



## The Hammersmith Society

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Juliemma McLoughlin  
Director for Planning & Development  
Environment Department  
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham  
Town Hall  
King Street  
London W6 9JU

Dear Juliemma

### **Proposed redevelopment of Landmark House and Thames Tower Review of project proposals presented in November 2016**

Members of the Hammersmith Society were pleased to have an opportunity to review the initial proposals for the redevelopment of Landmark House and Thames Tower last year with the project team. This is a very significant development, introducing large, prominent buildings on a site located within the town centre and visible in views from the river and from Hammersmith Bridge. The engagement of a high calibre design team is a very welcome start, and we hope this early consultation reflects an intention to promote a real dialogue with the community regarding the development proposals.

Against this background we note our observations on the current scheme proposals:

#### *Building provision*

*Public realm:* the generosity of the public realm provision is very welcome: it offers non-private open space for public enjoyment, it loosens the perceived bulk of the development, and it creates a porosity which could link with future routes between King Street and the river. The treatment of these public realm areas would be critical, to ensure the spaces *feel* public, and do not become subtly possessed by corporate elements, like notice-boards, barrier planters and railings; public realm can easily be diminished to a perceived forecourt, a spatial overture subservient to the enclosing buildings.

*Angel Walk and the site access:* priority is given to the retained Angel Walk terrace, creating the principal pedestrian link to the existing street fabric and business of King Street. This arrangement needs to be considered in the context of possible future links further east, adjacent to the Broadway, introducing entry direct from the Broadway or from the busier Lyric Square end of King Street, which would alter the centre of gravity of the site circulation.

In the context of the very significant different scale and identity between Angel Walk and the new buildings, the terrace might appear less prominent in the overall scheme than is suggested by the design illustrations.

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An Amenity Group concerned with Planning and Conservation in Hammersmith since 1962

Patron: The Mayor of Hammersmith & Fulham

Member of the London Forum of Amenity and Civic Societies  
President: Professor Hans Haenlein MBE

Founder Member of The West London River Group  
Chairman: Tom Ryland

Secretary: Annabel Clarke, 42 Greenside Road, W12 9JG Tel: 07940 575590

*Culture:* Culture is given welcome recognition, under the broad definition as ‘everything that makes a place attractive and likeable’; appropriate questions are raised to explore what form the cultural provision might take – and we will be responding to these separately. The cultural zone is positioned alongside Angel Walk (note the alternative entrance comments above). The cultural centre is a wonderful and generous idea; placing the piazza and the cultural spaces at basement level needs careful thought: the garden would lie beneath the first floor of the office building, and this, together with the lifts, stairs and balustrading associated with the level change might diminish the appeal and immediacy of making the journey to the venue. The provision might perhaps be located at ground level.

*Community:* substantial redevelopment of a town centre site brings change and disruption to the community. In the short term there is a natural resistance to development, but in the longer term the community will be mindful of the record of town centre renewal elsewhere, and the risk of the character of the existing town centre not being enhanced, but being overwhelmed and overshadowed by the scale of the new development. This would be unacceptable. Town centre development must hold sacrosanct the priority of the community and the fragile qualities of human scale and pedestrian pace.

*Site context:*

*Planning:* current LBHF Core Strategy planning policy provides general guidance for the site development, seeking (Policy HTC) ‘...to encourage the regeneration of the town centre and riverside. .... to build on the centre’s major locational advantages for office development and to secure more modern accommodation.... to continually improve the environment and public realm, and to improve access between the town centre and the Thames...’. These general policy ambitions for the town centre appear to be reflected in the development proposals – subject to justification of the hotel use proposed. However the emerging LBHF Local Plan, due for adoption in summer 2018, refers to potential comprehensive changes to the town centre: a tunnel to replace the A4 flyover, improvements in the connection between the city centre and the river, the redesign of Hammersmith gyratory. Hammersmith Society is aware of an emerging masterplan for the town centre, with a valuable and radical vision for the future, which will be included in the new Local Plan. The Landmark House development could be a very significant first step in realising this vision, and it is essential that the application design is developed, and assessed, in the context of the future Local Plan.

*Environment:* for this substantial development, close to residential areas, energy efficiency and measures to minimise air pollution are a particular priority, and we suggest the environmental strategy should be included at this stage of the proposals.

*Town centre:* further design information is needed to understand how the development will relate to the immediate and general surroundings of Hammersmith. The division of the buildings into separate blocks, the evident modulation of the façade designs, and the open spaces around the buildings would together help to diminish the perceived bulk of this sizeable development. The impact on daylight and sunshine in King Street needs to be assessed. The lesser scale of the west side facing Angel Walk is welcome, but nevertheless the existing terrace will be dwarfed by the development. Angel Walk is in the King Street East conservation area: whilst there is no conservation area profile, common to all conservation areas is concern for the immediate context of the area, referring to the impact of adjacent development on the character of the area; on this count the proposals would fail.

*Height:* current LBHF Core Strategy planning policy BE1 identifies the town centre as ‘...an area where tall buildings may be appropriate but ...not all parts of the town centre will be suitable. Any proposals for tall buildings will need to respect/enhance the historic context, make a positive contribution to the skyline emphasising a point of civic or visual significance...’.

A number of verified views of the development were shown at our meeting with the project team but do not appear to be included in the website information. Besides being visible in long views from King Street, the impact of the development on the Hammersmith skyline viewed from the river and the bridge is a critical consideration. The importance and sensitivity of these views is highlighted in ‘*Thames Strategy – Kew to Chelsea*’, a policy document endorsed by LBHF and The London Plan, where the Hammersmith river skyline is included in the listing of ‘Important Local Views’. A tall building is unwelcome, a tall building whose location is likely to appear random in the skyline context is more unwelcome, and a tall building which appears to have no locational or design relationship with future tall buildings on the Broadway site would be unacceptable. The development design has to be progressed in parallel with the emerging Local Plan, and with a specific LBHF policy which is needed for the town centre skyline.

These observations are offered as positive comment: we wholly welcome the replacement of the unsightly Landmark House buildings, and we are excited to have a first class development team engaged on the project. Please copy this letter to members of your internal team that are dealing with this matter.

We hope that the whole project team will give serious consideration to our current and future comments in developing further the design for this site.

Yours sincerely

Tom Ryland  
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The Hammersmith Society

cc Ian Rennie <[ian.ennie@eopuk.com](mailto:ian.ennie@eopuk.com)>  
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