

**Wandsworth
Design Review Panel
C/o Wandsworth Council**
Environment and Community Services
Department
The Town Hall
Wandsworth High Street
London SW18 2PU

Please ask for/reply to:
Telephone: 020 8871 6000
Direct Line: 020 8871 7564
Fax: 020 8871 6003

Email: barry.sellers@richmondandwandsworth.gov.uk
Web: www.wandsworth.gov.uk

Our ref: ECS/
Your ref:
Date: 20 February 2023

Sam Stackhouse
Montagu Evans LLP
70 St Mary Axe
London
EC3A 8BE

Dear Sam,

**Wandsworth Design Review Panel – DRP 3:
Booker BMW site, 41-49 and 49-59 Battersea Park Road, SW8 5AL**

The Panel is grateful to you and your development team for submitting your proposal to the Wandsworth Design Review Panel (WDRP) for a third design review on 6 February 2023. The DRP was held online on this occasion and the Panel provided feedback in a virtual open session with the applicant present to hear the Panel's views. We thank the applicant team and, in particular the architects, Glen Howells, for a clear and comprehensive presentation. As a formal planning application has been submitted, this letter will be uploaded to the application website.

As context, the site lies on the western end of the Vauxhall Nine Elms Battersea (VNEB) opportunity area and has an area of 0.81ha. The site falls within a built-up area, with the majority of it covered by building footprint. There are six mature trees at the front of the site. These are all subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and comprise a mix of four London Plane and two Lime Trees.

The northern part of the site fronting Battersea Park Road is currently occupied by Booker Cash & Carry which is a retail warehouse club totalling 3,209m² (GIA). The southern part of the site adjacent to the railway line is occupied by a BMW service centre totalling 1,224m² (GIA) of a Sui-Generis use class. The BMW maintenance garage is accessed by the New Covent Garden Market Access Road, which is the only point of access.

The application ref. 2022/1835 is for the following: “Demolition of the existing building and construction of three new buildings (between 15 and 22 storeys in height), together comprising 81 residential units (Use Class C3) and Student Accommodation comprising 779 student bedrooms (Sui Generis) along with 515sqm (GIA) flexible Commercial, Business and Service (Use Class E) and/or Local Community and Learning (Class F) floorspace with associated works including hard and soft landscaping, car parking, new vehicular access/servicing, and other ancillary works”.

General Principles

The Panel is pleased to see the updated proposals for the three plots in particular on issues of sustainability, landscape and design response. Having reviewed the scheme twice before, we feel invested in ensuring that high-quality and sustainable design is achieved, and we appreciate the team’s approach to addressing the issues raised by the Panel in the previous reviews and very much welcome the level of care and engagement demonstrated since work commenced.

- We are pleased the overarching vision for the three blocks has been retained as well as the choice of using high-quality pre-cast for the buildings.
- We welcome the new vision for the landscape strategy, and especially applaud retaining the mature trees on Battersea Park Road. We encourage the developer to ensure that the landscaping scheme is managed and maintained to an appropriate standard.

The detailed comments of the Panel have been collated as follows under the three main headings of the review:

Sustainability

We are pleased with the integrated approach for sustainability and welcome the team following through many aspects raised at the last review.

- In terms of mechanical cooling, we welcome how this has been designed out and omitted from the majority of the accommodation. However, having developed an integrated façade design approach for this we urge the team commit to eliminating it from all the buildings.
- As for sitewide carbon improvement over Part L 2021, achieving 50% for the residential is in line with the new GLA requirements and is welcomed, but we encourage the team to try and achieve the same for the student accommodation – given the same fabric details have been proposed. The embedded carbon calculation should include all elements on the site, not just the structure. Particularly ensure the materiality for the public realm is in line with the sustainability strategy adopted.
- In regard to the wind analysis undertaken, in order to fully understand the impact on people and vegetation we suggest further testing balconies at upper floors. As some are at the corner, these could need some element of protection. Equally ensure the wind movement in between Plot 1 and Plot 2 in proximity to the entrances is not creating unpleasant conditions.
- On the amenity levels, we recommend all additional elements such as the external air-source heat pumps are located and designed in from the onset and do not appear later on as an afterthought or where it could become a noise nuisance. Plan in for maintenance so that all technical equipment as well as PVs on roofs or elsewhere is accessed easily without disruption for landscape and residents.
- The new location for the plant equipment within each block is welcomed but these need to be shown in the drawings.

- As part of the landscape strategy, we welcome the approach that facilitates tree canopies growing together as they mature to provide continuous shade for the main pedestrian routes in anticipation of climate change adaptation.
- We encourage developing a robust water strategy for the site and invest into a water recycling system for irrigation of the landscape.
- In Plot 1, we note there is a need for a second core to address the new fire regulations and we are comfortable with the additional length to the building to accommodate this.

Landscape and Public Realm

- We are pleased that the landscape is now responding in a much more convincing way to the site and welcome the remodelling of Plot 1 to retain the protected trees. We support the proposal to design the planting close to the base of the buildings, but note the technical difficulties that this might bring, especially in terms of maintenance at a later stage when vents or other plant may need to be accessed. We therefore strongly encourage that the collaboration between the architects and landscape teams is retained up to delivery so that the construction requirements can be coordinated, and the landscape preserved and safeguarded in the long run.
- Equally, given the proximity of the mature trees to the blocks, routes for construction vehicles and the impact of cranes on site needs to be assessed and managed.
- We strongly encourage the team to prepare the management and maintenance strategy as stewarding the site in perpetuity is a way to enable the new community to thrive and strengthen its sense of belonging. We recommend compliance with the Public London Charter for the management of privately owned public space.
- As for The Glade, in the heart of the site, we recommend that the space is designed to be fully inclusive, safe and comfortable for young teenage girls as well as for students and children. How these groups coexist could be further articulated. We also suggest creating a stronger narrative for the landscaping by unravelling the underlying story of the ancient river that once flowed under the site. This could enrich the character of the place and provide further inspiration for the landscape.
- Creating biodiverse planting on rooftops is positive, but we are concerned that the selection of species is appropriate for the environmental conditions experienced at such high levels. As for the grouping of planting, select a mixture of both young and mature trees and plants that work well together and benefit from each other. We recommend a strong replacement strategy.
- In Plot 1 we are not convinced by the service and delivery arrangement and suggest that this should be reviewed, including how it is managed.

Design Response

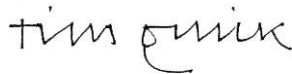
- We welcome the improvements and positive changes to the design. We are particularly pleased with the changes to Plot 1 which now feels more appropriate in scale, height and arrangement on the site.
- The dark glazed band wrapping around Plots 2 & 3 at the amenity level is slightly unconvincing and needs further resolution.

Moving Forward

We are very pleased how the scheme has evolved and applaud the applicant and client through their team of consultants for responding positively to the officer's and Panel's feedback.

The revised vision and strategies presented for the landscape have transformed the scheme and promise a high-quality development. Continuity through the delivery stage is important and for that reason we would encourage the client to engage the team as the scheme proceeds.

Yours sincerely



Tim Quick
Director, Formation Architects
Chair, Wandsworth Design Review Panel

Panel Members
Chris Twinn Principal, Twinn Sustainability Innovation
Deborah Nagan Landscape Architect
Marcus Claridge Director, Claridge Architects

Panel Admin
Barry Sellers Principal Planner and Panel Secretary
Daniela Lucchese Senior Urban Designer and Panel Coordinator

Applicant Team
Ben Wrighton Watkin Jones
Simon Lovell Watkin Jones
Sandeep Shambi Glen Howells Architects
Robert King Glen Howells Architects
Alex Smith Glen Howells Architects
Sally Itani Glen Howells Architects
David Reid Glen Howells Architects
Hannah Vincent Planit-IE
James King Planit-IE
Bernie Carr Atelier Ten
Zac Vandevor Atelier Ten
Joseph Lazell Atelier Ten
Simon Marks Montagu Evans

Attendees (invited to observe)
Mark Hunter Head of Strategic Developments
Janet Ferguson Planning Manager
Stephen Hissett Principal Planner
Sharon Molloy Principal Urban Design Officer

Cllr Tony Belton