

MEETING NOTE

SUBJECT	South Kensington Station (SKS) redevelopment Consultative Working Group (CWG) Meeting No. 5
VENUE	James Suite, Rembrandt Hotel, Thurloe Place
DATE	Wednesday 20 April 2016, 3 pm – 5 pm

ATTENDEES	<p>TfL Team: Mike Crabtree, Principal Station Sponsor, London Underground (MC) Jeremy Castle, Commercial Development, Transport for London (JC) Scott Anderson, Senior Property Development Manager, TfL (ScottA) Christopher Phiniefs, Principal Project Sponsor, LUL (CP) Richard Zavitz, Project Sponsor, Station & Interchange Development (RZ) Edward Butler-Ellis, Strategic Communications, TfL (EBE) Jennifer Henderson, SCU Project Engineer, LUL Justin Holland, Buckley Gray Yeoman (JH) Nick Sutcliffe, Director, HardHat (NS)</p> <p>Local Representatives: Amanda Frame, Kensington Society (AF) Michael Bach, Kensington Society (MB) Edward Davies-Gilbert, Knightsbridge Association (ED-G) Sophie Andreae, Brompton Association (SA) Bob Mabon, Brompton Association (BM) Claire Brisby, Thurloe Residents Association (CB) Jan Langmuir, Thurloe Residents Association (JL) Eva Skinner, Onslow Neighbourhood Association (ES) Susanna Trostdorf, Onslow Neighbourhood Association (ST) Robert Berg, Pelham Residents Association (RB)</p>
MINUTES	<p>1. Welcome</p> <p>NS from HardHat welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the apologies from Traci Weaver. Each participant around the table then</p>

introduced themselves.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

NS clarified the position on SFA being not just a funding matter but also related to technical challenges such as the lift to Thurloe Street.

ST asked to clarify that under the retail discussion, it was important for shops to focus on day-to-day needs for local residents.

The Minutes were then agreed.

3. Station arcade roof repair update

EBE provided a brief update. SA asked when the work would start. EBE said timings were not yet confirmed. SA and Ed Morton would be informed.

4. Station upgrade proposals

CP presented the results of the written feedback received after the presentation at Christie's. It was agreed to circulate the feedback given on the night and both sets of feedback will be placed on the new website (www.southkensingtonstation.co.uk)

CP updated the group on the changes to the officers at RBKC, namely Hilary Wyatt (Conservation and Design) and Roenaldo Colalillo (Case Officer).

CP explained that the officers had asked for work to show how the new elements introduced at platform level will link to the existing features. This was particularly in respect of the columns and the horizontal beams of the existing Edwardian canopy structure on the island platform.

EDG asked if on the westbound demolished platform, the existing columns that once supported the shops along Pelham Street will be retained. CP confirmed that they will not be disturbed as part of the station upgrade.

CP stated that the station upgrade proposals will safeguard the provision of two lifts to the District line platforms, two lifts to the Piccadilly line platforms, and one lift to Thurloe Street within the proposed new entrance. TfL estimate the cost of the full SFA scheme to be £20 million.

MB asked if this included the Piccadilly line and CP said it did, with 50% of the cost being for the District & Circle line element based on the feasibility study last summer.

MB asked if there would be a problem with funding. CP reminded the group of the new TfL financial position following the Autumn Statement (reduction and eventual elimination of the operating grant) and the need to look for additional sources of revenue. The new Mayor will also bring new priorities after 5 May.

JL asked if the same applied to the new escalators? MC confirmed that there is currently a range of revenue sources with the biggest being from fares. Maintenance and renewals around the network are funded by these sources.

MC reiterated the mayoral commitment to £76m match funding for SFA across the network. Priority stations typically in the outer boroughs and major central London stations upgrades have been providing SFA. South Kensington is in the top list of stations to address the blackspot in the area that has not been covered by other station upgrades.

ST asked to clarify the timeline to spend the SFA partnership funds. MC suggested that it is a 10 year programme across the network, although with the ambition of delivering sooner.

CP introduced the design approach for the external façade of the expanded ticket hall and stairwell to the new eastbound platform that balances the solidity of brick with horizontal glass features. This will be continued through the overbridge. AF expressed surprise at how this looked and queried what the officers had thought of this.

SA pointed out that this was a utilitarian structure and said the image was misleading due to the low quality. She suggested that it could look handsome in proper brick and that brick is the right material for the façade as to not introduce more disparate materials into the design. She queried the steel beams and whether this approach went too far in trying to tie into the existing canopy. SA asked to see colour drawings with the fully detailed brick.

AF said this would be a long term addition to the building and an opportunity to make something distinctive. MC said that a modern design approach would stand out even more.

SA said that the use of appropriate materials was key for the setting of the listed elements. Brick had been suggested on the site visit. The architect has the right general approach and should progress it.

RB asked how many handrails would be provided on the new stair. Handrails will be provided on each side of the stairs and include a central handrail.

EDG asked about the continuation of the design between canopy and the emergency stairs. CP explained that the steel bar was carried through to the over bridge with brick and glass above.

AF reiterated her concern about the quality of the pre-application advice from officers. MB had met the leader of the council to express concern about the lack of a joined up process with officers making important decisions on a personal basis and in isolation, which then led projects in a particular direction. AF said she would have more confidence in the project architect than some of the design advice from the council. MB added that the officers were unable to hear or benefit from the discussions at these consultative meetings, which was a missed opportunity. SA suggested that the proposals are taken forward so that it can be developed in detail.

AF asked about the progress with solving the dog-leg on the over bridge. CP confirmed that the dog-leg in the stairs has been removed with the stairs leadings to the full-height of the overbridge, though passengers will still need to turn-back on themselves to continue their journey.

CP explained that Exterior has won the new advertising contract. They have proposed a reduction in the quantity (nearly 50%) of the advertising offering throughout the station. In particular within the revetments, all of the large-size advertising boards are proposed to be removed and replaced with smaller panels (three static and two LED) at five locations along the new eastbound platform. This proposal was well received.

AF indicated an interest to discuss the lighting along the platform. This can be discussed at an upcoming CWG meeting.

EBE set out the next steps for the station capacity proposals. A drop in exhibition has been provisionally scheduled for Thursday 19 May in the TfL pop up shop in the arcade. This would be after the next CWG on the 18 May.

5. Around station development proposals

JH presented the latest work on the around station development concepts for each of the three areas:

Pelham Street

Showed option for ground floor retail with three storeys above, with top floor set back.

AF stated that the Council are against retail on Pelham Street.

SA asked if the residential was apartments. JH confirmed that the apartments were accessed from central cores. The site was 8.5 metres deep from the back of the pavement.

ES asked if the residential would be permit free. ScottA said there would be no parking on site apart from possibly accommodating a few disabled spaces at the Thurloe Square end.

EDG asked about soundproofing. JH confirmed that the units would be built to modern standards, which would address this.

JL asked for clarification on the height at the Thurloe Square end.

RB said that Pelham Street was a tertiary retail area while being prime residential. Why place retail into a tertiary site?

ScottA explained that TfL have looked at both options. The advisers say that retail value is also good.

RB asked for an estimated retail yield and ScottA indicated 3% to 4%.

RB queried this and requested further evidence be supplied.

MB suggested that the ground floor on Pelham Street would not be that attractive as a place to live, particularly once the threshold space was deducted from the limited depth.

SA alluded to the Wellcome Trust trying to obtain retail consent for the Clutton's office on Pelham Street (Brompton Cross end).

SA said that after more than ten years "we have seen a form of architecture that is responsive in scale, massing and style. Well done – and I really do mean that. The articulation makes a great deal of sense. The direction of travel is positive."

RB said that permit free depresses residential values. ScottA agreed that a reply would be circulated regarding Mr Berg's concerns.

20-34 Thurloe Street

JH explained that this was a difficult site owing to the constraints. There were three options which were (1) light touch refurbishment approach retaining the split floor levels and ceiling heights, (2) extensive refurbishment to achieve level floors, adding a storey and lifts and stairs (3) façade retention with new build to provide more dual aspect accommodation to modern standards.

SA said that the entire building makes a positive contribution to the conservation area and should be retained. As an example the South Kensington Estate refurbishment work demonstrates the potential.

ScottA confirmed that a historic buildings consultant is being procured to advise on heritage matters.

BM asked if the new station entrance will be accommodated in all three options. This was confirmed. MC explained that it had to be Thurloe Street as fire regulations ruled out the extent of intervention needed such as additional fire doors for a new entrance to the arcade.

AF asked how a decision will be reached on the preferred option? ScottA said it would be determined by all the factors combined.

MB asked about the impact on existing tenants. ScottA said that under Option 1 (light touch intervention) the majority of tenants could probably remain with the work phased.

SA said that South Kensington Estate has had experience with this for their work in Brompton Road. ScottA said he has a forthcoming meeting with SKE.

Bullnose

JH said there were two options – the same height or adding an additional floor. Option 1 would enlarge the bullnose by reclaiming void areas at the rear. Option 2 would provide for a signature destination restaurant at the upper level.

ES said that there are enough restaurants already. ScottA said the upper floor could be a gallery and not necessarily a restaurant. Use options would be discussed at a future meeting.

SA said that the massing was positive and it looks to be along the lines

we would be happy with.

EDG said that in the past it's been a free for all for all types of tenants with the results seen today.

RB asked what the long-term intention for the commercial development – retain or sell? ScottA said that the base case would be to retain the retail but sell the residential to recoup capital quickly.

RB queried why not maximise capital from residential by using the ground floor on Pelham Street. ScottA clarified that SFA funding need not be time-matched with the income / funding arising from around station development.

SA said the pavement around the bullnose was narrow where the crossings are located. The entrances to the units are right up close so not having so many shop entrances is potentially a good thing. JL agreed, saying it was difficult to get into the shops when it is really busy.

AF said that a terrace with umbrellas should be avoided at the upper level.

Arcade & Thurloe Street shop front restoration

JH presented the ideas for the arcade. AF said that the indicative hanging shop signs were much too big and needs to be appropriately restrained.

EDG queried the lighting for the arcade.

ES said the approach looks very encouraging.

SA complimented the shop front research and requested the photos, as they were new information.

SA said that restoring the paring of doors was important.

AF said that the corbels were missing from the image of the bullnose and Thurloe Street elevation.

EDG asked if the detail for the new station entrance will be worked up to be included in the restored elevation. ScottA confirmed that it would be.

ScottA said that retail research was being commissioned to identify the best format to respond to the needs of residents, workers and visitors. This would include quantitative and qualitative analysis to help inform the retail study. The consultants will attend the June meeting and or a further meeting in early July.

MB said that it is about positioning South Kensington as a District Centre and how adding to it will help address the current imbalance. ScottA agreed with this.

ST asked what the financial parameters are for the study. ScottA said that the objective was to assess potential values, the mix and the contribution to the community. The study will tell us what is possible.

6. Future meeting dates

18 May (apologies from AF & MB), 15 June, 6 July (tbc), 14 September, 16 November.