



**DEVELOPMENT OF EDDIE KATZ SITE, 42 STATION ROAD, COLLIERS WOOD
A response by Wandle Valley Forum to the second public consultation
February 2021**

1. Wandle Valley Forum provides support and an independent voice for 140 community groups, voluntary organisations and local businesses and for everyone who shares a passion for the Wandle.
2. We have considered the emerging plans for the development of the former Eddie Katz site in the context of the Wandle Valley Forum Charter (<http://bit.ly/27Yal2m>). This is an important and sensitive site alongside the river and located on the main entrance to the church of Merton Priory, the Wandle Valley's premier heritage asset.
3. We have welcomed the opportunity to meet with the developers to have had a response to our feedback on the initial proposals shared for public consultation. We remain concerned by the limited nature of the material which continues to be published, especially considering that Merton Council's Design Review Panel has considered more detailed designs in a closed session. It is a particular concern that so little information is available which provides a proper sense of the height, scale and mass of the proposed development. This is despite the results of the first public consultation identifying "*Ensuring the architecture is in context with its surroundings*" as a top priority.
4. We agree with the five priorities identified in the summary feedback on the first public consultation. The amended plans do not, however, successfully address them. National planning policy is clear that "*Permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions*" (NPPF, paragraph 130). The amended plans do not take all the opportunities available and, as presented, are not sufficiently developed to be confident of receiving planning consent.
5. Addressing each of the priorities from the first public consultation:
 - Providing high-quality affordable housing in Colliers Wood – this will require the proposed provision for 28% of the flats being single aspect to be replaced with 100% provision of at least dual aspect flats, in accordance with the new London Plan. We do not accept there are design constraints which predicate against this
 - Creating open and accessible public space for all to enjoy- the provision of active ground floor uses based around new public realm is welcome. To be effective this will require a mix of uses and a quality of public realm which complements and amplifies the role of Merton Abbey Mills to create a new destination and a place to linger. We believe this will require provision of a significant anchor space for community use – the proposed cycling hub makes a contribution to this. It will be

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important to provide more certainty about the mix of uses that will be provided. Any application will also need to be accompanied by evidence of a conducive microclimate being created within the new public realm

- Improving connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists – This will require significantly more than the provision of a new bridge over the Wandle to improve public access to and through the site via links across adjacent land to the pedestrian underpass accessing Merton Priory and Merton Abbey Mills and to Colliers Wood underground station via Merton Priory Walls. It is helpful feedback that “*We are also in discussions with Sainsbury’s on the enabling of future connectivity through to their site*” and this will need to progress to firm commitments prior to a planning application being submitted
- Enhancing and improving the Wandle Trail – The proposals for a new bridge and public access alongside the eastern bank of the river are welcomed subject to more detail about the design and approach. It will be important that the development creates no additional run-off into the Wandle and further measures to enhance the Wandle and Pickle Ditch should be supported
- Ensuring the architecture is in context with its surroundings – In the absence of appropriate drawings and independently verified views this cannot be fully assessed. The information currently available suggests the development should be at a reduced scale, height and mass so as to be much less dominant. This is necessary to make a positive impact on the Wandle Valley Conservation Area, avoid negative impacts on public enjoyment of the Wandle Trail, avoid adverse shadowing and micro-climate effects, and protect local amenity

6. Any development proposals also need to be accompanied by a commitment to a full archaeological investigation of the site, delivered through a non-standard planning condition that requires a comprehensive and detailed approach in light of the exceptional significance of Merton Priory. As promised we would welcome sight of the findings from the preliminary work that has already been undertaken.

7. We should welcome the opportunity to inform the future development of the scheme before it is presented as a planning application.