



**DEVELOPMENT OF FORMER WANDSWORTH GASWORKS**  
**A response by Wandle Valley Forum to amended planning application 2022/3954**  
**November 2024**

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 amended proposals for the development of the former Wandsworth Gasworks for residential and other uses rising to 29 storeys in the context of the Wandle Valley Forum Charter (<http://bit.ly/27Yal2m>), the London Plan, Wandsworth Council's existing and emerging Local Plan and Masterplan and the Key Principles ([http://www.wandlevalleyforum.org.uk/uploads/5/8/4/3/58438085/wandle\\_delta\\_-\\_draft\\_spd\\_mar\\_21.pdf](http://www.wandlevalleyforum.org.uk/uploads/5/8/4/3/58438085/wandle_delta_-_draft_spd_mar_21.pdf)) we developed for the Wandle Delta as part of the preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document. This is an important and sensitive site alongside the Wandle and located in a key position between Wandsworth Town Centre and the Thames
3. Our principle interest lies in the impact of the proposals on the Wandle, its wildlife and public enjoyment of the river, including the Wandle Trail. We acknowledge amendments have been made to the proposals but these fall well short of those needed to address our outstanding objections to the proposals. We sustain our objections to the proposals as presented and ask that the following considerations are addressed:

Excessive height – we find proposals for the development of multiple tall blocks rising to 29 storeys so close to the Wandle unconscionable. They are entirely out of character and in clear conflict with the Wandle Delta Masterplan. We are dismayed that the process of considering this application, including 29 pre-application meetings with Wandsworth Council, appears to have resulted in such a major departure being considered acceptable. This calls into question the whole basis of the Masterplan's viability and the value of its production. The contaminated nature of the site was known when the Masterplan was prepared and not considered to justify such excessive heights. The buildings will neither be located in a Town Centre nor clustered with similar buildings and will make a negative contribution to local character and context. The plans for tall blocks adjacent to the Wandle are also in conflict with the more sensitive requirements of the Masterplan which set an expectation of four storeys adjacent to the river.

Access and permeability – the need for new links between Wandsworth Town Centre and the Thames is a strategic priority we identified for the Wandle Delta Masterplan and it seeks the creation of “*new connections*”. This site provides a critical opportunity to provide new links and beyond the investment alongside the Wandle and in the Wandle Trail it fails to do so. Armoury Way remains a physical barrier and any improvement in east/west access is thwarted by land not included in the application.

General enquiries: [wandlevalleyforum@gmail.com](mailto:wandlevalleyforum@gmail.com)  
Web site: [www.wandlevalleyforum.org.uk](http://www.wandlevalleyforum.org.uk)  
Twitter: [@WandleForum](https://twitter.com/WandleForum)

Please respond to Chair, Wandle Valley Forum, c/o 43 Bramcote Avenue, Mitcham CR4 4LW

Wandle Trail and river – we welcome the potential for improved access along and across the Wandle including the new bridge link, increased area of public realm and landscape investment. The provision of more substantial green margins and opportunities for natural play as well as public paths is critical to success. The investment should also address the management of the Wandle Trail to avoid conflicts between users, with pedestrians taking priority and adoption of a code similar to that used by [Canal and River Trust](#). The scheme should bring wider improvements to the Wandle Trail, including wayfinding and interpretation and this should all include the Wandle Valley Regional Park visual identity (to be specified by condition). The quality of the design of the new bridge is everyday and a missed opportunity to create a significant and resonant landmark which increases public engagement with the river. The plans remain vague on the key issue of naturalising the river through the site area, referring in general terms to the “*scope to naturalise*” and lacking firm proposals and commitments to do so. These should be provided or conditioned. The fundamental issue remains that however welcome the improved public realm and access along the river provided it is fundamentally compromised by the adjacent development. This will be visually intrusive and result in significant shadowing for much of the day with negative consequences for both people and wildlife. The applicant’s own assessment shows that the area along the Wandle will receive a meagre minimum two hours of sunshine in March. We are also concerned by the impact on the local microclimate, especially wind speeds exceeding comfort levels.

Inadequate public engagement – while we welcomed the opportunity to meet with the prospective developers early in the process there has been no meaningful engagement on the strategic planning issues raised by the proposals. Our engagement led to a project of marginal importance, engaging local schools in a project relating to the public realm alongside the river. There was no opportunity to enter into serious discussion about the overall design of the scheme and the fundamental conflicts it throws up. We believe the proposals fail to “*demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community*” as required by the National Planning Policy Framework in order that they can “*be looked on more favourably than those that cannot*” (paragraph 132).

4. In conclusion, we sustain our objections to the planning application on these grounds. We urge that the planning application is refused or that the applicant enters into more meaningful engagement resulting in significant further amendments. The site is one where we support the need for significant development but it needs to be appropriate to the location.