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**From:** E Cohen [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 07 January 2019 00:30  
**To:** Future Merton  
**Subject:** MASTERPLAN - Wimbledon Masterplan Consultation Response

To: [future.merton@merton.gov.uk](mailto:future.merton@merton.gov.uk)

From: E [REDACTED] Cohen  
[REDACTED]

Date: 6/01/19

Dear Future Merton

Here are my comments and suggestions on the Wimbledon Masterplan.

Kind regards

E [REDACTED] Cohen

\* I applaud the recognition that there should be design guidelines for Wimbledon town centre. The concept of stitching the town together with increased pedestrianisation is good, as is greening of the area, and encouraging more independent quality retail businesses.

\* Unfortunately, it was very difficult to read the maps as very little was included by way of street names and the sizes are so small as to be illegible.

\* P42 Economy/Offices - Will the regeneration of Morden town centre (with transport links on the Northern line and buses to/from all directions) provide a large increase in office/commercial space, and will this be more economical than Wimbledon town centre, and thus draw businesses away from Wimbledon to Morden? Care needs to be taken not to destroy everything that makes Wimbledon attractive and end up with large white elephant commercial blocks.

\*P44 Leisure & Tourism - A new concert hall/auditorium, performing arts centre would bring more visitors into the town centre. Perhaps such a building could also include conference facilities.

\* Many references are made to the Wimbledon Tennis tournament and AELTC. This give international reputation to Wimbledon and an image of quality. The attractive character (that which has not yet been destroyed) of the town centre needs to be retained - ie the Victorian and Edwardian buildings with attractive detailing, curves, grace, elegance and pitched rooves. Existing buildings of note should be protected from demolition.

Coupled with the fact that **60% of landfill is created by the construction industry**, wherever older traditional buildings are to be redeveloped, they should be done by **refurbishing as much as possible** and at the very least **retaining the front facades** of these buildings. Looking up as you walk along the Broadway, even for example opposite Centre Court, all the individual buildings have much detailing of merit and differences which create interest and much to draw the eye and attention.

\* Wimbledon needs to retain its character, its human scale (page 7 "The human scale experience at street level promotes life, vitality and interest that give character to a place."). High rise buildings (14-18 storeys) will not achieve this. Wimbledon needs to find something unique to draw business, retail and leisure visitors. It has to compete with other local town centres such as Richmond and Kingston. Richmond has managed to update and enhance it's town centre without losing its human scale and traditional feel. It is also has shops that are different and unusual. Kingston is a huge town centre with a huge retail

offering. Guildford is another town which has retained its historic feel whilst updating its retail offering and maintaining the retail quality.

Wimbledon town centre is much smaller and has limited capacity for growth. We should be concentrating on attracting quality retail offerings and small/independent retail offerings, giving opportunities to unique small businesses - as suggested by the idea of mews developments (likened to the lanes in Brighton). It does not matter how much retail space there is, it will not attract people if it is not pleasant to walk around and does not have something different to offer the shopper.

\* The plan to increase the size of Wimbledon's commercial space to achieve a Metropolitan Centre appears to be an overdevelopment. Development over the railway lines will help to increase the commercial space. However, the height of this development should be limited to 8 storeys.

\* Heights should be limited to maximum 8 storeys. The suggestion of heights of 10 to 18 storeys will destroy the nature of the town centre. It will totally remove the human scale referred to in the masterplan. A formula should be used to protect existing low rise properties, especially residential properties so that they are not overshadowed by overbearing new buildings. Such a formula could be that no building can be more than 1 or 2 storeys taller than an adjoining building, especially existing residential buildings. This would provide a gentle stepped approach to building heights and prevent stark, dramatic height changes.

\* Public space - more public space is definitely welcome. However, existing poor air quality makes such spaces unsafe to spend time in. Without tackling the air quality, outdoor public spaces will be more of a health hazard than a benefit.

\* Traffic management & air quality - the Masterplan needs to be far more ambitious in tackling air quality/traffic management. The town centre needs to be pedestrianised in some way (eg as suggested by the Wimbledon Society). This could start as pedestrianisation through the town centre on Sundays. It would probably take many months for this to become widely known and start to attract people who want to shop, meet and eat without pollution, and really be able to enjoy sitting outside in open spaces.

\* Tall buildings exacerbate the problems of pollution and poor air quality, trapping pollution via the canyon effect, causing micro-climates, wind tunnels, whirlwinds (as can be seen on the plaza opposite Colliers Wood station). Tall buildings shade surrounding space, making it very cold in winter. This can already be seen along 'Broadway East' where it is very cold walking along the pavement on a sunny winter's day.

\* Broadway East should not continue to suffer from past poor planning decisions. The jumble of taller buildings with little attractive detailing and design should not continue to set the precedent for future buildings. It is a great shame the Premier Inn has just been built as this will again set a precedent for even poorer design than many of the existing Broadway East buildings. Those of brick with some green defensible space are less overbearing than those that abut the pavement and those of other materials. Defensible space to the pavement should be a requirement. Quality materials should also be a requirement. The same quality design guidelines should be applied in this area as in the town centre area (St Georges Rd).

Despite the masterplan (P125) stating Broadway East has no dominant character, there are still stretches of Victorian shopping parades with all the character and attractive detailing of this period. The design quality should encourage a return to this attractive style of building.

\* 14 (or more) storeys is far too tall for the YMCA development. Again this will set a precedent for this area of the Broadway - will it be impossible for the Council to refuse other developments of this height or taller? Broadway East already suffers from micro-climate effects of the existing tall buildings - it is extremely cold in winter even when the sun is shining, apart from a few places where the sun can peak through gaps between buildings. This has the potential to cause/retain ice on pavements which is a health hazard.

\* Making comparisons with locations such as Brighton and Melbourne does not seem appropriate. The footfall in these places must be much higher than that in Wimbledon. Any plans such as mews street

development must have sufficient footfall for small businesses to survive - to more than survive. Sufficient connectivity between these small areas must exist so that people are prepared to walk from one part to another. If it is too difficult to cross a road to reach just a couple of shops in a mews, people won't bother.

\* Pedestrian crossings must be given priority to encourage people to come on foot and make getting around the town centre easy (assuming it is not pedestrianised).

\* Increasing street trees must be accompanied by clearing up the leaf fall in winter. The infrastructure must be put in place to achieve this - this does not currently exist in the borough.

\* P86/87 Open spaces and new connections - This seems a great suggestion. Is it feasible? Pedestrianising the town centre is another option. The map is too small and poor definition/streets not labelled to understand how this will work.

Pollution in the town centre still needs to be tackled.

\* Design quality, Wimbledon's DNA - I applaud the inclusion of quality guidelines and the identification of materials, styles etc of different types of buildings. The examples of new buildings all seem to be much lower rise than the proposed up to 19 storeys in the masterplan.

Greater detailing and more curves need to be included in the examples of new buildings. A few bricks up ended to create a relief pattern doesn't cut it!

\* How can the drawing on page 98 be so far removed from the examples of modern buildings on page 97. This gives conflicting information and negates all suggestions regarding design quality. It is a pity this drawing has been included here and on the front page.

\* Businesses may come and go with fashion in work space, location etc, but residents are here to stay, especially in a town centre such as Wimbledon with so much residential housing right into the town centre. Any future plans must ensure residents are heard and catered for or the town centre will be dead in the evening and at weekends, and footfall decreased during the week.

E Cohen