

Dear Sir/Madam:

I write on behalf of Wimbledon E Hillside Residents' Assn (WEHRA) to present our views on the above draft documents. WEHRA represents 800 households just to the North of Wimbledon Town Centre, from Alexandra Road to Woodside, and Wimbledon Hill Road to Leopold Road. We are a solid community of primarily owner-occupied family homes, and with hundreds of school children that walk to the excellent local schools and with workers who use the nearby transport hub. Being in such close proximity to Wimbledon Town Centre, we are regularly called to defend our community, our homes and our right to quiet enjoyment. A fair few issues have been raised by our members, based on the proposals set out in these draft documents.

Starting with the core document, and following thru, here are our concerns:

Draft Sites and Policies Development Plan Document

We have a five really big concerns, which are 'global comments' for this entire document, as follows:

Definition of the 'Wimbledon Brand'

Page 3: Centre column: Wimbledon 'brand' is undefined. (Also P 39, 4.7 etc) As a Strategic Document, it is essential that this document clearly and concisely define what is meant by "The Wimbledon Brand." Any future development concepts or proposals for the Wimbledon Area (Village and Town) will be assessed against this 'brand' so it is fundamentally important to have a clear understanding of what this 'brand' is. If we were to attempt to identify key components of this 'brand', they might be:

- Upmarket, affluent; steady/solid community, unchanging amidst a fast-changing world
- Long and rich history, both social, political, economically and environmentally (Wimbledon Common, stables, Village Fair, site of scientific interest etc etc)
- Creative; artsy; innovative (Matches, Book fair, Music Fair, Polka and Wimbledon Theatres, Opera, Choirs, Brian Sewell effect, etc)
- **Green** - driven by the world famous 'green grass' courts of the AELTC/Wimbledon Tennis Fortnight, but also including the excellent reputation from hundreds of environmentally conscious and active environmentalists who live here, including the strong and growing groups like Abundance Wimbledon, Sustainable Merton, Transition Town Wimbledon, plus Tony Drakeford's excellent local work as Naturalist etc etc.

Distinction between WTC Nighttime Economy vs Evening Economy

We are horrified to read the words 'night time' and 'evening' used casually and interchangeably in the language outlining the future of WTC (eg: Part 1: P18, 1.71; P 19, 1.79; p20 1.80 and 1.81). For area residents, we have a crystal clear understanding:

- Evening: Any time until 11 pm, which is local residents' bedtime

-- Nighttime: Any time after 11 pm, which is when any noises will wake local nearby residents trying to sleep. Strict criteria must be met, for anything in the 'nighttime' period

WEHRA urges you to comb thru this document and ensure that these distinctions are carefully identified. Evening economy is encouraged; Nighttime economy is detrimental and has to be carefully evaluated using Police and Environmental Health statistics, before any additional nighttime businesses are permitted.

WTC Central vs Core vs Secondary Shopping Frontage

When WTC was developed in the 1980's the shopping parade along Wimbledon Hill Road was loosely included as a 'secondary shopping frontage' but this classification does not acknowledge the fact that this parade also serves as a neighbourhood parade for area residents. As a result of this sloppy designation some years ago, this parade has deteriorated terribly. At present there are a DOZEN estate agents here, taking premises from smaller independent shops that once were located here.

WEHRA urges you to amend the document throughout, to reflect this 'dual use' of this parade, and to ensure that further planning decisions for this parade respect the need for a local, healthy shopping parade, now a row of 'properties for sale' which are of no use to local residents.

Wimbledon Town Centre Perimeter

There is no mention in these documents whatsoever that, for planning and licensing considerations, proposals that are located on the absolute PERIMETER of the Town Centre (Wimbledon or otherwise) should be taken into consideration. This is a modestly sized Town Centre, and homes that are immediately on the perimeter suffer, when planners allow developments that are detrimental to the immediate neighbours. In the past we've been told that "this isn't a material consideration" because the site is 'within the Town Centre', however we feel this needs to be changed, to ensure the future of our otherwise healthy neighbourhood.

Infrastructure Levy: Wimbledon's Heavy Burden

We are not expert on this taxation, but it would appear that such a high 'penalty' for development will only further widen the 'rich v poor' within the Borough, and drive property prices higher in SW19.

Now, page by page, herewith our comments:

Part 1, P5:

a) instead of 'range of units' wording should suggest 'thoughtfully balanced' range of units, and that any changes would be an improvement from the existing range or not be acceptable. You never identify what is an 'appropriate balance' you just mention 'range' without any guidance. This is unhelpful to us, when new proposals come forward and need to be assessed

of their appropriateness. Justification: 1.2: The Town Centre must be desirable to locals first, and certainly as much as it is desirable to visitors. Please include this criteria.

P6: 1,6: In fact, sadly WTC is at present not really "attractive to residents". The language needs to address this deficit, as it is critical that WTC IS attractive to residents, and offerings in WTC should be assessed against three need groups: residents, tourists and businesses. As an example, Poundland would not be viewed as an appropriate retail offering here. (Note comment above about 'the Wimbledon Brand')

1.8: ADD: including small, medium and large (between 280 sqm). The town center is a MIX of sizes, and needs to continue to be so. The last sentence in 1.8 suggests that small units are not seen as essential, but just 'will be welcomed'. It should read will be ENCOURAGED - to enhance the mix with small start ups/lower rent and support the WIMBLEDON BRAND etc.

Part 1; P 11, Policy c) It needs to be specified that to get a change and move away from A1, you need say 30 mos' marketing to prove that this is no longer viable. We have lost far too many retail sites to A4/A5 and unless some of these venues revert to A1, we will have a town centre with few shops and vacant, former restaurants, as is happening now.

Part 1: P13, Policy b) need to define 'significant breaks'. Policy c) note that Wimbledon Hill Road is a conservation area, is PRIMARY shopping for locals and a percentage of retail must be retained. At present it is nearly all restaurants, bars and estate agents, and this deterioration must be stopped as a matter of urgency, or you will kill off all 'life' in the important local strip. Please designate a percentage for retail here.

Part 1: P14 d) Add: with focus on daytime and evening activity, but only selected and limited 'nighttime' activity, given the close proximity to residential area.

Part 1: P15: Secondary shopping frontage:
These parades still need Balance and Diversity. We suggest 50% retail; otherwise this is 'dead space' for the thousands of local people, students, commuters, and we all must travel further afield than necessary for our daily needs.

Part 1: P17: Policy aim: (first paragraph) Please add that 'nighttime' development -- ie anything after 11 pm -- must be done with great sensitivity to local residents.

P17: b) please add: Proximity to residential is a factor in WTC, and any proposals cannot cause a loss of amenity to the immediate community. Households on the perimeter of the Town Centre deserve the same respect as other residential homes. At present, a developer can put a bar on the absolute perimeter, and Merton says that's ok because it is in the Town Centre. Surely the reverse is the right way, that the local people have a right

to quiet enjoyment, and a developer should be refused permission to put a community-detrimental business on the perimeter of the Town Centre zone.

P18 1.79: Add clearly that evening (up to 11 pm) is acceptable; nighttime (after 11 pm) is to be heavily scrutinised

P20: 1.80: The para about 'Wimbledon 'brand' is far too loosely worded, and must be referred back to the definition in the start of the document please. Also, in fact there is NO MORE ROOM for leisure and entertainment facilities that would aim to attract visitors after 11 pm, and this should be clearly specified in this para, or the para should be deleted.

Part 1, P69: Flooding and drainage. Please add iv: All new developments must contain at least (50% ?) rainwater harvesting, eg could be used for toilet flushing, watering trees, washing machines). This should be a Second Merton Rule. Add: v: New developments will not be permitted to 'mass pave' land currently green. There must be permeable paving if paving is required, and full rainwater harvesting (to compensate for developing an area that previously was used for water run off.) Merton should be proud of their creative and future-looking Rules, and this is an easy Rule to add for 2012.

Part II: Potential Sites for New Uses

We are not pleased with the suggestion that Wimbledon Library (Item 16) is listed for redevelopment, and that it has been included as 'secondary shopping frontage in the map. This is a Library and a Community Serving site, and we do not want to lose that valuable resource. Lessons are help in Marlborough Hall, the Computers are heavily over-subscribed and the Library books, videos etc serve the immediate community very well. We are totally against this proposed redevelopment, which could include restaurants, financial services, even shops. Please remove the Library from this list!

Part III: Draft Proposals Map

LDF Propoosal Map: Shopping Frontages: Wimbledon:

We are very unhappy that this map suggests that Wimbledon Library be included in 'Secondary Shopping Frontages' (light blue) on this map. Also, that the Pavement, 1-8 Worple Road isn't included in Core Shopping Frontage (medium Blue). Please amend this map as a matter of urgency, as these are errors. Also, we urge you to consider designating the top end of Wimbledon Hill Road as a Core Shopping Frontage, to protect our area from the otherwise inevitable death of this shopping area. This strip has the potential to be a strong and successful commercial area, representing shops and businesses more like Wimbledon Village than the lower-market Wimbledon Town Centre. Note the latest restaurant, Sticks n Sushi at 58 WHR, which may well become the best restaurant in the Borough. Also note that Ely's repositioning a few years ago has proved hugely successful, and Elys are included in the Core Shopping Frontage.

Borough Character Study: Reinforcing Local Distinctiveness

We were surprised that the report has excluded the Conservation Area of Wimbledon Hill Road from this document. This area is a vibrant neighbourhood parade for thousands of area residents and we feel it should be included as a valuable asset in the Wimbledon community. The area is a Conservation Area, with several beautiful buildings within it, including the Bank Buildings (scheduled for huge renovation in the coming few years), the Library and the listed row of small shops on the western side of WHR. In addition this delightful community offers Wimbledon's best Health Food store, Fielders art store, The Fish Man (there five mornings a week), The Fruit & Veg Man (there five days a week from dawn til dusk), Ely's and chemist within, the eight fine little shops in the Pavement, Worple Road not to mention daily pedestrian traffic from Wimbledon High, Willington families. Not to mention the opening of what may become Wimbledon's best restaurant on Wimbledon Hill Road, which will draw locals, visitors and businesses in the SW.

We read into this that Merton Council have a very different view of our parade than what is actually happening. A schizophrenic situation exists that must be rectified with the publishing of this document. Would your group seriously review this concern, and amend the entire document to reflect the true status and best outcome for this area. At present we as locals are 'losing out' with the draft proposals for both the Wimbledon Hill Road area and for our Library. At the very least this area needs to be removed from the deadly 'Secondary Shopping' designation.

Thank you for considering our views; we are happy to meet and discuss any of these points further if that would be of use.

Kind regards,
Leigh Terrafranca, on behalf of Wimbledon E Hillside Residents' Association (WEHRA)
c/o Compton Road, SW19 7QA