

PECKHAM GATEWAY PROJECT BRIEF

Comments and queries from Peckham Vision

12th November 2013

Response to Network Rail / Southwark Council briefing document

1 INTRODUCTION

This paper is written in response to the briefing document dated 2nd October 2013 produced by Network Rail/Southwark Council and which in turn reflects the Project Description narrative contained in schedule 1 of the agreement document with the GLA dated 21st December 2012.

As the GLA document (The Brief) is set out in more detail, this will be the primary focus of the comments below. In addition to addressing these specific points, this paper attempts to set out some of Peckham Vision's aspirations for all the areas included within the Gateway area.

This is not an attempt to write a prescriptive independent brief but should be seen as an elaboration of thoughts already gathered in a previous 'Issues paper' dated July 2013, It includes further and better particulars of many of these issues and aims to clarify points of procedure. It expressly concentrates on the spatial and social outcomes rather than the necessary economic underpinning and business appraisal required. It should also be remembered that much of the background and inspiration for the project over the past years has come from voluntary community efforts by Peckham Vision, local architects and other individuals. This has resulted in restoration works currently proceeding which are independent but complementary to the Gateway project proposals.

Because the station building and the surrounding area is of some historical significance, there is a separate appendix which describes the Conservation setting and its historic development

It is however noted that the Network Rail/Southwark brief is generously aspirational and non-specific in its approach, with references to unlocking the potential of the site, and seeking to enhance the public realm. It is therefore of some concern to note the specific reference to a preferred option delivered as part of earlier conceptual design work. This is puzzling and needs to be clarified before design work is started.

2 KEY ACTIONS

The GLA brief describes the project as a catalyst for change along Rye Lane, The agreed area covers the station building itself and immediate environs, the surrounding viaducts with the arches beneath, the open rear area to the west and the land to the east presently covered by commercial and retail development now 80 years old.

The GLA brief refers to the project being divided into 'four key actions' which provides a useful framework for Peckham Vision's interpretation of the brief.

2.1 Actions A and B

This refers to the station building itself and its immediate curtilage.

It is generally acknowledged that the building itself has been altered, extended, part demolished and generally neglected over the years. The Brief rightly notes there is currently a great deal of vacant, redundant and under-used space, and sums up well the lack of efficient and effective use of this space. There are however a wide number of differing interests and stakeholders, and a coherent integrated plan should be developed which sets these out more explicitly. The Network Rail brief states that improvements to the station building are 'being progressed as a separate project'. Does this refer to the Access for All project and are the other work packages being

considered.?

2.1.1 Peckham Vision Responses

The Brief lists works to which Peckham Vision's responses are as follows.

- Removal of redundant buildings to create separate access to arches. *This is unclear: which buildings and access is being referred to?*
- Refurbishment and redecoration of the Former Waiting Room. *This is certainly recognized as a major objective: there are ongoing discussions between PV and Network Rail to do just this. This initiative is parallel to the works being considered under the Gateway heading and will be funded and it is managed quite separately. This needs to be emphasised in the Brief to avoid confusion. Also where does the proposal that it is considered as a similar model to the Denmark Hill station come from?*
- Station façade improvements including feature lighting. *Very important but to be considered in the context of improvements to the new square and the conservation context (see below).*
- Development and refurbishment of disused commercial space. *This is assumed to be the space on the ground and first floor to the north of the present Booking Office. Work is currently being carried out to bring this area back into active use, but is not strictly part of the Gateway project and should therefore be redefined as a part of the 'problem' rather than an element of the 'solution'.*
- Development of conservation skills. *This is noted, but the relationship with the THI project needs to be developed and a distinction is established between conservation skills and general building skills.*

2.1.2 An Integrated Plan

Generally however there is concern about the historic lack of an integrated plan for the building and this should be emphasized in the Brief, the following items in particular are linked together at some level.

The Old Waiting Room (OWR) as noted above is a major community project strictly separate from the Gateway project. It will require new stair access, secondary means of escape and dedicated WC provision. There are long term aspirations to use other parts of the station building to provide storage and office accommodation for the OWR. Lift access will also be needed, not only for people with disabilities but also for goods. Lifts will also be required in connection with the....

Access for All project currently under consideration. It would be logical for this to be integrated with the Waiting Room lift proposal together with consideration of....

Public WCs which are the subject of a current public lobby. A possible location has been identified below the northern viaduct in the position presently occupied by a redundant WC suite dating from the 1930s and which appear to have been disused for several years. The need for WC provision relates in turn to the other public aspects of the station including creating a....

Pedestrian access between the proposed forecourt and the rear area between the viaducts on the west side. This is likely to involve major restructuring of the station building both internally and externally to the rear, and will impact on both the enhanced public realm as well as the....

Operational uses of the building. It is noted that Network rail have completed works to the platforms in recent months. It is suggested any further planned works should be brought forward for consideration within the Gateway project together with any....

Concealed or under-used spaces which can be brought back into active public use and which address the current lack of everyday uses traditionally associated with railway stations such as a newsagent and a café.

The above is just a bare summary of works foreseen for the station building and there is much detail to be unpacked as the project unfolds. Two things stand out however.

- **A CO-ORDINATED PLAN**

It seems clear that all the above items are inter-linked which strongly suggests there should be an integrated plan. This is important since many of these items will be delivered by different agencies. Ideally it would also be logical for them to be included in a single planning application even if they are likely to be procured within separate packages.

In the past separate planning applications have been submitted in isolation, with little consideration given to the impact on other areas. Even if it is impractical to submit an integrated application, all aspects need to be considered together before the submission of the Gateway works.

- **A CONSERVATION PLAN**

The building is both listed Grade II and situated within the Rye Lane Conservation area. The Conservation plan for the area is awaited but in its absence there is a conservation statement attached as an annex to this document. This is initially concerned with setting out the historic development of the station but also aims to identify those elements that have survived and should be conserved.

Bearing in mind the complexities and potentially conflicting elements of the project plus differing interpretations of what constitutes 'heritage', it is strongly recommended that a conservation policy for the station building is adopted at the outset. This will enable clarity and a shared agreement about the relative importance of the surviving parts. It should also help control continuing unauthorized building work affecting the historic fabric of the building, the latest example being the installation of an intrusive cable tray across the rear elevation.

2.2 Action C

This part is primarily concerned with the area at the front of the station. The idea of creating a square here has been one of the driving points of the Gateway project and the case for this has long been accepted.

In detail there are aspects that need a lot more clarification before proceeding further with the design.

2.2.1 What will be the main function of the square? The Brief simultaneously refers to new public space being returned to the public and also 'active use' providing financial return. There is no suggestion as to how these will be reconciled and the relative importance attached to each.

2.2.2 What intentions if any, are there to promote non-commercial/retail activities. Will the square be made available for publicly generated events? Are concerts, public meetings or other events envisaged? How will pop-up or temporary events be catered for?

2.2.3 Who will manage and 'own' the space? To whom will they be accountable?

2.2.4 There is some concern about the scope and scale of the project giving rise to several differing assumptions and interpretations. It has been noted that all the commercial development fronting Rye Lane will be demolished as it is physically linked beneath the arches. It is understood there is no firm decision about the buildings set further back comprising nos. 12-16 Blenheim Grove and np. 4 Holly Grove. At this stage therefore there would appear to be no agreed boundary to the new square.

On the one hand many have welcomed the opportunity to sweep away the ugly and badly

maintained 1930s commercial development to create new townscape vistas and physical links running from Blenheim Grove and Holly Grove. This could have a major impact on the setting of the railway within the centre of Rye Lane and when seen as a 'tabula rasa' could open up a completely new range of opportunities at many levels.

Another view is that the new square should be smaller in scale and limited to the area framed between the viaducts only. This would avoid the major adverse impacts normally associated with bigger developments and be part of a more incremental low impact process.

It is alarming however that the 'preferred' option referred to in the NetworkRail/Southwark Council document assumes that new development will encroach on the newly opened up square and result in a very restricted public realm. This is seen as a highly prejudicial interpretation of the original intention and as such would be strenuously resisted in some quarters. The suggested figures of between 500 to 800 square metres of new public space however suggests the overall extent of the space has still to be decided.

2.2.5 At the same time it is good to see a 'design competition has been suggested to drive interest and it is assumed this will be carried out immediately given the limited period allotted to the design stage. But how will this fit with the current appointment of the Stage 2 architects? This is the kind of action we expected so there could be a public discussion about the options, But over a year has elapsed during which this could have been done to great effect. It is hoped this truncated period before the scheduled planning application will allow the architects to solicit ideas about the concept design.

2.3 Action D

This appears to be directed at the existing light industrial premises mostly situated in the arches which open off Dovedale Court. The issues surrounding this space seem the least developed to date and to some extent appear contradictory.

1 From the outset it has been suggested this area should be developed as a public space but what form will it take and how will it complement or compete with the new station square?

2 The Brief refers to 'tailored refurbishment' to a high standard suggesting a high value type of development. Is this appropriate?

3 There is also reference to a 'thriving bar scene' complemented by a 'strong artistic community'. It is suggested this is to be built on.

4 The arches are under-utilised and the Brief talks of a careful re-locating light industrial uses.

5 In the PNAAP second phase 2016 – 2020, the Network Rail site on the east side of Rye Lane needs to be considered for redevelopment to extend from there to the town centre. How this fits with Dovedale Court needs to be considered.

3.0 SUMMARY

From the forgoing it will be apparent that many of the issues raised as well as the actual spaces are interlinked and a holistic approach will be a prerequisite for project success.

There is wide support for the recreation of the square. There is a feeling that there is a special nature to Peckham town centre that needs to be nurtured and protected while it is adjusting to changes in the wider economy and to the developments around the station. Small changes favouring small independent units rather than national chains are preferred to larger developments at once. There is concern at the loss of small independent small businesses, including creative enterprises if rents become unaffordable. A variety and mix of rental shops are wanted rather than more of the existing kinds of shops, vanity units, meat and phone shops which are viewed as

an unwelcome current feature.

The storage facilities afforded by the arches behind the station are valued by town centre businesses. Some locals value the mix of light industry and commerce behind the station, and are also concerned at the loss of residential amenity with the extension of the night economy. There were also pleas for newsagents, letter boxes, cafes and public toilets near then station.

With that in mind this summary seeks to draw attention to the main physical elements considered most crucial in achieving a truly innovative design with real impacts on the social and economic future of the town centre.

3.1 Density of development.

Although not developed in detail, the scale of development suggested in the 'preferred option' for Dovedale Court and the new square appears totally out of scale and should be carefully defined at an early stage prior to detailed development. This level of development is likely to be met with considerable resistance.

3.2. Range of uses

The preferred option shows a variety of uses. Although only indicative, the juxtaposition and density particularly in the Dovedale Court and Blenheim Grove areas needs very careful justification before forming the basis for the project. What is the desirable range of economic activity most likely to deliver a sustainable project?

3.3 Creative uses

Much has been made of the unique agglomeration of creative enterprises such as galleries, workshops and studios in and around the Gateway area. Many of these are activities are unseen or unacknowledged and thought should be given to highlighting and positively fostering these activities to form a new hub in south London.

3.4 Phased development

The timeframe for the development should be taken into account with clearly defined phasing. Not only will this mitigate the extent of blight but help to ensure continuity with existing tenants.

3,5 The New Square

This is seen as the main driver of the project. Extent and type of use, impact of use, events and management are crucial.

3.6 The Station Building

A fully co-ordinated plan is necessary that integrates all the disparate building work currently being prepared

3.7 Blenheim Grove

The impact on the south side of the area needs to take into account the impact on adjoining residential properties, the maintenance of an active street frontage, overlooking from platforms and reinforcing the relationship with All Saints church. Most problematic is the relationship with the 1930s commercial buildings. The possibility of retaining part of these buildings might be explored.

3.8 Holly Grove

This should be seen as an opportunity to integrate what is presently an incoherent space with the station complex. The present relationships of the existing buildings should be addressed to reconfigure this area entirely.

3.9 Hidden spaces

The piecemeal development of the area around the station building has resulted in a lot of un-used, under-used and badly used spaces. This is a unique opportunity to remove or re-invent many of them. Ref. the 'pocket places' programme.

13.0 Impact of streetscape.

This is most important as it is the level of the physical environment which has the most immediate impact on everyday users of the area, and helps give a definite sense of place to an area. Street furniture, road and paved surfaces and lighting are what make a place seem different and special.

13.11 The Conservation context.

This will be the background setting and will relocate the station area in its historic context. A robust approach should be adopted which is imaginative and open ended.

Appendix

THE CONSERVATION SETTING

1.0 INTRODUCTION

One of the key assumptions is that the heritage aspects should be used as an asset in the regeneration process and that they will have a real beneficial economic and social impact. These are frequently untested assumptions and therefore it is felt there needs to be some shared awareness of the historic background and development of the railway within the curtilage of the Gateway area as a prerequisite for a fuller understanding of the impact of any changes that may be proposed.

1.1 RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT

The railway through Peckham was built in 1865 at a time when the area was on the brink of residential expansion and the station was opened both in response to the town's development to date as well as helping to establish Peckham as a major suburban centre.

The railway at Peckham did not consist of main through routes but was a confluence of secondary lines, and was an unusual example of railway companies acting in co-operation rather than competition as was more often the case. The London Brighton and South Coast Railway (LBSCR) and the London Chatham and Dover Railway (LCDR) had different but complementary interests when they combined forces to construct the present station. Although jointly used, this section of the rail network was built and owned by the Brighton company including the station building itself. Routes lead from Peckham to all the major rail termini south of the river as well as accommodating excursion traffic to such places as Greenwich and Crystal Palace. A particular feature was the South London line (SLL) owned by the LBSCR and which ran between that company's main line stations at Victoria and London Bridge.

But the main traffic was suburban rather than inter-city and this remains the dominant pattern today. A significant change took place in 2012 when the East London line extension was opened linking Peckham to areas to the north, east and south-west of London. The long-term impact of traffic patterns and increased journey opportunities are expected to have major implications not just for the station but for Peckham as one of the major town centres in South London

1.2 THE ORIGINAL STATION BUILDING

Converging on each side of the station, the various tracks enter Peckham on a series of viaducts, each railway company running separate services through different parts of the station. The building itself is an interesting example of a station that serves two opposing sets of platforms at high level, the main body consisting of two lofty double height, double cube spaces i.e. a large waiting room and a similar sized booking hall, built one over the other. The exact plan is slightly trapezoid to conform to the out-of-parallel alignment of the surrounding viaducts. Three-storey wings containing office and other ancillary accommodation were placed at each of the four corners.

The main building fronted onto Rye Lane but was set back approx. 30 metres, creating a carriage driveway as a forecourt, the sides being enclosed by the high sides of the surrounding platforms.

The architect was Charles Henry Driver who designed all the stations on the SLL section of the railway, all of which had similar stylistic features, although all responding to the differing characteristics of each location. Driver was a successful practitioner in the mid nineteenth century whose best known works are the pumping stations built for the Metropolitan Board of Works as

part of the huge interceptor sewer project constructed about the same time. Together with the two other main stations on the SLL at Denmark hill and Battersea Park, these comprise his best known works. All buildings are listed grade II.

Stylistically Peckham Rye station shows a distinctive influence of the concurrent French Renaissance revival, with its high curved mansard roof complete with elaborate metal crests and railings, emphasised pavilions and an articulated main elevation with horizontal band coursing. It too was listed Grade II in 2011.

1.3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE STATION TO THE PRESENT DAY

Inevitably the station and its immediate surroundings have undergone considerable changes over the century and a half since they were completed. Apart from alterations to the main building itself, there have been extensive demolitions to other parts within the curtilage plus newer buildings and accretions. The effect, both the setting and the detail, has been to considerably compromise those aspects which made the station so distinctive when first constructed.

The Gateway project provides a unique opportunity to re-think the building's setting together with its architectural detail, and to re-establish its architectural importance. There are however real difficulties in identifying the relative significance of the various components that have survived to the present day and it is important therefore to understand how the station building and surrounding infrastructure have changed over time.

1.3.1 MAIN BUILDING

The first thing to note is that the configuration of the original brick shell and roof have survived more or less intact, albeit not immediately recognizable in certain areas. The main east elevation is the most unaltered, the only alterations being the loss of an original porte cochère over the front entrance and minor alterations to the windows and entrance doors. It should be stressed that repairs to windows and doors in this area are presently happening as a result of initiatives by Peckham Vision and local architect Benny O'Looney Architects. This work is quite independent of the Gateway project and has already enhanced the appearance of this elevation.

The most egregiously adverse impact on this elevation was the imposition of the 1930s development that fronts Rye Lane. It is expected the removal of these buildings will in itself have an immediate beneficial effect. This opening up will enable the elevation to be properly appreciated from a medium distance perspective but will also enable the roof profiles to be properly appreciated for the first time in eighty years. These comprise a curved mansard with centre pavilion to the main roof and hipped crowned roofs to the wings. These elements have lost certain detailing and the presumed lead coverings have been replaced by zinc but the overall form comprises one of the most distinctive aspects of the building.

1.3.2 CIRCULATION SPACE

A particular feature when first built was a highly elaborate system of access stairs, galleries and passageways that linked the booking hall and external areas with the high level platforms. This was the result of the need to link two entirely separate railway companies with the Booking Hall but also possibly to separate passengers arriving from those departing and to facilitate ticket collection. This arrangement was swept away in 1935 possibly on grounds of operational complexity but also because of decay and resulting high maintenance, much of it being external.

New access ways were constructed within a new full height rear extension built between the wings on the west side of the station together with a single staircase directly linked to a newly configured booking hall within this extension. With one significant exception, there is now no trace of the original access routes, although similar elements of these features can still be seen at Battersea Park station.

This exception is one of the internal stone stairs which leads from the booking hall to a half landing which in turn allowed access to the original Brighton side platforms. This stair was kept in use to provide indirect access to the large upper waiting room which by this time was in use as a public billiards hall. After the latter closed some fifty years ago, this stair survived but no longer in any kind of use. It has been 'rediscovered' in recent years and is in the process of restoration and extension to give internal access to the upper space, now renamed the Old Waiting Room. The stair takes up the entire area of the south east wing and is a highly regarded example of a stone stairway with enriched cast iron balusters and timber handrail. There is currently a major initiative to restore the OWR and bring it back into use as a major public facility in Peckham.

1.3.3 PLATFORMS

The original platform construction was no less distinctive, comprising timber superstructures supported by cast iron colonnades extending to ground level. The detailing was very distinctive featuring timber boarded shelters, castellated timber boarded canopies, and timber decking. Again the design was used and adapted for all the high level access stations of the SLL and assumed to have been designed by Driver. It should be noted that there were originally three platforms serving the Brighton (south) side although one of these was taken out of commission in 1928.

In 1960 work was started on the entire reconstruction of the platforms. The outer south side platforms were eventually replaced by an island platform, and the north side platforms were reconstructed with a renewed brick superstructure on a new supporting steel structure. It should also be noted that the similar platforms to the other SLL stations have also been replaced in recent years, the only surviving example now being the down platform at Battersea Park.

The net effect of these replacements has been to totally alter and distort the relationship of the station building with the platforms and viaducts. The south side is now separated by a large awkward gap where the original side platform was sited and a brick addition has been crudely inserted on the north side with no thought given to its architectural detailing and appropriateness. The platforms themselves have been subject to several other improvements in recent years to make them safer and more convenient but notwithstanding their usefulness, these make no effective contribution to the historic setting.

1.3.4 INTERNAL SPACES

A comparison between the original architect's drawings and the rooms today reveal that considerable changes have taken place both in the architectural nature of the spaces and in their uses. Some former uses such as ladies waiting rooms, parcels offices and refreshment rooms have entirely disappeared, other spaces have been stripped out and completely refurbished. Some spaces have changed function several times e.g. the upper SW wing floor has changed from waiting room to station masters residence and is now just a corridor leading to the adjoining tracks for maintenance purposes.

The impact of all this on the historic fabric has been considerable. In some cases the spaces are now unrecognizable and it is fair to say that the only evidence of original use is limited to the SE wing staircase (ref. para 1.3.2), a new Waiting Room in the NE wing at platform level, and the Old Waiting Room space. This latter survives mainly as a shell and the proposed refurbishment will be a matter of reconstruction rather than just repair and redecoration. Even the Booking Hall, although still occupying roughly the same original space, now bears little evidence of its original features and use.

For the sake of completeness, mention should be made of an extensive 'sanitary suite' rediscovered recently beneath the arches of the northern viaduct. These WCs would originally have opened off the Booking Hall and appear to date from the 1930s when there were two Refreshment Rooms at Ground Floor level. The WCs appear to have been out of use for some period of time but have minor historic interest as representative of public conveniences of the

period.

1.3.5 EXTERNAL ENCROACHMENT

Early O. S. maps seem to show the front area was mostly undeveloped until c.1935 when the Southern Railway who in 1923 had taken over all assets previously owned by the LBSCR and the LCDR, completed a commercial development that wrapped around the station frontage, extending from Blenheim Grove into Holly Grove. Apart from a small arcade and a passageway linking the arcades in front of the station building, the entire frontage was now built over.

This consisted of two storey retail units with ancillary use over ground floor shops. Externally the upper floors are plain white painted render with horizontal metal windows and flat roofs over: the overall architectural effect being typical of mid 30s commercial building with quasi art-deco effects. The buildings have not been well maintained and overall have had the entirely damaging effect of concealing the station frontage. This development has survived more or less intact, the only main change being the proliferation of roof plant presenting an unsightly prospect when viewed from above. These buildings are not seen to have any long-term usage and the Gateway project is predicated on their removal to create a new square.

It should be noted that when these buildings are removed the 1960s brick superstructure to platform 3 will probably seem even more obtrusive. Also the arches to each viaduct are not symmetrically set out relative to the station frontage: this may seem more obvious following demolition of the commercial buildings.

1.3.6 THE ARCHES

The area to the rear of the station extends for c.100 metres and is enclosed by the viaducts almost up to Bellenden Road, consisting of arch spaces, all of which appear to be tenanted. Public access is through two of the arches. The 1871 O.S. map optimistically shows the area being landscaped although the evidence is that the railway companies were quick to exploit the commercial possibilities of these spaces and they have probably been in continuous commercial use for most of their existence. Today the area can be defined in three distinct areas.

1 Dovedale Court extends from the rear of the station building to a point where the two viaducts are linked by a brick structure. This area contains 13 number of arches under the north viaduct and divided into about six separate tenancies all with forecourts fenced off. Current uses include a Builder's yard, a metal fabrication works and a gallery. The tenancies beneath the south viaduct are provided with rear access doors into Dovedale Court. There is a single vehicular access from Blenheim Grove.

The entire area is overlooked from the rear access galleries of the station building as well as from platforms 2 and 3. On the face of it the rear view of the station building presents a dismal prospect showing a proliferation of physical changes. Apart from the changes associated with the platforms and the infill extension as noted above, there is encroachment of loading platforms of a former parcels office, inappropriate uses such a steel fabrication yard and concrete access steps to signals and TV cameras. There are grounds for taking a particularly robust attitude to changes in this area, and being prepared to consider radical architectural changes.

2 Blenheim Court is the courtyard which extends between the arches from the brick structure to where the viaducts converge. There are several separate tenancies in the section most of which house creative uses and studios. Following the PNAAP Public Hearings, they are not now being considered as part of the Gateway project and in any case do not give immediate rise to conservationist considerations.

3 Blenheim Grove. All the arches under the south viaduct are accessed primarily from Blenheim Grove , There are approx 15 number of separate tenancies including garages, ware

houses and a small microbrewery.

1.4 THE WIDER URBAN SETTING

The area under consideration for the Gateway project is defined as that owned by Network Rail but clearly this has an impact on the immediate area and in turn is affected by the surrounding townscape. In addition to the main buildings described above, a more detailed inspection shows numerous instances of minor encroachment giving rise to awkward and visually intrusive areas.

The main adjoining areas can be defined as follows.

1.4.1 HOLLY GROVE AND ELM GROVE

Holly Grove pre-dated the building of the railway and the gardens were reduced in extent to accommodate the railway on the north side. Most of the houses are listed and although strictly speaking are overlooked from platform 4 they are mostly protected from direct overlooking by high screening. It shares an open space with Elm Grove where they both meet in the area behind the station.

The area is generally defined by the widened end of the Holly Grove shrubbery. This is an under-appreciated landscaped area but bounded by an awkward junction of original houses, part of the 1930s development (no 2 Holly Grove), and a two storey plain post war brick structure (no. 4 Holly Grove) previously in light industrial use, and currently being refurbished as a gallery space. There is also a four storey brick building with art deco influences fronting on to Rye Lane and from the pre-war period. It occupies an island site and was designed as a stand-alone building to be viewed from all sides.

Opposite in Elm Grove are a group of six double fronted houses mostly listed grade II and dating back to the earliest residential development in Peckham with stucco frontages and other detailing typical of Regency period architecture. Number 24 is the Peckham Liberal Club recently registered as a community asset under the Localism Act. This is becoming another important venue for the creative industries and social and community meeting spaces. The open space area between Holly Grove and Elm Grove at this point is one of the important Pocket Places in the current Sustrans/Council project, linking with the space across Rye Lane in front of the cinema. These interlinked spaces need to form an overall urban design for this area where the Gateway station environment merges into the town centre environment.

Although this area lies within the adjoining Holly Grove Conservation area it is an important part of the historic setting adjacent to the station buildings that at present have no physical or visual relationship with it. The Gateway works provides a unique opportunity to address this architectural lacuna.

1.4.2 BLENHEIM GROVE

This road is mostly lined by properties on the south side some of which are listed and which face the forecourts to the arches backing on to Dovedale Court. All Saints Church built about 1875 at the station end faces the arches next to the 1930s development. There is some minimal encroachment onto the forecourts but more intense development both in height and density should be examined carefully to preserve the amenity of the houses on the opposite side as well as the impact on existing creative business uses.

1.4.3 RYE LANE

There is a distinct sense that Rye Lane is restricted and narrow at the point where the railway bridges cross the road. This feeling is more one of perception than fact and may be because the highway is affected by the siting of bus stops and because of the confluence of pedestrian routes. The bridges themselves of course visually overshadow the highway.

The new forecourt at the heart of the Gateway proposal is intended to have very positive social and economic impacts on this part of Rye Lane. But thought should also be given to how these can be affected by the changing townscape and architectural setting. It is currently undecided whether to remove the entire Rye Lane frontage or merely the structure between the viaducts but similar consideration should be given to a visual / physical link with the buildings on the east side of Rye Lane. No. 117-125 is a four storey stand-alone building, formerly the C& A building with a good representative art deco façade. It will now face the station frontage and should provide a good counterpoint to the alignment of Rye Lane.

In turn this building fronts an area sandwiched between the railway viaducts and known colloquially as 'The Cobbles'. This space behind currently has a single use as a scaffolding yard but contains reminders of its historic use as a coal yard. These include a high level area formally used as goods sidings, and sections of the original cobbled surface with rail tracks still embedded. This space links in turn to a more distant intention to connect a series of 'green spaces' extending all the way to Queens Road.

This would also link with the long term proposal to create a pedestrian walk from the Copeland Park, connecting with a path from a new entrance to the Copeland Road and Bussey Building between the south railway bridge and no. 133 Rye Lane. This is in line with the aspiration in the PNAAP to increase the possibilities of pedestrian movement north and south in the town centre to the east of Rye Lane.

Hyperlink http://www.peckhamvision.org/wiki/Transforming_Central_Rye_Lane
<http://www.peckhamvision.org/wiki/>

These extended proposals creating axial vistas and connections must be borne in mind when considering the current issues surrounding the station areas.

On a more local level this suggests that the surfaces and street furniture should be linked so as to visually connect the opposite sides of Rye Lane, with shared surfaces to mitigate the effects of traffic and particularly buses.