



LATIN ELEPHANT'S FEEDBACK NEW SOUTHWARK PLAN PREFERRED OPTIONS CONSULTATION & AREA VISION FOR ELEPHANT AND CASTLE

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30 November 2016**

This is Latin Elephant's second submission to New Southwark Plan Preferred Options consultation. The feedback and recommendations provided in this documents are in addition to the feedback and response submitted in February 2016. These should complement our wider work of promoting migrant and ethnic economies in London.

LOCAL CHARACTER (SP 2: Revitalised Neighbourhoods)

NSP should encourage the definition and protection of identity and local character of the different areas. This will ensure that the neighbourhoods and areas that benefit from a positive local character and have a distinct sense of place are well managed, and places with poor or mixed character are improved.

DM Proposed

Development must:

- Better reveal Southwark's local character and distinctiveness taking into account heritage assets, development patterns, street hierarchy, urban grain, rhythm, plot size, building materials, streetscape, landscape, height, scale and massing, architectural detailing and use.
- Take into account the nature and forms of the context in order to relate with the existing environment and create distinct sense of place.

Reasons: Southwark's built environment reflects different periods of design, development and community, and it contributes to the borough's distinctive character. Some local character is unique with a distinct identity, while other areas have local character that is poorer or less defined.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION (SP 5: Healthy, Active Lives)

Including communities and motivating them to participate and engage in urban development processes that the local authority would like to implement in an area could be a point to be taken into consideration, since new projects can affect in a positive or negative way the living standards of the people that live and use an area.



DM Proposed

Development must:

- Involve the community and people in decision making and other relevant issues that would affect their lifestyle and businesses.

Listen and action on the existing communities' needs and aspirations

- Preserve and promote cultural manifestations and historical richness of an area, and include them whenever a new development is being considered.

Reasons: Involving the community in major development projects guarantees benefit for the people who live in the surrounding areas because they can 'shape' the evolution of their neighbourhood. Moreover, involving the community can be beneficial for the developers which may encounter less delays or obstacles targeting the development through building consensus.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY (SP 5: Healthy, Active Lives)

In order to improve the resilience, health and wellbeing of communities, NSP should recognize the importance of having a multi-cultural community. Also, The NSP should deliver actions and programs to ensure the participation of these minority groups in development decisions. Also, it should be important to deliver adequate spaces for activities that can enhance and promote the character, heritage or cultural background of an area.

DM Proposed

Planning permission will be granted for development that delivers:

- Housing and commercial floor space that take into account the different needs of the future householders and workers regarding their ethnic and cultural diversity.
- Appropriate level of social mix according to the composition of the existing community.
- Easy access to amenities within an area, helping not only children, people with especial needs and the elderly reach businesses and other spaces.

In regeneration projects, development must:

- Avoid to produce negative outcomes to the existing community in term of loss of economic opportunities, housing spaces, public facilities and recognised places of civic interest.
- Protect, when viable, the interest of the lowest income groups by retaining or providing suitable and affordable spaces.

Reasons: Southwark's population is composed largely by different ethnic and cultural groups that enhance the diversity and attractiveness of the spaces. In order to retain this situation, future development should be forced to take into account the need of the local minority groups and low income groups which contribute to the identity and heterogeneity of the area. Proper accessibility to local stores and businesses should be taken into consideration, especially for people with



special needs and the elderly. Although this is specified in DM 9 (p.36), it would be good to include in the strategic policy.

MIGRANT AND ETHNIC BUSINESS (SP 4: Strong, Local Economy)

The local economy will be strengthened by protecting existing businesses and providing them opportunities to grow, and through development that provides new jobs and which creates an environment where businesses, including small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), can thrive.

DM Proposed

In regeneration areas:

- The new development should retain existing businesses or must provide the same physical and economic opportunities in order to maintain these activities in place.
- The new economic floor space should be adequate and limited to the context requirements which can be evaluated through specific survey methods.
- The new development should support the local economy and protect and promote ethnic and cultural diversity.
- Affordable rent should be granted to the existing business activities where an increment of rent value is expected due to the regeneration project.
- When necessary, the council should help protect small existing businesses in regeneration areas or when new developments are being considered.

DM 25 Railway Arches (addition)

- Well established business clusters in railway arches will be protected and enhanced where necessary through walking and cycling routes, shop front and public space improvements.

Reasons: Appendix C (p30-31) states that: 'Our policies promote a strong local economy whereby existing clusters of retail and business space are protected in regeneration areas and town centres. The provision of new workspaces which are flexible and can meet a range of needs are encouraged. Neighbourhood planning can also help to identify specific local clusters. Also, policy 4.8 of the London Plan 2015 state that a diverse retail offer should be provided around London, especially within town centres. Moreover, policy 4.9 of the London Plan 2015 state that the Mayor and boroughs may impose planning conditions or seek to negotiate planning obligations where appropriate, feasible and viable, to mitigate the loss of, and/or provide or support affordable shop units suitable for small or independent traders. In the specific case of Elephant & Castle station, the importance to retain the retail activities inside the arches is in accordance with the guidelines illustrated in the London SPG: Town Centres at pg. 68 and 137.



AREA VISION FOR ELEPHANT AND CASTLE

The description of Elephant and Castle's 'positive and distinctive character' should include a point that stresses the importance of existing business clusters, such as the Latin Quarter. For example, our research found out that there are 95 Latin American businesses in the EC area, each employing on average between 1-5 people, and attracting large number of visitors and customers to the area.

We recommend adding the following points (to be in line with the description for Walworth Road):

We will continue to support the local economy and protect and promote the local migrant and ethnic economies of Elephant and Castle during and after the regeneration programme.

The report '[The case for London's Latin Quarter: Retention, growth and sustainability](#)' (2016) sets the following vision for EC:

That the current Latin American business cluster at Elephant and Castle is formally recognised as a Latin Quarter, and its contribution to the local economy and community cohesion be acknowledged.

The establishment of a Latin Quarter for London will:

- improve social cohesion by creating an environment which is welcoming and inclusive to all;
- enhance the current retail offering of the borough through the provision and delivery of specialist food, goods and services;
- expand local employment opportunities and improve access to skills and training;
- enable small and micro businesses to establish themselves in the area by acting as a small business incubator;
- cultivate and establish a more vibrant and safer public realm at Elephant and Castle.

Given the current programme of regeneration taking place at Elephant and Castle there are a number of existing development opportunities which could help make this vision a reality. The vision for Elephant and Castle is supported by the following practical initiatives, which together maximise the potential of opportunities arising from the process of urban regeneration in the area:

- A Latin Boulevard
- Public Realm Improvements
- Latin American Food and Craft Markets
- A Community Hub
- Latin American Art and Events



The feasibility of these initiatives are outlined in our [report](#) and it is our wish that these are implemented as part of the vision for Elephant and Castle. If these practical initiatives were implemented the risk of displacement or further isolation of the existing Latin American business cluster and other migrant and ethnic businesses would be greatly reduced. In addition, it would strengthen the position of emerging migrant entrepreneurs in the area and secure their role in the future prosperity of Southwark.