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From: P [REDACTED] Gibson [REDACTED]
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To: Future Merton
Subject: Masterplan

The proposals start from the incorrect assumption that Wimbledon should rapidly expand its commercial role in competition with rival centres such as Kingston or Croydon. This would seriously damage the character of the town centre and add to congestion problems and increased commuting on already busy rail, tube, tram and bus services. The unbridled jobs growth in central London already means that many people commute into the City and West End from and through the borough and are then used to justify destructive schemes like Crossrail 2 which will have devastating consequences for the character and facilities of Wimbledon.

More emphasis should be given to enhancing the quality and character of the town centre and the range of uses and facilities including an emphasis on entertainment and affordable housing. The majority of remaining old buildings such as housing over shops should be retained with modest infilling on a few sites. Predominantly traditional building materials should be stipulated. The illustration publicising the proposals demonstrates all the bad qualities which will lead to a characterless and barren environment.

The building heights proposed are extremely harmful to maintaining the character of the centre and redevelopment should involve only minor increases to existing schemes and not exceed 8 storeys - and allow that height only in exceptional circumstances. The YMCA building illustrates well how an unduly tall building can harm the locality and the living and working conditions of surrounding occupants such as the well-mannered newer buildings on the corners of the Broadway and Trinity Road crossroads.

We were promised a replacement concert facility when the town hall's function was replaced by Centrecourt. The carpark site next to Morrison's is the obvious site to include such entertainment uses and is well located for public transport access.

Traffic does need sorting out but I am not convinced that the proposals are workable given the current heavy road use and narrowness of the roads. Detailed proposals, including alternatives to the damaging Crossrail proposals need to be developed.

I trust you will take these comments into account in reimagining the town centre proposals and come up with a new scheme that does justice to the name Wimbledon.

Yours sincerely
P [REDACTED] Gibson.

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