

[REDACTED]

From: C [REDACTED] Wada [REDACTED]
Sent: 06 January 2019 22:49
To: Future Merton
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Wimbledon Masterplan
Attachments: Wimbledon Masterplan (response to Oct 2018 consultation).pdf; ATT00001.htm

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please find attached a response as part of the Wimbledon Masterplan (Oct 2018) consultation process.

Kind regards,

C [REDACTED] & H [REDACTED] Wada
[REDACTED]



To: future.merton@merton.gov.uk

6 January 2019

Response to Future Wimbledon Masterplan (October 2018 Consultation Draft)

The draft Future Wimbledon Masterplan contains proposals would radically alter the nature, design, size and daytime population of Wimbledon town centre. I consider this scale and intensity of development to be wholly inappropriate for Wimbledon town centre. It would adversely impact neighbouring residential areas and would change the essential character of Wimbledon, whilst exacerbating current traffic congestion, rail congestion and pollution issues in the 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. The reality is that any new buildings exceeding 8 storeys high will tower over the existing townscape and radically alter the skyline for residents – not just those living in neighbouring streets but also those further afield. There needs to be a cap associated with new buildings and 18 storey developments feel excessive.

I believe that the Masterplan should state unequivocally that new buildings in excess of 12 storeys are unlikely to receive planning approval 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.

I would also be more likely to support a vision for future development based on the lesser of a 50% increase in the height of the current building and a 12 storey cap.

2. Evidence base for projections

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.

There needs to be clear explanation on how the economic modelling takes account of the digital changes that are changing the ways that people work & shop and will continue to amend the pattern of demand for traditional office and retail space. Otherwise, there is a risk of unnecessary 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?

I do not agree with the vision of Wimbledon’s future as that of a “Metropolitan centre” akin to that of Croydon and Kingston. The Wimbledon town centre is bounded by residential streets on all sides, making large scale redevelopment problematic.

I see no requirement for Wimbledon to “compete” with the likes of Croydon or Kingston, given they are nearby and easily accessible via public transport. It seems more appropriate for the vision of Wimbledon to be that of a “Major Centre”, with high commercial and residential growth potential (in line with the Mayor of London’s draft London Plan).

4. Crossrail 2

I recognise that the Council has a duty to plan for the future of Wimbledon town centre, regardless of whether the Crossrail 2 project proceeds. However, I struggle to see how the Council can approve or adopt a Masterplan before the timescale and plan for any Crossrail 2 development is clearer.

The Masterplan itself says that there is little scope to deal with the traffic problems in the town centre or to pedestrianise streets without new railway crossings to relieve the pressure on Wimbledon Bridge. This implies that the Masterplan has a reliance on further developments (such as Crossrail 2) to be a success; and to approve a Masterplan without such developments included will only increase the traffic, pollution and public transport capacity issues that already impact me regularly.

5. Historic buildings

Whilst the Masterplan acknowledges Wimbledon's rich history, it gives insufficient weight to preserve historic buildings and facades wherever possible.

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 (with its own adequate parking facilities) 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. I would urge the Council to give the Concert Hall proposal more enthusiastic support and more prominence in the Masterplan.

7. Consultation process

If it was not for groups like Friends of Wimbledon Town Centre taking a proactive approach to sharing information about the Masterplan consultation process, I would personally have not been aware of it.

For the next version of the Masterplan, I suggest that the Council should:

- run a further consultation process to gather residents' opinions; and
- in doing so take a more 'proactive' approach by writing to all residents at their home addresses, as well as mounting pop-up information stands in the Piazza and Centre Court.

Given the importance of this subject to everyone who lives and works in Wimbledon, the broadest possible cross-section of views should be collected before any final decisions are made.

For & on behalf of:

C [REDACTED] Wada [REDACTED]

H [REDACTED] Wada [REDACTED]