

MANHATTAN COMES TO OSTERLEY!

OWGRA Newsletter (Tesco & Homebase Redevelopment) February 2021, Issue No. 4

TESCO/HOMEBASE REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

HOW TO RESPOND/OBJECT TO THE NEW DOCUMENTATION SUBMITTED BY THE DEVELOPER

The planning applications submitted in Sept 2020 propose to demolish the Homebase site, build a new Tesco store on that site, with 2 levels of parking above, and 473 flats, and build a residential development on the current Tesco site (1677 homes). There would be tower blocks on both sites up to 17 storeys. These developments would increase the current population of c 13.K in Osterley & Spring Grove ward by over 40% to c 20K.

At the end of January 2021, Berkeley Homes/St Edward submitted 57 additional documents (c 4K pages) as part of their planning application to redevelop the two sites at Homebase and Tesco on Syon Lane. The developer says they are responding to significant concerns raised by the Greater London Assembly (GLA), Transport for London (TfL) and Hounslow Council Planners. The concerns of local residents have not been acknowledged.

The changes are very disappointing, as they do not address the major concerns of local residents and OWGRA. The main changes relate to energy strategy, some minor changes to the junction at Gillette Corner and a change in housing mix at the current Tesco site.



ENERGY, SUSTAINABILITY & COMMUNITY ASPECTS

- The revised energy strategies adopt site-wide heat networks which are reliant on air source heat pumps, removing reliance on gas supply to provide space heating. Solar panels would be installed on suitable available roof spaces of both developments. These changes would deliver on-site reductions of 59% and 51% of carbon emissions for the Tesco and Homebase sites respectively. Further reductions would be possible by increasing the extent of solar panels.
- There would still be a need to offset the remaining carbon emissions. We believe that more could be done to ensure that carbon offsetting is reduced to the minimum, particularly with Hounslow's declaration of a Climate Emergency.
- Reducing the size of the development to OWGRA's red-line of 6-storeys would substantially minimise carbon emissions. This solution has been ignored.
- Retaining the current Tesco and reconfiguring parking (e.g. multi-storey) has not been addressed, despite having substantial environmental benefits. Re-purposing the Homebase site to accommodate a leisure centre (pool, gym, etc) would greatly benefit the community, but this has not been considered.
- COVID-19: the revised submission did not address the pandemic issues and the lessons learned.

TRANSPORT

- The only significant changes proposed are some minor tweaks to the layout of the north-south pedestrian and cycle crossing on the eastern side of Gillette Corner. A number of options are proposed, some of which would retain the underpass (removing the underpass would allow for widening of the road).
- The developer is still insisting that traffic volumes will decrease at Gillette Corner, but we disagree, particularly as the assumptions made are not convincing.
- We still say that Gillette Corner needs to be reconfigured, and traffic flows improved, to make it safer and more efficient for all users of the junction (vehicular traffic, pedestrians and cyclists). The right hand turns from Syon Lane on to the A4 would remain dangerous.
- Where are the improvements to transport infrastructure? Only one in four properties would have a parking space meaning that most of the new residents would be relying on public transport, which is poor (PTAL 2) and already overcrowded. The only improvement proposed is a direct bus route from Osterley to Ealing Broadway. There is no prospect in the foreseeable future of funding the much-needed Southall Rail Link (which would connect Osterley to the Elizabeth line at Southall from a new Golden Mile station), and the West London Orbital (which would connect the Hounslow Loop going through Syon Lane station and Brentford to the Overground at South Acton).

HOUSING MIX

- There has been a reduction in the number of studio and 1-bedroom flats and an increase in the number of 3-bedroom homes on the Tesco site. However, studios, 1- and 2- bedroom flats would still account for 82% of homes on the Tesco site and 86% on the Homebase site. This small change does not address the dire shortage of decent family-sized homes (3-4 bedrooms) in Hounslow.
- There would still only be 25 small houses across the 2 sites of 2,150 homes.

If you have objected already, please object again, stating that your initial objections still stand, and that the developer's revised submission has done very little to address residents' concerns.

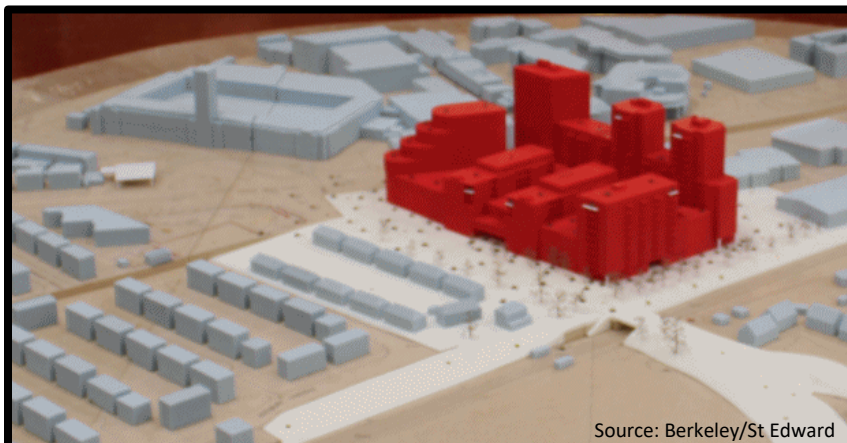
You could use the objections stated here:

- **Excessive height/massing/density**, in relation to existing residential areas and listed Gillette building.
- **Out of character with the area** (mainly 2-storey houses).
- **Overdevelopment**: adding 2,150 homes in mostly tower blocks (up to 17 storeys) to our neighbourhood of mainly 2-storey houses. The population would increase by about 6,000 which is equivalent to a small town (e.g. the size of Bagshot or Egham).



Source: Berkeley/St Edward

Above: Proposed heights and massing of development on Tesco site



Source: Berkeley/St Edward

Above: Berkeley Homes' original version of the Homebase site 3D model dwarfing the Grade II listed Gillette building (as featured in their planning application)

- **Serious lack of decent-sized family homes** to meet Hounslow's dire shortage of 3-4 bedroom homes.
- **Adverse effect on heritage assets** (including the Grade II listed Gillette building between the two sites).
- **Inadequate public transport, no improvements to roads, infrastructure and amenities**, with no firm plans or funds to upgrade in the foreseeable future.
- **Unacceptable traffic** (dangerous/over-capacity at Gillette Corner), route used by ambulances.
- **Environmental impact** (increased noise, air pollution, carbon emissions & poor sustainability).
- **No justification for demolishing Tesco and Homebase** instead of retaining or re-purposing.
- **Insufficient measures to meet Zero Carbon targets and Climate Emergency measures.**



With an estimated 5-7K additional residents, where are the improvements to public transport & traffic management to avoid daily chaos like this?

You can also add that you agree with many of the recommendations from Hounslow's Design Review Panel (see pages 3&4)

Anyone aged 16 or over can respond to the planning application so we encourage every member of your household (aged 16+) to respond (and you don't have to have received a consultation letter to respond).

The best way to object this time is by e-mail to Planning.AppResponses@hounslow.gov.uk quoting the two relevant planning ref. nos. in the title (**P/2020/3099 and P/2020/3100**), making sure you give your full name & address at the end of the e-mail.

STAY IN TOUCH VIA OWGRA MEMBERSHIP

If you want to keep up to date with local developments like this, then if you are an OWGRA member you will receive a regular e-newsletter. **You can join, or renew your subscription for 2021/2022 if you have not already done so, with the membership form enclosed with this newsletter.** If you have been a member before and your details are the same, then why not do it online? Further details are on the enclosed membership form.

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HOUNSLOW COUNCIL'S PURCHASE OF "OFF-PLAN" HOMES ON THE HOMEBASE SITE – A FORGONE CONCLUSION?

At a Council Committee meeting held two days before Christmas, it was agreed that the Council should purchase 164 homes from Berkeley/St Edward at the Homebase site, for council housing purposes.

There was widespread concern that this could act as a form of pressure on the Planning Committee when considering the developments. This led to a call-in of the decision by our own Councillor Unsa Chaudri and others.

At an Overview & Scrutiny Committee Meeting at the end of January, it was decided that not only had there been no consultation with Ward Councillors, but that there was inadequate evidence on which to base a decision and agreed to refer the decision back to the original Committee.

The original Committee met a few days later to consider the recommendations, and although they agreed that in future Ward Councillors should be consulted, it did not consider the detailed points of information shortfall and re-affirmed in full its decision to make the 'off plan' purchases.

A longer article on this, along with links to these meetings, is on the OWGRA website <https://www.thb.owgra.org.uk/>. All three meetings can be watched on YouTube.

OWGRA's Conclusion: We are concerned by the lack of transparency in these Council meetings. We are grateful to our Ward Councillors for stepping in to make sure that Council Committees are run properly and are held to account for their actions and decisions.

HOUNSLOW'S DESIGN REVIEW PANEL (HDRP) – RECOMMENDATIONS

Two reports were published on 28 January (and uploaded on to Hounslow's Planning Portal on 4 February) from the relatively new Design Review Panel set up by Hounslow Council to provide "an independent and impartial evaluation process that assesses the design of significant development proposals, regeneration programmes, policies, briefs and guidance".

We understand that the developer consulted the HDRP at an earlier stage about these proposals but those reports are confidential.

We are very pleased to see that many of our concerns and objections are included in the comments from the HDRP.

This is what the HDRP thinks about the HOMEBASE site development proposals. What do you think?

Now is the time to have your say! See 'How to Object' on page 2

Overall footprint: "...we are still not convinced there would be sufficient space to accommodate the movements of 1200 new residents and people walking to and from Syon Lane station."

Character/scale: "...we are still certain that the footprint of Tesco is compromising your ability to provide public realm that is good enough in character or scale for this quantum of new housing."

Environment: "We welcome the development of amphitheatre public space at ground floor level and think it is a good solution to deal with the level change although it is not big enough to serve the development in relation to the footprint of the building... We are concerned that its location, subject to noise and pollution from the Great West Road will result in the space being unusable... If the building footprint had been set back further, a solid wall could have been provided to acoustically protect this space."

Quality: "...the design evolution has focused on mitigating these issues rather than solving them. Ultimately, we still believe that the brief to accommodate a Tesco Superstore of equivalent size to the existing located on the opposite side of the road on this site has made it virtually impossible for you to achieve a scheme of the quality that you and Hounslow are aiming to achieve here."

Aspect of units: "It was noted that the massing of the scheme resulted in a high number of single aspect units due to the wrapping of residential around Tesco. However, the use of infill blocks in between the taller elements in block B also result in high number single aspect units which we think is unacceptable. We do not think 'semi dual' aspect units are a solution as they do not provide the true benefits of dual aspect dwellings. This issue can only be resolved by altering the massing of these blocks."

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HOUSING, COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT, ROBERT JENRICK, HAS RECENTLY SAID:

"Local people [should] set the rules for what developments in their area should look like, ensuring that they reflect and enhance their surroundings and preserve our local character and identity. Instead of developers forcing plans on locals, they will need to adapt to proposals from local people, ensuring that current and new residents alike will benefit from beautiful homes in well-designed neighbourhoods."

We couldn't agree more with the Housing Secretary. We are not NIMBYs. We would welcome developments on both sites that are appropriate for the area and not excessive. Our red-line is 6 storeys, which is the height of the Access Storage building under construction at Gillette Corner (initially proposed at 14 storeys, then reduced to 11 storeys and finally approved at 6 storeys).

This is what Hounslow's Design Review Panel thinks about the **TESCO** site development proposals. What do you think?

Now is the time to have your say! See 'How to Object' on page 2

Height/overdevelopment: "...we note that these blocks are themselves still high, and feel that there is still too much development..."

Scale: "...we still feel that the overall amount of residential accommodation is too great for the site..."

Open space/scale: "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."

Single aspect homes: "...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."

Overdevelopment: "...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."

Open spaces: "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."

Environment: "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."

Summary: "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. ...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."

Environment: "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."

Heritage: "...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. 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."

Overall: "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."

Heritage: "...we would still be concerned about the effect on Gillette and the view from the Parks..."