



Simon Roberts
WSP
Aldemary House
10-15 Queen Street
London EC4N 1TX

28th January 2021

Scheme: Osterley Place, Osterley Tesco site, Syon Lane, Brentford TW7 5NZ
Outline planning application with all matters reserved except access for the demolition of existing building and car park and erection of buildings to provide residential homes, plus flexible non-residential space comprising commercial, business and service space, and/or learning and non-residential institution space, and/or local community space, and/or public house/drinking establishment, and/or a mobility hub, along with associated access, bus turning, car and cycle parking, and landscaping arrangements.

Review Date: 18th January PM

Review Type: Chair's review

Panel: Jo van Heyningen (chair), Jane Briginshaw, David Ubaka

Agent: Simon Roberts, Matthew Mainwaring WSP

Client: Duncan Matthews, St Edward, Berkley group

Architect: Rebecca Taylor, Ian Fenn, Alec Borrill, JTP

Landscape Architect: Tom Baigent, John Wickham, Murdock Wickham

Dear Simon,

We were very pleased that Tesco Osterley has returned to the Hounslow Design Review panel for a chairs' review. We are still excited by the prospect of this important strategic site to accommodate a considerable amount of much needed housing. We commend you on the changes that have been made in response to comments made at the first DRP and we are on board with the project's aims. However, we still feel that the overall amount of residential accommodation is too great for the site and will affect the ability of the development to achieve its place making objectives. We would like further reassurance that all submission documents are explicit about site constraints and are robust

Hounslow Design Review Panel (HDRP)

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https://www.hounslow.gov.uk/info/20063/pre-application_advice/1943/hounslow_design_review_panel

enough to protect nearby heritage assets. We were disappointed not to see a more comprehensive masterplan showing both the sites and we urge both you and Hounslow to work towards a definition of net zero carbon that includes a very much more ambitious commitment to reduce both operational energy and embodied carbon on site.

Heart of Osterley

The panel was on board with the refined strategic objectives of the scheme as outlined in the presentation. We liked the 'Heart of Osterley' and your desire to create a hub for a mixed community here. You are much clearer now about the purpose of the 'Clearing' and its place in achieving a 'local place and a local heart' and forming a community hub. You have worked to develop a stronger character for both the buildings and the landscape and the drawings are evocative of the place you are trying to achieve. We note the variety of typologies contained in the proposal which could create strong marker points to a brand new settlement. However, we question how realistic these images are when you consider the sheer volume of people who will be using the place. The open spaces are too small for the scale of the scheme and the size of both the Meander and the Clearing feel minor in comparison to the height and bulk of buildings. Although the design of the Meander has improved significantly, its triangular form suggests it might be difficult to inhabit, when you consider the amount of people that will use it. We are concerned it will become a passing through place and not somewhere for people to pause and dwell.

For a scheme that will contain approximately 3,500 people there is a real need for a more substantial open space at the physical centre of the development. If the built form was reduced, there would be space to carve out a true heart of Osterley in the centre of the site.

Protecting Heritage

The scheme is more successful in how it responds to its sensitive southern and western edges. The step down in scale from blocks to town houses is a move that we support. However you need to be mindful of how you are protecting the broader heritage context, in particular the Gillette Tower and protected views from the Parks.

There is concern about the unremitting nature of development, characterised by ranks of buildings with sizeable footprints, and its impact on the wider townscape. The fly-through animation indicates that there isn't a balanced relationship between ground, built form and sky, which is necessary to prevent the development feeling overbearing to the human scale. Although we are supportive of how the design distinguishes between taller elements with lower linking blocks, we note that these blocks are themselves still high, and feel that there is still too much development for this strategy to be successful. Although you have highlighted a protected view from the Meander through to Gillette Tower, our advice is that the tower is not visible from most of the development. There is a need for more delicate townscape shaping that carves and shapes mass in response to important sight lines and protected assets.

It may be possible to redistribute density with a different deployment of height with clusters of slender towers – thus bringing it closer to LBH's original strategy. This may help to create more space at ground level and improve townscape legibility. However, we would still be concerned about the effect on Gillette and the view from the Parks so would require view testing.

Submission Documents

The panel reviewed all of the submission documents in the round are still not convinced the Masterplan, Design Code and Parameter Plans work coherently together. In order to ensure that Hounslow get what they need from the proposals the submission documents need to work much harder at outline level to secure the project's place-shaping objectives.

In particular we are concerned that the Parameter Plans do not have enough information about key constraints, particularly Heritage and Conservation and public realm. We feel it is not sufficient to have a heights plan supported by a separate views-testing document to protect the view to Gillette and other sensitive viewpoints. The parameter plans must explicitly show these constraints to properly protect these important assets. We are also very concerned that the maximum developable area as shown in the parameter plans does not describe how the extent of the building envelopes as described will deal with environmental factors such as wind, sunlight and daylight.

Sustainability & liveability

The updated Masterplan shows that efforts have been made to reduce the amount of single aspect units within the development. However, it is clear the parameter plans would result in development that features double banked buildings with long corridors, inevitably resulting in a higher proportion of single aspect dwellings than is desirable. Within the context of the pandemic, with families confined to flats with limited outlooks and risk of overheating we feel that it is unacceptable to have this many single aspect dwellings. We would urge you to look again at your masterplan and consider if smaller forms of buildings that are not connected are more appropriate.

We are concerned that sustainability is not a clear driver for the scheme. Although there have been improvements to the carbon reduction targets, which we understand will improve as the grid decarbonises, we are convinced that the aspirations should be higher from the outset and include commitments to reduce embodied as well as operational energy and minimise payment into the carbon off-set fund. The proposed energy centre indicated does not seem sufficient in size for a scheme that is serious about sustainability and we urge Hounslow to set the bar high in terms for major strategic developments schemes like this one.

Linked Schemes

The panel welcomes your joint commitment to the at-grade crossing over the A40 to replace the existing underpass and reiterates that the proposal should be contingent upon its delivery. However, the panel was disappointed that a deeper study of how the sites work together was missing from the presentation and submission documents. A comprehensive masterplan of how people will live and move between these two new large settlements is essential to evidence how you are meeting Hounslow's aims for the Great West Corridor.

Conclusion

In summary, the panel has fundamental concerns about the scheme and feels that many of the issues highlighted in the first review are still to be fully addressed. Although we applaud the work done to develop the sense of character of the architecture and landscape, we advise that you take a step back and reconsider the overall quantum of development. Both you and Hounslow should be aiming to have the highest aspirations for this very important site in terms of quality of

accommodation, public realm, sustainability and relationship to heritage, and we do not think the scheme delivers these in its current form.

Yours sincerely,



Panel Chair
Jo van Heyningen



Panel Manager
Amanda Rashid