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From: Philippa Manasseh <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 26 February 2018 18:55
To: Londonplan
Subject: The New Draft London Plan.

The London Plan scarcely mentions Kensington nor even what is now a 22 acre wasteland in Earl's Court. Yet this is exactly the sort of area which should be covered by SD1 Opportunity Areas. The beautiful, internationally famous Exhibition Centre which was multi purpose was demolished as part of the Earl's Court Master Plan .The plan covers over 70 acres and is in two London boroughs and when planning permission was granted both were Tory run. There were supposed to be community gains as sweeteners but none of them are in Kensington and Chelsea. Now Hammersmith and Fulham is a Labour run borough and this is where all the planning gain is. If we are not careful we will have a car park for 20years on the site. The only people likely to benefit are a few Chelsea Football Club supporters.

The Death of the Masterplan is being caused by that part of the plan which involves the demolition of two housing estates being rejected by the current council of Hammersmith and Fulham . This leaves a huge gap. The developers have to think again and should reapply for planning permission from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham.

This could be under the direction of the London Plan section 2.07 to provide a mixture of housing including Social Rented and genuinely Affordable Housing and a replacement venue. As all Londoners are aware, a wide range of housing options is badly needed . Thirty percent of the current population of Earl's Court lives in social housing some of which is of very poor quality. Kensington and Chelsea's existing housing problems have intensified due to the tragedy of Grenfell Tower. Even before that the high cost of land and buy to leavers made housing all but the rich, impossible. Neither the developers or the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea have had any interest in social inclusion. Design is highlighted in the London Plan in Chapter 3 but to quote Kensington's MP.

"Facing Warwick Road, in place of our beautiful and now demolished art deco facade, would be a bizarre pair of supposedly landmark buildings that I am sorry to say are reminiscent of Italian fascist architecture."
Emma Dent Coad MP on #Capco "Exhibition Square." #saveEarlsCourt

The loss of the Earls Court Exhibition Centres One and Two, seriously damaged the small businesses which relied on the exhibition centre for trade such as hotels, cafes, pubs, shops and restaurants. London is now very short of exhibition space, which is vital to the economy. Earls Court Exhibition Centre represented 30% of London's and 16% of the UK's vital exhibition space. At the same time music venues are closing down all over the capital. The old Exhibition Centre provided both. It also contributed to the economy of the area and to London itself at over £1bn per annum.

What is needed is to treat this as an opportunity area providing appropriate housing and infrastructure as defined by section 2.04. The present scheme or what is left of it was for expensive properties, which may never have been lived in. The local authority may like the lack of rubbish needing collection but local shops need customers. By this I mean for useful and necessary things not just estate agents. There should be sufficient housing of a type which would not only create a community but could fit into the wider existing Earl's Court community. For this reason there should be easy access in and egress from the development site rather than allowing it to be isolated. For example a light tunnel as at King's Cross to Tesco's in the Cromwell Road, through the estate for walkers and cyclists since there will no longer be a north south access road. The present route is both unpleasant and dangerous. There are currently plans for an entrance to the tube station, which unbelievably, in the 21st Century, does not provide step free access to the tube from the Earls Court Masterplan site in Warwick Road. I cannot believe that is acceptable to the Mayor's Transport Strategy.

It seems, according to Property Week dated 15th of February 2018, that the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, has bought the Empress State Building (on the Hammersmith and Fulham side of the border) for use by the police. This gives the opportunity for a local police station to be included on the site something which gives a feeling of safety and security to a community at a time when police stations are being closed down locally.

There will be a need for medical facilities. Currently GP services in the area are inadequate and this provides the perfect opportunity to correct this. The Earls Court Masterplan envisages a private hospital on the site. Given the ongoing campaigns to save our local major hospitals and their A & E departments, this is not acceptable. The closure of the Thamesbrook Extra Care facility off the Kings Road has lost over 50 beds to the Royal Borough with currently no work started on a promised replacement. Here is an opportunity for some joined up thinking – let us look at building a cottage hospital, as well as a rehabilitation centre and convalescence home which is publicly owned and run for the benefit of the whole community.

There are currently no secondary schools in the area. The original idea was the new property owners would be too rich or too absent to need state schools. This may not be the case now if housing is provided for families. Therefore there is a good case for a secondary school. There is currently a Church of England primary school in Warwick Road which could either be extended or another school built. A school which could provide access for adult education or better still a purpose built college to help older residents retrain and provide access courses for younger adults, would be best.

Sources

Johnson, Darren, AM, Letter 20 June 2013 to Boris Johnson
Save Earl's Court Campaigners & Save Earl's Court Supporters Club: Earl's Court, Rescue, Recovery, Renaissance. (2017)
Earl's Court Master Plan

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