



King Street Regeneration

Public square stakeholder workshop

7pm, 9 December 2009 – Hammersmith Town Hall

Attendees

Cllr Mark Loveday	LBH&F
Nigel Pallace	LBH&F
Bill Dyke	LBH&F
Rob Mansfield	LBH&F
David Walters	King Street Developments
Matthew Bonning Snook	King Street Developments
Nikki Gibbard	King Street Developments
Dan Burr	Shepherd Robson
Peter Griffiths	Shepherd Robson
Robert Townshend	Townshend Landscape Architects
Phil Jaffa	Scape Design Associates
Stephanie Shuttes	Scape Design Associates
Natalie Moorse	M&N Communications
Shaffique Manson-Visram	Design for London
Jane Wilmot	H&F Disability Forum
Keith Gray	H&F Disability Forum
Melanie Whitlock	Hammersmith Society
Tom Ryland	Hammersmith Society
Angela Clarke	Hammersmith Society
Avril Grundberg	St Peter's Residents Association
Angela Dixon	Hammersmith & Fulham Historic Buildings Group
Michael Burrowes	Brook Green Residents' Association
Victoria Timberlake	Friends' Meeting House

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Cllr Mark Loveday introduced the workshop and gave a summary of the current timetable: although the project was put on hold because of the economic climate, the rest of the scheme is now being worked up. Due to the importance of the public square this is the first aspect to be brought forward.

2.0 Scape Design Associates

- 2.1 Scape presented a short film showing their initial design proposals and set out the constraints of the initial design brief on their proposals: that the square is effectively a 40m² space bounded by the reinstated town hall steps and pedestrianised Nigel Playfair Avenue.
- 2.2 There are two governing principles behind Scape's designs:
- To ensure there is appropriate synergy between the Town Hall and the square to create a place of prestige;
 - To draw people into the square by exploring the possibility of extending the use of textures and materials across to the opposite side of King Street, creating a clear signpost into the square and slowing traffic down
- 2.3 It should be noted that unlike Lyric Square this is not a through route so offers its own unique opportunities in terms of different uses – Scape stated that they would value input from all attendees as to how they would like to see the square function.

3.0 Uses

Different potential uses of the square were discussed, including as an outdoor temporary cinema or performance space. Specific points raised were as follows:

- 3.1 The potential for use of the reinstated steps as a platform and performance space to allow activity to spread out from inside the town hall.
- 3.2 The ground floor uses of the buildings surrounding the square will determine how active the space is – at the moment the proposal is to have retail space to the west and cafes/restaurants to the east.
- 3.3 The general consensus was that there should be no single use or designed-in 'theme' for the square as this will make it less flexible and more likely to date quickly.
- 3.4 The square should be a civic space which can speak for itself and provides an appropriate setting for the Town Hall, but should not have a prescribed identity and its character should be allowed to develop over time.

4.0 Access

4.1 Pedestrian access to Town Hall

- 4.1.1 In general, the reinstatement of the Town Hall steps as a design feature was supported, as long as there is also properly integrated step-free access.
- 4.1.2 The step-free ramp access should be given as much attention in the design process as the steps as the main access route to the Council office and One Stop Shop for most people, including people with prams etc as well as the disabled.

4.2 Shared space across King Street

- 4.2.1 Some concern was expressed with the idea of extending the square across to the other side of King Street, particularly by the Disability Forum, in terms of the idea of 'shared space' and a potential conflict between pedestrians and vehicles.
- 4.2.2 Scape stated that if the square is extended to the opposite side of King Street it will be a visual link only, and that level changes will be retained to ensure there is no shared space. *Post meeting note – the space allocated for the public square is the area immediately in front of the Town Hall only. Any extension across the road would subject to discussion and agreement with LBH&F.*

4.3 Disability Forum comments (summary of points received from the Disability Forum after the workshop)

- The main entrances to the current town hall to be step free so people with mobility impairments or buggies do not feel they are second class citizens when everyone else goes up the steps.
- The town hall square areas including grassy places to be generously proportioned and step free.
- Visually impaired people need to be able to navigate themselves in the town hall square and its facilities, to the current town hall and the new town hall complex.
- Blind people who rely on tapping their canes for navigation need a building line or other physical delineation to help them know where they are independently in open space e.g. along King Street or towards the town hall or the town hall square.
- The new town hall square is not that large a space so we think care is needed to make sure it is welcoming and works well as a space particularly for people using/visiting the town hall and the town hall square facilities.
- We would not support space shared by pedestrians and vehicles unless there was a clear physical step so pedestrians knew when they were stepping into the road. Relying on visual contact between driver and pedestrian is not safe for those pedestrians who for whatever reason cannot do this.
- We also do not support cyclists using or sharing pedestrian space in the town hall square. We were pleased this view was shared by the architects who are keen that the town hall square is a space to be enjoyed and used by people and

pedestrians and not used as a rat run for cyclists.

5.0 Design

5.1 Link to the river

The idea of making a visual connection between the square, the river and the creek was discussed. Scape responded that its current design references the creek and marks the route to the river. LBH&F confirmed that there is no possibility that the creek can be reinstated.

5.2 Materials

It was stated that a simple palette of high quality materials should be used on the square. Shepherd Robson commented that the same palette will also be used on the surrounding buildings to ensure the square works in harmony with its surroundings.

5.3 Asymmetry

It was asked why Scape's design appears to be asymmetrical - Scape responded that the asymmetry will help guide people into the square who area approaching up King Street and that the asymmetry is a slight optical illusion as the proposed trees and raised terraces all lie perpendicular to the Town Hall.

5.4 Green spaces

The use of green spaces, planting, raised lawns etc were encouraged to ensure the square is a 'green', in contrast to the more sterile Lyric Square.

5.5 Water feature

Some comments were expressed on the success of the current water feature in Scape's design. It was asked if there is any possibility for the water feature to be sculptural and more a piece of public art - Scape responded that they would be happy to work with a local artist to develop the water feature in further detail.

5.6 Acoustics

There was concern that noise from the road will be intrusive during events in the square. Scape stated that the water feature would provide background 'white noise' to help mitigate traffic, with the water flow varied to provide different levels of noise. LBH&F was asked to explore whether the traffic at Argyle Place can be made two-way to prevent traffic from queuing on King Street beside the square.

5.7 Relationship to Lyric Square

Although there was a general consensus that the square should be very different to Lyric Square, it was noted that there is a natural synergy between the two, as they anchor both ends of King Street, and there is the potential to hold joint events across both locations.

6.0 Other

6.1 Nigel Playfair Avenue

The Historic Buildings Group expressed its opposition to the raising of Nigel Playfair Avenue and the construction of a bridge across the A4. In response, the team stated that a level crossing is not viable, and that underpasses, in whatever form, are unpopular, but that the bridge will be designed to be as sympathetic as possible to the Town Hall. The Disability Forum and the Friends Meeting House voiced support for a step-free footbridge in place of an underpass.

6.2 Name

Ideas were requested for a name for the square. 'Hammersmith Square' seemed to be the preferred option.



7.0

AOB

M&N will supply minutes/notes of the workshop to all attendees. If individual parties want to provide their own formal response to the issues discussed please forward to Bill Dyke at LBH&F and Natalie Moore at M&N.

- ENDS -