

[REDACTED]

From: F [REDACTED] ORourke [REDACTED]
Sent: 06 January 2019 21:51
To: Future Merton
Subject: Wimbledon Masterplan

Dear Sir, Madam,

I'm writing to you to register my comments on the Future Wimbledon Masterplan. I've spent some time reviewing it, and as a result of discussions, would like to comment as follows:

Building Height:

- I completely disagree with the proposed maximum height of up to 18 storeys. I think that this is wholly inappropriate for Wimbledon and would irrevocably change the character of Wimbledon, as well as exacerbating current traffic congestion and pollution issues in the town centre. To pass this level of increase off as "moderate" is disingenuous. A maximum of 10 storeys should provide capacity to grow without impacting the town in the way I outline above. The YMCA building on the Broadway, which is the tallest building by some distance in the area, is an eyesore. Permitting further similar development cannot be allowed as part of this Masterplan

Evidence base:

- Whilst I agree in principle with the need to have a plan to direct future growth, I struggle with the numbers you have put forward, particularly the projected 8000 jobs and the 50% increase in commercial space. From discussions with local residents, this was a common theme. If there is evidence to support these figures, please publish them. Otherwise, you undermine the Masterplan and impact its ability to effectively direct sympathetic growth and change.

Classification of Wimbledon:

- I disagree with Merton Council's stated desire for Wimbledon to be a "Metropolitan Centre", rather than a "Major Centre". If you set out with that ambition, I fear you will be setting us up for a development path that is not in sympathy with Wimbledon's character. Indeed, this also stokes fears of a mini-Croydon. I understand that you are not keen on this comparison, but your Masterplan and the language it employs only promotes this fear.

Historic Buildings:

- Rather than simply acknowledging the town's rich history, I would like to see specific commitments to preserve specific historic buildings and facades.

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. A world-class performance venue would be a huge asset to the cultural life of Wimbledon. It would also help to attract visitors and businesses to Wimbledon, increase the number of overnight stays and boost overall economic activity. The Council should give the Concert Hall proposal more enthusiastic support and more prominence in the Masterplan

Consultation process:

- The consultation process for both the Masterplan and the Local Plan has been inadequate. Given their importance to everyone who lives and works in Wimbledon, it is not enough simply to publish the documents on the Council's website and place hard copies in libraries. With such 'passive' methods of

communication, most residents are likely to remain in ignorance. The Council should be more proactive and consider writing to all residents at their home addresses, as well as for example mounting pop-up information stands in the Piazza and Centre Court/.

Overall, I am very supportive of the idea behind a Masterplan for Wimbledon. A blueprint that will guide future growth and development in a sympathetic way is an excellent idea. It is therefore critical that it is done right, and doesn't aim to fundamentally change the character of the town through overdevelopment, or indeed permit high-rise development that would drastically alter the feel of the town. I'm in agreement with the idea of developing the St. Georges Road / Worple Road area, but fear that the current plans are too drastic.

I trust that you will take my feedback into consideration,

Kind Regards

[REDACTED]

F [REDACTED] O'Rourke
[REDACTED]