



Hackbridge & Beddington Corner  
Neighbourhood Development Group  
[www.hackbridgendg.wordpress.com](http://www.hackbridgendg.wordpress.com)

Neil Rowley  
Savills PLC  
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6 November 2013

Dear Neil

**CONSULTATION WITH YOU AS LOCAL DEVELOPERS AS PART OF OUR  
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PROCESS**

I am writing on behalf of Hackbridge and Beddington Corner Neighbourhood Development Group (H&BC NDG) in advance of our meeting with you on 7 November 2013. As you are aware, we have been working on a Neighbourhood Plan for Hackbridge and Beddington Corner, which is now close to the submission, consultation and publicity stage.

We would like to consult with you before our Plan is submitted, which will probably be in January 2014 and before you submit further planning applications. As you know, we had wanted to meet with you sooner to discuss both your proposals and our aspirations for the Felnex site, but we do understand that you have not been ready to talk to us until now.

To inform our first meeting, we thought it would be useful to provide a written brief, outlining many of our questions and observations about the Felnex site. The points raised in this brief relate to the Felnex site as a whole and represent comments and questions from local residents and businesses involved in producing our neighbourhood plan. In addition, this brief contains a number of comments relating to the proposals unveiled earlier this week at the exhibition but we would value the opportunity to give you further feedback in slower time, and indeed have taken the opportunity to feedback comments either at the exhibition or via your newly released website.

Firstly, can I express my thanks on behalf of the group for the exhibition you held at Hackbridge Primary School on Monday 3 November, outlining your proposals for Phase 1 of the redevelopment of the site. It was really helpful to have the opportunity to talk to the architects involved and to gain an understanding of their vision for the site. We were also interested to hear about similar developments elsewhere, in particular the Highams development in Waltham Forest. Having viewed the website for this development, there appear to be a number of similarities and it would be interesting to find out a little more about this development, in particular what worked and what didn't and how lessons learned will be used to ensure the development of Felnex meets the needs and aspirations of people who already live in Hackbridge, in addition to those who have yet to move to Hackbridge.

We would like to talk to you about a number of important issues related to the Felnex development. We have identified these issues after reading the 2011 Felnex Trading Estate Outline Planning Consent and attending the consultation at Hackbridge School on Tuesday 4 November 2013. We considered the Felnex proposals with regard to the:



- Themes and Objectives of the Neighbourhood Development Group (H&BC NDG) developed in consultation with the wider community, made-up of:
  - **Housing and Built Environment**
  - **Local Economy**
  - **Environment**
  - **Energy, Waste and Water**
  - **Movement**
  - **Community, Culture and Identity** and
- The local planning guidelines and commitments which include the commitment to the One Planet Living Framework and Principles in Sutton and Hackbridge.

### **Comments/Questions and Observations**

#### **1. Thank you for your commitment to sustainability as shown in your Plans to date**

Our first overarching comment is that we are really pleased with your ambition that Felnex will be an exemplary sustainable community and contribute to our shared goal of Hackbridge becoming a truly sustainable suburb. We agree that Hackbridge has the potential to be a great, sustainable place to live and work, making a critical contribution to Hackbridge becoming a sustainable suburb. Of course, sustainability is about more than resource efficiency; sustainable communities if well designed will foster social and economic sustainability too. We think however that the current proposals have some way to go before fulfilling that promise and we would like to work with you to achieve this.

#### **2. Felnex will increase the size of Hackbridge by a third so we need to get this right**

Our second overarching comment is that Felnex is the biggest development that will ever happen in Hackbridge. There are a lot of people that will be affected by this development, so as a group we need to try to get this right for the majority of people.

#### **3. We would like to work collaboratively with you going forward**

Our third overarching comment is that although the Felnex Development has got off to a great start;

- We have **proposals for improvements to the granted outline planning permission**
- We **would like to work with you/developer partners ahead of detailed planning applications** at the earliest opportunity to consider these points and the broader aims of the community for Hackbridge as set out in our draft neighbourhood plan.
- We have **local knowledge and expertise and wish to help** the project realise our shared ambitions for the successful development of Felnex and for Hackbridge.

#### **4. Supermarket, shops and accommodation**

We are positive about the idea of the supermarket and more shops. The community have long wanted to see a greater variety of shopping in our town and the supermarket could supplement the shops that are here. But there are a number of important points which we would like to see addressed as follows:



- We were pleased to see that you made reference to the importance of design to encourage **just-in-time smaller, frequent shopping trips** to reduce the need for people to drive to the supermarket. We would like to see the inside and outside of the supermarket designed to facilitate easy access by foot or cycle from London Road and for just-in-time several times a week shopping, this would be light enough to carry and is also expected to reduce food waste.
- **The level and configuration of car parking and servicing facilities for the supermarket needs further discussion.** The food store is located with excellent public transport facilities by rail and bus, yet extensive free car parking is provided, and no details of bicycle parking arrangements and incentives are provided. This appears to be 'business as usual'. Furthermore, the location of the car park and service entrances is highly unsatisfactory. Firstly, they are located side-by-side, breaking the continuity of frontage in a way that is likely to have major adverse impacts on the housing directly opposite (particularly at night with car headlights), and on pedestrian and cycle safety and security on the street. Consider as an example the negative impact of the car park entrance of the nearby Centrale building, which is of much smaller size. Secondly, the two access entrances are located at the southern end of the block, requiring all traffic to travel the length of the flanking street to reach them. Again this is magnifying the traffic impact on the residential properties by making vehicles travel the full length of the street to access the car park/service area. We strongly recommend the reduction of car parking provision for the supermarket, better configuration and improved access arrangements. For example, if parking were below grade or undercroft, this would enable the supermarket to be at ground level with easy access from the street, and would enable the maisonette elements, which are currently single-aspect to be dual-aspect on the upper floor and potentially with access to private open space on the roof deck.
- Review the **heights of the supermarket, shops and flats above** with regard to their visual impact on the narrow High Street and Victorian cottages opposite. It was clear from the exhibition on Monday that additional thought had been given to the design of the buildings for Phase 1 of the development in terms of how the different new buildings will interact with one another, creating an attractive street scene that is residential in character. Indeed, we were shown improvements to the initial plans, which included a new apartment block beside the railway line, to increase natural surveillance and introduce a marker for the proposed pedestrian route through to the station. All of this is interesting. What was less well defined was how the new buildings will interact with what is already here. Clearly this is an important aspect and we would like to see how this has been addressed in the design being presented for Phase 1.
- **Frontage on London Road** - Our Plan states that the London Road is our district centre, in line with National Planning Policy Framework direction (Ensuring the vitality of town centres, page 7). We would like active frontages facing the London Road to be sympathetic with this. We do not want Felnex to become the new centre of Hackbridge. Where possible it makes sense for any new shops to be along the same road as the others, making it a more fulfilling high street experience.



- **One Planet Supermarket** - The supermarket should aim to help deliver the sustainable suburb aspiration. H&BC NDG would like to work with the developer and the proposed supermarket operator to develop plans and proposals for a supermarket using the one planet living approach and ten principles. In addition to operational issues, there are a series of configurational problems that undermine the potential for this to become a flagship sustainable food store: the prioritisation of customers arriving by car, its location at first floor rather than ground floor level, and the access via an energy-hungry travelator oriented toward the centre of the site rather than towards London Road and neighbouring shops.
- **Enable local employment** care needs to be taken not to put the existing shops out of business and new jobs could be created e.g. with a local delivery service.
- How do the residents access the **roof gardens**? Are any of the units open directly onto the roof garden to encourage use and easy surveillance for security? Can children easily access the roof garden and the play space from the units?
- Will each home or work space provide for secure and easy access **bicycle parking inside the buildings**?

## 5. Travel Planning, car parking and road space

- We would **like to see the travel plan for Felnex**. Traffic is a cause of concern in the neighbourhood and the development site is very close to excellent public transport links so it could in theory be almost car free if a good travel plan is implemented. Centrale failed to address this or provide a car club and residents who were not provided with parking spaces are now parking elsewhere in Hackbridge. Placing further pressure on what are already hotly competed parking spots. As I am sure you will have received comments back from residents and business alike about the problems with parking, you will no doubt wish to work with us to address this issue. We propose that street parking is hidden from view and consideration is given to the car park becoming a multi-use/multi-purpose municipal car-park, incorporating parking for parents of schoolchildren and the existing Hackbridge Station car park, which would enable a more welcoming approach to Hackbridge to be created at the station area. Perhaps the first two hours could be free, but drivers can pay for long term e.g. station parking.
- We are concerned about **road safety and traffic generation** at this difficult location. It was not clear from the exhibition that concerns relating to both the entrance to the site from London Road and Hackbridge Road have been fully considered. We understand that the road (Felnex Road?) will become two-way rather than the existing one-way. The volume of traffic is likely to increase in the immediate area of both entrances to the site and this will put additional strain on what are already busy roads, particularly in the case of London Road, dealing with a constant stream of traffic on what is the A237, and the traffic flowing from Hackbridge Station car park and local businesses including an MOT centre and vehicle recovery. There is also concern that this road will become a 'rat run'.
- The design and specification of the site access junction appears entirely in conflict with the design and specification of the new **Heart of Hackbridge** highway redesign, due to begin on site in the coming weeks. The proposed junction incorporates traffic islands,



excessively wide kerb radii, and even a slip road for merging traffic exiting the Felnex site. Neither does the proposed junction adequately address the poor conditions for pedestrians and cyclists at the entrance to Hackbridge Station. This is entirely in conflict with the pedestrian and cycle friendly design of the Heart of Hackbridge project.

- **Multi-functional and hidden parking to create a more welcoming approach to Hackbridge.** A lot of supermarkets have their car parking at the front of their shop e.g. Asda on Beddington Lane, this is not what we want. It was good to see your proposals for a covered car park, limiting the impact of rows of parked cars becoming part of the landscape. You have permission for 175 parking spaces for the supermarket. It is noted that the exhibition boards are now proposing town centre parking for 206 cars. It would be helpful to clarify how and why this figure has changed. In our endeavours to achieve the status of a sustainable suburb (Hackbridge Sustainable Suburb) we feel that it is imperative and beholden on us as a neighbourhood development group to reduce the impact of parking on our neighbourhood.
- **Reduce car parking and road space** - We propose that car parking levels be reduced from 0.72 to below 0.7 per residential unit as originally proposed by yourselves - or even down to 0.6 - in order to guarantee car club provision and utilisation. We would like you to look at parking across the site to see how it can be better planned. This may result in the freeing up of additional development land, the financial benefit of which could be utilised in other parts of the site if some of our other proposals have a cost. It will also create a different feel for the development and should lead to improved sales and a better quality of life.
- **What are the proposals to secure a Car Club operator?** It was not clear from the exhibition whether this had been considered for the Phase 1 development as no reference was made to provision or use of a car club scheme.
- **Design for community interaction** - The design of the streets can encourage sociability and space for children to play. Your plans mention home-zones. We like this idea, we would like to see the designs of the layout and suggest using soft landscaping so people can't speed through.
- **Public transport** – Please can you clarify what is planned for the buses and how does it work with the main flow of traffic for all the facilities that will be located on site. In particular, it would be helpful to clarify how the buses in question, 127 and 151 will access and leave the site. Will they have priority over other traffic? With the likelihood of many people moving to the site due to its good links to London, has Network Rail looked at the potential increased volume of customers and whether the station itself can cope with it and capacity on rush hour trains?
- We want to **encourage walking and cycling** so would like to see these modes of transport prioritised.
- **Connections to better link the Felnex development to the existing community**  
We would like to see good pedestrian and cycle links made through the proposed development, especially between the existing and new shops and Restmor Way.



- **Safety of the underpass** - The under-bridge pathway provided as part of the renewal of the Hackbridge railway bridge will enable east-west access but the safety for pedestrians needs to be improved. Can you please explain how you have built this facility into your plans.

## 6. Community infrastructure

- **Community facility.** Outline planning permission highlights a community centre. This needs to be reviewed to ensure that it doesn't duplicate what is already provided at either All Saints or BedZED Pavilion. Please can we discuss the function of it? Who is going to run it and how will it be funded? We would like to discuss alternative needs we have identified in our Plan, for example recreational facilities for the schools.
- **Care home** - will be a private concern. Is that the best use of land on the site? We would wish to see the evidence to support the need for such a facility.

## 7. Educational needs

- The residential build of Felnex will create a certain number of family homes which will need educational services, whether that is primary or secondary school places. Provision is made in the Section 106 agreement for funds for education.
- The new builds proposed for Corbet Close and Wandle Riverside also need to be taken into account.
- Hackbridge Primary School is now a three form entry and has no capacity to expand on its current grounds. Culvers Primary School is two form entry.
- The recreational facilities for both schools are limited, with Hackbridge Primary being dominated by concrete.
- Currently there is a proposal by the local authority that a new school be built on the Community playing field at BedZed, with recreational facilities on the Metropolitan Open Land north of BedZed. This does not yet have community support or planning permission.
- We understand that you looked into projected school figures back in 2011, but this data will now be out of date and also included a primary school not in the Hackbridge boundary. We have a meeting on 11 November with Sutton Council to discuss the projected figures for the area and the impact of the new developments and whether the current primary schools are able to facilitate these educational requirements.
- We will be in a better place after this meeting to continue our discussions with you in this respect.

## 8. Green and Open Space –changes to layout proposed

We propose a change in the location of the proposed open and green space from the centre of the development in order to help Felnex to link in more with the existing community.



Creating new green spaces on the approaches to Hackbridge Corner will signal the character of Hackbridge as a sustainable suburb, taking as its inspiration the scale and configuration of the existing Hackbridge Green.

We propose re-distribution of public open spaces proposed for the site as follows:

- Locate soft landscaped area contiguous with boundary of school site, in order to enable it to be used by schoolchildren during school hours under appropriate supervision and management arrangements;
- Locate soft landscaped open space on Hackbridge Road frontage adjacent to Hackbridge Green; and
- Locate soft landscaped open space on London Road frontage, potentially incorporating existing trees.

## 9. Conservation

**Trees and Biodiversity** - Please can you protect the trees and enhance the biodiversity on the site. A landscape survey of the trees should be done, so we are able to protect any specific ones. It is understood that the large tree currently at the entrance to the site from London Road, on the left hand side has been marked for removal, owing to the possibility that construction work is likely to damage the root system and as a result it may prove a potential hazard if it should fall at a later date. We would wish to see the small number of trees on the London Road retained and protected during all phases of construction.

We would like to see planned boundary fencing replaced by **soft landscaping** ie hedges to increase biodiversity in the area. Our plan is to bring the proposed Wandle Valley Regional Park into Hackbridge, which has been earmarked as a major gateway.

**Survey old building before demolishing** The building behind the fabric warehouse has some architectural interest – further information should be sought before pulling it down as Hackbridge has few heritage sites left. We would wish to discuss how it might be possible to incorporate this existing building into later phases of the development

## 10. Review of building heights to ensure sympathy with and connection to the existing community

- At the moment the design as shown in the Outline Planning Consent shows building heights which create an impression of a wall. We propose that the taller buildings could be located more towards the middle of the Felnax development, with smaller or shorter buildings on edge of the development.
- By setting the new building frontage back behind new green spaces, the height of the development and its impact on the street and surroundings can be mitigated.
- H&BC NDG is concerned about the height of buildings by the school and on the London Road. This will greatly reduce daylight to the school and to existing residents of London Road and create a wind tunnel along Hackbridge Corner, particularly if the proposed development continues the building line established by Centrale. We would



like to discuss how density can be achieved across the site, with the possibility of reviewing building heights,

- H&BC NDG would like to see detailed designs of buildings, specifically how the facade of the buildings are being detailed to break up the scale; stepping heights, type of cladding materials used.
- This information should clarify what impact the proposed buildings will have on the daylight to the existing buildings on both London Road and Hackbridge Road.
  - Taller buildings are associated with negative behaviour ie gangs, drugs, violence – how will the design of these buildings ensure that this cannot happen and that there are no negative spaces or dead ends to make people feel unsafe?

### **11. Affordable homes for local people**

We would like to work with the developers on ideas to bring forward more affordable homes for local people, not just those on very low incomes. We propose that part of the site could be made available for intermediate housing or for a community-led build project to help bring forward development of the site. This could be managed by a professional team but as a not for profit project and it could enable competitive pricing of the homes. We are looking for different forms of tenure to social housing since we are concerned that the approach of the Sutton Core Strategy is too narrow to meet the changing housing needs of the community. It was not clear from the exhibition what amount of the residential units proposed for Phase 1 would be affordable.

### **12. Resource efficiency**

**Pleased with the proposals to achieve zero carbon in building energy use on site** We are pleased that, as set out in the council's policies, the whole site both commercial and residential will be energy saving with renewable energy to achieve zero carbon emissions in building energy use including heat network connection and with a connection to the school. The development is not, however, zero carbon and your current proposals only commit you to reduce CO2 emissions by 25%. At the exhibition it was also confirmed that waste heat from the incinerator will be used to heat the housing and photovoltaic on the roofs will provide energy. It would be helpful if you could confirm how much will be provided from these two sources of energy.

It would be helpful to gain a fuller understanding of the heat network being proposed for the site and how the homes will be heated prior to the heat recovery system for the incinerator coming into operation?

#### **We would like to know more about proposals for:**

- Water saving e.g. rainwater collection and water saving appliances
- Materials of construction
- Sustainable waste management and minimising waste in construction
- Demolition should be looking at re-use
- Helping residents to recycle and reduce waste
- Are the residential units single aspect?
- Has summer time over heating been considered?



- There does not seem to be any solar shading provided to either the residential or commercial units; particularly the west facing two storey glazed commercial units. It will only encourage over use of air-conditioning systems.
- Why not consider passive ventilation for the residential units and just the car park?

### **13. Sustainability – create a one planet living action plan for Felnex**

In line with the council policies and community aspirations for a sustainable suburb and one planet living - bringing in all of the above – we would like to see an action plan developed using the ten principles to enable residents to achieve one planet living for Felnex.

We look forward to discussing these points with you at our meeting on Thursday.

Yours sincerely

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