

**Wandsworth
Design Review Panel
C/o Wandsworth Council**
Environment and Community Services
Department
The Town Hall
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Our ref: ECS/
Your ref:
Date: 8 July 2022

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

Dear Sam,

**Wandsworth Design Review Panel – Follow-Up:
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 second design review on 8 June 2022. 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. Historically the site provided residential terraced houses with its current commercial use established in the 1970s. 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 Booker warehouse is a large, corrugated metal building with a brick base.

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 proposals are for the 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 appreciates seeing the proposals for a second time but we are disappointed that the scheme has already been submitted as a planning application with many outstanding issues. In the previous design review, we raised some fundamental questions which in our view have not yet been adequately explored or justified.

As previously stated, we welcome the overarching vision and generally support the height and massing proposed as well as the use of high-quality pre-cast for the buildings. We welcome the progress made since the first review on the student blocks, Plots 02 and 03, in particular the refinement of the pre-cast concrete and variations in colour. However, we do not think the progress made is yet sufficient to give us and the Council the confidence of a successful outcome.

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

Sustainability

We acknowledge the additional work done in addressing the sustainability aspects raised in the previous review. We support the aspirations and targets set, but we are still not convinced this has gone far enough as we are missing the evidence to support the choices made. Moreover, we are surprised that the architecture and in particular the fenestration, is similar on all sides of the buildings, despite orientation or context.

- We note the choice to achieve BREAM standard Outstanding for the proposed development. It is important that this is clearly demonstrated.
- We note the limited amount of PV area and would ask that this is checked against GLA standards. As southern facing terraces will need solar shading this could be provided by PVs.
- We are concerned about the stated need for mechanical cooling as this feels like something of an afterthought. Areas that will have a propensity to overheat were not shown, and evidence should be provided as to why mechanical cooling is required.
- Overheating analysis and level of daylight should inform the façade design. Obviously, this varies according to orientation and level. We therefore question the analysis which results in very similar window sizes on all elevations and at all heights.
- We are concerned about the lack of wind analysis and refer again to the Corporation of London Wind Microclimate Guidance. We would have expected contours of wind and wind tunnel analysis to identify potential problem areas.
- More clarity on Urban Greening Factor is required alongside proof of its robustness as well as the net carbon footprint based upon the palette of materials used.

Landscape and Public Realm

Overall, it looks like the landscape has been well developed, but we are concerned about how it will be implemented. There is still not a sufficient and robust enough explanation as to why the proposals are the best achievable for the site.

- The evolution of the landscape solution for the area over the Heathwall Sewer running diagonally across the site still remains unclear. We note the considerable area of seating and kerbs and wonder how those foundations are dealt with as we fear these might be changed and downgraded afterwards.
- Furthermore, we think there is a missed opportunity of creating a stronger narrative and enriching the character of the place by not unravelling the underlining story of the ancient river that once flowed here, and the 150 years old drainage system that replaced it. A river that once was part of the tidal power driving a mill in this location could bring inspiration to the landscape.
- We feel that the category B and C trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order along Battersea Park Road frontage should be retained. There are very few existing trees in the area and we would wish to see a stronger justification about their removal given their 20-40 years lifespan and their contribution to the sustainability, ecological and wellbeing aspects of the scheme.
- We are disappointed the opportunity for adding a line of trees along New Covent Garden Access Road where the space would allow it has not been exploited. These will help mitigate the harsh environment for pedestrians and help visually improve the street scene and the Urban Greening Factor for the site.
- We are concerned about the choice of the proposed planting added as these appear to be largely non-native and the sizing is not clear. We suggest considering SUGI type planting of a variety of indigenous species that can change over time, alongside some larger growing species which managed carefully can provide the height and impact needed to give the site its character.
- The SUDs strategy appears too weak. The technical drawings are not detailed enough to show the falls, how much water is retained, needed etc. A credible SUDs strategy has the opportunity to mitigate extreme weather changes, and this should be sought.
- In terms of play areas, the provision is not clearly detailed and explained. We suggest being more careful in ensuring all age groups are catered for.
- We encourage the preparation of a costing as well as a landscape management and maintenance plan for the public and private spaces. Also, landscape sections would have been useful at this stage, as well as planting plans and lighting strategy.

Design Response

As previously said, we support the scale and massing of the buildings and the use of pre-cast concrete as a principal material for the façades. In principle, we welcome the progress on the use of colour for the pre-cast panels, façade detailing. In particular we very much liked the disposition of the amenity provision in the form of roof terraces to Plots 02 and 03 and the way this breaks up the mass of the building in a coherent way.

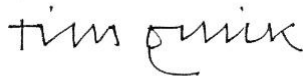
- In our view Plot 01, the affordable block, is architecturally the least successful of all the buildings while at the same time being in the most prominent location. While the colours do vary between the buildings, the application of regular grids across every elevation leaves us wanting more variety in such a large scheme. We would have liked to see a different approach to the residential building reflecting its different programme.

- We are somewhat concerned about the lack of active frontages at ground floor level. We appreciate class E and F uses are proposed for the ground floor of Plot 01, however we feel more could be done to create an active ground floor environment. More clarity is needed on how the commercial and community uses are going to relate to the landscape around.
- We would encourage consideration to the treatment of soffits including the possible introduction of colour and pattern.

Moving Forward

Despite the fact that the scheme has now been submitted, we suggest that the applicant continues the dialogue with the Council on further design development to improve design quality and prove its sustainability credentials.

Yours sincerely



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

Panel Members

Chris Twinn	Principal, Twinn Sustainability Innovation
Angie Jim Osman	Director, Allies & Morrison
Deborah Nagan	Head of Place & Nature, Future Homes Hub
Marcus Claridge	Director, Claridge Architects

Panel Admin

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

Applicant Team

Jonathan Morris	Watkin Jones	Client
Simon Lovell	Watkin Jones	Client
Rob King	Glenn Howells	Architect
Josh Allington	Glenn Howells	Architect
Andy Robinson	Future City	Culture and Place-making
Tessa O'Donnell	Exterior Architecture	Landscape architect
Bernie Carr	Atelier Ten	Energy and Sustainability
James Ainsworth	Montagu Evans	Planning
Sam Stackhouse	Montagu Evans	Planning

Attendees (invited to observe)

Mark Hunter	Head of Strategic Developments
Janet Ferguson	Planning Manager
Sharon Molloy	Principal Urban Design Officer
Joanna Chambers	Senior Planner

Cllr Matthew Corner