

Dear Future Merton Team,

Thank you for your letter inviting us to view the 'Pre-Submission Estates Plan'.

Our main concern, that we would like to see reflected before submission, is that the plan does not seem to reflect the most recent proposals we have seen and objected to from Circle Housing. This raises serious concerns that the council and the housing authority are not in synch, and that Circle Housing is not reflecting key elements and policies laid out in your plan. In general we like and support your plan, which clearly puts the people who live in the neighbourhood at the centre of its policies. However we feel that these policies are not reflected in the plans of Circle Housing.

We raised objections to the most recent consultation which was the proposed purchase and regeneration of the Old Lampworks in Rodney Place (Planning Application 16/P3738) - an area which is almost entirely excluded from the plan you outline (exceptions are noted below). Attached are a copy of the concerns we raised in October, which in summary are right to light, disturbance/overcrowding, loss of privacy, the proposed houses do not fit the look & feel of Rodney Place and historical significance.

**In relation to the 'Pre-Submission Estates Plan' we have the following comments:**

**Building Height**

We respect and support your guidance on building height, in particular in respect to street width and density. e.g. That any taller buildings should be placed nearer the wide boulevard of Morden Road and in keeping with other developments on that road. We feel however that because Rodney Place is not part of the estates plan our views, right to light, building proximity & height in relation to our buildings are not being considered, and that Circle Housing are not adhering to the policies you have outlined.

The Pre-Submission Estates Plan Policy EP H8 Building Heights states:

(a) "The prevailing height across the estate must be lower than the heights along Morden Road and Merantun Way, but marginally higher than heights in the more sensitive areas of High Path, Abbey Road, Rodney Place"

(g) "The close proximity of Rodney Place and Merantun Way create a need to respect existing low-rise development as well as retaining the most of the potential for taller buildings fronting Merantun Way. Building heights in this area must particularly respect, and be sensitive to, these constraints and opportunities".

The proposed 3 storey townhouse opposite our house may be marginally higher but adds density in a very narrow estate, whilst a 7 storey apartment block directly contradicts your policy asking that the Rodney Place development be respected.

The illustration on pg. 98 (Site analysis) highlights a negative view from the centre of Rodney Place looking west to the existing blocks. We believe that a similar, if worse, view would exist looking south if the proposed apartment block were to be developed, as well as generally taller buildings in surrounding area than the existing majority 2-3 storey blocks

(with the exception of the 12 storey tower blocks). Whilst you have considered the new buildings in the estate in relation to each other, you have not considered existing buildings who are also valid council members and part of this neighbourhood, and the impact on us.

### **Character Assessment**

We were surprised that in your character assessment (Site Analysis 1 Character Areas - pg. 86) reference was not made to Rodney Place, which is an enclave of well preserved cottages surrounded on 3 sides by the estate. The houses are believe to date from approx. 1920 as railway cottages and the council are considering listed status for the buildings. As a wider point, although you reference that you intend to create some sort of focus point for Lord Nelson (EP H1 Townscape - d) generally it feels there is more opportunity to recognise the historical significance, and that due thought has not been given to this in favour of making the neighbourhood look like “the London vernacular”. That’s just a bit cold and thoughtless to us, and for an area rich in history surrounded by Merton Abbey Mills, Morden Hall, St John the Divine Church and the River Wandle, it feels like our character is being lost not celebrated, which is a real shame. We have visited one of the estates you highlight as your design inspiration - St Andrews in Bromley-by-Bow - and it could be any estate anywhere in the world, lacking any sort of soul and character. We urge you to sustain and reclaim some of the neighbourhood’s character while you still can.

### **Streets & Passways:**

Policy EP H2 Street Network 3.140 (pg 106) references Mews style streets for Rodney Place. A change to the street layout would open us to additional traffic, parking problems, strangers in the area (we’ve already been robbed over Christmas) and general security issues which we feel is unfair as a street which is not part of the local estate.

Illustration on pg. 111 (H3 Movement & Access) highlights a cycle/pedestrian path/flow through [REDACTED] without any further elaboration on how or why this is propose. Similarly the illustration on pg. 122 (H6 Environmental Protection) highlights a ‘green chain’ towards Wandle River crossing [REDACTED] without any further elaboration on how or why this is proposed

We hope that you will listen to our concerns and consider them, as throughout this process we and our neighbours feel we’ve been ignored. In particular we urge that measurable controls are put in place to ensure that Circle Housing must adhere to the policies you’ve outlined.

Kind regards,

