

**PRE\_APPLICATION MEETING NOTES:  
THE MORRISON SUPERMARKET SITE, BRENTFORD****DRAFT**

ref: BCC 668. June 13 2016.

- 1. Attended:** Matthew Lamb (Essential Living Development Manager  
**by** Robert Whiting, Essential Living, Asset Director  
Paul Beckford ..... PR Consultant  
BCC members (see MinJune 2016),
- 2. These Notes** These notes describe the various issues discussed with Essential Living and relate them to adopted policies.
- 3. The Site.** Land between Brentford High Street, the Beehive ph on Half Acre, the former Police Building (with separating passage) the bus station in Alexandra Road and the County Court.
- 4. Local Plan** Site 18 Brentford. (p263 vol 2) 0.6 hectares. Retail led mixed use, Retail 75%, Residential 25%. PTA 4. Flood zone, CA and listed building restraints.
- 5. Character Area. U.** Describes mixed character of frontages. No building more than four stories. The supermarket has long inactive frontage.
- 6. South Side of High St** Outline consent has been granted for Ballymore development ground floor shopping frontage opposite former Magistrates Court to Half Acre. MS car park opposite Morrison's.  
  
Design and Access Statement para 5.0 Masterplan Scheme/  
Para 5.3: Massing Strategy states:  
  
"The massing of the scheme is generally defined as 3/5 storey High Street area, 5/7 core area and 7/10 landmark buildings marking basins "(on lower ground),
- 6. Essential Living** Essential Living are a new company founded in 2012. Their first project at the Archway will be ready for the first occupants in September 2016. They are funded by Pension Companies and others. EL do not build their own projects, but project manage them so that several contractors will contribute to the final buildings. All residential accommodation is let. Limited discounts are provided for low income tenants.

**7. Design Team.** EL have appointed two architects. Juice Architects for retail have prepared preliminary ideas. These were discussed, but the plans were not left with us. Residential: HTA Architects have not yet prepared drawings.

**8. Proposal.** EL propose to build a new supermarket on the Morrison car park (.....m2 area) at High Street level above a basement car park accessed by a ramp from the High Street. Servicing would be off Alexandra Road on the north of the site.

Morrison's would be demolished and replaced by a public area and further retail north of the Beehive ph. This would open up the vista of St Paul's steeple from Dock Road

Above these buildings they wish to build 200+ flats (studio, 1, 2, 3 br) in as yet un-designed blocks rising to 6 floors above the High Street pavement and to 13 floors on the northern boundary.

**9. Amenity.** It was not clear whether London Plan standards for balconies would be followed. The scheme would benefit from the public amenity space. Any communal private amenity could possibly be at first floor level. EL propose to create enclosed private amenity on the top floor within the buildings.

**10. Density.** The local plan (see para 4 above) proposes that the residential floor area should be 1/3 of the retail area. Far more is proposed.

The London Plan defines suitable residential capacities for sites with PTaL 4. Local Plan policy SC5 requires compliance. We have not yet calculated the site capacity in these terms. However, as no on site parking is to be provided for non-disabled residents the London Plan constraints are very relevant.

Inspectors have advised at local inquiries that excessive densities can lead to poor living conditions. Clearly EL will have to have regard to the need to avoid single aspect north/east facing flats, over-shadowing, privacy, turbulence, etc.

**11. Density Constraints** The London Plan indicates 70/260 units per hectare which would give 42 to 156 units on this 0.6 ha site if it were all residential. In a mixed use development the residential capacity would be proportional to the mix of uses. The Local Plan stipulates 25% residential and 75% retail. On that basis the capacity of the site would be 11 to 39 units.

Assuming that it would be appropriate for the scheme to be 50% residential and 50% retail the capacity would be 21 to 78 units.

On any basis it would appear that a scheme for 200 units should be rejected as an unacceptable "departure".

**12. Height** The urban design context will be the Ballymore development described in para 5 above. This limits the High Street frontage to 3 to 5 stories. It would be appropriate for the High Street frontage of this site to be lower than the Ballymore scheme.

It should be noted that the sites for the taller building on the Ballymore site are on the low lying land closest to the river.

New designs for the Police Station site are in course of preparation. It is understood that the present tower is not suitable for residential conversion and that it may be replaced by a new structure. Residents have objected to the height of this tower and would welcome redevelopment in lower buildings.

The proposal to increase the building heights on this site towards the back was not supported. The land is higher at the back so the impact of tall buildings would be greater. Additionally the whole site can be seen from many angles so that the skyline is a critical factor.

**13. Height Constraints.** Local Plan policy CC3 seeks to "support tall buildings of high quality in identified locations" This site has not been so identified.

Policy (i) seeks for "sensitive location and setting.... responding to the character of the surrounding area"

Policy (k) looks for appropriate scale

Policy (j) is concerned about silhouette.

The BCC has been concerned that the domestic and suburban character of the High Street should not be lost.

**14. Timing.** Morrison's lease extends to June 2018. Ballymore's timetable for their phase 1 (supermarket + retail + housing) is not fixed and is likely to fail to achieve new retail before 2018/9.

EL state they wish to submit a planning application by December 2016 which might allow a new store to open on site in 2019.

During the period 2018/9 it is possible that Morrison's would close and that no alternative supermarket or car park would be available for Brentford residents.

- 15. Council Initiative** Local Plan Policy CC2 states at para 6.7 "The Council aims to prepare more detailed design guidance for specific places like masterplans,, urban design frameworks....."

The Local Plan policy TC2 states that "we will promote the regeneration of Hounslow and Brentford linked to the broader regeneration of those areas".

Unfortunately, although the Council is promoting the development of the adjacent Police building no Master Plan to co-ordinate the Half Acre sites has been proposed nor have any plans been prepared and opened for consultation showing how development on these sites might affect future development on the north side of the High Street.

- 16. Master Plan** Ballymore, EL and London Green are proposing to rebuild Brentford simultaneously, but they are not working to an agreed Master Plan. While this enables each to control their own development more easily, many opportunities to meet the varied needs of Brentford Town Centre may be lost.

Local Plan policy TC1 describes Brentford as a District Centre. Policy TC2 specifically referring to Brentford seeks to "support the vitality and viability of centres and promote.....a diverse range of retail, service, business, cultural and leisure offer". While some of these objectives could be met south of the High Street it would be desirable for this scheme to include a wider range of facilities, ie:

- 17. Uses.** It may be possible to develop the western part of the site to provide services, business premises and varied leisure such as restaurants, health clubs etc and to include small niche shops to complement the supermarket.

Character study U states that "the (Morrison) supermarket has a long inactive frontage". By including smaller units on the High Street frontage this mistake could be avoided in the EL proposals.

**18. Varied Housing.** When asked to include special housing in their scheme EL replied that this type of provision was outside their experience. However, Policy SC8 indicates that the Council will work to "increase the quality and quantity of specialist and supported housing"

This provision would be particularly valuable as aged, infirm and disabled residents would be living immediately above the facilities they need. It would be desirable for EL to work with experienced special housing developers to achieve a mix.

**19. Waterman's.** The adjacent Police Building site is to be redeveloped for a new Waterman's Arts Centre and for housing.

The BCC has long held the view that Brentford would gain immensely from having a varied and lively arts centre, including provision for young and old to be involved in all the arts and for the centre to provide a library, book shop, cafe and exhibition space, integrated into the heart of Brentford.

The EL plans follow Local Plan guidance to extend the retail frontage east. In doing so they bring the sites east of Half Acre into the centre and create a focus which should be the location for Watermans.

If plans can be co-ordinated the amenity space around the Beehive ph could provide the forecourt for an arts centre located at the southern end of the Police site and patrons who come by car could possibly be accommodated in car parks in the Police site, EL site and in Ballymore's block G, directly across the High Street.

**20. Integration.** The BCC has already asked for more co-ordination between these developments and would urge that the applications east of Half Acre should be presented in the context of a Master Plan which also considered what changes might be made on the north side of the High Street when its time comes for renewal.

These are town centre sites. Brentford is a Local Plan priority.

We look for co-ordinated and varied uses, including the re-provision of office space and waterside industry, for co-ordinated massing and facade design and for the use of traditional materials like stock brick and render.

**21. Further  
Consul-  
tation.** We would like to thank you for meeting us. All our meetings are open and you are welcome to come to any. We look forward to your exhibition in July and we would invite you to discuss your scheme further with us early in the autumn before you are fully committed to a scheme for which you are seeking a planning consent.

For and on behalf of the Planning Consultative Committee, BCC.

Denis Browne  
chairman.