

**Notting Hill Gate Workshop 2**  
**Land Use and Building Form**  
**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2013**

**AIMS OF WORKSHOP**

**To discuss:**

- The mix of uses that redevelopment must address, e.g. inclusion of housing, new retail, offices.
- What attracts people to Notting Hill? Is a new 'destination use' needed at Notting Hill Gate? What should be introduced as a 'destination use'?
- What scale of buildings might be appropriate in Notting Hill Gate? What are the main impacts of different building height options on the surrounding streets, spaces and historic environment?
- What building forms would improve the appearance of Notting Hill Gate and views from conservation areas?

**Comments on land uses**

- Any new land uses should not take away from the neighbourhood and the community. Introducing stores where people only browse and don't buy will not help.
- Notting Hill Gate should not just be an investment vehicle. It should be a community where people live. Need to bring back the community on both sides of Notting Hill Gate.
- What are the proportions of existing land uses in Notting Hill Gate?
- There should be 'destination uses' in Notting Hill Gate because of the high public transport accessibility. Saatchi Gallery on Kings Road is a positive example of a 'destination use'. Notting Hill Improvement Group spoke to Saatchi a long time ago about taking the space above McDonalds.
- A typical 'destination' does not usually work for the local community as it encourages people to come to the area and leave again.
  - Notting Hill Gate needs to provide for people who both live and want to shop there.
  - We don't want people coming through residential areas to use a 'destination'.
  - Notting Hill Gate has a destination and that is Portobello Road. We need to retain this by improving access to it. These links are important. We also need to make sure that the antiques shops of Kensington Church Street are retained.
  - Redevelopment has the potential to 'lose' what Kensington Church Street is about.
  - Notting Hill Arts Club, the Gate and Coronet are already destinations – do we need another?
  - Public realm improvements are crucial to improving the feel of the area, such as additional crossings and more seating. Helps with 'place-making'.

- Farmers' market is a destination use.
- Offices in Newcombe House create a destination by having a daytime activity which brings people to Notting Hill Gate every day.
- Shame to have lost W.H. Smith. Jamie Oliver is a destination, but is not for the community.
- Offices should be retained as the high PTAL (public transport accessibility level) implies that Notting Hill Gate is a suitable location for offices. It can cater for high trip generating uses and it adds vitality to the area with workers arriving in the morning and using the surrounding facilities for lunch etc.
- Key issue is the Government recommendation to convert offices to residential under permitted development rights. RBKC seeking an exemption from these proposals.
- Affordable housing and affordable retail are key issues
  - Think about moving the less viable shops down Kensington Church Street leaving Notting Hill Gate for those high end shops that can afford to be there.
  - Danger that local uses may not be able to afford Notting Hill Gate in future. Do we have an idea of what uses can afford Notting Hill Gate? Holland Park Avenue has desirable 'boutique' uses but can't afford Notting Hill Gate.
  - If we don't want an empty shell of investment properties, a better mix of housing tenures and options must be provided, including social/affordable rented and shared ownership/shared equity. And there is a need to keep a mix of housing; the affordable housing shouldn't go off-site. No more 'social cleansing'.
  - Any new housing should include social rent provision to encourage long term residents that will not just be investment properties or holiday lets
- New residential development needs to be architecturally linked to existing residential areas e.g. Victoria Gardens, Hillgate Village.
  - The character of Notting Hill Gate should reflect the character of the streets which surround it, i.e. the small terraces that exist behind the Notting Hill Gate frontage should be replicated and respected with any new residential development. We do not want to see big apartment buildings plonked on top of shops or offices. Notting Hill Gate has a character that we should respect and enhance. This will ensure continuity with its hinterland.
- The cost of installing step-free access at tube stations is a key issue. Could new entrances be installed in the ground floor of a new development?

## **Comments on building form - architectural model**

### **David Game House**

- Would accept some additional height if the quality to the rear of the building and integration with surroundings was improved.
- A taller block (7+2) creates a solid, overbearing 'wall' which overshadows NHG creating a poor pedestrian environment.

### **Newcombe House**

- Redevelopment should recognise the presence of the listed station.
- Improve the wind issue (microclimate).
- Scope to increase intensity of use. Could be some additional built form within the site. Could accommodate a farmers market and some public realm space within the site.
- Dislike the current tower.
- 30 storey test height used in model is too high and bulky. Will dominate the whole of Notting Hill Gate.
- Transport – step free access is important. Should be upgraded to provide an accessible interchange.
- Acceptability of height depends on design quality.

### **West block**

- Improve connection by widening alleyway. Service road has a poor quality environment.
- Potential 2 storey addition at United House. Ideas for visitor centre or covered piazza beneath the corner. But covered area not that successful at base of Campden Hill Tower so would this work?

### **Other**

- Dislike the current bus gyratory around Kensington Mall. Could buses wait near Starbucks instead of outside the post office and use Kensington Mall for community / farmers' market.
- Quality makes a huge difference for tall buildings. Key factors are: right place, right shape, right use.
- If the urban grain and integration with the surrounding area is addressed first, then there is scope to think about increasing height.
- The Gate Theatre is not good enough standard – doesn't pull in crowds, nor do cinemas, they are only a local attraction (unlike Curzon).
- Is there an option to build over the Circle and District line station?

## **Comments on building form - key views**

### **Notting Hill Gate – baseline information**

- Is TFL part of this exercise? Why not leave the trains and have an exciting market under the magnificent glam canopy. Now that would be exciting!
- What I want is to be assured that the SPD will protect affordable housing and affordable retail but this meeting appears to be ducking the key issue.
- The intention to place Affordable Housing off-site is destructive to the area.

### **Key Views: Campden Hill Road**

- Improve look of M&S Simply Food

### **Key views: Kensington Church Street**

- Get rid of block at end covered in sheeting
- Importance of mature trees
- Streetscape interest greatly enhanced by varying roof heights architectural style and materials and colour
- Get rid of tower block

### **Key views: Kensington Church Street**

- Stop end view of street, could be greatly improved by high quality replacement building
- Get rid of tower block
- Get rid of top floor development right hand red brick building

### **Key views: Notting Hill Gate, looking east**

- The balance of social/public housing, retail, affordable retail, commercial is key!
- Improve roofscape of Coronet – only listed building in Notting Hill Gate. Restoring its features would be wonderful and impact on the identity of Notting Hill Gate.

### **Key views: Notting Hill Gate, looking west**

- This is truly terrible. Retain Coronet and demolish everything else
- Demolish Czech Embassy and Newcombe House

### **Key views: Kensington Park Road**

- Remove tower block
- Improve shops in Pembridge Road
- Remove tower block in distance

### **Key views: Kensington Conservation Area**

- Get rid of tower block behind
- Get rid of tower block on left

### **Key views: Pembridge Gardens and Linden Gardens**

- Remove tower, demolish chequered block at end of vista and build something more attractive
- Remove modern block to rear

### **Key views: Kensington Gardens**

- Very nice