

# B&Q Masterplan

## Urban Design Comments

01/12/2020

### Design background

We have engaged with the applicant on dedicated design workshops in 2019. The workshops covered the proposed masterplan on a plot by plot basis, landscape and overall masterplanning principles were discussed tested and scrutinised.

We need to stress at this point that this exercise did not involve any architectural discussion nor is the submitted relevant with architectural expression, the outcome is a masterplan which encloses building envelopes, open spaces and road network.

### Masterplan Concept

The current masterplan has been designed to respond to the site-specific attributes such as the conservation area, existing retail environments and the improvement of the existing B&Q site. The overarching vision is to create a high-quality living environment that is integrated into the wider context through a circulation network which is defined and overlooked by building frontages.

The proposed masterplan is based on a hierarchy of buildings and interconnected open spaces framed by varying scale height and density. There is no dominant architectural pattern here as the proposed consists of building envelopes as part of the masterplan. The perimeter of the development plots is designed to provide a positive pedestrian experience which will ensure future enjoyment of spaces by residents.

The masterplan responds to the existing hospital and demonstrates a seamless stitch with station facilities with a legible transition to residential areas. The focal point of a square associated with the Cricklewood Lane area is justified due to the footfall of the station and the need for public areas for people to enjoy while visiting.

### Height, bulk, scale and massing

As mentioned above the proposed built form of the site comprises a series of building envelopes organised in a linear fashion. The bulk, scale and massing of individual building envelopes varies to account for the proposed uses and the scale of the spaces that they frame or relate to. This provides variation in character, visual interest, identity, place and way-finding across the masterplan.

The tallest element proposed by the square is envisaged to mark the station, while the tallest residential elements are located on the Eastern part of the site overlooking the rail lines. This is an acceptable move.

The overall design approach is proposing to enrich the area by creating diverse places within the masterplan. In order to achieve legible environments that are familiar, comfortable and easy to navigate, we envisage that future architectural proposals can build on this overarching principle in order to deliver through architecture the envisaged environments of this particular masterplan.

## **Character**

The overall character of the masterplan is defined through the layout of buildings and related open spaces. It is a varied environment that predominantly stays lower on the Northern edge to stitch to and respond to the Conservation area.

This language manifests differently on the different typologies of buildings, further highlighting individual character but with a familiar design language. This attempt is welcome as it could reinforce wayfinding, provide more robust edges where needed and differentiate between public and private spaces.

## **Visual impact and views**

Under the Local Plan, the protection of existing amenity arrangements in any area is an important aspect of determining whether a proposal is acceptable or otherwise. The protection of existing residential amenity is required through good design in new developments which intern promotes quality environments. More specifically Policy DMO1 states that proposals should seek to manage the impact of new developments to ensure that there is not an excessive loss of amenity in terms of daylight/sunlight, outlook and privacy for existing occupiers.

Separation distances internally and with regards to the neighbouring structures are taken in to account while designing, this is apparent by the proposed masterplan which specifically stresses the attention to separation distances of buildings. There is however increased sensitivity in terms of sunlight amenity, this however is an aspect highlighted by the masterplan for future designs to consider and mitigated.

The study on views and subsequent impact is very satisfactory as the design team managed to demonstrate minimum interruption to existing views, partly because of the manipulation of topography on site and partly because the proposed building envelopes are sensitive with regards to the existing urban fabric.

## **Layout and connectivity**

The movement strategy creates optimum car flows without compromising the ability for pedestrians and cyclists to move around in an attractive environment, without interruptions, with minimal exposure to noise and air pollution and with clear and frequent views to destinations. This is achieved by the clarity of routes proposed within the masterplan, these are primary routes, emergency routes and most importantly pedestrian only routes.

These new links reinforce the connectivity towards the existing hospital depending on which part of the masterplan the journey starts. Vehicular movement is not a dominant feature throughout and is designed for minimum interaction with pedestrians, allowing for people to activate the streets and resulting in more outdoor areas for future residents to enjoy and use in a positive way.

The use and encouragement of alternative mobility such as cycling, carpooling or plainly encouraging walking should be applied on site. The rise in population will mean a significant rise in demand for

transport and infrastructure; this could put a strain on the local system if not supported by an alternative mobility strategy.

The improved connectivity and permeability of the site, which accords with the intent of London Plan and Barnet Core Strategy reconnects the site with its surrounding areas as well as improved access to adjacent public transport and the wider network.

### **Landscaping**

The majority of the landscaping works such as open space and squares Will be presented in detail along with future applications for the development of plots.

- Proposed Plaza
- Residential garden areas (front and back)
- Street planting
- Car parking
- Play space

The proposed masterplan incorporates a variety of open spaces which are sufficient to provide a much needed balance between grey and green infrastructure at this point in time. Finally the play provision is also incorporated within the masterplan proposal, ensuring that it is a major design element, not to be overlooked in future applications. The proposed landscaping details largely adhere to these requirements.

### **Play space**

According to Housing SPG standard 1.2.2, the development is required to make appropriate play provisions in accordance with a GLA formula and calculation tool, whereby 10sqm of play space should be provided per child, with under-5 child play space provided on-site as a minimum, in accordance with the London Plan 'Shaping Neighbourhoods: Play & Informal Recreation SPG and 'Providing for Children and Young People's Play and Informal Recreation' SPG'.

The proposed play space is therefore acceptable and we anticipate more detail on the designs when applications for the development of plots come forward.