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17.3.2023

Planning Policy
Environment and Community Services
Town Hall
Wandsworth High Street
London, SW18 2PU

Dear Sirs,

Consultation on proposed main modifications to the plan

I am the chair of the Board of Directors for the Thameswalk Residents Association (TWRA). We live at Thameswalk, a small block of 16 apartments fronting the river Thames and adjacent to The Glassmill, a 1980's office building located on the corner of Battersea Bridge Road and the River Thames. We have been following the Local Plan process and take this opportunity to formally set out our concerns to the proposed changes within the Main Modifications to the Plan. We have also been watching with interest the proposed redevelopment of The Glassmill following the conditional sale in late 2021 and it is this proposed redevelopment which concerns us most.

The Glassmill is located within a mid-rise location. However, this property is not an allocated site in the plan, so we have to rely upon the policies within the plan to protect our interests. We own land to the south and east of The Glassmill, and as the Thames is to the north and Battersea Bridge Road to the west, it is not only the completed development which concerns us, but also the development period and construction methodology. We understand that a Development Management Plan will be submitted as part of any planning application, but the development methodology and disruption to our lives, over a long period of time, is most concerning. The larger (taller) the development, the longer and more disruption will be experienced by the residents.

We would therefore like to make the following observations and comments:

Main Modification number MM1 – Introduction

We note that Policy LP4 is to be added to the list of strategic policies. We welcome this addition.

Main Modification number MM146 – LP4 Tall and Mid-rise Buildings

We note the following proposed amendments:

Part C. *"The Council will seek to restrict Pproposals for tall buildings will not be permitted outside the identified tall building zones."*

Part G. "*The Council will seek to restrict P*proposals for mid-rise buildings ~~will not be permitted~~ outside the identified tall and mid-rise building zones."

The justification for this change is:

"To enable more flexibility in recognition that there may be instances where tall or mid-rise buildings may be appropriate outside these zones based on a more detailed assessment at planning application stage. The Council wishes to maintain the thrust of its position by seeking to restrict proposals for tall and mid-rise buildings outside these zones. However, the proposed wording is considered more flexible than stating that proposal will not be permitted, to potentially allow for such proposals."

We object to this proposed change. There seems to be little point in having a policy to restrict mid-rise and tall buildings to specific zones and locations if the wording behind this allows for flexibility. Your council has spent many years in preparing the plan and considering appropriate locations within the borough for mid-rise and tall buildings. LP4 is suggested to become a strategic policy, yet the wording to protect all other locations has been watered down from "will not be permitted" to "The Council will seek to restrict". We also note that some of the allocated sites, in MM11 for example, have the following proposed amendments: "The maximum appropriate height range for the zone is 7 to 10 storeys, and the maximum appropriate height range for the site ~~must~~ *should* be in accordance with the tall building maps in Appendix 2." Many things "should" happen, but rarely do. Once again, a watering down of the very firm direction for new development. You seem to be suggesting that any location within the borough may be suitable for mid-rise and tall buildings. This suggested amendment is most concerning for our residents, and I am sure for other residents within the borough.

We understand that the local plan sets out the polices to guide new development to appropriate locations, and especially appropriate locations for mid-rise and tall buildings. The local plan should also protect the environment and the quality of existing residents' lives. It seems that the proposed changes do the opposite, providing applicants the opportunity to make the case for mid-rise and tall buildings in any location within the borough. We are certain that viability will be the main consideration for extending new buildings into the sky and removing sunlight and valuable views from existing properties. Your policies should be protecting these views and the general quiet enjoyment for residents' and visitors alike.

The junction of Battersea Bridge and Battersea Bridge Road should not be considered suitable for tall buildings. Any such development will have a most detrimental effect upon many local residents and users of the Thames Path and the most valuable open space to the west of Battersea Bridge Road. We would therefore urge you to reconsider these proposed amendments.

In summary we are strongly supportive of the London Borough of Wandsworth's local plan and its clarity with regard to the allocation of specific areas for development in general and Tall and Mid-rise buildings in particular. Our concern is that the proposed amendments to the Tall and Mid-rise buildings section will make it much easier for developers to undermine the plan. This cannot be in the interests of residents and is obviously not the intention of the Council.

Regards



Sir Christopher Edwards
Chair of the Thameswalk Residents Association