

PRE-APPLICATION MEETING: WATERMAN'S SITE & POLICE BUILDING SITE.

ref: BCC769.

1.00. These notes record the presentation, the joint discussions with London Green and Watermans and the conclusions subsequently reached by the BCC..

2.00 Attended: James Tregoning (London Green) and Melanie Wykes (DP9), Jan Lennox (Waterman's Arts Centre) and members of BCC (see minute: MinJune 2016.

3.00 Waterman's Site. The site is described as Albany Riverside, Brentford site 11 in the Local Plan. The area is 0.63ha with a PTaL of 3.

3.01. London Green presented ground and lower ground floor plans by Duggan Morris, architects, showing 25 flats per floor in cluster blocks with gaps giving oblique views of the river, They hoped to provide 200 units, which would average eight storeys.

3..02. The design should produce an acceptably broken silhouette and give views of the river to most residents.

3.03 No sections or elevations were available.

3.04. Underground parking on two levels would be for 100 cars. It is not known whether TfL would accept additional parking on this site.

3.05. A small cafe facing the park is proposed.

3.06. It was noted that the approved design for the Marina on metal frames would extend for about the length of the Waterman's part of the Waterman's/ Max Factor frontage.

3.07. London Green hoped to hold an exhibition in the summer/autumn and to lodge a planning application in October/November. A further meeting with the BCC has been arranged for September 12.

4.00. Discussion and Comments.

4.01. The irregular character of the plan was welcomed. It was noted that 25 units were shown on each floor. If 200 units were proposed the average building height would be 8 storeys. A serated skyline is proposed which would be welcome. However, most of the buildings would be unacceptably high and effectively extend the line of development along the river bank. This would be above the height of Albany House and Goat Wharf,, both of which the BCC and Kew Gardens considered to be excessive.

4.02. The density of the proposal does not conform to London Plan guide lines nor to Local Plan policies. For a site of 0.63ha between 44 and 163 flats would conform. Assuming 25 flats per floor this would give a more acceptable average height of 6 or 7 floors.

4.03. The plan appears to have been carefully arranged to give river views to most flats and to avoid over-looking.

4.04. The buildings are spaced too close together to give other Brentford residents more than a passing view of the river. In at least one opening the spacing should be increased to continue the open character of the adjacent park.

4.05. Wider spacing might also reduce over-shadowing in the afternoons. Sunny balconies would be most appreciated after work.

4.06. The general conclusion was that a scheme of the character proposed would be welcome if it was reduced in height, opened up at ground level and conformed to density standards in the London Plan

4.07. It was appreciated that the excessive density could enable the re-built Waterman's Arts Centre to be substantially bigger than the present premises.

5.00. The Strategy for a new Arts Centre.

5.01. Jan Lennox described the requirements for the new Arts Centre in detail and answered questions about the benefit of the proposed centre compared with the existing facilities

5.02. The plans, by Foster Wilson, architects, show a theatre for about 500, two cinemas for 200 and 120 people with extensive facilities and a large foyer to Half Acre.

5.03. It would appear that the centre would be at least twice the size of the present Arts Centre. It is understood that the present Arts Centre is supported by visitors from a distance, as well as by local residents.

5.04. We do not know what research has been done to determine what support the new centre would attract nor the facilities which patrons would require.

5.05. We noted that no on-site parking is proposed. The present Arts Centre has a car park, which is used by patrons, and we think that it is unlikely that a larger centre could survive without adjacent parking.

5.06. The possible options might include:

Agreeing with Essential Living that an additional floor of underground parking might be built under the new supermarket.

Agreeing a modification of the proposed Ballymore multi-storey car park on the south side of the High Street to include spaces for the Arts Centre.

Revising these plans so that they included an on-site car park.

5.07. It would be unacceptable to provide the Arts Centre on this site without appropriate parking.

6.00. The Arts Centre in the Brentford Context.

6.01. The Council (and the BCC) have long supported the relocation of the Arts Centre in Brentford Town Centre as confirmed in the Local Plan.

6.02. The BCC wanted the centre to be a central part of phase 1 of the Ballymore scheme, so that it would be adjacent to the supermarket and opposite the square in front of the former Magistrates Court.

6.03. The proposal by Essential Living to re-build the supermarket on the Morrison site opens up a new possibility to place the Arts Centre in such a context. If the Arts Centre was accessed from the new square proposed by EL next to the Beehive ph, the Arts Centre could become a daily part of the new town centre life and help to integrate all the arts with residents of all ages.

6.04. We note that the plans by Foster Wilson show the foyer on Half Acre with an entrance at the northern end. As the plans are at a preliminary stage we hope it will be possible to amend them so that the entrance is from the south, directly addressing the new open space proposed by Essential Living.

6.05. If this integration of the Arts Centre into the heart of the commercial development can be achieved we think that Brentford will have a unique asset.

6.06 We look forward to seeing a carefully researched argument to establish that size, complexity and access to the proposed centre can proceed with the full support of the Council and local residents.

7.00 The Police Building Site.

7.01. The site is described as Brentford site 15, Brentford Police Station with a site area of 0.23ha and a PTaL of 4.

7.02. Pollard Thomas Edwards have been appointed architects and we discussed a draft typical floor plan. Core A with 6 units, B with 4 units, C with 4 units and D with 4 units. Total 20 units. No other drawings were yet available. The applicant hoped to provide 100 units.

7.03. London Plan guidelines show 16 to 59 flats on a site of this size. As over half the built volume is non-residential 8 to 30 flats would be appropriate.

7.04. We are concerned that no on-site parking is proposed even for the disabled. If this cannot be improved it will be necessary to ensure that residents have no rights to park in adjacent CPZs.

8.00. Development Benefits.

8.01. It had been understood that all these flats were to be affordable to remedy the under-provision resulting from developments at Commerce Road and around the stadium, which did not meet the Mayor's targets.

8.02. We are now being told that the amount of affordable housing would depend on the viability of the development package.

8.03. This leaves unanswered the question of where priorities lie. All the applications are over density. Development can only proceed if they are viable.

8.04. It would appear that the first question to establish is the size and cost of the Arts Centre and to ensure that it is sustainable. It will be necessary to research the physical requirements of the centre, its management and vision and its plans for connecting it closely to local residents and those further away.

8.05. We would expect the new Arts Centre to provide for young people and the elderly, for those using the shopping centre and those who travel here.

8.06. This will require a wide range of facilities, including a creche, a bookshop and possibly a library, music both inside and outside the centre as well as cafes which are also art galleries and much flexibility so that ever changing demands are met.

8.07. We doubt that all of the extensive premises proposed are necessary and we think that with more open planning, far more activities could be provided with less space.

9.00. We have no figures as yet, but we would expect the Arts Centre plans to be reviewed and the over-density provision of the proposed housing to be reduced.

9.00. Housing on the Police Station Site.

9.01. The demolition of the Police Station tower gives a welcome opportunity to provide low to medium rise development.

9.02. We welcome the basic form of the housing design, which opens to the south. This could be developed to link this central court by stepped levels to the open square at ground floor level on the Morrison site.

9.03. The 100 units proposed is clearly over-density. (See para 7.03 above). Many of the single aspect flats face into the central court, which is about 15m wide, many are likely to be over-shadowed and much will depend on the detail design and on a reduction of built volume.

9.04. Local Plan Policy SC8 calls for Specialist housing to meet the needs of the elderly and disabled, whose numbers are increasing. Such provision should be sited close to the facilities they need. The inclusion of some special housing would be particularly appropriate on this site.

10. 00. General Comments.

10..01. The BCC welcome the open approach to consultation evinced by London Green, the quality of the architects they have selected and their approach to the development package.

10..02. We consider that the proposals for the Arts Centre, which could be the most important feature in the Brentford Town centre, need careful scrutiny and that measures to reduce the over-density of the two housing developments should follow.

10.03. We welcome the assurance given by London Green that their planning application for the Police Building site will be presented in the cumulative context of the emerging Morrison's proposals and also the outline consented plans for the Land South of the high Street.

10.04. London Green confirmed that they would be happy to maintain a working relationship with Essential Living to ensure their schemes fit/work together, but they indicated that that will not extend to a formal masterplan for the whole of the town centre

10.05. The BCC thank London Green for consulting us when their plans were still fluid, and we look forward to seeing their further consideration of their proposals when we meet in September.

10.06. This note has been drafted by the BCC and is submitted to London Green as a draft record of our meeting on June 27th 2016 with comments related to approved Development plans.

10.07. The text has now (July 20 2016) been agreed with James Tegoning of London Green and signed on behalf of the Planning Consultative Committee, Brentford Community Council

Denis Browne (Chairman, Planning Consultative Committee)

July 20 2016