

TOWER BRIDGE COURT
Team London Bridge response to public exhibition
May 2019

1. Team London Bridge is the Business Improvement District (BID) representing approximately 400 businesses in the area between London Bridge to the west, Tower Bridge to the east, and south towards Bermondsey. TLB has a strong remit from businesses since 2015 to deliver the [London Bridge Plan](#). Our mission is to ensure London Bridge excels as a leading place for global commerce and continues to develop as a pioneering local centre for enterprise, culture and entertainment. We work with our partners to ensure a world class physical environment that is engaging and distinctive.

2. We welcome the chance to provide our feedback to the current proposals for Tower Bridge Court. The proposals sit within the London Bridge boundary, so its business tenants will become members of the BID. We are keen to ensure the long-term success of the site, and how it supports the London Bridge Plan and the Area Vision in the New Southwark Plan.

3. The proposals occupy an important site on Tower Bridge Road on the boundary of both London Bridge's commercial core and the riverfront as identified in the London Bridge Plan. This prioritises mixed office and high street retail uses, a high quality public realm, improved pedestrian permeability and a need to improve the quality of and access to open spaces such as Potters Fields. There are also opportunities to enhance the Thames Path which runs by the site.

Land use

4. We support the improved mix of uses planned for the site, especially the activation of the ground floor with retail units. This is consistent with its location in the Central Activities Zone and the London Bridge Area Vision (New Southwark Plan AV10.2, 10.3) which supports growth in "*office provision, shops, leisure, culture, science and medical facilities*" over residential development. We believe a development of this scale should also be contributing to London Bridge's cultural offer and provide affordable retail and workspace units. The New Southwark Plan requires 10% affordable workspace in major development schemes delivering employment space (Policy P28) and the quantum being provided in the scheme is unclear.

5. We welcome the scheme's emphasis on retail/food over two levels, at both the ground and basement, and the commitment to prioritise independent operators. This space needs to meet the requirements of independents, including through provision of small floor plates, and complement the offer elsewhere in the area. Given the extent of other local retail and food provision it would be helpful to see further evidence of the overall demand for such space to ensure there is an appropriate balance of provision and to underpin the commercial success of the new developments.

6. The proposals for a flexible space in the ground floor for community and cultural uses is welcome. This could be informed by the [London Bridge Culture Strategy](#). It will be important to ensure use of any such space is affordable, and also to ensure a business model, which requires this space to be successful in attracting activity and visits, and not to become an underused lobby space. We would be pleased to show you how our own London Bridge Hive space is managed as a community, cultural and commercial venue.

Historic context

7. The site is in Tower Bridge Conservation Area and sensitively located in respect of the Tower of London UNESCO World Heritage Site and the Grade I listed Tower Bridge. The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan notes the general lack of presence of buildings along Tower Bridge Road and comments on the “bulky 1970s/80s concrete framed building of Tower Bridge Court” which “frames the entrance into Shad Thames”. Any development proposals need to respect this context and be an improvement on the current building.

8. The area is characterised by buildings of an industrial, warehouse, style. In considering the scheme’s materiality we ask that careful consideration be given to both the balance of brick and glass and the proportionate dimensions of the windows in the new floors and elevations at the north of the site to ensure an appropriate relationship with the historic character of the area.

Public realm and landscaping strategy

9. The proposals provide little detail of the approach to the public realm and landscaping. There is also a lack of attention to the key relationship with the Thames Path at Shad Thames where more space for high pedestrian flows is needed. We believe there is further scope for improving permeability through the site from Tower Bridge Road, with links across to the access through the 1 Tower Bridge scheme. The detail of planting, waymarking and the surface treatments will be critical to the success of the plans.

10. We believe a stronger greening ambition is needed that matches the ambitions of the Green Grid in the London Plan and takes opportunities for greening on key elevations and roofs as well as, selectively, at ground level. The scheme should also be developed explicitly to identify the opportunities to create new “[placemarks](#)” that will be treasured by the community in the future. Placemarks are supported by the New Southwark Plan Area Vision for London Bridge.

Environmental performance

11. We welcome the commitments to sustainability and believe these can be strengthened and embrace a wider range of considerations. The scheme is ideal for demonstrating an uplift in sustainability performance through refurbishment as well as new build and we look forward to any draft planning application being accompanied by clear targets for biodiversity net gain, air quality positive, carbon, energy, wellness, resource efficiency and reduced ground level wind speeds and urban heat island effect. The commitment to BREEAM Outstanding also needs to be stronger than an aspiration.

Servicing and deliveries

12. We would welcome more detail on how the new development will be serviced, the traffic volumes and frequency envisaged and how it will avoid problems with servicing and deliveries with the potential for significant pedestrian conflict in Horsleydown Lane. We would encourage exploration of opportunities for a consolidated approach in collaboration with others in the area, and can suggest joining our subsidised consolidated waste scheme.

13. The scheme should support ambitions in the London Bridge Cycle Strategy (2018), which is based on significant business consultation. Cycle-parking provision needs to meet standards in the New London Plan and Southwark plans as a minimum.

14. We would welcome the opportunity to address these issues and discuss the plans prior to it progressing to a full planning application.