



To Chris Hayward  
Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee  
City of London Corporation  
Guildhall  
Aldermanbury  
London EC2V 7HH

23 June 2022

## **LONDON WALL WEST – RESPONSE TO PROPOSALS PUBLISHED 18 JUNE 2022**

### OVERALL COMMENT

We are dismayed that the fundamentals of the proposed design remain the same as those we saw last December. The scheme proposes the demolition of Bastion House and the Museum of London. In their place is planned a huge office-led development of some 780,000 sq. ft, including two massive new towers, with limited cultural and green space. The scheme is wholly inappropriate for a site of such significance, both in its physical form and in terms of its proposed usage. Moreover, it undermines the City's desire, as expressed in Destination City, to be one of the world's premier destinations through its cultural offerings.

### OUR OBJECTIONS

We have been told repeatedly that the principal objective of the proposed development is to raise funds – for the move of the Museum of London and other City projects. By focusing on this objective, the City will:

- Ignore the site's rich history, which features the Romans, Shakespeare, and John Wesley and many other historical features. The opening up of the Roman Fort Gate will be severely diminished by its commercial setting.
- Sacrifice the site's public cultural heritage: as the home of the Museum of London for 50 years and the previously intended location of the world-class Centre for Music. It remains the Southern gateway to Culture Mile linking the South Bank and Tate Modern to St. Paul's Cathedral and beyond.
- Confront visitors instead with a huge commercial development, with a cultural offering representing just over one per cent of its space.

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## **BARBICAN QUARTER ACTION**

- Compromise the nature and architectural integrity of the Barbican Quarter. The Barbican is world-renowned and one of the City's major post-war achievements. The Museum complements the public benefit of the Barbican while Bastion House reflects its admired Brutalist design. The new proposals include little in the way of public benefit while the height and mass of the buildings will dominate and diminish the surrounding neighbourhood.
- Undermine many of its own policies and statements: the draft City Plan; the Open Space, Responsible Business and Climate Change strategies; the aims expressed in Destination City and the desire for the City to be a cultural hub, as expressed in the Barbican/Golden Lane Strategy .

There are also questions concerning the scheme's compatibility with the National Plan and the National Planning Framework . How can the City ask others to respect its policies if it fails to do so itself?

### THE CITY'S CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

It is now widely agreed that, because of the devastating impact of carbon emissions on global warming, and the large proportion of carbon emissions resulting from major construction projects, serviceable buildings should not be demolished if re-fitting them is a feasible alternative. Our polling showed that 88% of Barbican residents opposed demolition of Bastion House and the Museum of London. However, the Whole Life Carbon Assessment report prepared by the City's project team dismisses the option of retaining Bastion House without providing the necessary factual evidence. The judgement is based on a hypothetical assessment of risk rather than a full structural survey.

Moreover, if the scheme were to go ahead in its current proposed form, it would add over 45,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere during the demolition and construction phases. This is more than the entire CO<sub>2</sub> annual output of the City Corporation's operational activities. How would this be compatible with the City's stated aim of achieving Net Zero in its own operations by 2027?

### THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

The City has stated its *commitment to transparency and delivering a robust consultation process*. We have commented elsewhere that this is far removed from our experience. Above all, the City has failed to engage with local stakeholders



on the fundamental issues about the site as recommended by the National Planning Policy Framework.

While the Project Team has specified the nature of the consultation undertaken to date and highlighted the key concerns that arose (the height and mass of the proposed buildings, and issues of sustainability) they have provided *no information whatsoever* on the extent of those concerns, and why so little has been done to address them. We can only assume that the City's failure to provide us with detailed information is because there is widespread opposition to these proposals.

In addition, the Project Team's graphics are selective and misleading. There is little assessment of the scheme's impact on the Barbican Estate and neighbouring conservation area. No 3D models demonstrating the full scale of what is proposed have been made available although we know they exist and their availability for stakeholders is encouraged in the London Plan .

We urge the City to live up to its commitment to transparency and consult meaningfully with the local community. The current process falls far short.

## CONCLUSION

This remains a short-sighted proposal, lacking vision and apparently driven solely by the desire to raise money. Furthermore, the intention to enter into a long lease with a developer carries the risk that even the limited public benefits of the proposal would later be jettisoned by the developer.

As our polling showed, there is no evidence the scheme has the support of the local community. It is contrary to many of the City's own policies. This is an outstanding site crying out for an imaginative scheme respecting its heritage and location. We once more invite the City to stop, think again, and work with us and the wider community to develop a scheme worthy of the site, the City and London itself.

**Adam Hogg and Averil Baldwin Joint Chairs Barbican Quarter Action**

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