

RBKC EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC FOR CORE STRATEGY JULY 2010

KENSINGTON SOCIETY: INTRODUCTION

Michael Bach: Introduction

VRARA: Chairman
Kensington Society: Chairman Planning, Transport & Environment
Chelsea Society: Council Member, Newsletter editor
London Forum: Chairman: Planning & Transport: London Plan EiP

DOE/ODPM: 1970-2005, but 1990-2005

Policy responsibility: substantially overhauling key positive planning PPGs/PPSs:
Lead: PPG3, PPG6/PPS6, PPG13, PPG20

Policy research, development, production, scrutiny (ie Select Committees), dissemination, enforcement (call-in and appeals) and monitoring.

KEY ISSUES THAT SHAPED OUR THINKING:

VRARA: problems – losses to housing – builders’ yard to 2 large hotels
Loss of post office
Subterranean developments
Expansion of private school – travel plan

KENSINGTON SOCIETY: OUR CONCERNS

Localism – we have a strong sense of “ownership” of the Core Strategy

We strongly support most of the Vision and policies in the Core Strategy, especially the “changes in direction” – we recognise the strong need for a change from the received wisdom that everything should give way to housing – things have gone too far and too fast in the last ten years – it is time to redress the balance.

The Problem

Losses of other uses to housing:

- **Cleansed out small-scale uses**
 - small offices – 30,000sqm lost in last 10 years = 10 years “need”!
 - post offices – Victoria Grove, Westbourne Grove, Kensington High Street, Stratford Road, St Ann’s Road
 - petrol stations – Chepstow Road, Earl’s Court Road – v few left!
 - pubs – the losses are greater than suggested and are continuing.

- **Targeted larger-scale non-residential uses:**
 - education – King’s College sites, Chelsea College of Art, schools
 - health – Brompton Hospital, Princess Louise, Collingham Gardens
 - hotels – De Vere Gardens 2 hotels/650+ rooms to 92 flats, Pembridge Square 60 bedrooms to just 1 house,
 - offices – Charles House, Kingsgate House
 - care homes – Vicarage Gate, Delves House, Sheppard Trust
 - Commonwealth Institute – large “enabling development” 60+ flats

Losses of housing:

- Deconversions

All this is a “one-way street’ – things have gone too far –the party is over!

The Solution:

This has led to recognition of the need for policies to maintain the supply of other uses:

- social and community uses: need for a sequential approach to “disposal”;
- offices: need to protect dwindling supply of small offices as well as keep large offices in the right locations, rather than allow large offices in the wrong locations
- hotels – need to keep what we have and improve the quality

Subterranean development: sustainability, drainage, flood risk

Risk from surface water and sewage flooding

- the need to require greater precautions to reduce surface water runoff – by retaining permeable surfaces (not just front gardens), retaining water on site
- requiring developers to protect themselves from flooding (eg basements)

Shopfronts – driving up quality

- use change to improve the streetscene to make our town centres more attractive and successful

What we want:

Keeping life Local = Localism

- to maintain and improve local shops and services that meet our day-to-day needs within easy walking distance – strong, vibrant neighbourhoods

Fostering Vitality:

- to retain the diversity and vitality that characterise this Borough – shops, museums, tourism and premises for small businesses
- to ensure that the social infrastructure is in place for the current and future population

Renewing the Legacy:

- to conserve and enhance our built environment heritage
- to drive up quality in our public realm and the street scene – including shopfronts

Diversity in Housing:

- to maintain and work to achieve more mixed and balanced communities
- to meet the needs of residents for a home – not to compete in the world market for investment opportunities or second/third/fourth homes – housing need should be considered in terms of the needs of residents for primary residence.