

Our Ref: MS/1000

7th December 2016

Greater London Authority
City Hall
The Queens Hall
The Queen's Walk
London
SE1 2AA

Dear Sir

New Vision for London – A City for All Londoners - Representation made on behalf of the V&A

On behalf of the V&A, we submit representations to the Greater London Authority in response to the document published for consultation entitled "A City for All Londoners".

The V&A's representation is made under the following headings.

- 1. Background to the V&A**
- 2. Existing London Plan Policy Context**
- 3. City for All Londoners - Part 5: "Participation in Culture"**
- 4. V&A – Planning Policy Considerations.**
- 5. Recommendations.**

1. Background to the V&A

The V&A – the world's leading museum of art and design and performance, enriches people's lives by promoting the practice of design and increasing knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of the designed world.

Although the V&A's collections are international in their scope, they contain many particularly important British works - especially British silver, ceramics, textiles and furniture.

The Museum was established in 1852, following the enormous success of the Great Exhibition the previous year. Its founding principle was to make works of art available to all, to educate working people and to inspire British designers and manufacturers. Profits from the Exhibition were used to establish the Museum of Manufactures, as it was initially known, and exhibits were purchased to form the basis of its collections.

The Museum moved to its present site at Cromwell Road in 1857 and was renamed the South Kensington Museum. Its collections expanded rapidly as it set out to acquire the best examples of metalwork, furniture, textiles and all other forms of decorative art from all periods. It also acquired fine art - paintings, drawings, prints and sculpture - in order to tell a more complete history of art and design.

In 1899, Queen Victoria laid the foundation stone of a new building designed to give the Museum a grand facade and main entrance. To mark the occasion, it was renamed the Victoria and Albert Museum, in memory of the enthusiastic support Prince Albert had given to its foundation.

Contemporary design has always been at the heart of the V&A's work and the Museum remains true to its founding mission of promoting excellence in design and manufacturing. It works hard to encourage contemporary designers, acquiring their work, and providing inspiration through its displays.

The V&A, Sadler's Wells, The University of the Arts London and University College London (UCL) are also now working with the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) to form a new cultural and higher education quarter on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Part of the Olympic legacy, the project has been championed by the Mayor of London and backed by £141 million investment from central government. The scheme is expected to deliver 3,000 jobs, 1.5 million additional visitors and £2.8 billion of economic value to Stratford and the surrounding area.

The ambition is to create a new model for how cultural and educational organisations can work in the future, with increased collaboration, a real sense of connection to the local community and a desire to support emerging talent and lead new research.

The V&A vision for Stratford will complement the existing V&A sites. The new venue will present more of the Museum's outstanding collections in never-before-seen ways and greatly enhance access to 1000 years of design, architecture, art and performance. It will encourage public participation in almost every aspect of museum activities with storage, research and conservation spaces that are visible to the public.

Permanent galleries on site will include the first dedicated museum space in the UK to document the full breadth of digital design and begin to write the design history of that fast moving field. There will be space for a rolling programme of major exhibitions, as well as studios for new and emerging practitioners.

Building work will commence in 2018 with a target opening date of 2020/2021.

2. London Plan Policy Context

V&A, Cromwell Road.

The V&A, together with the National History Museum, Science Museum, and the Albert Hall and the internationally renowned colleges of education, arts and music – forms part of the “Albertopolis” which is an acknowledged world-wide cultural destination.

The unique National and International cultural status of this grouping of cultural institutions is acknowledged in the adopted London Plan where the V&A and other institutions are identified in Map 4.2 as being within the “*South Kensington Museum Complex/Royal Albert Hall Strategic Cultural Area cultural quarter.*”

Policy 4.5 – London’s Visitor Infrastructure - (f) states that:

“The Mayor will, and boroughs and relevant stakeholders should: promote, enhance and protect the special characteristics of major clusters of visitor attractions including those identified in Strategic Cultural Areas in Map 4.2.”

Policy 4.6 – “*Support for the enhancement of arts, culture, sport, and entertainment*” of the adopted London Plan also states that:

“The Mayor will and boroughs and other stakeholders should support the continued success of London’s diverse range of arts, cultural, professional sporting and entertainment enterprises and the cultural, social and economic benefits that they offer to its residents, workers and visitors.”

Supporting text in paragraph 4.32 states that:

“London’s cultural and creative sectors are central to the city’s economic and social success. The Mayor’s Cultural Metropolis^l seeks to maintain the capital’s status as one of greatest world cities for culture and creativity..”

and

“London’s internationally renowned historic environment, natural landscape and cultural institutions, including museums, galleries and theatres, are a defining part of the capital’s heritage as well as major visitor attractions. Strategic cultural areas (Map 4.2 and Policy 4.5) identify, protect and seek to enhance significant clusters of these institutions and their settings including Theatreland in the West End, the South Bank/ Bankside/London Bridge, the Barbican, Wembley, Greenwich Riverside, the South Kensington museums complex/Royal Albert Hall.”

V&A, Olympic Park

The London Plan also identifies the Olympic Park being within a Strategic Cultural Area.

3. "A City for All Londoners" – Part 5 - Participation in Culture

The V&A note the following paragraphs in relation to the Mayor's consultation relating to Cultural Activities in London:

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"I want to end this vision document with a focus on one of my highest hopes for the Mayoralty – the thread that joins us all together and creates a city we can be proud of- London Culture" We are blessed to live in a City virtually unrivalled anywhere on the planet for the breadth and quality of the arts and culture that is on offer.

Culture enriches people's lives, it makes people healthier and happier and it helps to bring different communities together. But is also goes much wider and can be a driver for regeneration.

But for all London's amazing cultural assets, it is a real shame that, at the moment, only one third of Londoners feel that they make the most of cultural on their doorstep. It is remarkable that we are home to globally renowned institutions like the British Museum, that Tate and V&A – yet still too many Londoners are not fully making what the City has to offer.

Through my policies on culture, I want to change that. I am determined to preside over a city in which no Londoner is left behind our fantastic arts and culture. I want to work with our amazing institutions to open them up to more London's communities – particularly those least likely to make the most of them and I have plans on how I might support this.

The London Borough of Culture is a major new feature that I outlined in my manifesto. I believe it can play a major role in our city's cultural landscape, building on the European City of Culture model"

4. V&A – Planning Policy Considerations

The V&A seek to continually enhance their reputation as one of the world's leading museums - both at its existing site at Cromwell Road and also at their complimentary site being developed within the Olympic Park - in order to increase the attractiveness of the V&A to millions of visitors from both the UK and also internationally.

To deliver the V&A's future vision and operational needs and the associated benefits that this brings both to London as World City – including the participation in culture by local communities - the V&A seeks continued strategic planning policy support from the Mayor through the cultural policies in the London Plan. This strategic planning policy support provides the necessary strategic planning framework within which local development planning policies can be formulated by the Boroughs.

A recurring planning policy issue affecting the V&A is ensuring that local planning policy strikes the right balance between meeting the needs of local communities and interest groups within the South Kensington Museum Complex/Royal Albert Hall strategic cultural area whilst also ensuring that policy supports the V&A in its role as national &

international cultural institution which attracts visitors both nationally and internationally.

Planning issues that the V&A have to address in implementing its needs as a national and international cultural institution include the following:

- The need to have temporary exhibitions of national and international significance and in support of these exhibitions the V&A will need the ability to install outdoor works of art within the vicinity of their Cromwell Road site and also at the future Olympic Park site.
- The need to have ability to provide associated high quality retail, restaurant and conference facilities within the museum buildings in order to enhance the attractiveness of the museums and which also help fund the operational costs of running of the museum complexes given that entry to the V&A is free of charge.
- To ensure that when visitors access the South Kensington Museum Complex/Royal Albert Hall Strategic Cultural Area, there are retail and restaurant facilities that not only meets the needs of local residents but also the needs of the visitors to both the V&A and other institutions within the strategic cultural quarter.
- The need to ensure there is a consistent and unified local planning policy framework given that the South Kensington Museum Complex/Royal Albert Hall Strategic Cultural Area is within both Kensington and Chelsea and the City of Westminster.
- To ensure visitors have access to a high quality and frequent public transport access to South Kensington Museum Complex/Royal Albert Hall Strategic Cultural Area the museums and to the Olympic Park.
- The need for TfL to provide disabled access from South Kensington Underground enabling access for all to the South Kensington Museum Complex /Royal Albert Hall strategic cultural area.
- To ensure that the public realm between the underground stations serving the V&A's museums are of high environmental quality, attractive and safe.

5. Recommendations

The V&A welcome the opportunity to comment upon the Mayor's new vision for London and with specific reference to policies relating to London's cultural role, the V&A wish to work in partnership with the Mayor, other cultural institutions and other stakeholders in relation to the new London Plan by:

- Reviewing, and where necessary updating, the London Plan's cultural policies context which re-iterates the significant role that cultural institutions have – such as the V&A – in promoting London as a World City of Culture.
- The need for having a specific strategic cultural policy relating to the South Kensington Museum Complex/Royal Albert Hall and also

for the Olympic strategic cultural area - given the importance of these strategic cultural quarters within the London wide context.

- To ensure that the London Plan's cultural policy vision strikes the right balance between meeting both local needs and needs of the cultural institutions within strategic cultural areas.
- To work with the Mayor to ensure that local communities have access to and participate in the cultural institutions.
- To work with the Mayor and TfL in supporting and enhancing public transport and pedestrian, disabled and cycle access, as well as public realm environmental improvements to the South Kensington Museum Complex/Royal Albert Hall and the Olympic strategic cultural areas.

The V&A therefore very much welcomes the opportunity of working with Mayor for London and in association with the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, the LLDC, TfL and local community groups, in taking forward the Mayor's Cultural vision for London.

Yours faithfully



Mike Straw
Planning Director
RPS/CgMs

cc Steve Hyde, V&A