

From: S [redacted] O'Reilly [redacted]
Sent: 06 January 2019 14:08
To: Future Merton
Subject: Masterplan consultation Wimbledon

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in response to the Masterplan and Local plan having reviewed this potential.

The draft Future Wimbledon Masterplan contains proposals which would radically alter Wimbledon town centre. Commercial usage is envisaged to increase by up to 50%, with a doubling in building heights in some areas, from 7 up to 18 storeys (too big! We are not central London OR Croydon!). It would adversely impact neighbouring residential areas and would change the essential character of Wimbledon, whilst exacerbating current traffic congestion and pollution issues in the town centre.

I like the Masterplan's emphasis on improved quality and design of buildings and the aspiration for a greener, more attractive town centre.

1. Building heights

The Masterplan refers frequently to a need for more "mid-rise" buildings in the town centre to enable commercial growth. Mid can't be 14 stories.

I believe the Masterplan should state unequivocally that new buildings cannot be above 7-8 storeys because of their visual impact on the surrounding area, their incongruity with existing historic buildings and the increase in traffic congestion and pollution to which more intense development would inevitably lead.

2. Evidence base?

The Masterplan contains little or no data to justify the suggested need for a projected extra 8,000 jobs and proposed 50% increase in commercial space in the town centre. Growth in demand appears simply to be assumed, on the basis that 'if we build it, they will come'.

This kind of analysis is completely absent from the Masterplan. Without it, there is a risk of encouraging inappropriate and/or speculative commercial development, which is out of keeping with the rest of Wimbledon town centre and which places unsustainable pressure on the town's infrastructure and services.

3. Metropolitan or Major centre?

In the Mayor of London's draft London Plan, Wimbledon is defined as a "Major Centre", with high commercial and residential growth potential.

In the draft Masterplan, Merton Council states that it would like to see Wimbledon recognised as a "Metropolitan Centre". This would allow much larger scale development akin to centres like Croydon or Kingston.

This is a small neighbourhood not a mini City!

4. **Crossrail 2**

I am unclear of the links here? Surely it is dependent on it but Crossrail should not drive what this town is? Its a residential suburb with some commercial aspects.....Not the other way about?

5. **Historic buildings**

Wimbledon's heritage and sense of community are highly valued by residents. Whilst the Masterplan acknowledges the town's rich history, it gives insufficient weight to residents' clearly expressed wish to preserve historic buildings and facades wherever possible. Also its not clear how we move to a design for Wimbledon and all the buildings that support it to work with this heritage.....

6. **New concert hall**

The Masterplan mentions (page 71) plans developed by the Wimbledon Concert Hall Trust for a new performance venue in central Wimbledon. An obvious location would be the Council car park next to Morrisons, but the Council has yet to give its backing to this use of the site. I believe that a world-class performance venue would be a huge asset to the cultural life of Wimbledon.

7. **Consultation process**

Given the importance of this subject to everyone who lives and works in Wimbledon, I consider that the consultation process for the Masterplan has been seriously inadequate. It is not enough to publish a 136-page document on the Council website, place a hard copy in libraries and put a small piece in 'My Merton'. With such 'passive' methods of communication, most residents are likely to remain in ignorance. The more I talk to friends and neighbours the less I realise people have read or understand.....seems a little like the EU election! Wrong questions....wrong answers.....

S [REDACTED] O'Reilly