

**Notting Hill Gate**  
**Introductory Workshop**  
**Thursday 6 December 2012**

**AIMS OF WORKSHOP**

- Establish where we are now. Is the Core Strategy vision still relevant, have we got the key issues right (land uses, building form, transport/public realm)?
- Identify the direction we are moving in - what kind of place do we want Notting Hill Gate to be?
- Understand any concerns people have regarding the redevelopment of Notting Hill Gate.

**RUNNING ORDER**

- Session intro
- Project Intro
- Landowner introductions
- Town Centre background
- Discussion 1: Brainstorming Exercise
- Discussion 2: Review vision and key issues

**QUESTIONS USED TO GENERATE DISCUSSION**

**Discussion 1: brainstorming – what is the future of Notting Hill Gate?**

What do we like and dislike about Notting Hill Gate?

What can we make more of?

What is its role?

Who does it need to cater for?

What potential is there to enhance Notting Hill Gate?

How can it be made more distinctive?

What can be improved / addressed?

**Discussion 2: vision and key issues – have we got them right?**

Based on what you have discussed in the brainstorming session...

**Vision**

Does this still apply / is it still suitable?

Why / why not?

Anything else to add?

What issues to be addressed relating to each of these points?

How might we expand on these points?

**Key issues**

- Building form
- Land uses
- Transport & public realm

Do you agree that these are the key issues?

What would you add?

What are your main concerns relating to each of the issues?

## Table 1

### BRAINSTORMING SESSION

- Like:
  - Having 2 cinemas
  - The public art installations
  - Very good transport links including London Underground, Central line, Oxford tube
  - Retail – supermarkets, farmers' market
  - Cafes and restaurants
  - Cosmopolitan vibe
  - Vibrant
  - Nightlife – pubs and clubs
  
- Dislike:
  - Difficulty crossing road
  - Tired looking buildings
  - Newcombe house eyesore
  - Quality of architecture
  - Not enough public art
  - Retail offer – absence of useful shops (except Tylers)
  - Public realm – traffic dominated
  - Lots of activity but not necessarily interest around Notting Hill Gate
  
- General observations:
  - Trees have helped the microclimate – used to be very windy near Campden Hill Towers.
  - Impact of internet e.g. on antiques in Kensington Church Street.
  - Doctors surgery – needed.
  - Volume of pedestrians at the weekend going to Portobello market.
  - There aren't many hotels – boutique type.
  
- Make more of:
  - Retail, don't want a 'clone town'. Types of shops in Kensington Church Street – specialists – e.g. picture frames – useful. (Pembroke Road = trashy shops).
  - Public realm and public art.
  - People that pass through.
  
- Role:
  - Cater for a variety of groups and activities, not just cafe culture.
  - Diversity – not limited to 'high end' e.g. Kensington Church Street but also not restricted to 'cheap'.
  - Provide a complementary offer to Kensington High Street.
  
- Protect essential good services:
  - Pharmacies
  - Tylers
  - Fishmonger
  - Farmers' market
  - Chegworths – started in farmers' market
  
- Potential to enhance:
  - Architecture – ugly.
  - Small shops on north side are terrible.
  - Centre point / Marble Arch tower on the east-west route at cross roads.
  - Mixed reaction to a tall building.
  - Height – sensitive if too high but Kensington High Street is acceptable.
  - It is possible for tall buildings to not feel intrusive – dependant on how they address the street.
  - Public realm – decluttering like High Street Kensington = good.
  - Quality of shops. Avoid a clone street.

- More timeless buildings, not typical 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- A couple more floors wouldn't matter.
- New space for residential uses so that offices are retained.
- Mix of useful shops / amenities – post office, GP.

## REVIEW OF VISION & KEY ISSUES

### Key issues:

- Building form – less important
- Land uses – very important...
  - Retail – mix, independents
  - Office – loss to be resisted if possible, workers contribute to vibrancy and retail expenditure etc.
- Transport and public realm: traffic not an issue – we're in the middle of London. Underpass?

## Table 2

### BRAINSTORMING SESSION

- Retain farmers' market.
- Princeton site (i.e. Book Warehouse) – should be an iconic modern building.
- Coronet – restoration = good but they should finish off by restoring the 'guided god' (Jupiter?) – perhaps through % for art contribution.
- Address pedestrian congestion around tube.
- Be ambitious with proposals, do something big, iconic – e.g. shopping centre concept, use first floor level, piazza over road, reconfigure undercroft (Newcombe). Multilayered e.g. Barbican, Southbank. Could take more height on Newcombe or increase floorspace by going down, in order to finance other things.
- Iconic tube entrances (and station concourse – e.g. tiles / mosaics) – artist involvement.
- Tylers = much needed homeware store.
- 'Greening the Gate' – consider green walls, innovative cladding, especially high rises e.g. Athenium Hotel, Piccadilly.
- Notting Hill Gate is a city centre place, not suburban / out of town character
- Calm the traffic impact. But realistic that it is a very busy road, major route.
- Keep some open space, concerned public space will be lost.
- Pembridge Road caters for tourists – cheap, tacky shops.
- Bring quality shops back to Notting Hill Gate – need good management by landlords.
- Need a tourist centre with information and facilities.
- Small, unique local shops add to the character.
- Land use mix = key issue for Notting Hill Gate.
- Good practice = Marylebone high street.
- A destination – retain some of the tourists / visitors.
- Community facilities – a job centre with advisors with 'real' business experience.

## REVIEW OF VISION & KEY ISSUES

### The Vision:

- '...improved shops and restaurants that reflect the needs of the local catchment' – yes, still relevant. Address it creatively e.g. Jamie Oliver shop – quality design, attracts range of activities, increases dwell time.
- '...boutiques and premium quality retailers' – tradition of record shops, book shops, help save antiques shops. Different offer from Westfield – compete against. Can affordable retail be provided by landlords?
- '...major office location' – retain workplaces of some kind otherwise it becomes a dormitory. Variety of sizes and types. Smaller e.g. workshop / light industrial. Flexible workspaces.
- '...arts and cultural offer' – how is this reconciled with higher rents? – gentrification. Challenge = affordable & characterful vs quality (potentially pricing out unique independent shops). Literature connection important – should be specifically mentioned.
- '...pedestrian friendly' – slow the traffic, pavement cafes.

### Table 3

- Only a few shops serve local needs. Rent increases are driving out these retailers.
  - Book Warehouse / Waterstones
  - Tylers
  - Calders Chemists / Boots
- Concern there may only be fast food, Bureau de Change and Estate Agents in future.
- Local people like independent shops.
- Competition nearby: Westbourne Grove (boutiques) and Westfield (main stream) take up the clothes shopping demand.
- Couple of good pubs Swan and Ladbroke Arms
- The area is not short of places to eat.
- Shops at the western end find footfall difficult.
- Four sandwich shops all together.
- Tall blocks – plans to upgrade, support for removal of Newcombe House. Don't like architecture of Newcombe House and Campden Hill Towers.
- Problems seen now are the result of road widening in sixties.
- Substation on Newcombe House site will remain.
- Like Saturday Farmers' Market.
- Problem of separation of one side of road from the other, railings, need more crossings, stressful to cross the road, barriers across the road make it feel like a motorway.
- Vintage shops contribute to atmosphere and slightly seedy heritage.
- Street trees brought down by the scaffolding collapse going to be replaced during the course of this planting season i.e. by end Feb.
- Coronet Theatre – shame the upper floors are empty.
- Is there a requirement for a Doctors' surgery?

### Other comments received:

- Reaffirm Notting Hill Gate's role as a preferred office location  
A higher-order town centre and a major public transport interchange. This will mean retaining existing office floorspace – large, medium and small units - rather than converting it to housing. We should also be seeking more offices to make better use of this centre.
- Strengthening its role as a district centre  
Providing a full range of district centre functions for the north of the Borough – not trying to emulate centres higher in the town centre hierarchy or specialist centres such as Westbourne Grove. It needs a better balance of shops and services – fewer estate agents, bureaux de change and coffee shops. Managing the mix of shops is essential – this is a district centre, so should have a higher proportion of shops serving local needs, such as a good hardware shop as well as newsagents. Some of the rent levels may need to be adjusted to support a better range of shops. It needs to improve its offer to the local community. We must retain our cinemas and theatres which serve both the local community and the wider area.
- Strengthening its role a focus for the local community  
Within a 10-minute walk – by retaining or locating essential local services in a more central location, such as a new group GP practice, perhaps in conjunction with a pharmacy, retaining the post office and pubs.
- Reconfiguring the public realm to reunite both sides of the street  
Google Maps shows it as a dual carriageway – we need to break the mould and make it accessible and user-friendly for all users, who ultimately are on foot or even in a wheelchair. Facilities for cyclists also need to be improved to improve both safety and cycle parking. Apply the Council's streetscape principles – set up a sub-group to do the street audit (I will volunteer) and generate support from all stakeholders.
- Improve access to the underground station

Including raised junction treatments on the south side, better crossings to the north side and for the station to be made step-free to the District and Circle Line platforms.

- Improve the service areas/roads behind the shops.
- Continue to support the cluster of antique shops in Kensington Church Street.