

PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT AT 110 THE QUEEN'S WALK

Representations by Team London Bridge

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1. Team London Bridge (TLB) is the Business Improvement District (BID) representing over 350 businesses in the area between London Bridge to the west, Tower Bridge to the east, and south towards Bermondsey. Team London Bridge has a strong remit from businesses since 2015 to deliver the [London Bridge Plan](#). Our vision is to make London Bridge one of the most sustainable, culturally innovative and compelling places for business and tourism in the world.

2. We welcome this opportunity to inform proposals for the “*transformation*” of 110 The Queen’s Walk – the former City Hall. This is a prestige building in a primary Thames-side location overlooking the Tower of London World Heritage Site. It is located in the Thames Policy Area where Southwark Local Plan Policy P25 demands a sensitive approach. The project should adopt the highest standards of design in both the building and public realm and make a major economic and cultural contribution to London Bridge’s future.

3. Overall, we find much to welcome in the proposals which seek to respect the distinct character of the former City Hall, improve the public realm and strengthen the cultural offer. They seek to address many of the known shortcomings in the original building and enhance its contribution to the area.

4. In taking the proposals forward we ask that they address the following considerations:

Land use – We support the mix of uses proposed for the site, including additional retail and cultural uses. These will also activate the frontage and improve the relationship between the buildings and the surrounding public realm. There is an important balance to be struck, however, between the historic civic use of the building and the mix of future uses. For example, the relationship between the use of The Scoop as a venue and hosting cultural events that make best use of the indoor and outdoor spaces may impact on the plans for the “*flexible retail zone*”. The primary use of The Scoop should be for events and cultural uses and it should not be a retail destination or primarily used for outdoor eating and drinking. We urge that consideration is given to providing public access to the former London’s Living Room at the top of the main building. Since its inception this has offered significant public and civic benefits in terms of the key view of the Thames and the Tower of London World Heritage Site. We are aware of the cultural and economic benefit that a similarly unique viewing platform at The Shard brings.

Design – We welcome the intention to be sensitive to the distinct curved form of the former City Hall. This “*striking geometric design*” was acknowledged by Historic England in considering the building for the national heritage list and it was denied a certificate of immunity from listing. We are aware of its inclusion in the proposed Local List for Southwark. This confirms the need to respect the character of the existing building and we urge that the proposals are fully considered by Southwark’s Design Review Panel. There is a risk that the changes consequent upon an expansion of the building and the replacement of the sloping façade with a combination of vertical and horizontal elements disrupts and

diminishes the distinct symmetry and silhouette of the building, particularly the characteristic south curve. The building has an iconic status as a result of its distinct design and is a significant driver for visitors to London Bridge. The impact of the changes needs to be fully explained and justified in the Design and Access Statement which will accompany any planning application

Public realm – We welcome the intention to improve the public realm around the building. The site is a designated area of Borough Open Land and is adjacent to the Metropolitan Open Land of Potters Fields Park (not Potter’s Field Park). The ownership boundary between the site and Potters Fields Park is uncertain on the ground and should remain blurred although there needs to be clarity on the long term management of all the open space. The removal of the “garage’ structure” can bring welcome benefits, but also raises questions, for example the provision of toilets currently housed there. It is unclear what consequential changes might be intended for Potters Fields Park as a result of these changes and their impact on pedestrian and other flows through the area. These need significant further discussion, including with Potters Fields Park Management Trust, and should be informed by a detailed analysis of current and future pedestrian and other flows.

We are concerned, for example, by the narrowing of the route running to the east of the expanded building which may not have the capacity for pedestrian flows in the area, particularly if there is outdoor seating for a restaurant here, which would need careful management. The project should also embrace the reality that the open space along The Queen’s Walk by The Scoop is occupied on a semi-permanent basis by market stalls/cabins/pagodas for a significant amount of both the summer and winter every year. This impacts pedestrian flows and impacts on the relationship with use of The Scoop and its surroundings for other events and activities. There are opportunities for enhanced legibility through appropriate navigational and visual cues and wayfinding across the site.

We also believe there are opportunities for improved cycle parking in the area (Weaver’s Lane) and the site could also be served by cycle parking provision nearby in Battle Bridge Lane, which is a more visible and accessible place to leave a bike before entering London Bridge City.

Greening – We support the intention to take inspiration from previous use of the site as the William Curtis Ecological Park. This pioneering early example of urban greening has much to offer the future. The site can make a major contribution to the London Bridge “Green Grid”, as has recently been achieved nearby in London Bridge City with the Putting Down Roots Garden. Significant further detail will be needed to demonstrate how the approach will be delivered and how it will be distinct from the current greening approach. The site is intensively used for markets, cultural and other activities and it is important that other greening initiatives are compatible with this. This may impact on some of the proposals for The Scoop and different options may need to be further explored. We welcome the intention to provide vertical planting on the altered building. This offers a significant greening opportunity consistent with Southwark Local Plan Policy P13 and P59, and supports the London Bridge Area Vision policy stating that “Greenery and innovations in environmental resilience should be incorporated into buildings”. It will be important that the approach is integrated into the design and its future management is assured.

Cultural offer – The site should be making a major contribution to delivering the [London Bridge Culture Strategy](#) and strengthening the community. It is the premier outdoor venue for cultural activity in London Bridge. The improvements to make The Scoop and its related buildings and spaces more workable are welcome. The project provides an opportunity to revisit and strengthen the current planning obligations for supporting cultural activity. It could

also contribute to the Social Regeneration Charter outcomes envisaged by Southwark Local Plan Policy SP2. We believe there are particular opportunities for developing an innovative relationship between the indoor and outdoor space at The Scoop to support events and other cultural activity. The nature and quality of this cultural offer is critical to ensuring the overall impact of the project is to retain and strengthen the informal appeal of the area, especially to families and tourists, for example in making them feel welcome and included when not spending money, and avoiding an overly corporate look and feel.

Sustainability – The former City Hall building included pioneering sustainability elements and was an inherently low energy design. There are significant advantages in terms of embodied energy and use of materials in the option largely to retain and extend the existing building and we welcome the intention to integrate sustainability into the future design. It should be a project ambition to achieve net sustainability improvements while still supporting a significant expansion of the existing building. We have identified the following measures as appropriate in relation to other schemes in the area – BREEAM Outstanding, WELL Platinum, air quality positive, EPC Rating A, wirescore (platinum) – while recognising these can relate better to new build schemes. It will be important that the project establishes and achieves such demanding sustainability outcomes. In London Bridge we have an agreed ambition to be one of the most sustainable places for business and tourism in the world, which is set out in the [London Bridge Net Zero Routemap](#) for 2030 in line with Southwark and London policy, and each new development in the area (and particularly an iconic building like this) is a significant opportunity to support this journey.

Heating and energy – We are working with major local stakeholders to develop a district heat network concept in the knowledge that large scale communal projects provide the most significant opportunity to deliver the aims of the London Bridge Net Zero Routemap. The project could make a major contribution to delivery of this routemap as part of the overall management of the More London estate. It includes significant underground space which could be harnessed by a district heat network serving the whole area, including as a location for necessary plant and equipment. We should be happy to discuss how to include this scheme, and can supply a copy of the pre-feasibility report. We welcome the contribution that solar panels can provide, particularly if this could enable a wider conversation about solar panels on the estate.

Servicing – We do not have any details of the likely impact of the project on vehicle movements, especially for servicing the building. It would be consistent with other local initiatives for any expansion to be accompanied by use of cargo bikes as the norm. We would welcome an overall reduction in vehicle movements as a result of the expansion proposals. Other large local developments are committing to use consolidation hubs, like the centre in Dartford established by Guy's and St Thomas' Trust, to considerably impact their servicing needs

5. We should be pleased to discuss further how to help deliver shared ambitions for this important location.