across the “yards” between Blocks B and C; and between D and E, remain inadequate. The flats on the lower floors will not receive adequate sunlight and daylight, and the current proposals of tall vertical fully glazed windows show they will not have adequate privacy either.

While at ground floor level with commercial units we welcomed shop fronts facing the “yards” at close distances, this spacing is not acceptable on the upper floors. In Block B the promised set back at first floor level, which was intended to effect the increase in facing distance, turns out to be inadequate to achieve the purpose.

4. Block B.

We welcome the improvement of the design of the High Street frontage of the food store in Block B. It would still be desirable for the higher parts of block B to be reduced by one floor and to be clad with light coloured brick materials as this part of the building will be part of the skyline seen from the High Street.

5. Block C

We welcome the reduction in the apparent height of the High Street frontage itself, and the visual breaks to modulate this frontage into “bays” of a width that is comparable to the existing widths in the High Street. The detailed architecture of this block still attracts criticism, in terms of the over simplistic detailing which is alien to the High Street at present, and in terms of the height of the ground floor storey, which removes it from the human scale so important to the street.

We still seek to limit this block to 6 storeys so it does not present a major visual intrusion above the High Street parapet when seen from the north pavement to the High Street.

6. Block K.

While some of us admire the architectural boldness of Block K, it remains a building completely out of scale with the area and with no possible justification in townscape terms. The problem of evening shadows remains, as does the adverse impact on many views from a great distance.

7. Waterman's

The emergent Local Plan now supports an Arts Centre in the site. This should be a committed part of the scheme from the outset, firmly linked to the commercial heart of the town. Unfortunately, although only in outline, the allocated areas of Block F are clearly too small to support the Arts Centre required, and the current use description is so vague as to be almost useless.

8. Existing Buildings Retained.

We welcome the retention of those historic buildings which have been kept. We ask for confirmation that not only the main fabric, but also the details and features such as the cast iron window frames will be retained, as these are so important in maintaining the character of the buildings.

Yours sincerely

M D Rockel
Secretary
Planning Consultative Committee
Brentford Community Council