

PD13291/SS/JA

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15 July 2024

The Secretary  
The Battersea Society  
c/o 29 Beauchamp Society  
London  
SW11 1PG**Planning Application Ref. 2022/1835**

Dear Sir / Madam,

**41-49 (BOOKERS) AND 49-59 BATTERSEA PARK ROAD  
APPLICATION REF. 2022/1835**

On behalf of our client, Watkin Jones Group (“WJG” / “Applicant”), we write in response to your letter addressed to the London Borough of Wandsworth’s (“LBW” / “the Council”) Planning Officer, Anastasia Bernard, dated June 2024, which we have been sent a copy of by LBW (**Appendix 1**). Your letter is in response to the consultation of the live planning application (ref. 2022/1835) at 41-49 Battersea Park Road (Booker Cash & Carry) and 49-59 Battersea Park Road (the former BMW Car Service Garage), London, SW8 5AL (hereafter referred to as “the Site”).

We thank the Battersea Society (“the Society”) for its continued engagement with the project since we started this journey in 2021. We are grateful for the Society’s positive comments on some of the revision made to the original application made in 2022.

Notwithstanding, your letter states that the Society remains strongly opposed to the development and objects to this application. Your letter then proceeds to set out the reasons for your objection. As you know, via the Applicant’s community engagement consultants, Kanda Consulting, the Applicant has proposed a meeting with the Society to discuss the concerns raised, however, this has been declined by the Society. Whilst the offer of a meeting remains on the table, we thought that it would also be helpful to comment on the reasons for your objection from the Applicant’s perspective.

**Background**

As you are aware, in May 2022 we submitted an application to the Council for the redevelopment of the Site. The current description of development is as follows:

*“Demolition of the existing building and construction of three new buildings (between 12 and 22 storeys in height), together comprising 55 residential units (Use Class C3) and Student Accommodation comprising 762 student bedrooms (Sui Generis) along with 495sqm (GIA) flexible Commercial, Business and Service (Use Class E) and/or Local Community and Learning (Class F) floorspace with associated works including hard and soft landscaping, car parking, new vehicular access/servicing, and other ancillary works.”*

Following careful review of the comments and responses raised during the statutory consultation, a series of amendments were proposed by the Applicant. The amendments were presented to a third Design Review Panel meeting in February 2023, followed by a LBW Design Workshop in March 2023.

Whilst the principles of the amendments were supported by LBW and the Design Review Panel, the submission of amended drawings and documents was stalled as a result of ongoing economic pressures until April 2024. These amendments have now been submitted and are currently subject to public consultation.

## Responses to matters raised by the Society

We comment on the matters raised by the Society in order they appear in your letter.

### Housing Need

We endorse the Society's comments that there is a housing need and as the Society will be aware, Purpose-Built Student Accommodation ("PBSA") is a housing tenure that is supported in the London Plan (Policy H15 / paragraph 4.15.1 / paragraph 4.15.2) and Local Plan (Policy LP28 / paragraph 17.35). The London Plan (paragraph 4.1.9) states that PBSA contributes towards housing needs at a ratio of 2.5 beds to 1 home. The PBSA therefore delivers the equivalent of 305 homes, not to mention that the provision of purpose-built accommodation will reduce pressure on the private rented sector in the Borough and encourage the return of HMOs to family housing. This indirect benefit is also recognised by national planning guidance. The proposals now benefit from three supportive Universities – most recently from the London School of Economics.

Combined with the 55 affordable dwellings, the development would deliver the equivalent of 360 homes, exceeding the 307 homes under the extant permission granted in 2019 (ref. 2015/6813) and directly contributing to the LBW Housing Land Supply figures. We note that whilst the extant planning permission had approval for a traditional residential scheme alongside a mix of commercial uses, this permission is not viable to develop which is why Watkin Jones is now investing in this Site.

In addition to providing more homes than the extant permission, the proposed development provides affordable housing that meets those tenures in greatest need. Indeed, whilst the extant permission offered 77 affordable units, just 20 were affordable rented units, with the remaining being intermediate shared ownership units. Furthermore, the extant permission offered a smaller number of family sized units than currently being proposed. The proposed development provides 55 affordable homes of which 27 are Social Rent and 28 are London Living Rent. A comparison between the two schemes is outlined in **Figure 1** below and which we consider the proposed development provides a betterment overall serving those in greatest need. In addition, we also note that the proposed development would deliver 171 much needed affordable student bedrooms.

More detail on this is included in the submitted Planning Statement and demonstrates that the application is not "*dismissive of the need for housing*".

**Figure 1: Proposed vs Extant Affordable Housing Provision**

Provision	Proposed Scheme	Extant Permission
<b>Total Affordable Units</b>	55 units	77 units
<b>Social Rent</b>	49% (27 units)	0%
<b>Affordable Rent</b>	0%	26% (20 units)
<b>London Living Rent</b>	51% (28 units)	0%
<b>Shared Ownership</b>	0%	74% (57 units)
<b>Family Sized Units (3+ Bed)</b>	29% (16 units)	5% (4 units)

### The Development in its context

We note your comment that the submission does not show the development in its wider context, however, we kindly direct you to the Visual Assessment within Section 10 of the Heritage, Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment submitted as

part of the application. This presents the scheme in the context of its wider surroundings, with the views assessed having been discussed and agreed with the Local Planning Authority.

#### New Mansion Square

We can reassure you that the impact of the proposed development on New Mansion Square has been considered in the technical assessment of the application. This includes an assessment of impacts of overlooking, privacy and daylight, sunlight and overshadowing. With regards to overlooking and privacy, the separation distances between Building 3 and New Mansion Square represents a betterment on the extant permission and whilst Building 3 is slightly taller than the corresponding building approved under the extant permission, the residual daylight, sunlight and overshadowing impacts are still considered acceptable in a high-density urban environment. This is set out in the assessment prepared by Point2Surveyors.

We would note that the Council has commissioned an independent review of the daylight, sunlight and overshadowing assessment submitted by the Applicant.

With regards to dialogue with Peabody, the Applicant has been in dialogue for over two years and has resultantly made some significant changes to the proposals. We maintain contact and do not anticipate any objection from Peabody in respect of the current proposals.

#### Principle of Student Accommodation

We acknowledge your concerns relating to the need for PBSA and the potential overconcentration of PBSA in the local area.

Firstly, in relation to PBSA need, the Applicant is a leading operator of PBSA in the UK and has undertaken extensive market assessment which concluded that there is indeed a strong need for PBSA. The Student Demand Assessment submitted as part of the application expands upon the current levels of demand for PBSA in London, which is reinforced by letters of support by Higher Education Institutions.

In terms of over-concentration of PBSA uses, please note that Appendix 3.0 of the Planning Statement sets out the assessment of student housing concentration. The results of this assessment is within the Wandsworth administrative area of the Vauxhall Nine Elms Battersea ("VNEB") Opportunity Area, student homes represent just 4.3% of the total residential homes granted since 2012 – the date that the VNEB Opportunity Area Planning Framework was published. Our Planning Statement (Appendix 3.0) also includes an assessment of overconcentration against the criteria in the most recent Wandsworth Local Plan and further concludes that the grant of planning permission for PBSA on the Site would not lead to an over-concentration of such uses. This takes into account Palmerstone Court – the first and only PBSA scheme in the Borough to date.

#### BREEAM Rating

We appreciate your queries regarding the BREEAM level that is being targeted. The Applicant has been exploring ways to deliver a highly sustainable scheme, and as you reference, the proposal is to achieve 'outstanding' for the PBSA. Whilst the Applicant has the same aspirations for the commercial units this cannot be confirmed until an occupier is secured for the units since several of the credits are reliant on the end occupier.

#### Traffic Planning

In relation to comments on Sleaford Street, we can confirm that the road will not be any narrower than as existing, with the public footway to be re-provided. A turning point is provided for vans at the southern end of the site. It should also be noted that a footway is provided on the eastern side of Sleaford Street and it is intended that this will be adopted for public highway.

The proposed location of disabled parking has been discussed throughout the pre-application and at Design Review Panel and is born out of a desire to create a high quality and safe public realm for use by future residents of the Site, as well as the surrounding community, in the centre of the Site. As such, to adapt for these other objectives, the proposal is to provide

the disabled parking along Sleaford Street (as part of existing highway infrastructure) to allow the public realm and play space provision to be maximised and secured as a safe environment in the centre of the Site.

The anticipated delivery and servicing trips have been determined based on TRICS data, which is a database of surveyed sites. Following consultation with TfL, a higher delivery and servicing trip profile has also been used for residential trips, based on TfL data. With regards to student housing and the demand for fast-food deliveries, these will mainly be undertaken by smaller vehicles, including bicycles (including electric) and mopeds. This is outlined and acknowledged in the Delivery and Servicing Plan, with a marked area between Blocks C and D. It should also be noted that the large majority of servicing movements occur outside of the network peak periods. This position will be further assessed by the Council and TfL through the consultation process.

#### Design Review Panel

Firstly, we would like to assure you that we agree that the Design Review Panel is a vital part of assessing design proposals, which the Applicant has been entirely supportive of throughout the formation of the current proposals. We also appreciate that you may not have been made aware that a further a further DRP was held on 6 February 2023 to discuss the current design proposals (as outlined earlier in this letter). Moreover, a follow-up design workshop was undertaken with LBW design officers before the scheme was finalised for re-submission.

The conclusions of the 2023 DRP were positive with regard to design teams' response to feedback and the resultant evolution of the scheme, for which the formal DRP response can be found at **Appendix 2**. Since the meeting, there have been no substantive changes to the scheme and the comments are therefore considered to be directly relevant to the current proposals.

#### **Closing**

We trust that this letter clarifies your queries, however, we would welcome arranging a meeting to discuss further if it would be useful. Should you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact Sam Stackhouse ([sam.stackhouse@montagu-evans.co.uk](mailto:sam.stackhouse@montagu-evans.co.uk) / 07826 947 254) or James Ainsworth ([james.ainsworth@montagu-evans.co.uk](mailto:james.ainsworth@montagu-evans.co.uk) / 07901 791 800) at this office.

Yours faithfully



**Montagu Evans LLP**

# **APPENDIX 1 - BATTERSEA SOCIETY CONSULTATION RESPONSE**



Reply to: [planning@batterseasociety.org.uk](mailto:planning@batterseasociety.org.uk)

6 June 2024

Anastasia Bernard  
Planning Department  
Wandsworth Town Hall  
London SW18 1DA

Dear Ms Bernard

### **Booker and BMW sites, 2022/1835 revised**

While we welcome and acknowledge the small changes made to the plans, the Battersea Society remains strongly opposed to the development and objects to this application. The plans remain an unneighbourly over development of the site with a heavy concentration of small rooms for students rather than the housing which is so much needed. The paperwork appears to concentrate on the way that the one building directly on Battersea Park Road relates to the Viridian building and to the Battersea Power Station development to the north rather than showing the whole development in a wider context as a major development on the south side of Battersea Park Road.

### *New Mansion House Square*

This development, built and partially occupied in January 2024 is one key example of the way in which the paperwork diminishes the impact of their development on its neighbours to the south. It is referred to throughout as 'Phase 4A. We cannot find any reference to recent dialogue with Peabody. In its analysis of the surrounding area the Planning Statement says:

“To the south, the Site is bound by a railway line, beyond which lies a mixture of industrial units associated with New Covent Garden Market. To the west, the Site is bound immediately by Sleaford Street, beyond which lies a mixture of existing residential development fronting Battersea Park Road and construction ongoing adjacent to the railway and

Battersea Power Station Phase 4: 2.12 The Battersea Power Station (BPS) development occupies all the land to the north of Battersea Park Road. Immediately across Battersea Park Road and to the north of the Site is Phase 4”

The Daylight and Sunlight report appears to blame balconies at New Mansion Square on poorer levels of daylight and to suggest that residents knew they would be overshadowed and moved in on this understanding.

### *Student Housing*

The paperwork in support of this change is unconvincing and incomplete. It does not include a proper review of the many student residences around Vauxhall and Albert Embankment, and makes little reference to the Palmerston Court student development just along Battersea Park Road to the west. It includes a long list of colleges within London but provides no evidence about volumes of demand for student housing in the area. It makes no reference to concerns about falling student rolls and to the increasing restrictions on visas for overseas students. On the other hand, it is almost arrogantly dismissive of the need for housing within Wandsworth, a point which I am sure that the Council will review in greater detail as the application process continues.

#### *BREEAM rating*

We cannot understand why only the student accommodation is targeting 'Outstanding' while the rest is merely Excellent. We trust the applicant will think again.

#### *Traffic Planning*

The site is bounded by the heavily trafficked New Covent Garden Market access road to the east and by Sleaford Street to the west. This latter is a narrow road with limited turning space and is a cul-de-sac ending at the carparking area of New Mansion Square. It can be expected to become increasingly busy with domestic traffic. Even if this were not the case, it is inconsiderate for the applicant to take up space on this public road for blue badge parking and delivery drop offs rather than provide for these on site.

Any estimate of deliveries based on 2014 surveys is totally inadequate as deliveries have increased exponentially over the past 10 years. Approval of 2015/6813 in March 2019 for a residential scheme on this site pre-dates Covid which accelerated the move towards home deliveries. We were told by Urbanest, developers of Palmerston Court and other student housing, that they experience high demand for delivery space, including for fast food deliveries. The details they give in their Delivery and Servicing Plan, application 2024/1874, bear this out and paints a very different picture. This emphasises the importance of the applicant providing space on site for delivery and turning.

#### *Design Review Panel*

The most recent review in 2022 remained critical of elements of the design. We are disappointed that there has not been a review of these latest plans.

#### *In conclusion*

We very much hope that this application will be refused in its current form. In the (hopefully) unlikely event of student housing being approved we would wish there to be a further review of the surrounding landscaping and provision of play areas for children.

Yours sincerely

*Chair, Planning Committee, Battersea Society*

## **APPENDIX 2 – 2023 DRP RESPONSE**



**Wandsworth  
Design Review Panel  
C/o Wandsworth Council**

Environment and Community Services  
Department  
The Town Hall  
Wandsworth High Street  
London SW18 2PU

Please ask for/reply to:  
Telephone: 020 8871 6000  
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Our ref: ECS/  
Your ref:  
Date: 20 February 2023

Sam Stackhouse  
Montagu Evans LLP  
70 St Mary Axe  
London  
EC3A 8BE

Dear Sam,

**Wandsworth Design Review Panel – DRP 3:  
Booker BMW site, 41-49 and 49-59 Battersea Park Road, SW8 5AL**

The Panel is grateful to you and your development team for submitting your proposal to the Wandsworth Design Review Panel (WDRP) for a third design review on 6 February 2023. The DRP was held online on this occasion and the Panel provided feedback in a virtual open session with the applicant present to hear the Panel’s views. We thank the applicant team and, in particular the architects, Glen Howells, for a clear and comprehensive presentation. As a formal planning application has been submitted, this letter will be uploaded to the application website.

As context, the site lies on the western end of the Vauxhall Nine Elms Battersea (VNEB) opportunity area and has an area of 0.81ha. The site falls within a built-up area, with the majority of it covered by building footprint. There are six mature trees at the front of the site. These are all subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and comprise a mix of four London Plane and two Lime Trees.

The northern part of the site fronting Battersea Park Road is currently occupied by Booker Cash & Carry which is a retail warehouse club totalling 3,209m<sup>2</sup> (GIA). The southern part of the site adjacent to the railway line is occupied by a BMW service centre totalling 1,224m<sup>2</sup> (GIA) of a Sui-Generis use class. The BMW maintenance garage is accessed by the New Covent Garden Market Access Road, which is the only point of access.

The application ref. 2022/1835 is for the following: “Demolition of the existing building and construction of three new buildings (between 15 and 22 storeys in height), together comprising 81 residential units (Use Class C3) and Student Accommodation comprising 779 student bedrooms (Sui Generis) along with 515sqm (GIA) flexible Commercial, Business and Service (Use Class E) and/or Local Community and Learning (Class F) floorspace with associated works including hard and soft landscaping, car parking, new vehicular access/servicing, and other ancillary works”.

## **General Principles**

The Panel is pleased to see the updated proposals for the three plots in particular on issues of sustainability, landscape and design response. Having reviewed the scheme twice before, we feel invested in ensuring that high-quality and sustainable design is achieved, and we appreciate the team’s approach to addressing the issues raised by the Panel in the previous reviews and very much welcome the level of care and engagement demonstrated since work commenced.

- We are pleased the overarching vision for the three blocks has been retained as well as the choice of using high-quality pre-cast for the buildings.
- We welcome the new vision for the landscape strategy, and especially applaud retaining the mature trees on Battersea Park Road. We encourage the developer to ensure that the landscaping scheme is managed and maintained to an appropriate standard.

The detailed comments of the Panel have been collated as follows under the three main headings of the review:

## **Sustainability**

We are pleased with the integrated approach for sustainability and welcome the team following through many aspects raised at the last review.

- In terms of mechanical cooling, we welcome how this has been designed out and omitted from the majority of the accommodation. However, having developed an integrated façade design approach for this we urge the team commit to eliminating it from all the buildings.
- As for sitewide carbon improvement over Part L 2021, achieving 50% for the residential is in line with the new GLA requirements and is welcomed, but we encourage the team to try and achieve the same for the student accommodation – given the same fabric details have been proposed. The embedded carbon calculation should include all elements on the site, not just the structure. Particularly ensure the materiality for the public realm is in line with the sustainability strategy adopted.
- In regard to the wind analysis undertaken, in order to fully understand the impact on people and vegetation we suggest further testing balconies at upper floors. As some are at the corner, these could need some element of protection. Equally ensure the wind movement in between Plot 1 and Plot 2 in proximity to the entrances is not creating unpleasant conditions.
- On the amenity levels, we recommend all additional elements such as the external air-source heat pumps are located and designed in from the onset and do not appear later on as an afterthought or where it could become a noise nuisance. Plan in for maintenance so that all technical equipment as well as PVs on roofs or elsewhere is accessed easily without disruption for landscape and residents.
- The new location for the plant equipment within each block is welcomed but these need to be shown in the drawings.

- As part of the landscape strategy, we welcome the approach that facilitates tree canopies growing together as they mature to provide continuous shade for the main pedestrian routes in anticipation of climate change adaptation.
- We encourage developing a robust water strategy for the site and invest into a water recycling system for irrigation of the landscape.
- In Plot 1, we note there is a need for a second core to address the new fire regulations and we are comfortable with the additional length to the building to accommodate this.

### **Landscape and Public Realm**

- We are pleased that the landscape is now responding in a much more convincing way to the site and welcome the remodelling of Plot 1 to retain the protected trees. We support the proposal to design the planting close to the base of the buildings, but note the technical difficulties that this might bring, especially in terms of maintenance at a later stage when vents or other plant may need to be accessed. We therefore strongly encourage that the collaboration between the architects and landscape teams is retained up to delivery so that the construction requirements can be coordinated, and the landscape preserved and safeguarded in the long run.
- Equally, given the proximity of the mature trees to the blocks, routes for construction vehicles and the impact of cranes on site needs to be assessed and managed.
- We strongly encourage the team to prepare the management and maintenance strategy as stewarding the site in perpetuity is a way to enable the new community to thrive and strengthen its sense of belonging. We recommend compliance with the Public London Charter for the management of privately owned public space.
- As for The Glade, in the heart of the site, we recommend that the space is designed to be fully inclusive, safe and comfortable for young teenage girls as well as for students and children. How these groups coexist could be further articulated. We also suggest creating a stronger narrative for the landscaping by unravelling the underlying story of the ancient river that once flowed under the site. This could enrich the character of the place and provide further inspiration for the landscape.
- Creating biodiverse planting on rooftops is positive, but we are concerned that the selection of species is appropriate for the environmental conditions experienced at such high levels. As for the grouping of planting, select a mixture of both young and mature trees and plants that work well together and benefit from each other. We recommend a strong replacement strategy.
- In Plot 1 we are not convinced by the service and delivery arrangement and suggest that this should be reviewed, including how it is managed.

### **Design Response**


- We welcome the improvements and positive changes to the design. We are particularly pleased with the changes to Plot 1 which now feels more appropriate in scale, height and arrangement on the site.
- The dark glazed band wrapping around Plots 2 & 3 at the amenity level is slightly unconvincing and needs further resolution.

### **Moving Forward**

We are very pleased how the scheme has evolved and applaud the applicant and client through their team of consultants for responding positively to the officer's and Panel's feedback.

The revised vision and strategies presented for the landscape have transformed the scheme and promise a high-quality development. Continuity through the delivery stage is important and for that reason we would encourage the client to engage the team as the scheme proceeds.

Yours sincerely



**Tim Quick**  
Director, Formation Architects  
Chair, Wandsworth Design Review Panel

**Panel Members**  
Chris Twinn                      Principal, Twinn Sustainability Innovation  
Deborah Nagan                    Landscape Architect  
Marcus Claridge                   Director, Claridge Architects

**Panel Admin**  
Barry Sellers                      Principal Planner and Panel Secretary  
Daniela Lucchese                Senior Urban Designer and Panel Coordinator

**Applicant Team**  
Ben Wrighton                    Watkin Jones  
Simon Lovell                      Watkin Jones  
Sandeep Shambi                 Glen Howells Architects  
Robert King                      Glen Howells Architects  
Alex Smith                        Glen Howells Architects  
Sally Itani                         Glen Howells Architects  
David Reid                         Glen Howells Architects  
Hannah Vincent                Planit-IE  
James King                        Planit-IE  
Bernie Carr                        Atelier Ten  
Zac Vandevor                    Atelier Ten  
Joseph Lazell                    Atelier Ten  
Simon Marks                      Montagu Evans

**Attendees (invited to observe)**  
Mark Hunter                      Head of Strategic Developments  
Janet Ferguson                   Planning Manager  
Stephen Hissett                   Principal Planner  
Sharon Molloy                    Principal Urban Design Officer

Cllr Tony Belton