

## **IDEAS/ FEEDBACK AT THE BRENTFORD HIGH STREET COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS LAUNCH 18 January 2007, Watermans Arts Centre**

Note: The bullet points below – recording post-it notes at the launch event – are essentially a vast brainstorm of ideas/ responses. In the March workshops we will be exploring feasibility in more depth, as well as how the various ideas can be integrated.

### **HISTORY**

#### **What photos/stories do you have of the high street's past?**

#### **Which older buildings would you like to see restored?**

- back to old street plan architecture – like this example of Bradbury's Green
- Wilson & Kyle building – omit all extension floor in same type – Brentford needs lofts!
- not a building but the Brentford Monument to be restored to its original site at Ferry Wharf
- Wilson & Kyle building
- St Georges Church
  - Kew Bridge Station
  - Library
  - Baths
- Keep the canal/river for commercial & leisure use
- Restore Mrs Trimmer building
- Wilson & Kyle building
  - St George Church
  - Kew Bridge Station
  - Library
  - Baths
  - Bradburys
  - Keep boat industry and skilled light industry
  - Restore old street plan and architecture like Bradburys
  - Sense of continuity in layout, feel and surviving industry will help bolster welcome for new commercial enterprises
- You heard that BW's new "official unofficial" policy is to discourage all boats from the canals and shove them in marinas? Excuse: no staff to maintain, what for my pals on the coalboat?

#### **General**

- to encourage a sense of place and identity, Brentford needs its own museum
- is history equal to roiling (*to make turbid by stirring up the sediments of*) reminiscences
- castigate the cunning craftsmen of the re-development?!X
- coffee shop with internet café including books and papers to read
- old fashioned tables and cosy comfortable atmosphere – homemade cakes
- look at Borough market for what Brentford could be like – *Monmath coffee shop for example*

- important to keep boat industry and other skilled light industry
- artisans should be encouraged to take root here

## LOCAL ECONOMY

### What would make people more likely to shop on the High Street?

- Art Gallery/shop
  - Flower shop
  - Music shop (records)
  - Book shop
- Attract artists/small .....
- Covered Market – open 6 days for economically marginal enterprises
- Better Banking services
  - Chemists with more stock
- Primark – adults come back to where they were when young, affordable, trendy
- Young Persons clothes store – closest one in Hammersmith
- More interesting/diverse shops and a major retail park to pull in “routine” shopping
- Better Stock in shops
  - Plus quality “essential” shops, eg Butcher as good as Richardsons at Northfield
- Good Baker with Quality Breads
- A good Fish shop
- Wider selection of shops – needs to have a cleaner and more pedestrian friendly ‘feel’
  - Open up river access
- Use Pitshanger (Ealing) as a model – need Butchers, Fishmonger, Greengrocers
  - More up-market cafes with street seating.
- Small SPECIALIST shops along Northfields model but must have a ‘draw-card’ (eg M & S etc) to get people down there

### What would make Brentford’s High Street unique and distinctive to many other High Street?

- A few significant architectural achievements (modern, memorable, functional) was done in the 19th century
- A small dedicated museum and Tea shop
- Old and new Book shop – not Waterstones, etc
- International Foods
- Pedestrianise it so pushchair users can get around safely – no loading up
  - Convert Church to primary school
- Having quality independent retailers
- More places like Café/Coffee shop and Pizza restaurant facing The Weir
  - Use Piazza there for music in summer
- Quality Cafes on the canal and river – (expensive)
- Can we have a footbridge over Thames Brentford *gate* at Kew
- Reflect Brentford’s past as canal basin and riverport
  - Also reflect engineering eg Brunel connection
  - Ensure unique shops, bars and restaurants are included
  - Reduce traffic
  - Demolish Somerfield and McDonalds – move to Great West Road
  - Build Town Square on Summerfield site.
- Access to Thames but not dominated by lucrative unimaginative housing

- We need windmills, heat exchange pumps, solar panels, EVERYWHERE
- Delighted that the 'local' pub Brewery Tap was not pulled down and replaced by a trendy bar with drink the ..... and no real beer

### **Why do you (not) visit Brentford High Street?**

- Run-down, decaying, no decent shopping
- Run-down, depressing pre-war feel, few interesting 'one-off' shops
- Architecture is dated/old/unwelcoming
- Will use if there is reliable E8 bus (ie not impeded by more cars)
- Some good shops but others a bit run-down – especially on South side – major redevelopment of South side needed
- I love the Art shop
- Not enough quality shops – would like good Butcher, Grocer for example plus fishmonger
- Because it is boring, run-down and doesn't supply the range of things I need, unlike Chiswick, Ealing and Richmond
- Parking very difficult, expensive
- Not enough high quality specialist shops, not wide enough selection, no major stores
- Look at range of successful shops at Northfields High Street Ealing as good examples
- Would like to see proper economic study of options eg cost/benefit analysis for community because it has a super restaurant-La Rosetta and two super pubs-Brewery Tap and Magpie & Crown

### **Are there additional businesses that you think are crucial to improving choice on the high street?**

- Good basic shops – grocer, bakery, etc., and a health food shop, nice cafes/bars
- Need a major store eg M & S, John Lewis, etc., to encourage people to come
- Keep the Post Office
- Undercover market everyday
- A Book/CD/DVD store – I do not care if it is part of a chain
- Bribe Waitrose to open a smallish market! – need balance

### **Are there any additional trades that you think are crucial to improving choice on the High Street?**

- Better banking services
- Better parking
- Bookshop
- Butcher
  - Grocer
  - Fishmonger
  - Baker
  - Deli
- Industry involving boats/boatyards must be maintained
- Butcher

- Grocer
- Fishmonger
- Deli
- Baker
- Avoid Tesco, Sainsbury and that crowd
- Deli
  - Butcher
  - Fishmonger
  - Quality Fruit & Veg
- Butcher
- .....Deli

## **ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY**

### **How safe do you feel on Brentford High Street? .. Could improvements be made?**

- More jobs
- Increase in CCTV coverage – late night shops particularly vulnerable at night
- Provision of cycle lanes
- Needs covered market open 6 days for economical marginal enterprises
- Fairly – by far the biggest danger is traffic
- Get on with it
- Farmers market
- Traffic light management poor at junction of Halfacre
  - London Road phasing does not allow safe passage for pedestrians
- It is not crime, anti-social behaviour, alcohol or young people

### **How would you like to see all environmentally friendly development achieved?**

- Start thinking that windmills, solar panels, ground water pumps are BEAUTIFUL & NECESSARY
- Trees! Since 1987 when Library trees blew down, almost no street trees replaced
  - from station especially should be planted
- Cycle improvements – racking that is lockable
- Less traffic – this would mean cleaner air (polluted air kills)
- Restore historic buildings/spaces – not new ones
  - develop carbon neutral high street
- Wider pavement – south side
  - An obvious pride in the appearance of shops
  - Top quality service
- Considered landscaping – green areas/benches – grass roofs!
- Leave High Street to transport – move shops south to Brent Way
- To be able to walk around Brentford, river, canals to also cycle – connect it together

### **Does High Street fell pedestrian friendly enough at present, or could improvements be made?**

- Pedestrianise it especially important for infants who spend hours in zombie state in pushchairs – in a big open (quiet space) they/we sound off – happy!
- Two streets divided by a busy road
- Just about traffic slow and relatively easy to cross
- No, the High Street is for traffic not people at present
- Not pedestrian friendly – need wider walkways & pedestrians as much as possible
- Too much traffic
- Bus stop near Post Office – pedestrians have to take to the road to get past the crowds waiting for buses – pavement narrow compared with generous width on North side
- Children's needs – less traffic so they can 'communicate' therefore pedestrianise
  - Requires a car park at either end

## How do you think transport could be improved on Brentford High Street?

- Equal rights between traffic and pedestrians – low speed limits, eg Florence main square
- Cyclists first
- Twice as many buses to Piccadilly Line tube – 65 & E8
- Cycle pool/share (pay or free)
- Enforced bus lanes
  - Bans on street-side parking
- Car park at either end (Somersfields is one perhaps) the pedestrianise. The Court forecourt should be for the public, not cars – allow cycles & buses through
- 65 bus in town centre

## What leisure and cultural activities would you use in Brentford High Street?

- Small cinemas/clubs
  - Live music venue (Watermans used to do this)
- Music on summer evenings in square and Carols at Christmas
  - 'Events' – musical, etc., on Piazza *Faun* weir (Between new pizza restaurant and café)
- Overall look run down buildings and shops
  - Zebra crossing needed to be safer for school children, etc., welcomed
- Mix of shops, cafes to encourage as a place to spend time
- Improve Watermans particularly the extension – it looks very run down and uninviting but could be real cultural centre pulling in people from further afield
- Good quality leisure facilities in High Street or near
- Canal & Riverside cultural events
- High Street Art Gallery
- You have old buildings and water – need to give it all contemporary image, retaining the history
  - Gallery – space – inviting artists, respond to .....
  - Environment cultural projects
  - Artists – Public Art
  - Diversity
  - Local competitions
  - Arts Council application - Arts Project Officer to develop links
  - Visual + Events Festival – an international arts festival - partnerships TVU, artists studios
  - Arts initiative involving community
  - R..... Festival – bring new artistic ideas – attract locals ..... adults + young people
  - TVU
  - Sponsors
  - Hotels/Developers
  - GlaxoSmithKline Business partnerships

## **Do you have ideas for waterside activities that would be well used?**

- Picnicing space for friends/families
- Business waterside not all leisure eg boat repair, chandlery, etc
- Retain water industry, boat repairing, etc
- Cafes
- Bridge over river from Thames Path to join canal towpath for foot/bike
- Simple – renting a rowboat or kayak
- Bigger theatre and cinema + more events – good thing
- Leisure use of water – how? Since BW's 'official unofficial' policy is to discourage such use – not having staff to maintain????
- Would like to see a walking/cycling route along canal and Thames through Brentford without being thrown out onto the road every so often
- Waterside Cafes
- Footbridge to Kew Gardens
- Sea Scouts or other such groups

## YOUNG PEOPLE

### What do you think makes a good play space?

- In Camden Town there is a youth centre built over a canal in the shape of a castle
  - perhaps a similar thing could be done in Brentford
- Would be great to have a Hogarth type centre catering for young people from 0 – 18
- Youth space – (dedicated variety of activities targeted at different ages and interests)
- A specific space for 13+ - youth club
- Build more facilities for young people – Activity Centre – Youth Club
- Astroturf
- *Messet play and Risk*
- Really use the water – wildlife – canal/river – for row boats/kayaks/sailing
  - Space for people to hang out – well-lit & appropriate for age so young kids are not threatened by older kids
- Play space and a (community) café behind St Lawrence's Church – Church could be converted to housing
- Good play space
  - stimulating
  - safe – no hazards – away from traffic
  - visual appeal (well maintained)
  - no dogs
- Children need
  - less traffic on the high street so they can communicate (most tots in pushchairs go into a trance) so PEDESTRIANISE permitting buses, cycles
- Improve Syon Estate Park and other existing areas for young people first or it wont work
- Traffic calming measures in Brook Road South please
- Less traffic so the area is safer and the air fit to breathe
- Musical Licences for street entertainment – bands and buskers

### What are young and old peoples' particular needs on High Street?

- Ask kids, not old-timers like me
- Old people
  - easy access
  - no trip hazards (properly maintained riverbank)
  - places to sit and meet
- Post Office accessible
  - Shops – disability access
  - some parking and some short term parking – 30 mins – in front of shops
- We need a meeting room – Assembly Room like Isleworth – more local meetings – find it hard to find space

## **MARKETING AND IMAGE**

### **Would a High Street loyalty card encourage you to shop in Brentford?**

- Not as much as better shops
- Need to have better shops first
- Yes
- Please keep some messy and derelict bits – near the river and canals – they signify possibilities or just messing about

### **What do you think would be a good way for High Street to be promoted?**

- Keeping the sense of an old riverside community
- Unique independent quality retail
  - Old complimented by new
- I think Brentford's history is the biggest draw – if we can upgrade the historical information and make the sites look better more people will show up
- Communal signs on pavement for each business to be names
  - Plaques mounted on posts sited at beginning and end of shopping area
- Try to retain the unique 'old time' feel of the high street and market square – many of the shops need refurbishment rather than to be knocked down

### **What image would you like Brentford High Street to present?**

- Promotion of River Boat people, the Canal and focal crossing of River Brent to the Thames
- Upmarket community atmosphere eg Marylebone High Street, Pitshanger High Street
- A High Street with lots of small shops rather than a shopping centre
- Quaint, historic, comfortable, classy, safe, clean, with much character
- Midway between Northfield Avenue and Turnham Green
- Plenty of shop units
  - a covered market for use 6 days a week
  - work units – all related to water at water's edge
- I like a mixture of manufacturing, services, posh houses, not posh flats, Watermans, etc.
- Positive, developing, friendly, up and coming
- Unique shops selling quality and diversity not just corner shops
- Really we do need chains – Sainsburys, Boots BUT really good individual shops would be better I think, but they would need support – parking, cafes

### **What would Brentford have to offer or be, in order for you to be proud of Brentford?**

- needs to pull young family
  - a new coffe bar or deli with internet café
  - swimming baths should be regenerated to become a local resource again
- Different to other high streets – not another Next, WH Smith etc.
- Arts, media & training centre for all ages

- You need a big banner at traffic lights etc advertising Farmers Market (as they do for West Ealing one)
- Historical
  - Characterful
  - Independent
  - Different
- Individual shops./character
- More parking
- Genuine and far-reaching traffic reduction scheme and air pollution reduction
- To really use the water aspect of Brentford – keep a feeling of the history – a place to shop, eat drink and have some nice space for relaxing, picnicing
- Where is the vision?!
  - boats/tourism
  - Thames footbridge to link from approx Brentford Gate (Kew) – Thames Footpath to Canal, etc.
- The canal towpath for A4 to Brentford should be made to attract flow from Great West Road – should tempt towards restaurants, etc
- Open spaces enhanced with planting between the essential elements
  - Uncluttered pavements (have you counted the clutter between Goddards and the Magistrates Court)

**Did you know Brentford Farmers Market runs every Saturday morning? Do you use it?**

- Yes I use the Farmers' Market regularly but there seems to be fewer and fewer customers
- There were no vegetables last few times I went which is a shame
- Yes but West Ealing is more convenient
- Yes we use Brentford Farmers' Market – good quality produce - would be nice to see it expanded eg fresh fruit and veg
- Did know about Farmer's Market p go regularly and good!
- A covered market to function 6+ days a week
- Yes I do use the Farmers' Market – fruit and veg please
- Yes but not as often as I should!
- Current Farmers' Market very small and no comparison with ones in Barnes, Chiswick, Ealing, etc.

## **HIGH STREET DESIGN AND LIVEABILITY**

### **What height of development do you think is appropriate?**

- Low-rise – max. 4 storeys
- Fairly low – high building make it an unattractive and polluted canyon
- 4 floors max.
- Max. 4 storeys
- Keep low and open – max. 3 storeys
- A mix of housing – new but also with area and existing ‘better’ examples – 4 storey max.
- should not be too tall – block light and open aspect next to river – generally 3 storeys but allow exceptional exceptions
- low level development with ample circulation space to enhance and open up the waterside

### **What size of home do you think would work well on High Street?**

- None – it’s a High Street, not yet another housing terrace!
- Get back to old street plans and glimpses through to river via narrow street
- No dwellings on waters edge at pavement level
- More family housing – I... 1-bed buy to let
- Family homes – less 1-2-3 bed flats and closed developments
- Family homes – there is now an ample supply of flats which tend to be occupied by people who work away from Brentford
- Develop High Street in keeping with surrounding
  - Specialist shops
  - Not high rise (no higher than current)
  - keep boatyards (Nigel’s) and docks
- Small buildings – small spaces

### **What ‘look and feel’ would you like in a redeveloped South Side of Brentford High Street?**

- Good textures and small scale
- Small individual businesses with one or two key multiples as a ‘draw’
  - Pedestrian friendly footways to encourage leisurely passage
- Welcoming access to river (not unwelcoming walk through housing estate)
- Level most of existing South side of High Street
  - Build a smallish shopping centre for high quality stores, eg John Lewis, M&S
  - Turn rest of South Side into low rise alleys for specialist shops and housing
  - Pedestrian only access (of lanes in York)
  - Possible large cinema/leisure complex to north side
  - Adequate parking for shopping in ‘lanes’
- English vernacular design of buildings ie Palm Court Richmond
- Make Brentford a centre for the arts – studios and workshops
- Do not have the mega brands eg Tesco, Waitrose
  - Avoid the sameness of other centres
- Keep waterways and boatyards – key differentiator

- Investigate creatively using existing warehouses and industrial buildings
- A mixed look and feel – old with some new rather than new with a smattering of old

## General

- Any possibility of a bridge (foot) over to Kew?
- Existing old buildings behind the High Street must be kept eg the granary and yard opposite
- Ice-skating ring – could be beautiful and something for the children
- Retain original character of Brentford and an updated water-community feel/traditional crafts and trades – not like ‘The Island’
- Try and keep the existing street plan
- Public Art should be integrated into the High Street – you can work with local and good public artists
- Creative consultant and bring artist together and important to consult the community
- Don't want any more ugly buildings like McDonalds and Somerfield with car parks facing the High Street
- Conservation lead
- Design from water
- Enlarge the conservation area
- Adopt a planning brief
- Spacious riverfront area with cafes, exhibitions and arts features with space for markets and performance events
- It would be nice to connect Brentford – the high street, river to canals with shops, cafes, bars and nice open spaces
  - use the water
- Keep the warehouse
- Keep the warehouses
- Keep distinctiveness – not Kingston/Hounslow – no more cardboard boxes
- Views of canal and rivers from High Street
- Public Space – Thames Path – lanes – car parks either end of street can be pedestrianised
- Kin Wilkie scheme good
- Play area behind St Lawrence's Church
- Please make windmills, solar panels, heat pumps from earth and air NORMAL
- NECESSARY for ALL energy needs – lights, loos, etc.
- Narrow lanes and riverside footpaths
  - Pssst – we need cars off square north of high street and space turned public
- Welcoming access to the river – not an unwelcoming walk through a housing estate and car parks