

Dear Sirs

There is much in the Estates Local Plan (High Path) to commend it.

I would like to make the following comments:-

There is a grave danger of turning the High Path Estate and south Wimbledon into an inner city enclave instead of an integral part of the wonderful borough of Merton - by increasing the density dramatically and allowing tall buildings to be developed. This will totally spoil the character and feel of the area as well as having a grave impact on services and amenities.

The recent survey regarding Wimbledon town centre identified that people do not want tall buildings. This applies to the areas outside the town centre as well as within the town centre.

There was little in the Estates Local Plan regarding the internal living space. For example, no mention was made

- * that all rooms should have windows

- * that there should be sufficient family/communal rooms within a family dwelling so that there is space for different activities to be carried out at the same time, for example children have a quiet space for doing homework and not just one room serving as kitchen, dining room and living room.

- * that new homes will have at least as much space as existing homes and with an appropriate layout providing sufficient space within different room types.

The Estates Local Plan does not take into account the proposed new school on High Path - The Harris Academy Wimbledon.

The following are my comments on specific sections of the document:-

2.44 p 37 - Defensible space - I welcome the statement that all perimeter blocks should have active frontages with well designed appropriate defensible space. I would like to suggest, from the perspective of a pedestrian, that the most pleasant defensible space in front of buildings such as flats, houses and office blocks, are those that have railings or a wall to waist height with greenery between the building and the boundary, the greenery thus visible from the street. In addition, if the boundary is defined by a wall, greenery on top of the wall can be an attractive feature if it is well maintained. The use of the railings or wall gives a feeling that the building is not encroaching on the pavement whilst requiring very little distance to separate the building from the street.

2.47 p 37 - Promoting sustainable development - does this take into account the carbon emissions etc of the building materials, machinery, equipment etc used in the construction as well as the carbon footprint of the finished buildings over the years of usage? If not, it should do so. There is no point in having a low carbon footprint building if it has used many times the carbon to build.

p 88 - The current site analysis might be correct at this time, however, with the proposed new school to be built on High Path in the very near future, this needs to be taken into account in the site analysis.

p 101 Issues Summary

3.116 - I see no problem with green space fronting onto Merton High Street - it gives an aspect of open-ness and relaxation rather than frenetic and hemmed in.

3.117 - Morden Road has not been enhanced by developments such as the grossly unattractive Spur House especially at ground level. It is not appropriate for the council to make comments regarding the lack of cohesion in this road when they have allowed developments such as Spur House to take place.

3.119 - Whilst I acknowledge that the estate is badly designed in terms of buildings and space and that it has a high PTAL rating, this does not automatically mean that the area can sustain a huge increase in density on the estate and the surrounding area, where much development is also taking place. The local transport links can only support a finite number of people, ditto other services. Is enough being done to ensure, for example (amongst other amenities and services), sufficient sewage waste extraction and medical facilities.

p 102 Opportunities Summary

3.123 - Whilst Morden Road is perceived as a wide road, there is a danger the buildings will be too high and too close to the pavement (ie without defensible space) changing the aspect from a wide road to a hemmed in, over-shadowed road. This 'wide road' has nothing like the width of the roads say in Vauxhall where tall buildings do not give a feeling of imposition to the pedestrian or road user.

3.128 - Whilst creating views to Merton Abbey Mills is a commendable intention, Merton Abbey Mills itself has been grossly neglected over very, very many years and has none of the vibrancy it originally had. Unless Merton Abbey Mills is to be fully utilised as a key asset to the vicinity, there seems little point in providing views. However, providing views to the Wandle and green area alongside is well worthwhile.

3.129 - I welcome the suggestion that the estate should be designed to guide future developments outside the estate. Currently, there seems to have been no thought given to integrating developments with the surrounding area - Spur House being a typical example.

p 104 - Site Specific Policies

EP H1 d) A focal point or space to highlight the area's links with Lord Nelson needs to be carefully thought out so as to be recognised as such and not thought of as a waste of space or a lost opportunity.

3.132 - Morden Road - Do not make the buildings too high as is the current policy. The road might be deemed wide enough but in reality tall buildings will result in a feeling of domination and being hemmed in and overlooked.

p 106 - EP H2 Street Network

3.141 - Any links with Rodney Place should only be made with the approval of the existing residents/property owners in Rodney Place.

p 107 - H2 Street Network map

North-South future extensions into Merantun Way will not be possible with the development of the proposed new secondary school on High Path (Harris Academy Wimbledon). I think it is also fair to make the assumption that future extensions cannot pass through the existing primary school and it's land. It is misleading to show these suggested extensions on the map.

p 108 - EP H3 Movement and Access

3.147 - The development of the proposed new school is a redevelopment of the land between High Path and Merantun Way - presumably this will include the redesign of Merantun Way into a boulevard? and will presumably be discussed with TFL (3.148) ?

p 126 - EP H8 Building Heights

It is disappointing that the maximum building heights are not specified in the document.

c) Morden Road - the document states that taller buildings are more appropriate along Morden Road and the heights should be guided by the newer developments springing up along Morden Road. These developments do not necessarily have the backing of residents and locals. The appallingly unattractive and indeed ugly buildings that are being developed with inappropriate heights - ie far too tall - are not a basis on which to guide the development of the High Path Estate on Morden Road. To create a boulevard feel it is not necessary to have extremely tall buildings.

e) Any development along the north side of High Path must enhance the feeling of safety walking along the street at night. I do not think these buildings should be taller than the news streets within the estate.

f) Merantun Way - As I understand it, the south side of this road is currently industrial usage and likely to remain so? This is another street that will not benefit from tall buildings.

p 129 - Indicative Street Sections - I am puzzled by the diagrammatic representations of a high street (eg Merton High Street), an urban boulevard (eg Morden Road) and a wider boulevard (eg Merantun Way). Currently there is insufficient width on all of these roads to accommodate 4 lanes of traffic or 4 lanes of traffic plus cycle lanes and footpaths. I cannot imagine how these roads will be widened sufficiently along their whole length to accommodate the additional lanes of traffic, cycles and pavements. I therefore have to assume these illustrations are not accurate and are misleading.

In addition, the illustration of the urban boulevard in comparison with the high street shows just how inappropriately tall the buildings along the boulevard are.

4.4 - P176 - I am not sure if this paragraph leads on to point 4.5 and the following points or if there is some text missing...

"Notwithstanding the requirements of the council's validation checklist the applicant will be required to provide information to address the following:"

There is nothing following this paragraph except the subsequent sections.

4.5 - P176 - I am concerned that there is a danger the idea that different phases of development have their own character may in itself lead to a mismatch in design rather than mitigate the concern over monotony.

4.7 - P176 - The materials should be in keeping with the existing local area. For example, in general brickwork of the buildings in the surrounding area tends to be London yellow stock, multicolour or red brick. Some buildings may be discoloured due to pollution through the years from coal fires and soot to modern day traffic pollution. Care should be taken to not assume dark bricks were originally dark bricks and thus lead to the use of inappropriate or out of context building materials.

4.16 - P178 - Ensure that street furniture does not hinder the path of pedestrians especially, for example, people pushing buggies, pulling shopping trolleys or mobility scooters.

Many thanks for your consideration.

Kind regards

