
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Study. I will be making comments aimed primarily at Wimbledon (Town Centre, Village, Common and surrounding areas) and addressing the areas current attractions, some concerns around existing proposals referred to in the Study, and opportunities which we should not miss.

1. Current attractions

In my view the Study, while describing the physical characteristics, does not sufficiently highlight the features which make Wimbledon a desirable and attractive place: specifically

- the friendly, small town sense of community and feel to the place which is not limited to the Village but carries through to areas off the Town Centre such as South Park Gardens
- the varied and attractive residential streets with interesting architectural features - not limited to the large houses but also evident in some of the small mews terraced housing
- the location of these attractive residential areas close to the commercial Town Centre giving the whole area a residential character and a human scale.
- the existence of historic buildings create interest and are best appreciated in the low-rise human scale context - examples include the Prince of Wales pub and Old Town Hall.
- the cultural life of Wimbledon as represented by Wimbledon Theatre, the Polka Theatre and various cinemas. The efforts of residents to regularly bring the Wimbledon International Music Festival and the Bookfest add also greatly to the reputation of Wimbledon.
- Wimbledon Tennis is obviously also a huge sporting event and a draw to tourists from all over the globe. In addition the area has good gym and leisure facilities. Best of all is the Common providing a varied mix of woodland, Wandle and green open spaces.
- A number of independent bars and restaurants add variety and liven the area from the Village all the way down to the Town Centre.

2, Concerns

The concerns I have relate primarily to the areas identified for 're-imagining' and 're-examining' in that the re-imagining seems to be limited to what is termed as 'intensification' ie the introduction of dense accommodation in high rises.

- the railway track, which was the 'raison d'etre' for the Town Centre and therefore runs through the middle is targeted for over track building. This seems to disregard the fact that the land is already elevated by the railway track over the base of the nearby residential housing and adding a high rise layer on the tracks will seriously damage the views and appearance - the fundamental character - of the area.
- In the Town Centre itself buildings like the Pinnacle building (and almost certainly the hotel under construction) will not add to the character of Wimbledon, quite the contrary. There is a real risk of over-providing for office space at a time when most enterprises are re-thinking the need and cutting back.
- Wimbledon has good shopping options, but there is a need to encourage more of the smaller independent shops and restaurants to maintain local character which might otherwise be driven out by the bland ubiquitous high street chains.
- We need to actively preserve our green spaces and avoid building over them. Children can play very effectively without the presence of large plastic constructions, or purpose built frames, and we should encourage this.

3. Opportunities

Merton has a real opportunity to enhance the character and attraction of Wimbledon, and avoid creating constructions which dominate, overwhelm and detract from our current heritage.

- the land either side of the railway track could be carefully planted with trees and shrubs, improving the views both for residents and rail passengers; London, like other cities will need carbon offsets and we have an opportunity to plant trees, and create green spaces in place of parking lots;
- traffic in Wimbledon is heavy, in particular the constant movement of HGVs, trucks and construction vehicles. I would like to see a limitation of this kind of traffic in the residential areas around and through the centre of town, directed instead to the A3/M25 allowing pedestrianisation of the shopping area and one way flows for smaller vehicles and cycles in residential roads
- a Concert Hall - much promoted by residents - would enhance the cultural offering and provide a home for the Music Festival as well as potentially other performing arts.

Many thanks

Kind regards,