

NOTTING HILL GATE
Ambitions for Notting Hill Gate: Refurbish, Refresh or Re-think?

PUBLIC CONSULTATION REPORT
16 October 2013

Contents

A.	The Consultation Process.....	3
B.	Consultation Responses.....	4
	Summary of Leaflet Questions.....	4
	Exhibition Votes Cast.....	5
	Final Response Totals.....	6
C.	Commentary on Strengthening the Identity of the Town Centre.....	8
	Notting Hill Gate’s Character.....	8
	Shops, retailers and offices.....	8
	Evening economy and cultural attraction.....	9
	Community.....	10
	Portobello Market visitors and tourists.....	10
	Saturday Farmers’ Market.....	10
	Housing.....	11
D.	Commentary on Improving the Streets and Public Spaces.....	12
	Road width.....	12
	Road crossings.....	12
	Street clutter.....	13
	Public realm quality.....	13
	Signage and route to Portobello Road.....	13
	Moving bus stops.....	14
	Space for cycling.....	14
	Underground entrances.....	14
	Stop the traffic ideas.....	14
E.	Commentary on Improving the Buildings and Architecture.....	16
	Shop and building fronts.....	16
	Newcombe House.....	16
	Other 1950-60s architecture.....	16
	New building heights.....	17
	Group of taller buildings.....	17
	Appendix A: Leaflet and postal responses.....	18
	Appendix B: Online responses & Extracts from longer online responses.....	18
	Appendix C: Exhibition Panels and workshop notes and photos.....	18

NOTTING HILL GATE

Ambitions for Notting Hill Gate: Refurbish, Refresh or Re-think?

Introduction

This report summarises the public consultation undertaken in September 2013 on the issues and options for Notting Hill Gate, to inform the Supplementary Planning Document to be prepared by the Council.

With increasing interest by local landowners in making changes to their properties, this process has sought to explore three themes for improving Notting Hill Gate – the town centre’s identity, the quality of the public realm, and improving the buildings - to elicit responses and reactions by posing three levels of change: *Refurbish, Refresh or Re-think*. These levels are cumulative so that Refresh includes the Refurbish option, and Re-think encompasses the Re-furbish and Re-fresh options.

A. The Consultation Process

This process began in late 2012 with early workshops held in December 2012 and February 2013 to establish whether the vision outlined in the Core Strategy was still appropriate, the issues to be addressed and how to tackle them. These workshops had low attendances, but brought many detailed ideas to the fore which have been explored in more detail in this later consultation.

This round of consultation therefore needed to consult residents, businesses and visitors more widely, finding ways of engaging more and different people, opening up discussions on the scale of change desirable and possible. The issues for public consultation were discussed with the Architecture Appraisal Panel (AAP) during the preparation of the material.

The methods of engagement used were:

1. Public exhibition and workshops

A public exhibition was held over six days from 10-19 September 2013 at Astley House, Notting Hill Gate to encourage visitors to discuss their ideas in person. The exhibition was launched on Monday 9th September with an evening preview for the Notting Hill Gate Liaison Group, and then opened to the wider public with around 275 people attending the exhibition over the six days, on:

Tuesday 10 September 10am-2pm, with a one hour morning workshop

Thursday 12 September 3-7pm

Saturday 14 September 11am-4pm with a one hour afternoon workshop

Monday 16 September 10am-2pm

Wednesday 18 September 3-7pm with a one hour evening workshop

Thursday 19 September 10am-2pm

The three workshops were held at different times to encourage a range of people to examine the issues in detail. The material used at these events was also available whenever the exhibition was open. The workshop sessions were split into three groups with discussion around the content of the exhibition boards – identity, public realm, and built form.

- Identity – discussions explored what people see as the image of Notting Hill Gate now and in the future;

- Public realm – discussions around the key issues with the public realm, thoughts on the sketch scheme shown on the ‘Refresh’ board, and ideas about whether more radical options should be explored; and,
- Built Form – participants were able to look at a 1:500 scale model and adapt the development sites to identify which buildings are liked and disliked and to explore different possibilities for height and massing.

2. Consultation leaflets & website

An A3 folded leaflet was also produced outlining the issues from the exhibition and was sent to 12,178 households within 800m of Notting Hill Gate centre, just before the exhibition opened. This allowed residents to respond directly to the questions on issues raised, either using a detachable Freepost form by return post or in person at the exhibition. It listed the opening hours for events, the website for an online version of the questionnaire, plus further contact details.

Announcements about the consultation issues and how to respond were also made using the Council’s established communications channels, e.g. posters in local libraries and Council notice boards, the Council website’s Consultations and Notting Hill Gate pages, Twitter, Facebook, the weekly Planning Bulletins, Business Direct Bulletin, City Living Local Life, plus local newspapers - The Chronicle, Kensington and Chelsea Today, The Resident and The Hill, and the Evening Standard.

B. Consultation Responses

At the end of the consultation period, 578 responses were received to the leaflet questions (171 online and 407 by post and by hand), some of which included letters giving more detailed comments. This total is 4.7% of the 12, 178 leaflets dispatched (with others handed out at the exhibition).

From these sources, the overall feedback is very mixed, but with a consensus on **re-thinking the town centre’s identity** and **re-thinking the streets and public spaces**, with comments on the issues involved in these options. However the preferred approach to **improving the architecture and buildings** is not quite as definitive, with a narrow margin in favour of **re-thinking** the area – again with qualifications on the ideas within that option.

Summary of Leaflet Questions

The responses to those responding to the leaflet by post, or in person are as follows:

1. To strengthen the town centre’s identity, which option is your preferred approach:

32% A. Refurbish 19% B. Refresh **49% C. Re-think**

2. To improve the streets and public spaces, which option is your preferred approach:

19% A. Refurbish 21% B. Refresh **60% C. Re-think**

3. To improve the buildings and architecture, which option is your preferred approach:

31% A. Refurbish 31% B. Refresh **38% C. Re-think**

As the leaflet asked for residential post codes, it is clear that virtually all of the respondents have come from the area itself, and not visitors from other areas of London or beyond.

Exhibition Votes Cast

Further responses were received at the exhibition by participants voting with red dots on the exhibition panels. These are as follows:

1. To strengthen the town centre's identity, which option is your preferred approach:

40% A. Refurbish 20% B. Refresh **40% C. Re-think**

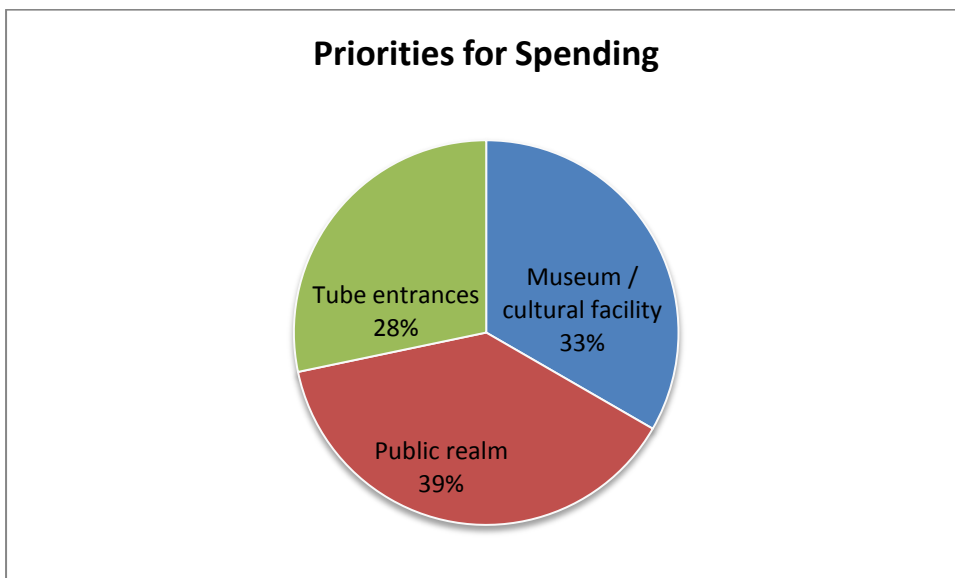
2. To improve the streets and public spaces, which option is your preferred approach:

26% A. Refurbish 24% B. Refresh **49% C. Re-think**

3. To improve the buildings and architecture, which option is your preferred approach:

27% A. Refurbish **37% B. Refresh** 36% C. Re-think

Attendees to the exhibition were also asked to prioritise how funding from the development should be allocated between the new museum /cultural facility, the public realm or new underground entrances, with the public realm slightly more popular than the museum /cultural facility or tube.

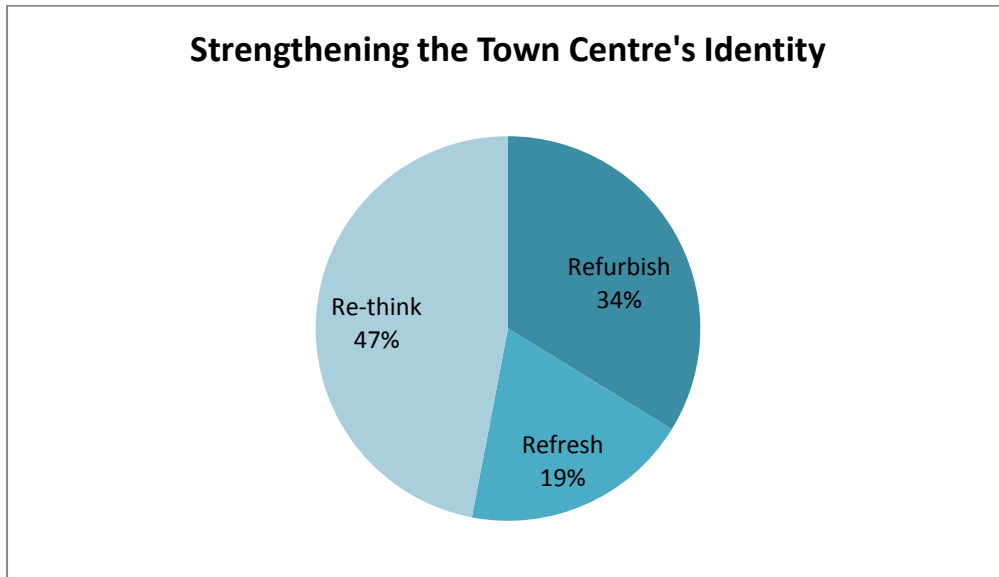


Final Response Totals

Combining all votes cast in person, by post or online, the responses are:

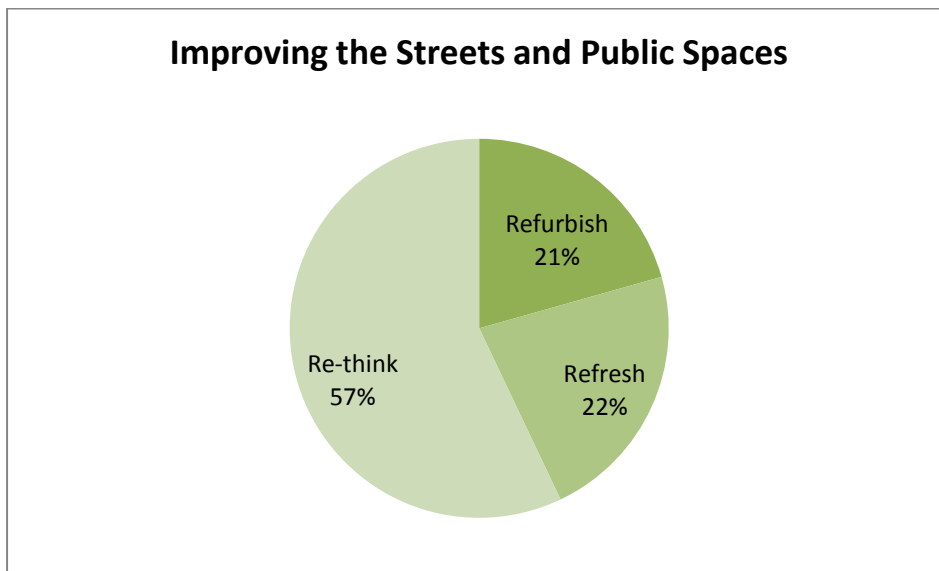
1. To strengthen the town centre's identity, which option is your preferred approach:

34% A. Refurbish 19% B. Refresh **47% C. Re-think**



2. To improve the streets and public spaces, which option is your preferred approach:

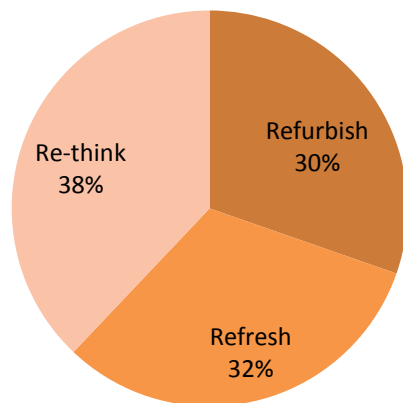
21% A. Refurbish 22% B. Refresh **57% C. Re-think**



3. To improve the buildings and architecture, which option is your preferred approach:

30% A. Refurbish 32% B. Refresh **38% C. Re-think**

Improving the Buildings and Architecture



The comments made by all respondents according to the three themes are set out in the following sections. These were gathered from the written and emailed responses, and the workshop discussion groups and boards. It is important to note that those who voted for the 're-think' option across all three themes generally did not offer many comments, while those with reservations - preferring the 'refurbish' or 'refresh' options - wanted to set out what these were and why.

C. Commentary on Strengthening the Identity of the Town Centre

The following section summarises the comments provided by respondents on strengthening the identity of the town centre. With the majority of views expressed in favour of **re-thinking the town centre's identity**, the comments cover a number of ideas and concerns raised in the refurbish, refresh and re-think options.

Notting Hill Gate's Character

There is a well-acknowledged series of dilemmas around Notting Hill Gate's character amongst the respondents. It is understood as a place characterised by a number of functions: through traffic movement, public transport interchange, an arrival point for one of London's major visitor attractions at Portobello Road Market, alongside local neighbourhood shops, services and evening entertainment, and supporting work places. The contrast between the low-rise and colourful stuccoed surrounding residential areas and the 1950s architecture on Notting Hill Gate itself presents the greatest challenge to its future. One resident describes the need for 'a sense of place *consistent* with the historic character of the area', which will need to come from its land uses, streets and architecture. Whether Notting Hill Gate is a town centre or a local high street is a key point of debate, but it is seen as a local hub with significant footfall. Kensington Church Street's antiques shops are acknowledged as unique, as is Portobello Road Market.

Shops, retailers and offices

There is widespread support and loyalty for useful independent neighbourhood-related retailing, and not chain stores. There is a clear desire for better mix of shops, and for higher quality food shops. Marylebone High Street is seen as model for how to increase the retail quality, overall environment and neighbourhood feel, by one overall management approach, with low rents for key tenants. (Whitstable and Greenwich are also referred to as places with a similar feel, sense of place and mix.)

There is continued support for lower rent occupiers and the domestic needs-based shops (e.g. the pharmacy, a new or replacement surgery, the post office, delicatessen, the hardware shop, pet shop, etc.).

Concern is common about the number of estate agents, nail bars, fast food and take-away shops, mobile phone shops, and bureaux de change in the area, and the need for more zoning or control of these uses. There is also a clear view about competing badly with the emerging proposals for Queensway, the 'high end' nature of Kensington High Street or Westfield ('the antithesis'), if new development here aims to attract chain stores. The west end of Westbourne Grove is suggested as a good model for a gentle regeneration approach, but not necessarily the type of shops. Ideas about reducing business rates and offering council tax incentives are proposed to encourage smaller businesses to flourish here.

The busy roads and traffic levels are seen as a deterrent to shopping and lingering, for residents and visitors alike, with a mismatch between Notting Hill Gate's reputation, visitor expectations and reality.

The balance of residential, retail and office space is appreciated, supporting the local daytime economy, but using ground floor space (i.e. shop units) as office foyers was not well received, although this concept successfully used at Drylands was perhaps not well explained.

The area is not seen as appropriate for a large corporate headquarters or major single-occupier office buildings (unless linked to the cultural facility below), as other places are more central and cater to this market already. Old Street and the Silicon Roundabout effect are a useful example for the area, with small and medium sized businesses prevalent; smaller more flexible office space with a media centre is recommended, and it is recognised that lower rent spaces do not come with new development.

Evening economy and cultural attraction

Central to Notting Hill Gate's character are the existing cinemas and theatre, as a reflection of the area's Bohemian heritage. There are few day-into-evening attractions however, with many seeing the 'way home from work' stopping off point as a potential role for the centre. There are also comments about the licensing of late-night venues and where they are located, with a call for more venues (and pubs) which are busy in the evenings, rather than night clubs with 2.30am closing times.

Despite overall support for the idea of a new cultural attraction there are very mixed views about the provision of a new museum. A museum is not seen as dynamic or relevant to this residential area, as there are plenty in this part of London. Respondents are particularly concerned about attracting more visitors to the area when it is already busy in the day time, and especially on weekends.

An alternative location suggested would be en route to Portobello Market and the Museum of Brands, or making links with Kensington Palace and the newly relocated Design Museum, so that it is not completely independent (and prone to failure). Moving the Museum of Brands here was also mooted.

There were many alternative proposed uses for the cultural attraction, for example linking it to the local arts base potentially with a major corporate sponsor(s), and as a multi-cultural outlet for interactive arts, an exhibition or rehearsal space, and a cafe with good views (like Peter Jones restaurant at Sloane Square on 7th floor). Developing relationships with people in the area is essential to it becoming part of the neighbourhood, as well as drawing visitors from nearby hotels, extending the life of the area into the evenings.

Examples from elsewhere include the Whitechapel Art Gallery, the White Cube Bermondsey, the Ice House Holland Park, a small Lyric Theatre, Kings Place King's Cross, St Petersburg's Arts Center in Florida as exhibition and learning spaces. Local talent and students, whether musical, artistic or otherwise, could also have space there. The links to the other cinemas, theatres and clubs are also central to this idea, with joint promotion and shared facilities. The area's literary strengths are also suggested as a basis for book fairs and markets.

There are also many references to the existing art works in the area, loved and loathed (e.g. the elephant) and the need to relocate these or find space for new ones relevant to the area (e.g. a toll gate and NHIG's current proposals for Dante Leonelli's Halo).

Community

What emerges from the responses about retailing and the cultural economy is a clear desire for the strengthening of the area's identity to be about the existing neighbourhood and its attractiveness to residents and tourists en route to Portobello Road Market, not an entirely new look or feel. The messy, more affordable and colourful vitality that makes it different to other nearby neighbourhoods is its identity, and it is the space to gather and enjoy which seems to be missing. Respondents describe the desire for a café culture, but without the chain coffee shops.

Other priorities for investment mentioned include public toilets (in or separate from the tube station, and for locals and visitors), a lack of community focus – as a square or gathering place (building or facility), and a need for community events. The lack of attractive public spaces not already dominated by all-day drinking or passing traffic is part of this.

Furthermore, there is an overall concern about the impact of a major redevelopment programme on daily lives, and the need to plan for this as part of the development brief. Reassurance is sought that this would be a coordinated development framework which allows Notting Hill Gate to change organically, and not in a piecemeal or wholesale fashion.

Portobello Market visitors and tourists

Recognised as a key attraction, Portobello Road Market is welcomed by residents, but more crowd management is needed on Saturdays in particular – with top quality signage and the de-cluttering of routes to make the public space around the tube work better. Signage could direct visitors to use Kensington Park Road, not just Pembridge Road.

Visitors could also be encouraged to use Ladbroke Grove tube for the market - as for Covent Garden and Leicester Square tube stations, and WCs should be provided for the vast number of people passing through. Adding to this busyness with a new attraction near the tube specifically was not welcome, but encouraging the crowds to view Notting Hill Gate as an attractive area to visit was.

Saturday Farmers' Market

The farmers' market is extremely popular with respondents as a source of food shopping and contact with food producers; but it also offers a different experience of the area, and a community meeting place, and adds to the footfall to other cafes and shops locally.

There is great concern over its disruption if it is moved and the need to maintain space for it throughout any changes.

There are also ideas about its possible dilution if it is moved to a more main-street location – with the stalls changing to appeal to tourists, or getting stuck in busy Saturday visitor flows, frustrating the social nature of the market for local people.

A design configuration suggested is for 30 stalls on around 400sqm, with easy access for stall holders, preferably in a grid formation, rather than linear. Alternative locations suggested include: UCK car park in Victoria Gardens (where new housing is already proposed); behind the Marks and

Spencer store; behind Campden Hill Towers in an improved service area; in front of United House and Boots (also very unpopular); at the southern end of a temporarily closed Pembridge Road; the bottom of Pembridge Gardens; adjacent to the Gate Cinema (Farmer Street); along Uxbridge Street; in front of or behind Newcombe House; behind Astley House (West Mall); Fox School playground (its original home), under the Town Hall (Hornton Street); and, outside All Saints Church near Powis Square (north). Queens Park farmers' market is cited as well managed in a school car park.

Housing

There are very mixed views on providing housing, with positive views about affordable housing here or as part of the development package but built elsewhere. There is great reluctance to see luxury apartments developed, which would add little life to or damage the area if they are marketed and sold as buy-to-let properties or foreign investments (with low occupancy rates) and little interest in the local economy. The balance of housing with office space is clearly important however.

D. Commentary on Improving the Streets and Public Spaces

From the three main themes, the following section summarises the comments provided by respondents on improving the streets and public spaces. With the majority of views expressed in favour of **re-thinking the streets and public spaces**, the comments cover a number of ideas and concerns.

Road width

There is concern over narrowing Notting Hill Gate carriageway and potential traffic impacts on side streets, given the experience of summer diversions due to Thames Water works (although this was seen as good and bad). References are made to the Westway and its strategic function to support Notting Hill Gate's new character, and Chiswick is cited as a good example, with its busy road but strong village identity. Comparisons are made to the King's Road, Kensington High Street and Exhibition Road, but with uncertainty about how the traffic would really work.

The traffic speed and dominance from its noise and air pollution are recognised as a deterrent to pedestrians and cyclists using Notting Hill Gate, as they are the regular customers (not the passing car drivers). Suggestions for reducing the road impacts include creating segregated cycle lanes and wider pavements, plus reducing traffic speeds especially westwards to 20mph as a whole zone. Reinstating the Congestion Charge in the area is also raised by many people.

Some tunnels and bridges are also suggested, plus new one or two way systems for Notting Hill Gate itself, Pembridge Road, the top end of Kensington Church St and Kensington Mall, and Palace Gardens Terrace.

The road should be a 'maximum of two lanes of traffic each way on Notting Hill Gate and straight pedestrian crossings'.

Road crossings

There are a significant number of representations from Fox Primary School parents and other residents/ parents about the urgent need for clearer and more pedestrian-friendly road crossings at:

- Campden Hill Road and Notting Hill Gate, especially for children judging a complicated three-way junction. There is no east-west crossing, and so a new crossing there or from M&S (north) to the east corner is called for. This would also benefit businesses west of Campden Hill Road.
- Some traffic calming on Campden Hill Road to slow traffic before this junction.
- The pelican crossing on Notting Hill Gate (by Campden Hill Towers – Holland and Barrett to Video City) that cars and cyclists regularly run through even on red lights, and with long wait times between the two crossings sections. This should become a straight crossing and with more frequent crossings at rush hour, say 8-9am and 3-4pm.
- More count-down timers or faster change times for traffic lights in other locations to encourage people to wait to complete their crossing, avoiding risky crossings being made by running across. This includes the slow and staggered crossing point between Foxton's, United House and the Gate Cinema; and the top of Kensington Church Street.
- A new zebra crossing over Ladbroke Terrace.

- A new crossing at Foxton's corner where there is illegal parking and crossings being made through railings.
- Traffic calming to Kensington Place outside Fox Primary School to allow safe crossings there.

Notting Hill Gate is seen as needing a major redesign to favour pedestrians and cyclists over traffic, but with a careful study of traffic patterns and a range of measures to address different times of the day and week.

Transport for London's standard lighting along Notting Hill Gate from Campden Hill Road to Linden Gardens is seen as promoting motorway-style driving along a fast road; there are calls to change this lighting and help to change perceptions.

Street clutter

There is a clear desire to see street furniture removed, but with caution around the existing crossings where children currently do not understand the road layout and the staggered nature of the crossings. The railings need to remain in place until the straight-across crossings and better crossing points are put in place. The split pavement level on Pembridge Road also needs redesigning first.

There is a need for more waste bins (underground) for the bags of rubbish left on streets, and to tackle litter (including dog mess and chewing gum) on Notting Hill Gate, Pembridge Road, Kensington Park Road, and Holland Park Avenue, and public toilets. The bike racks at Frae and Crispins create pinch-points for tube users and passers-by.

Public realm quality

There is a clear call for more street trees (evergreen and London planes) in the centre of calmer carriageways and along the kerb edge, and more opportunities to introduce planting on-street or on green walls ('green graffiti'). Examples cited include the Athenaeum Piccadilly, Mile End Bridge, Westfield and the Hundertwasser housing in Vienna, with creative lighting to soften the area by night. The central reservations could be extended eastwards and become places for cycle parking within a redesigned road scheme.

Poor or infrequent street cleaning is also clearly highlighted, and is associated with high visitor numbers, making the area seem intensively used.

More seating and places to linger are sought, as the existing spaces (in front of Newcombe House or Campden Hill Towers) are judged to be very poor, or too windy to be comfortable places. There is a need for a public space to linger - with sunshine and sheltered from winds – probably on the north side of Notting Hill Gate. A number of smaller spaces need more thought (and could be reinstated as incidental trading pitches), as they have become places for anti-social behaviour associated with on-street drinking or do not encourage day-to-day use. These include the space at Kensington Temple, and the Farmer Street link. The Duke of York Square scheme is given as a good example of local public space created, and Westbourne Grove (also for the public toilets!).

Signage and route to Portobello Road

There is unanimous support for more signage to Portobello Road with a choice of clearer routes, using other languages and attractive designs for signposts or pavement trails. This signage could also

direct visitors to other attractions and areas nearby, like Kensington Palace, Kensington High Street, Kensington Gardens, Kensington Church Street, Westfield and Holland Park.

Moving bus stops

There was concern about losing or moving bus stops and services through Notting Hill Gate. Some suggestions for moving bus routes locally to reduce congestion on Pembridge Road include the number 452 and 52, to run along Notting Hill Gate and then Ladbroke Grove, avoiding Pembridge Road; or the number 328 through Ladbroke Grove and Westbourne Park Road to reduce congestion. The narrow carriageway with parallel parking on Pembridge Road causes congestion for buses and the new Routemasters are awaited to resolve this.

There is a suggestion to move the bus stop a short distance further at the top of Kensington Mall and Palace Gardens Terrace, where stopping buses cause congestion on the main routes just behind them.

Space for cycling

There are clearly regular conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists using the footways and jumping traffic lights, as the road is seen as too dangerous for cycling. Better provision for cycling is needed to resolve this with suggested segregated cycle routes and advance cycle stop lines at traffic lights. Examples of best practice elsewhere are offered at www.aviewfromthecyclepath.com with designs from Holland and indicative costs.

Underground entrances

Notting Hill's key strength is seen as its connectivity and interchange between the District, Circle and Central Lines. The tube entrances and exits are widely regarded as hazardous and overcrowded at peak times. Their designs are seen as iconic contributing to local character, to be retained or refurbished.

There are proposals to spread the exits out to disperse crowds, including a direct link north to Pembridge Road, a second southern exit, and a new northern exit closer to Campden Hill Towers. Opportunities to move the stations inside buildings are described and for retail space in concourses at ground floor and below ground level. However, the majority view seems to be that moving the tube entrances is not a priority.

To relieve overcrowding, tourist information should be provided underground to direct Portobello Road Market visitors better (and similarly for Kensington Palace Gardens and the new Design Museum). There needs to be disabled access by escalator or preferably elevators, as well as ways of carrying suitcases up the changes of level for the many visitors passing through with luggage. Step-free access onto the trains is also referred to, not just to the station level.

Reinstating or re-providing WCs as part of any reorganisation would be welcomed.

Stop the traffic ideas

There is widespread support for pedestrianisation. This is mostly called for along Notting Hill Gate itself between Bayswater Road and Kensington Church Street, and the southern end of Pembridge Road on a permanent or temporary basis.

There are many ideas about traffic-free areas on Saturdays in particular, or synchronised traffic lights across the Pembridge Road-Notting Hill Gate junction with references to Oxford Circus and le Marais in Paris (on Sundays for the markets). Other suggestions include a single lane of traffic in each direction on Notting Hill Gate from Palace Gardens Terrace to Kensington Church Street, and Pembridge Road becoming one-way or bus access only.

E. Commentary on Improving the Buildings and Architecture

From the three main themes, the following section summarises the comments provided by respondents on improving the buildings and architecture.

With a narrow margin of views expressed in favour of **rethinking the buildings and architecture**, the main concerns expressed are around replacing the existing tall buildings with new ones, and the environmental effects of those on the public realm.

The striking contrast between the architecture along Notting Hill Gate and the low rise village-like surrounding areas is well recognised, and any change is seen as an opportunity to repair damage previously done to the area. The relatively marginal financial viability of redeveloping the area is not widely understood, or conversely is seen as incredible, and so concerns are expressed about the cost of demolitions to the Council itself (and hence council tax levels) or about developers making excessive profits and changing the area too radically.

Shop and building fronts

Many respondents commented on the need for more uniformity and design control over shop fronts and signage (plus illuminated signs), to improve the visual appearance of the area. France and Italy are seen to have good examples, whether traditional or modern.

The single storey shop extensions and split premises opposite Astley House are seen as particularly unsightly, and needing more control too. The mix of retail units described in the town centre identity section is linked to the issue of visual control, and as is zoning or grouping uses according to the different users (i.e. visitors or locals), so that necessary tourist services are available but contained.

Newcombe House

There was little overall concern about the loss of Newcombe House and the associated buildings on that site (down Kensington Church Street). The square in front is seen as a public space (albeit unloved) should be replaced or re-provided in a better form, with the old building line restored. Ideas for that area provide the public space on the eastern edge of the block to capture more direct sunlight. The space in the rear yard where the farmers' market is held is very popular by association. The wind effects of the tower and its shadowing is a widely held concern, and its height is seen as a reasonable maximum for any new building.

Other 1950-60s architecture

Astley House, the Czech Embassy, Campden Hill Towers and its adjacent flat roofed buildings, the Marks and Spencer building, Ivy Lodge, the Book Warehouse building, and David Game House are all referred to as being eyesores. There are few concerns about these being replaced, altered significantly or refurbished, as it is acknowledged that they do not help the area's image, being iconic but ugly. Changing Hobson House however is seen as having a potential impact on the Gate Cinema, as could adding floors to Astley House on the upper floors of Broadwalk Court flats.

Uxbridge Street, with the long wall of rear shop service areas, is also raised as being unsightly and needs to be redesigned to work better for passers-by and occupiers. The Jameson Street substation

is raised as a query by many respondents. There is also a suggestion to continue Jameson Street through David Game House, and to form a gateway over Notting Hill Gate in the same location.

The quality of development on the north side of Notting Hill Gate is seen as poorer than the southern side, from Marks and Spencer to United House, the Book Warehouse building, plus the single storey projecting shop fronts leading to Bayswater Road – making this side a long stretch of unattractive buildings.

Recladding the existing buildings is widely recommended, using more uniform colours and simpler materials (rendered or repainted, 'glass balconies and non-grey gravel cladding'), and good lighting. There is a reference to Eastbourne Terrace, Paddington and Bolebec House, Lowndes Street as good examples of buildings being reclad, as is Recipease.

New building heights

The greatest issue raised in respondents' comments is around the height of a new landmark building at Newcombe House, and the opportunity to not replace it. A landmark building(s) does not need to be tall, e.g. max 10-11 storeys, but needs to be seen as good quality architecture. Where new storeys might be added to the existing buildings, the ground floor spaces could become public space as a trade-off to enliven the street.

Group of taller buildings

There is also great concern about a cluster of towers at Notting Hill Gate, as it is not seen as a central enough location to warrant it: Notting Hill Gate is not Croydon or Acton, or even Singapore, and it would be damaged by the scale of change suggested. Design quality concerns are about the use of steel and glass architecture, and whether this would be soulless or create a 'wow factor' – the definition of which is not stated. Charles House on Kensington High Street is referred to as a poor example of new development, as is 1 Hyde Park, but this latter scheme is also judged to be a good medium height high-density solution (a 10 storey 'ground scraper').

All the consultation comments received are contained in Appendix A-C. For privacy reasons, names and contact details and any personal references to individuals have been removed.

Appendix A: Leaflet and postal responses

A1 Leaflet as distributed and available online

A2 Table of postal responses

A3 Additional letters and comments

Appendix B: Online responses & Extracts from longer online responses

B1 Table of online responses

B2 Extracts of online submissions (for legibility)

Appendix C: Exhibition Panels and workshop notes and photos

C1 a-e Exhibition Panels as displayed and available online

C2 0-3 Notes from exhibition workshops

C3 Photographs from exhibition panels