

SITE ALLOCATIONS DPD

RESPONSE FROM WARDS CORNER COMMUNITY COALITION

Wards Corner Community Coalition endorses the response to the Site Allocations DPD consultation by Our Tottenham Planning Working Group. We provide additional specific detail on Seven Sisters, Wards Corner and the Wards Corner Community Plan in this document, drawing on our experience in planning, our deep knowledge of the site and our local expertise since 2007. We have annexed the Community Plan to this response, also available at <https://wardscornercommunityplan.wordpress.com/>.

1) Specific comments on ‘Tottenham High Road Area of Change’

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We disagree that the High Road will ‘benefit from the priorities set out in the Plan for Tottenham, in terms of improving the local economy, housing choice and standards, and environments’. In the case of Wards Corner, existing businesses, traders and residents stand to be displaced by development plans, not benefit from them. The text should be changed to explain HOW existing businesses and residents benefit from development. The Wards Corner Community Plan sets out how existing local economies can be nurtured, housing retained and environmental standards improved, and this approach could be explored in relation to the High Road more generally.

Bullet point 3) on Seven Sisters does not mention Wards Corner, despite this being a key local asset and proposed as a major development site with Apex House currently. Wards Corner should be mentioned here and reference to the Community Plan made, which demonstrates the potential for a restored Wards Corner building which retains and supports the unique character and retail offer currently on the site to be the centre point for a new gateway to Tottenham.

The last paragraph lists heritage assets in the Tottenham High Road area of change. Wards Corner should be included in this list. As set out on the community plan (p.21), two buildings are of particular architectural merit and historic significance: the Wards Corner building itself (now boarded up) and 1-2 West Green Road (Tottenham Wine retailer). Both buildings are locally listed and are part of the historic corridor of Tottenham High Road. We welcome the suggestion that the document recognises the importance of Tottenham High Road’s heritage and confirms ‘development will seek to build on these assets’. These statements should also encompass the Wards Corner site.

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The second bullet point confirms the council’s aspirations for a landmark/gateway at Seven Sisters. The community plan sets out how a restored Wards Corner building which retains and supports the unique character and retail offer currently on the site could perform this function (e.g. p.14).

The third bullet point sets out the Council’s aspiration for ‘Wards Corner regeneration delivering houses, shops and public realm improvements through

development and/or renewal'. The bullet point should be amended to acknowledge that housing and businesses are already present on the site – it is not an empty site – and aspirations for development and/or renewal should set out how existing occupiers will benefit and be involved in improvements. We welcome the suggestion that improvements can be achieved through renewal, and refer the council to the Community Plan for detailed work conducted on this option. In light of the benefits of renewal over comprehensive redevelopment, we suggest the text is amended to propose renewal rather than development.

2) Specific comments on THR7: Seven Sisters regeneration project

Existing policy designations

We welcome acknowledgment that this site is in a Conservation Area. Presently, the aspirations for this site do not set out how this will need to be considered in future developments.

The reference to the London Plan should take account of the updated evidence on retailing which (amongst other drivers) is presently causing the Mayor of London to consult on changes to the London Plan. The changes to the London Plan currently out to consultation by the Mayor of London suggest that pressure on retailing due to multi-channel shopping will require middle-level town centres and high streets to develop a specialist retail or other offer in order not to lose their functions. We suggest that this recognition suggests Haringey Council should re-think its approach to Wards Corner, which is already the site of a specialist and diverse range of retailing. Chapter 2 of the Community Plan sets out the role of Wards Corner in relation to the High Street more generally.

The existing Wards Corner indoor market is a major destination for London's large Latin American population (estimated one million) and other visitors from all over London who want to speak their languages, meet friends, let their children play with other families and enjoy live music. It is indeed a place where people linger and spend money. If properly restored and managed, it has even more potential and could attract many more visitors to Tottenham. The Community Plan sets out how Wards Corner could become a genuine destination and attraction for the people of Tottenham and London as a whole. However, present plans to re-locate the market occupants risk disrupting individual businesses as well as the 'Gestalt' of the market as a whole and surrounding businesses, in particular through the two-year hiatus caused by the current development plans and the tripling of rents which is expected to result.

More generally, Appendix 1 of the Community Plan sets out the policy and planning context at London-wide and Haringey level which supports the approach of restoration and retention of the existing Wards Corner buildings. We are therefore unconvinced that the development approach outlined for this site follows the existing policy designations – the analysis provided in the Site Allocations document is insufficient to demonstrate this.

Draft site allocation

As this site includes Apex House and Wards Corner, we consider that the aspirations for this site are best delivered through retaining the historic Wards Corner building, retaining and supporting the unique character and retail offer currently on the site. This should be built into the overarching framework for development of the site. The draft site allocation should be amended to reflect this.

Additionally, we suggest references to 'a broader mix of shops' and 'a revamped market' are amended in order to reflect the diverse and specialist retail offer presently on the site.

The Community Plan (especially Chapter 1) provides further detail.

What is the site and surrounding area like?

Paragraph 1: the description of the Wards Corner site neglects to mention the existing businesses present on the site outside the market. The reference to a 'local market' should also be expanded to reflect the very specific and specialist role of this market. Suggested text in italics below:

The existing Wards Corner indoor market is a major destination for London's large Latin American population (estimated one million) and other visitors from all over London who want to speak their languages, meet friends, let their children play with other families and enjoy live music. It is a place where people linger and spend money. If properly restored and managed, it has even more potential and could attract many more visitors to Tottenham.

Paragraph 2: the description of buildings as derelict and unsafe neglects to mention that requests from communities and businesses to bring these buildings back into use have been persistently turned down by Haringey Council, in particular in relation to the upper floors of the Wards Corner building. The text should be amended to acknowledge that the site has been left in a state of disrepair while a new developer has been sought. The text should acknowledge that refurbishment remains an option and that the buildings are structurally sound; the community plan demonstrates this in detail (in particular Section 2.3, which sets out design and restoration principles).

Paragraph 3: we welcome reference to the conservation area. It should be set out in the design principles how this will be taken into account.

Design principles

The text should acknowledge that a second development proposal also exists for the site, namely the Community Plan, which has now been validated and is out to consultation. The text should acknowledge that planning permission for the major mixed use scheme proposed by Grainger was granted on the basis that the indoor market be re-provided, and confirm that this remains a priority. The design principles should also make reference to the need to accommodate existing businesses outside the market within any future development.

When suggesting the potential for a 'modern style of architecture', the text should make clear that this is not the case in relation to those areas within the

conservation area, and address more generally how this 'modern style of architecture' will relate to the historic corridor of Tottenham High Street.

Implementation considerations

More detail is needed on the figure of £432,000 for CIL and £518,000 for s106 – where have these come from?

The provision of public money to support the reprovision of the indoor market within the Grainger development should also be included here, with further details as to how this will be monitored by the Council.

We refer the council to the Community Plan proposals for energy efficiency, biodiversity, sustainability and recycling within a refurbished Wards Corner building (section 2.3).

3) General comment on THR8: Seven Sisters Station

It is unclear how THR7 relates to THR8. Much more detail is required in order to comment on the proposed site allocation and should be provided in a separate document if need be.

4) Views on the future of Tottenham

WCC and the West Green Road and Seven Sisters Development Trust have spent some three years developing a community plan for Wards Corner, based around the retention and restoration of the market building and the nurturing, amplification and extension of its present strengths and community value. The Plan includes proposals for further community and exhibition spaces, and on-site services and facilities to support micro- and social enterprise, drawing and building on the existing strengths of the indoor market and immediate surrounding business community. It proposes that the regeneration and management of Wards Corner should proceed through the West Green Road and Seven Sisters Development Trust, enabling community-led regeneration to occur.

There is much in the Community Plan which is in line with existing Haringey Council planning policy, and its aims to support entrepreneurship, small business development and cultural space seem particularly relevant to existing priorities. Our overall comment on the future of Tottenham is that it has a wide range of existing community assets that should be retained and supported to grow organically in any regeneration plans, proceeding in collaboration with the community. The Community Plan for Wards Corner and the recent Our Tottenham commitment to support the development of community planning in Tottenham should give the council confidence to work with the community. This should provide an impetus for a shift from the existing top-down model of regeneration, to a community-led approach, which is likely to be far more effective in achieving the Council's aims to address problems of deprivation and opportunity in Tottenham. Regeneration in Tottenham should *not* be solely in the hands of the Major Businesses and Landowners Group. We look forward to much greater dialogue with Haringey Council on the future of Tottenham.

5) Background on Wards Corner Community Coalition

The Wards Corner Community Coalition (WCC) is a broad based coalition of groups and individuals who came together to challenge plans to demolish a city block in Seven Sisters, Tottenham, known locally as Wards Corner. WCC has campaigned since 2007 to save the market, local businesses and homes, meeting spaces and cherished buildings. WCC is made up of and supported by residents and a wide range of local groups including residents associations, trader organisations, Tottenham Civic Society, Tottenham Conservation Area Advisory Committee, Pedro Achata Trust, Pueblito Paisa, the Seven Sisters Multicultural Market Traders, the Tottenham Traders Association, Tottenham & Wood Green Friends of the Earth, Sustainable Haringey, Haringey Living Streets, Seven Sisters Permaculture, The Civic Trust, The Victorian Society, English Heritage, the New Economics Foundation, the Ethical Property Foundation, Bioregional, Planning Aid for London, Parity Projects, representatives of all political parties and other groups.

The WCC has two principal objectives:

- 1) Stop Grainger PLC and Haringey Council's plan to demolish Wards Corner and displace all the residents and businesses, building in their place unaffordable flats and retail space aimed at national chains.
- 2) Design and implement a community led development of the site that allows all current occupants to stay and provides space for new retail, community facilities and small startup businesses.

The former Wards department store has been home to a thriving indoor market since 1985, providing a space for diverse ethnic groups, including Afro-Caribbean and Latin American, to launch and grow their small businesses. It currently supports around 60 businesses, providing around 150 jobs. The particular role of the indoor market in supporting entrepreneurship amongst diverse groups is of particular value in light of the barriers and inequalities faced by migrant and ethnic minority groups in economic participation, and in light of the deprivation in the surrounding areas. The indoor market is also a social place that offers opportunities for inter-generational and inter-cultural exchange and support. There are additionally many local shops outside of this building within the wider Wards Corner site, which are also highly valued for the specific services and goods they supply and their social function in supporting Tottenham's diverse communities (e.g. Cosmos newsagent; Tottenham Wines; The Eye Practice).

WCC meets every Monday evening in Pueblito Paisa café, Seven Sisters Market, and regularly organises events and workshops. WCC has developed a Community Plan, which has just been validated by Haringey Council after a long delay, and is affiliated with the Our Tottenham Community Planning Network. WCC was selected by academics from the Open University as a case study for their 'Creative Citizens' project with the Royal College of Art, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council under the 'Connected Communities and Digital Economies' programme. This collaboration has resulted in the launch of an on-

line consultation platform for the Community Plan, using 3D images of the plans to invite comment (see <https://cc.stickyworld.com>).

The WCC believes that regeneration should be community-led, that the people affected should be involved at every stage of development and that any regeneration project should focus on meeting the needs of local people, not on displacing them. Haringey Council's approach to regeneration at Wards Corner has led to exclusion of many local people at every opportunity and explicitly to change the social makeup of the area. As such their development includes no social housing, will provide little to no space for small independent businesses and will not serve to meet the needs of many of the current residents at Seven Sisters.

Despite the thriving multi-cultural market, surrounding shops and huge potential of the site it has been blighted for many years by the Council' and Transport for London's plans for impending demolition and refusal to allow use of the building above the ground floor. Shopkeepers and landlords have not spent money on their buildings and the whole site appears at first site to be a mess. It is not therefore surprising that people who have not seen inside the Wards Stores building nor understood the Community Plan draw the quick conclusion that everything should be demolished and replaced by something new, regardless of its lack of quality and distinctiveness

The Council's low aspirations for our neighbourhood, shown by years of ignoring the community's views and proceeding with this dated and dispiriting proposal are a disaster. There is the real alternative of an exciting and genuinely community led scheme which, more than ever before, has engaged the talent, enthusiasm, commitment and energy of hundreds of multi-cultural Tottenham residents and traders.

The core work of the WCC is campaigning for a fairer, more just, more accessible, and more inclusive approach to planning and development, at local, borough and London-wide levels. This work goes hand-in-hand with our principal focus which is to halt the plans for demolition at Wards Corner and to implement a community-led redevelopment of the site.

Wards Corner Community Coalition

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