

PECKHAM PLANNING NETWORK

RESPONSE TO THE INSPECTOR'S PROPOSED MAIN MODIFICATIONS TO THE PECKHAM AND NUNHEAD AREA ACTION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Peckham Planning Network (PPN) is an informal network of local individuals and organisations which:

- Is committed to sustainable development
- Seeks to facilitate local initiatives to articulate a vision and an agenda for future development in Peckham

Many of our members have engaged with the Peckham and Nunhead Area Action Plan from the start, with the aim of supporting the involvement of the whole community in a discussion of the options for the development of Peckham Town Centre. During July 2013 members of PPN participated actively in the Public Hearings on the PNAAP.

Part A of this document contains our collective response to the consultation on the main modifications to the Peckham and Nunhead Area Action Plan recommended by the Inspector following the Public Hearings in July 2013. Individuals and organisations that participate in PPN are also submitting their own responses on issues of particular interest to them.

Part B presents PPN's public engagement on this matter.

PART A: PECKHAM PLANNING NETWORK RESPONSE

1. Provision for usage of business space for artistic and creative enterprises.

The Inspector has proposed a number of main modifications to ensure that the PNAAP takes a more consistent approach to acknowledging Peckham's role as a creative 'hotspot' and encouraging developments that build on this reputation. While this approach is expressed in some sections of the PNAAP, we agree that it needs to be reinforced in other sections.

In particular, we support the Inspector's view that the PNAAP could '*...do more to encourage the provision of accommodation suitable for [artistic/creative] enterprises*' (Note to Southwark Council, August 2013, point 10).

The development of artistic and creative enterprises is already making an important contribution to the economy and reputation of the area. Supporting the creative economy could also bring other similar industries into the area and thus stimulate the creation of more worthwhile jobs. We note the development of East London Tech City, with media, creative and technology industries being, attracted to the area by an artistic and creative upsurge similar to the current scene in Peckham. Where appropriate, the PNAAP should support the maintenance and development of this kind of enterprise, for example through specific provision for the use of business space by artistic and creative enterprises, alongside small businesses and light industrial uses.

Specifically, we support the following proposed modifications:

- a) MM5, MM6 and MM7: amend Policy 6 on Business Space to include specific references to and provisions for artistic and creative enterprises.
- b) MM25, MM27: amend Policies 27 and 35 on Land use to include specific reference to and provision for use by artistic and creative enterprises.
- c) MM37: add the following statement to PNAAP4 (Copeland Industrial Park), '*The continued use of the Bussey building by creative and artistic enterprises will be supported and encouraged*'.
- d) MM38: add the following statement to PNAAP6 (Peckham Rye Station), '*The railway arches within the site known as Blenheim Court should be retained and made available for class B1 business use. The continued use of these premises by creative and artistic enterprises will be supported and encouraged*'.
- e) MM39 which provides for an updated figure of the Peckham Rye Station site, showing the indicative boundary of Blenheim Court.

Further, to ensure the consistency of the PNAAP in relation to the need to acknowledge Peckham's role as a creative 'hotspot' and to build on this reputation, we propose that a sentence be added to the section on proposal site PNAAP 6: Peckham Rye Station to emphasise the need for improvements coming forward on the site to avoid disrupting the emerging creative industries which are already taking root there and contributing to these innovative strands of the local economy.

As the Inspector has recognised, the core of Peckham town centre around Peckham Rye station, multi-storey car park and Bussey Building/Copeland Park has provided a suitable environment for the growth of the artistic and creative strands of the local economy. Some have established themselves over many years and have provided essential foundations for a wider variety of enterprises such as theatre, dance and other performance arts, artistic workshops and studios, sculpture and artistic events, innovative art galleries and bars & restaurants. The pace of change has quickened and continues to be very dynamic and in the last year more new enterprises have established to the rear of the station building in the railway arches in Dovedale Court, and in the buildings to the side of the station in Blenheim Grove and in Holly Grove.

The significance of these parts of the Peckham Rye Station site and the kinds of businesses which are taking root there are that they are a key part of the 'creative hotspot' that the PNAAP says it will build on. Encouraging these kinds of small locally-rooted enterprises on the station site is critical to continued development of Peckham's new and emerging creative economy. It is important to note that none of these parts of the site are required for the creation of the new public square, and are compatible with the development of a market space behind the station.

We suggest the following insertion to the section 'We are making this designation because' on page 178 for proposal site PNAAP 6: Peckham Rye Station:

**New artistic and creative businesses have located and continue to locate to the sides and rear of Peckham Rye Station, as part of the growth of the creative industries also taking place on the multi storey car park site, the Copeland Park site PNAAP 4, and the Peckham Liberal Club in Elm Grove. These together form the heart of the activity contributing to Peckham's reputation as a creative 'hotspot'. Improvements to the areas to the sides and to the rear of the station building coming forward need to avoid disrupting the existing and emerging clusters of artistic and creative enterprises to foster further on the site this innovative strand of the local economy. **

2. Proposal site PNAAP 2: Cinema / Multi-storey car park

The Main Modifications proposed by the Inspector include the deletion of development site PNAAP 2, currently the multi-storey car park accessed from Cerise Road and the cinema which is housed in the same building (MM34).

PPN supports the deletion of the designation of this site for development for the following reasons:

- Redevelopment of the site would put at risk local assets:
 - The current cinema is well-located for local residents and is a well-used community asset
 - Inventive use of the car park for artistic, creative, performance and social activities (particularly the well-established Hannah Barry Gallery and Frank's Cafe) has made this building a focal point for local cultural life.
- The existing building is providing a flexible space for a range of artistic and creative enterprises, forming a dynamic hub of activity with the Bussey Building and Copeland Park, with the galleries, studios, micro brewery, cafes and bars that have become established in the railway arches along Blenheim Grove (Dovedale Court and Blenheim Court), the commercial buildings along Blenheim Grove and Holly Grove, and recently the community asset registration of the historic and fully functioning Peckham Liberal Club in Elm Grove opposite the station as a significant community and events venue.
- The multi-storey car park building has become an iconic part of the local landscape and an attraction for visitors to Peckham.

Furthermore, as the Inspector has noted (Note to Southwark Council, August 2013, point 44) the contribution to housing, retail and business provision which could be achieved through the development of this site is relatively small: *'I find it pertinent that these figures account for a relatively small proportion of the overall housing, retail and business provision envisaged for the AAP area.'*

Specifically we support:

- a) MM34: Delete all of PNAAP 2 Cinema / Multi storey car park designation.
- b) The main modifications which follow from MM34 (e.g. MM8, MM9, M26, etc)

Given the lack of suitable alternative sites for a cinema in Peckham, we propose that MM1 be edited to remove the reference to alternative sites, as follows: *'... we will seek to maintain a cinema either on this existing site or on an alternative site within Peckham core action area'*.

3. Building heights

Many of PPN's members expressed their concerns during the Inspector's hearings about the introduction of tall buildings in Peckham town centre, as set out in the PNAAP. We are disappointed that the Inspector has not referred to many of the issues raised, such as the impact on valued local views.

However, we welcome the Inspector's proposal that the PNAAP should provide greater clarity about the requirement for tall buildings proposed for the sites specified to: *'...sustain and enhance the significance of Peckham's heritage assets, their settings and the wider historic environment, including conservation areas and listed and locally listed buildings'*. (Note to Southwark Council, August 2013, point 30). This requirement at least provides grounds for considering the impact of any proposed tall building on the surrounding area.

Similarly, we consider that the Inspector's further proposed main modification, that *'the taller element should be linked to an improved and generous public realm'*, provides some basis for ensuring that the environmental and quality of life impacts of tall buildings are properly considered in decisions about this kind of development.

Specifically, we support the following proposed modification:

MM19: amend Policy 26 on Building heights to require any tall buildings to sustain and enhance the significance of Peckham's heritage assets, their settings and the wider historic environment, including conservation areas and listed and locally listed buildings. Further to establish that any taller elements on three proposed sites (PNAAP1, PNAAP4 and PNAAP5) should be linked to an improved and generous public realm.

4. Presumption in favour of sustainable development

While PPN generally welcomes the introduction of a policy establishing the presumption in favour of sustainable development (MM30: insert a new Policy: Presumption in favour of sustainable development), as recommended by the Inspector (Letter to Southwark Council, 26 April 2013 and Note to Southwark Council, August 2013, points 35 - 36), we are concerned that the wording of the policy is unbalanced. Proposed Policy 48 states that the Council will *'always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible'*. This emphasises the Council's commitment to collaborate with those applying for planning permission; however, there is no equivalent commitment that the Council will always proactively involve the local community whose interests may be affected by the proposed development.

We suggest the following amendment to the wording of proposed Policy 48, in order to rectify this lack of balance: *'We will always work proactively with applicants, local residents and other affected groups jointly to find solutions which secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area.'*

PART B: PECKHAM PLANNING NETWORK PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Between 16-18 December 2013 the Peckham Planning Network worked with Peckham Vision on a community 'pop-up' event on the future of Peckham Town Centre at Peckham Springs Gallery, Dovedale Court. The purpose of the exhibition was to inform local people of the several current consultations relating to the town centre, including the PNAAP consultation on the proposed modifications. The exhibition looked at the impact these new policies or projects related to planning policy decisions will have on the community and to encourage them to take part in the latest round of consultation.

Over the two and a half days, the exhibition was well-attended by local people. One of the focusses of the exhibition was to highlight the contribution which the existing artistic and creative industries make to life in Peckham. In order to gauge public opinion on this issue, visitors to the exhibition were asked if they agreed with a statement on the importance of the creative industries, which can be found at **Appendix 1**. As outlined above, the PPN strongly believes that Peckham's existing artistic and creative enterprises are one of the keys to sustainable development in Peckham.

The signatures recorded can be found at **Appendix 2**. People visiting the exhibition were also encouraged to send in their responses to the Inspector's Report to Southwark Council separately.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we trust that Southwark Council will take our views into consideration when responding to the Inspector's Report.

Yours faithfully,

Lucie Carayon, Eileen Conn, Michael Mohamed, Paula Orr, Anna Plodowski

on behalf of Peckham Planning Network (PPN)

an informal network of local individuals,

supported by Peckham Vision, Peckham Power, the Peckham Society and Transition Town Peckham.

APPENDIX 1

PECKHAM PLANNING NETWORK STATEMENT ON THE INSPECTOR'S REPORT

I believe that the **creative industries** offer a sustainable way of providing growth in central Peckham which benefits the whole community. I agree that:

- Peckham's artistic and creative enterprises around Peckham Rye station, Blenheim Grove and Dovedale Court should be encouraged and supported;
- Southwark Council should look into the scope for other uses of the multi-storey car park , such as a permanent arts & culture centre;
- The Copeland site, including the Bussey Building, has great potential as a hub for creative and artistic enterprises;
- The Arches Studios in Blenheim Court make a great contribution and should be retained.

I therefore support the main modifications set out in the Table of Modifications required by the Inspector which relate to the creative industries, eg Policy 6 of PNAAP, PNAAP Site 2, PNAAP Site 4, PNAAP Site 6.

APPENDIX 2

SIGNATORIES TO PECKHAM PLANNING NETWORK'S STATEMENT ON THE INSPECTOR'S REPORT

The Statement at Appendix 1 was signed by the following Peckham residents and visitors to the community 'pop-up' event on the future of Peckham Town Centre held at Peckham Springs Gallery, Dovedale Court between 16 – 18 December 2013.

The signatories provided their addresses, but, very regretfully we omitted to ask them to indicate whether they were happy for their names and addresses to be published. We are therefore providing a copy of the signatures, with the addresses blurred (see attached pdf document). We are able to make available the full addresses if this is required.