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PD6926/JS/SN

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04 January 2019

Planning Policy
London Borough of Merton
Civic Centre
London Road
Morden
SM4 5DX

Sent via Email and Post

Dear Sirs

SUBMISSION OF REPRESENTATION TOWARDS DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

On behalf of our client, Aberdeen Standard Investments (ASI), we have pleasure in submitting representations to the Local Plan Consultation Draft. The representations focus predominately on the Centre Court Shopping Centre, hereafter known as 'the Site', of which our client manages on behalf of the fund in which it sits.

Centre Court is the principal purpose-built shopping centre in Wimbledon town centre and opened in 1992. It is a typical shopping centre of its time with an internal mall with "anchors" at either end in terms of a department store and foodstore. However, it is differentiated from many other shopping centres by it incorporating the former Wimbledon Town Hall on its Broadway frontage as well as the elevations of older buildings along Queens Road, although these have largely been truncated by the construction of the shopping centre.

Over recent years, there has been a significant change in the retail food and beverage, and leisure environment, not only in the rise of online purchases and multi-channel retailing but also with the change in the type of retail, food and beverage and leisure and other attractions that customers prefer to see in a town centre.

This has been compounded by retailers choosing to consolidate their representation in fewer (often larger) town centres. ASI now considers there is an opportunity to develop an entirely new vision for the Centre court site since it was built. At this stage it is too early to determine the form of any redevelopment but ASI wishes to agree the uses that may be accommodated in the future through the plan preparation process.

These representations aim to comment specifically on the Wimbledon Chapter (Policy N3.6 - Wimbledon) and the option of including the Centre Court site as an allocation with the draft Local Plan.

Site Allocation

The site is in a prime location with a variety of uses surrounding the site in the centre of Wimbledon but as a shopping centre it offers a very limited range of uses. This reflects that when it was developed, single assets were more popular with the funds. Outside the centre, the range of uses transition from offices, retail and commercial to the west to a largely residential area to the east.

The variety of uses surrounding the site provides an opportunity to expand the range of uses on the Centre Court site. A mixed-use development on this site would reinforce the change in uses from the west to the east.

From reviewing other site allocations within the draft Local Plan, it is understood that the principal of the allocations is to provide suggested uses for sites and taking into consideration issues and opportunities relating to that site. Matters such as building heights and massing are not mentioned within the allocations and are considered in the draft Future Wimbledon Masterplan.

To assist with identifying the appropriate mix of uses on the Centre Court site for a site allocation within the draft Local Plan, we have provided a table outlining the key headings raised within other site allocations. This table has been provided below for ease of reference. A redline plan for the site has also been included under Appendix 1.

Site Allocation Headings	Site Allocation Responses
Site Name	Centre Court Shopping Centre
Site Address	Centre Court Shopping Centre, Queen's Rd, Wimbledon, London SW19 8YE
Ownership	Aberdeen Standard Investments
Site Area	1.73ha
Site Description	<p>The site is currently occupied by a shopping centre comprising retail and associated uses.</p> <p>It is surrounded by a number of uses comprising Wimbledon Train Station and offices, retail, and commercial uses to the west, retail & leisure uses to the south, and residential to the east. The northern boundary sits adjacent to tram and railway tracks and platforms of Wimbledon Station.</p> <p>The main site entrance is located to the south west of the site along The Broadway. Secondary accesses are located along Queen's Road.</p> <p>The site is surrounded by a number of building types ranging in height from two to four storeys.</p>
Current Use	Shopping Centre
Consultee's Suggested Use	Any of the following uses, or suitable mix, of Retail & Leisure (Class A1-A5, D2), Offices (B1), Residential (C3) and Hotel (C1).
Strategic Planning Factors	<p>The site is set within a Town Centre with the highest public transport accessibility (PTAL 6b). The site sits adjacent to Wimbledon Train Station which provides main line and commuter services to Central London and across the South Western Railways network. There are also more limited southern services. In addition the station is also the District Line terminus of the Wimbledon branch and western terminus of the Croydon Trams.</p> <p>The site currently falls within the following designations: Primary Shopping Area and Wimbledon Central Shopping Frontages.</p> <p>The site comprises two Grade II listed buildings (Old Town Hall and the frontage of the Old Fire Station) and falls within the Broadway Conservation Area.</p> <p>The site is located within Flood Zone 1.</p>

<p>Issues</p>	<p>The site accommodates the main purpose built shopping centre in Wimbledon and is well let.</p> <p>The vehicular access to the site for cars and service vehicles is off Queen's Road.</p> <p>The current shopping centre is inward looking and has limited pedestrian connections to neighbouring areas.</p> <p>It is largely uniform in height and lacks variety in building heights and massing.</p> <p>The site currently accommodates heritage assets in the form of two listed buildings and partly falling in a conservation area.</p>
<p>Opportunities</p>	<p>The size of the site and its location will give rise to a variety of opportunities regarding potential uses on the site and future densities/massing.</p> <p>Opportunity to provide replacement retail & leisure uses more suited to the modern requirements of the local population and other Wimbledon visitors.</p> <p>The size of the site is large enough to be able to accommodate a wider range of uses rather than the current mono-use.</p> <p>Its excellent public transport accessibility makes it a highly suitable location for new homes as well as commercial uses.</p> <p>St George's will be the main location for offices and workspace, but Centre Court can complement this with accommodating workspace among a mix of uses.</p> <p>The opportunities for replacement buildings on the site to connect to streets and spaces should be maximised.</p> <p>The redevelopment of the site provides an opportunity to promote and enhance the listed buildings on the site and improve their setting.</p> <p>The site provides an excellent opportunity for the redevelopment of a substantial brownfield site within the heart of the town centre in single ownership which may mean that it can be delivered in the short to medium term.</p>

Summary

The draft Local Plan has provided a timely opportunity to consider the future development options relating to the Centre Court site.

Over recent years, there has been a significant change in the retail, eating and drinking, and leisure environment and this provides the opportunity to provide a development which is more suited to modern demands.

Centre Court Shopping Centre is now 27 years old. It's linear and largely insular form means that it is reliant upon shoppers being drawn along the mall. Aberdeen Standard Investments' view is that it has too much retail floorspace compared with current and anticipated future demand.

Aberdeen Standard Investments believes there is now an opportunity to explore a different future for the Centre Court site where retailing, places to eat and drink and leisure attractions can be consolidated towards the Broadway but also it can accommodate office/employment floorspace as well as places to live.

The inclusion of the site within the Wimbledon Chapter (Policy N3.6) as a site allocation would provide an opportunity for the site to be promoted for a mixed-use development which makes more efficient use of a highly accessible brownfield site.

We hope that the points raised within the representations are helpful and provide an appropriate response to the draft Local Plan. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss the points raised further or respond to any other queries you may have.

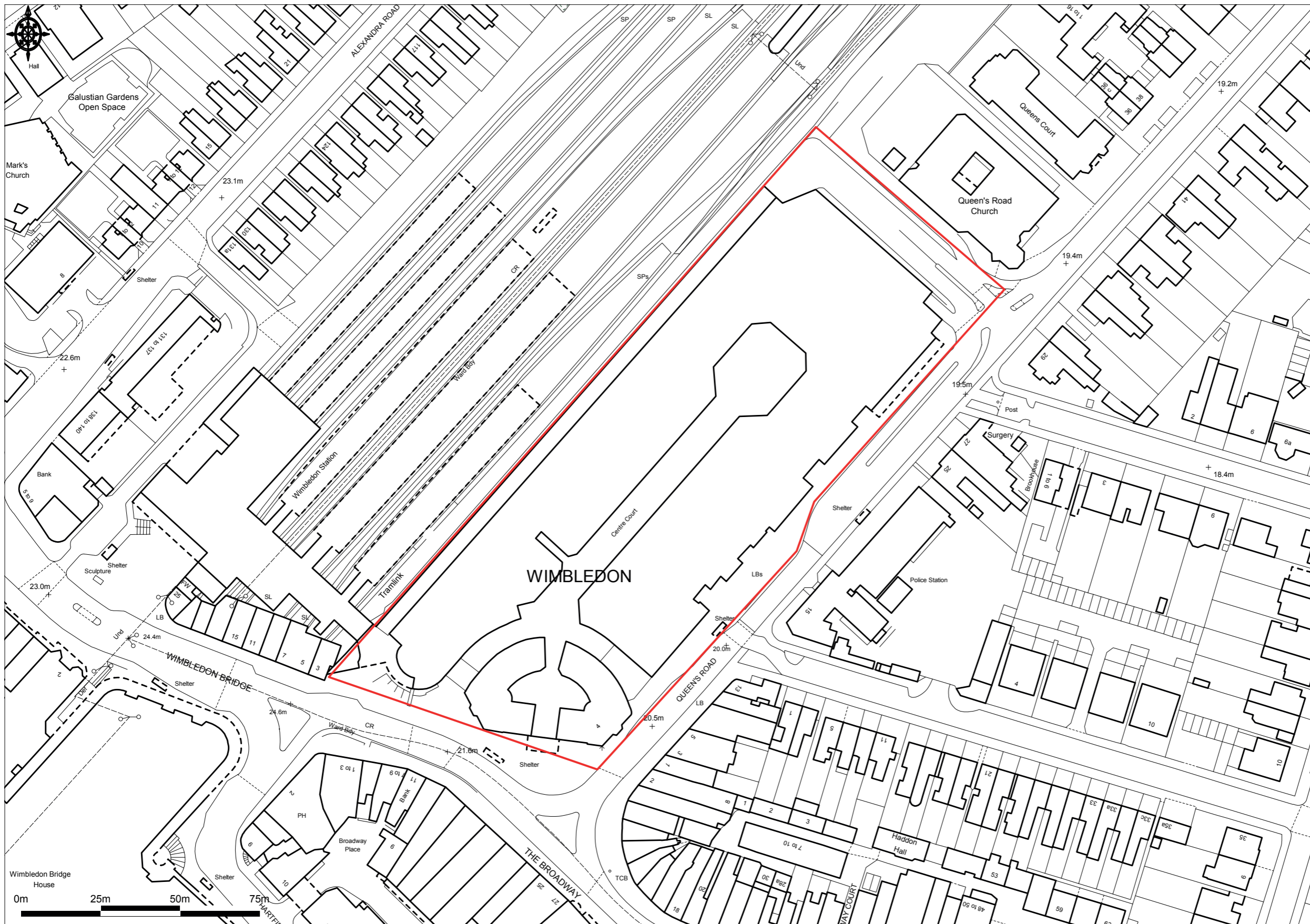
Should you wish to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact either Julian Stephenson (Julian.stephenson@montagu-evans.co.uk / 020 7312 7537) or Sam Neal (sam.neal@montagu-evans.co.uk / 020 7312 7468) who would be happy to assist.

Yours faithfully,



Montagu Evans LLP

Appendix 1
Redline Plan



REDLINE PLAN

Application Site

Promap
 Ordnance Survey © Crown Copyright 2019. All rights reserved. Licence number 100022432. Plotted Scale - 1:1250

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Location:
 Wimbledon Centre Court

Date:
 January 2019

Scale:
 1:1,250 @ A3

▲ North

