



Brentford High Street Steering Group

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Brendon Walsh
Director Regeneration, Economic Development and Environment
London Borough of Hounslow
Civic Centre
Lampton Road
Hounslow
TW3 4DN

Friday 22 February 2013

Dear Mr Walsh,

Ballymore planning application for Brentford Town Centre

Thank you to you and your colleagues for facilitating last Autumn's public meeting at St Paul's Church. At the exceptionally well attended meeting, some 250 members of the community expressed their outright objections to the scheme as submitted by Ballymore – no one spoke in favour of the proposals. We enclose the online petition with 245 signatories gathered in the two weeks running up to the public meeting, which echoes the views expressed that evening. We are aware that many additional letters of objection have been sent directly to the Council.

Brentford is a community that, as home to global leaders such as GlaxoSmithKline and Brompton Bicycles, has always sought to work in partnership with the private sector to enable the investment Brentford town centre needs. Hence we are keen to find a way through the current impasse. It would be terribly unfortunate and costly for the applicant and community if on balance the application cannot be accepted at planning committee or a decision that was not in line with the Brentford Area Action Plan went to Judicial Review.

For these reasons it has been suggested that it might be helpful for Brentford's three key umbrella organisations to set out a summary of the priority areas where we hope the Council will be successful in negotiating with Ballymore improvements to the planning application on the community's behalf in the coming weeks and months.

Priority areas are as follows:

1. Develop a coherent retail strategy that includes a support plan to ensure that all retail and other small businesses currently on the south side of the high street have the potential to continue operating during the build phase and secure affordable new retail space within the final scheme, as well as support to access financing - if required - to increase the capitalization of their businesses.

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2. Set out detailed plans for how and when Watermans will be moved to the town centre as a catalyst for economic regeneration.
3. Move the development substantially towards to four stories or less, in keeping with the local area and the Brentford Area Action Plan policy. Brentford's infrastructure (sewage, healthcare and schools) is already struggling to cope with the growth in population of the past decade.
4. Continue to maximise the retention of key existing historic buildings on the site integral to Brentford's character. For all that has been achieved in this regard it is disappointing that the Vicarage, Wilson and Kyle and adjacent 81 High Street are all under threat of demolition with no effort yet being made with the latter two buildings to recreate the frontage.
5. Change the architectural style to something both beautiful and in keeping with Brentford's character & heritage. This does not preclude some contemporary architecture but should broadly pick up a mixed traditional warehouse style in keeping with recommendations of The Princes Foundation for the Built Environment and examples on the attached note. We were encouraged by an initial focus group session with Ballymore's architects last Autumn that was looking at alternative options for the High Street frontage around 108/9 High Street. This more collaborate approach to design should be extended to review all the facades.
6. Design should go further in responding to and respecting the importance of the water's edge, water users, access and boat maintenance as an important element that is particularly special to Brentford. For example, a tidal grid/dry-dock maintenance facility at Workhouse Dock is important to our heritage and economy – the example of such a facility working within and enhancing the centre of a new development being Banbury. The slip way should also be retained at Workhouse Dock – the Richmond waterside example proves that these are operable as both working and social spaces.

We would be happy to meet with you in the coming weeks to discuss these priorities further and hope a revised application can be developed with Ballymore that we can support.

We enclose a one page visual summary of some of the community's key reference points for the future architecture of our town centre. We believe this demonstrates that with more active listening, the community's vision and local planning policy is deliverable.

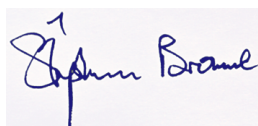
Yours sincerely,



Andrew Dakers
Chair, BHSSG

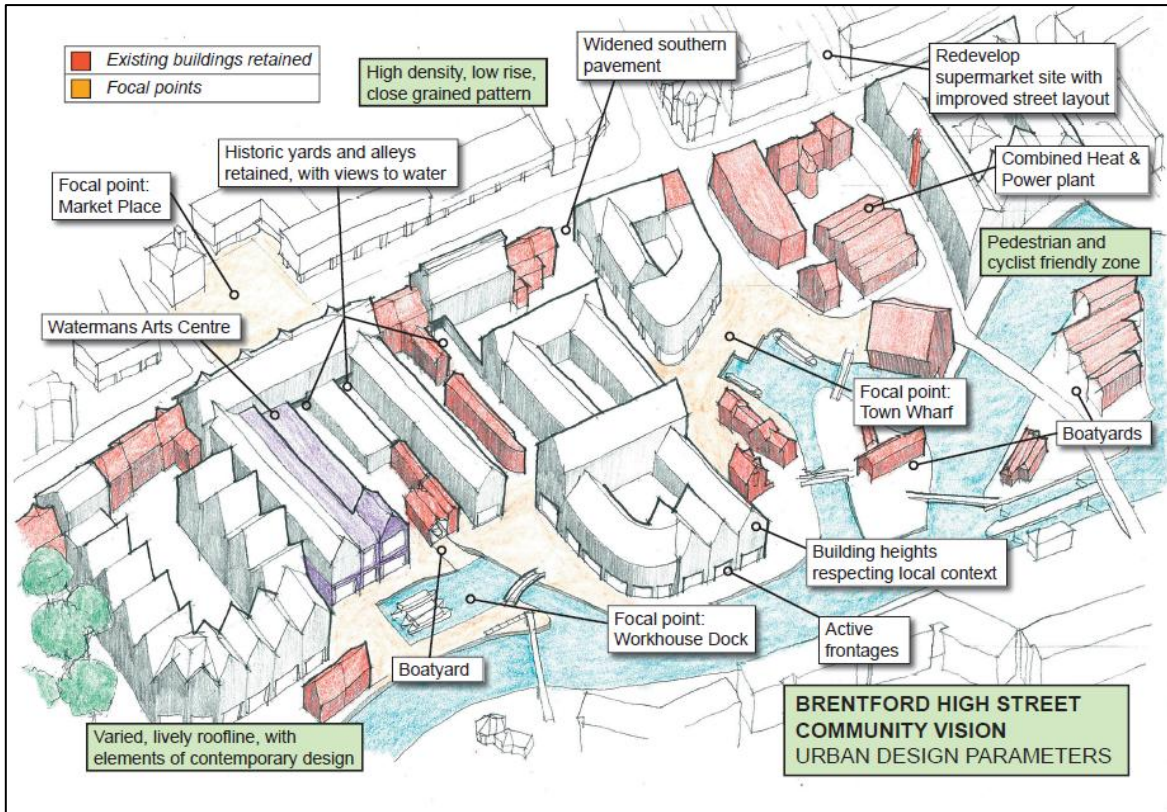


Suzie Betlem
President, Brentford Chamber of Commerce



Stephen Browne
Chair, Brentford Community Council

Cc: Syon & Brentford Ward councilors, Sunny Desai, Mary Macleod MP and Lord Stern of Brentford



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