

Wandsworth Society

Please respond to:

49 Wandsworth Common West Side

London SW18 2EE

Wandsworth Borough Council

Town Hall

Wandsworth High Street

London SW18 2PU

Dear Sirs,

Objection

Application No 2021/5004 B&Q site, Smugglers Way SW18 1EG.

For the attention of M/s Cathy Molloy

The Society has considered the details provided with and in support of the application for an increase of the accommodation proposed to be built at the above site.

We wish to object strongly to the application on the following grounds:

1. The increased height of the Blocks nominated with the increased density, 78 additional units to the existing 335, is an increase of 23% overall. This is an unrealistic addition to the proposed accommodation as an additional minimum of 78 persons will make use of public facilities such buses, trains, medical facilities which are currently at full capacity.

We attach hereto our objection to the 2017 application No 2017/0580 in which we stated that our principal objections were: that the proposals were too tall, excessive density, with no justification for the height of the tall buildings.

2. The additional heights proposed take the scheme even further in breach of the guidelines in the Local Plan. When a 15 storey tower was proposed for the Homebase site in 2017, it was clear that it would dominate the smaller scale of the surrounding area and this was the main factor in that scheme being refused by the Council.

3. The heights of up to 19 storeys now proposed are totally out of scale with the riverside developments to the north (Riverside West) and the Tonsleys to the south. We demonstrated in our objections to the Homebase site that the natural heights for a development in this location should not be above 9-10 stories. The existing consented scheme on the B&Q site already grossly exceeds the provisions of the Local Plan and the Council's own recommendations and guidelines.

4. These major departures from the Local Plan would not in our view be justified even for a single block away from the Town Centre. Here 13 blocks are proposed on the limited site of the former B&Q occupied land. We believe this overcrowding of the blocks will lead to overlooking, overshadowing and intolerable conditions for those occupiers on most floors. Such dense and overcrowded development has been built elsewhere in the Borough at Vauxhall/Nine Elms on both sides of the rail lines and close by in Wandsworth to the south east of Osiers Way and the south east corner of Gargoyle Wharf. The result is bleak and unwelcoming.

It is quite unacceptable and unnecessary overdevelopment. The Council should refuse the application outright.

5. We note that more trees will be removed although a revised planting scheme is proposed. It is unlikely that any of the new trees to be planted on site at ground level and be able to survive, as much of below the ground surface will contain services.

6. The off site environmental improvements shown are of little real consequence. If consent is granted we would expect the Council to seek an additional financial commitment from the applicant to enable additional trees and landscaping to be undertaken elsewhere in the borough.

7. Although not strictly a planning matter it is of great concern that in the Quod Housing and Viability Assessment dated August 2021, Section 6 Modelling Outcomes (page 14) 6.1 The Appraisal Summary shows a deficit/loss of £30.5million. We believe that incorrect assumptions have been made as the modelling is based upon profit centres to two separate entities, the landowner and the developer. In this case the applicants are the same. The applicants knew the risk they were taking on acquisition and should not rely on increased density to retrieve some of this deficit.

Conclusion.

The Wandsworth Society finds the application wholly unacceptable in terms of massing, the increased heights, the environmental impact on services and the unnecessary overdevelopment of the site. The loss of additional mature trees will further detract from the "greening" which the Council aspires to in all policies.

We urge you to advise the Planning Applications Committee to refuse the application.

Yours faithfully,

Philip Whyte.
Leader Planning Group
Wandsworth Society