

LB Hounslow Consultation on Ballymore High Street Development

Those presenting/answering:

Cllr Colin Ellar (CE), portfolio in Environment, deputy leader to council
Andrew Dakers (AD) - Brentford High Street Steering Group (BHSSG)
Owain Nedin (ON) - Brentford Dock
Suzie Betlem (SB) - Brentford Chamber of Commerce
Denis Browne (DB) – Brentford Community Council
Cathy Callagher (CG), Assistant Director Regulatory & Development Services LB Hounslow
Sunny Desai (SD) – Environment Officer, responsible for this application
Heather Cheesbrough (HC) - Assistant Director Strategic Planning, Regeneration and Economic Development at London Borough of Hounslow (recently appointed)
David Laycock (DL) - Ballymore
Paul Monaghan (PM) – AHMM Ltd (architects for block C)
Patricia Huertas (PH) – Town Centre Manager for Brentford and Hounslow
Marcus ? (M) – Glenn Howells Design (Architects for block K)
Luke Emmerton (LE) – DP9 (planning for Ballymore)

Present as observers: Mary Macleod MP, Cllr Barbara Reid, Cllr Robert Oulds, Cllr Theo Dennison, Cllr Ruth Cadbury, Cllr Matt Harmer, Cllr Steve Curran, Chris Calvi-Freeman, various officials from LB Hounslow, and around 250 residents.

CE welcomed us all, as chair of the meeting, explained people would give short speech followed by a Q&A.

SD introduced the scheme:

Hybrid application i.e. phase one in detail plus rest in outline. Demolition/retention of some buildings. Maximum of 929 residential units with retail, commercial including works to St Lawrence, junction improvements and more. 11 development blocks over the site, 2-5 stories over High street, 5-7 over the middle part and 2 10 story buildings. Council have been working with developers to address issues raised by residents so far.

DL

Ballymore is a committed landowner and developer, it maintains all its own sites and is in it for the long term, is not going to build and run. Ballymore, despite rumours to the contrary has had one of its best years ever; it understands re-generation and retail. Look at its portfolio of developments. Council committed to regeneration and land assembly. The overall Masterplan has been borne out of community consultation, following on from the joint Prince's Foundation consultation with BHSSG. We are still listening and still making changes. Ballymore's commitment is long term. We think the vision is a strong one and the partners involved are ready and able. We have 3 of the highest quality of architects working on it. We want to start demolishing early 2014.

PM

4 initial aims to include in the scheme are low heights, a variety of mix, small shop fronts, clear public/private hierarchy
The public will be able to walk around all of the waterside which is currently mostly not available.
Keep some historical buildings

Various photos of the dramatic warehouses that existed on Brentford Dock.

Looked at English Heritage assessment of buildings in Brentford, as well as the BHSSG Community Vision.

Did their own survey of all different historical buildings on site, looking at minimum/maximum of buildings worth keeping.

Keeping St Lawrence's, 131-4 High Street and Motorwise, Post office and Nat West all on high street.

The high street parade of shops is going.

Off the front the 3 storeys with high pitched roof is being used and adapted, Brewery Tap staying, as is the white building on Catherine Wheel Road plus a few more.

Regarding the WK building opposite Morrisons: the much need road widening at this busy junction will necessitate eating into the front of the WK building so despite initially hoping to keep it the WK building is going.

We are keeping nearly twice as many buildings as Prince's Trust assessment did.

The old high street was packed quite densely.

Shop fronts are not historical, we want each one to have its own character.

The gaps in high street will go.

Our first consultation was back in Sep 2011

Out of consultations over the first scheme came issues with height and public space.

We aligned lanes so could see waterside from high street.

There were three tall buildings, now only 2 with a couple of floors shorter.

Application went in.

Varying building heights to create diversity

Articulation of massing creates more prominent and easy access to public open space

Increased width of waterside walk.

increased parking provision, added boat parking.

Elevation on high street has been changed, breaking it down into 3 apparently different buildings

One part of the building now sticks forward opposite Magistrate's Court to help accentuate the market place.

Have tried to make similar differences to the waterside elevation.

Have added a sports pitch to the roof of Plot G (car park).

GLA like the architecture and height.

ON – see speech as separate pdf

<http://www.brentfordtw8.com/default.asp?section=info&page=ballymoreBrentfordDock.pdf>

DB

Been asking for 25 years for a decent high street. 2/3 of scheme will be 2 bed or less. Need range of sizes and affordability. Need a place that is good for children, but development relies on balconies for outside space, need sheltered housing and similar for the elderly, we need somewhere that will be lively in evening, need Watermans in centre of everything, more positive plans for river use that has come to pass, with loss of scale and high roof lines the familiar character of the high street will be lost. Need a mix of buildings and human scale, old shops had narrow frontages of different designs, but even these new amended frontages are still twice as wide as old frontages so more dominant. Pleased to see Market square has been kept; what will fit comfortably in the scheme?

We need a place for shoppers, we need housing, we don't need too high a density. There are 1 million square feet in this development. Parking is going to be a premium which will affect nearby residents. No proposals for improving bus services, bus lay bys, cycle lanes not

all integrated. Need decent transport to make shops accessible. Brentford used to be major focal point and an attraction in itself, we still have Syon and Kew and we need to complement them to make this town a focal point for businesses. Must be built well and more modestly. And by someone who will stay and look after it.

SB

See speech summary at <http://www.brentfordchamber.org/index.php/our-contribution-to-consultation-on-ballymore-development>

AD

See speech summary at <http://www.coactivate.org/projects/brentfordhighstreet/presentation-to-the-public-meeting-on-wednesday-21-november>

Q&A session (comments from floor denoted by "Q"):

Q Paul Slattery: lived here for 33 years, Ballymore have had 5 years so far. Don't like it. [applause] nothing good. Far too massive, poor architecture, too close to high street. You couldn't call high street pretty but at least it has broad pavement and trees. It feels large but the tall buildings will make it seem smaller. Narrowing space for pedestrians. Community Vision seems to have been binned. Back then council had agreed 4 stories. Architecture of brutalist school. Ugly and aggressive, reminds me of Feltham development back in 70s. Are we to make the same mistakes here Not enough space. Reminds me of Victorian ghettos that used to exist in Brentford in terms of density. We don't need any more small flats, need family accommodation. Where's the new school, doctor, extra room at West Middlesex Hospital? Vision for retail at odds with what we want. We don't need usual high street shops. Riverside cafe culture is not going to work in Brentford. It doesn't at Ferry Quays. How many cafes do we need? We need to consider their history. After eviction of Ridgeway Marina, Ballymore removed services so buildings could not be used in future so turned into blighted area. These businesses could have continued thriving. Ballymore bought land at an expensive price and wants to get it back with cheap flats. We have one chance to get it right and this is not it. We want world class development. [hearty applause]

Q Jo Francis

It's too high, too dense, no houses. What we want is a modern version of the Butts that people want to live in. Please don't let it happen.

Q David Pavett, Isleworth (was on IBAC)

Design and access – supposed to be relatively brief and non technical to help public. About 20 files so informational problem helping public to understand the complicated documents
Density – important indicator; document states 194 homes per ha which is 14% above range from London plan. Density calculations simply wrong, using wrong criteria. Vertically mixed development so different calculations so densities are wrong. Not interpreting London plan correctly.

Family housing – normally 3 beds or more. Less than 10% here. London plan suggests 30-38%.

CG design and access – executive summary

density – haven't assessed and will clarify calculations

family housing – agree, need in Hounslow for large houses. Will evaluate mix of tenure, type and affordability

Q Mary Macleod, MP

Has had a lot of correspondence on this topic, summarised as Brentford residents know we only have one chance and we do care. Number of correspondents and those here tonight show how much people want to get it right. Plea to council that there is real transparency and engagement with community over this application. People want to know what is happening. Mayor's OLF (Outer London Fund) went towards regeneration. How will that be used as part of this?

Q Paul

Please clarify relations/guidelines between Ballymore and architects. Who makes the decisions?

Q recently moved into Brentford

nobody's mentioned Johnson's Island. Hanger will be replaced by a 10 storey block.

No one has mentioned historic boatyard [rounds of applause and cheers]

Where's the sense in having a 10 storey block next to boatyard.

Our library should be brought into town centre because library is the hub of community and turn existing library into a local history museum.

Don't like the flats. [applause]

CG: consultation is ongoing, the application will go to area forum when have looked at amendments; will list concerns; planning will negotiate and then will make recommendation to planning committee;

PH: OLF over last 18 months consist of 1.3 million secured for Brentford, some spent on markets over last year as well as a couple of shop front improvements. £1million capital investment remaining to be spent by March 2014 to introduce connectivity between Great West Road and High Street. Looking at market place, working with 5 local landowners including GLA, Design for London. There will be a public consultation Dec/Jan

DL

Ambitious improvements to the high street. 6-10m wide on pavements. Have tried to set back to get generous pavements.

We are the ones paying architects, have carefully chosen ones with proven track record and integrity. There is often a pull/push between developer and architecture.

density brief borne out of Princes Foundation workshop. Heights then not dissimilar to present ones.

Ben Bolgar (Prince' Foundation) was not aware of amendments when he made quoted comments.

Johnsons' Island nothing to do with Ballymore

continued use of boatyard part of original brief. No residential facing onto boatyard and nearest tall building has design code to prevent balconies overlooking boatyard.

View from the bridge – design code demands surrounding buildings are set back to keep that view in both directions

Mix – no point in building flats that can't sell, discussion with GLA and council. GLA happy with mix and density. Reflection of character and vision. Mix of leisure and retail can work here. The development will be noisy with evening life so it is not a good location for children.

Q Sarah Poland, lived here 25 years

Disconnect – totally different from everything we've discussed in previous meetings/consultations. Ballymore presentation showed photos of beautiful buildings with nooks and crannies and interesting features and then come up with this! [applause] hasn't understood Brentford at all. Don't want green mosaic on walls. We want wood, stone, masonry, bits of metal, window frames.

Q Caroline Gilbert 3 years on Brentford Dock

St Lawrence's Church – it's the oldest building in Brentford, oldest sacred space, should be open access for people living here, not just for people who can afford to go to gym. Should be accessible to ordinary people without being charged vast expense. Graveyard round back has small buildings added onto it and it should be kept as a little park [applause]

Q Paul Velluet architect live/work Twickenham, 4 generation of family from Plough yard connections between heritage photos and results used.

Heritage section of planning documents omit 5 key policies from the Mayor's London Plan relating to heritage issues, local character and tall buildings, omits that only 10 years ago, english heritage recommended approval of whole area as conservation area heritage study makes no reference to height or density of development. Absolutely fundamental to development

PM: AHMM has been going 23 year, very difficult, don't like CGI pictures as don't show texture and detail, prefer using larger scale model; maybe 25 architects working on all these; idea is that these buildings have come from Brentford's past, have been influenced by warehouse type details. Details are of very highest quality. Look at Ballymore's other developments who pay high attention to quality. Founder of Ballymore was bricklayer. There are metal windows, bricks, stone, shopfronts, different scale.

Grand Designs (TV programme) – sometimes fantastic sometimes horrible and we wouldn't agree on which is which. Mixed opinions. We will carry on working with people. Would like to give tour of buildings we've developed and how we've changed people's lives.

DL:

St Lawrence is a grade II listed building, has been dilapidated for 35 years. Something needs to be done. It will be regenerated at a substantial cost so handing it over with no income is simply not practical. Need to give people access so people can view inside.

M

Absolutely passionate about this product. Lots of details in buildings, some hard to access. Intention is to open up green space. One of white buildings on model [behind St Lawrence's] should have been removed to make it more accessible. Idea is to restore church to former glory. Need to restore it sensitively such that if it changes hands in the future it can be altered. Amenities for all changes on park. Would like to make it a route through but access issues. Part of diversity across the site. Paul has described street scenes with lots of diversity and character. Want to make it all Brentford.

DL: private open space taken seriously, all flats have decent usable balconies. Space has to be usable. All roofs are accessible either to block community or private belonging to owners below. Play proposals are in churchyard (public) and in private areas.

LE:

We are working with English Heritage and they have been very positive. Grateful for comments from Paul Veluet. Team who developed heritage statement aren't here today but will pass comments on.

CG: need to do full heritage assessment and have own conservation design team who will meet and assess.

Q Chris – Brentford Dock for 25 years

Ballymore newsletter states block k - "well received", don't see any evidence for that statement.

As catchment officer for Thames river trust – lots of green space around the dock which is very attractive and vital, would like to see similar green corridor around Ballymore site

Q Bernie

Where is acoustic modelling? New enhanced lanes are going to create noise issues and will enhance aircraft noise. Lanes will be very noisy

Q Anna Ford, 31 years

Planning is about people, not just buildings. Fabulous community here. Didn't hear about people who are going to inhabit these blocks. There are not going to be family, old people or adolescents here. We tried to get a youth club in Brentford which is desperately needed and failed. Is this development sustainable, how has use of scarce resources been minimised, what is environmentally sensitive here?

M

Block K is a landmark building. Hidden beside basin. Is not opposite dock. Has extravagant balconies. Vital we use all space, including balconies and roofs. Block K has CHP plant [Central Heating] that will serve entire building.

Materials as foreground building should stand out more than other buildings so has some special quality. Has smaller footprint than other buildings

DL: feedback has been positive on K. Intention is to create green corridor. Trying to keep as much greenery as is possible. Relationship between river Brent and canal makes this site unique. Tidal variation of 2m makes difference. Have done internal noise assessment of each of flats. Has passed environment assessment. Fair comment re young people. Community uses have not been decided and need further dialogue. Take sustainability seriously. Looking at connecting with nearby heating systems if possible. Photo voltaic panels are not worth it cost wise and money spent better elsewhere.

Q 30 yrs,

OAP and have concerns. Worst development I've ever seen. Schools? Doctors? Parking? Can't park outside own house even so now. CPZ won't help. Losing local garages to flats. Where are these 1500 going to park? Go away and think again

Q Jonathan wright 6 years

height – initially 12 stories maximum which reduced to 10 (is this typical ploy of starting too high so can be generous and reduce it) Regarding illustrations shown of similar in London, these were 4-5 stories height. Ballymore rise to 7 and are narrow passages. It's not the same.

block k – "landmark building" is an excuse by architects to justify large building

Q Elizabeth from Brentford Dock

Nurses/doctors were approached by architects re west mid hospital. Were involved in design of hospital. All plans had ignored all our suggestions and contributions made having given significant time to working on plans. Are you ignoring what we say here? Capacity of hospital could not sustain this amount. It's already stretched bed-wise. Cannot sustain all these extra people come in. Question commitment to people in Brentford.

Q OAP

is anyone going to take any notice?

CE: council and developer will take on board comments made

Q Tam Burns, licensee of Magpie

Has DL lost my phone number/email as no contact for several months.

Removing Brent Way removes access to beer deliveries from back.

with closures of bulls head yard and new supermarket my back yard will get no sunlight.

With flats above the supermarket behind the pub am likely to get complaints from residents moving in. They can complain and get pub shut down or hours reduced. Have worked in pubs where access limited due to noise. Even if pub was there first. Solid wall behind pub will magnify noise.

Shadow plans show very little daylight in back yard. So pub is ignored and will probably close

PM: Have heights 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 with some setbacks and 2 buildings of 10 stories. This variety matches variety of 100 years ago. [laughter]

HC: Point has been well made re the need for community infrastructure such as schools etc. This is not a part of an individual application, however large, but part of a wider planning issue and these aren't going to be delivered on site. Development should make sufficient contributions that it doesn't exacerbate existing problems. The wider planning context will be implemented through the local plan.

DL: We do anticipate there could be doctors or dentists in the scheme if people ask for it; not down to them but down to PCT. Re parking – we will maintain 66% car parking for residential units as we move through scheme. 2nd weightiest document in the application is community involvement. We have been in dialogue with the Magpie regarding these issues and are aware of them. We think Magpie can use public realm out the front and we can improve rear. The Magpie is not being ignored

CE said thank you to everyone, that this is complicated issue and we need a better consensus than the one we have.