

CWCF RESPONSE TO OSC

RE: Preferred Site for new Canada Water Leisure Centre

My name is Pauline Adenwalla and I am Chair of Canada Water Consultative Forum (CWCF) an organisation that was set up in 2000 to consider all the major plans and policies relating to the regeneration of the Canada Water area.

In our opinion the decision to proceed with expensive consultation on the preferred site for the new Canada Water Leisure Centre is premature and based on a somewhat flawed report and jeopardises further meaningful consultation on the wider master plan.

I would like to very briefly explain the story so far relating to the community's aspiration for a new pool before detailing the reasons for CWCF's view that the decision is premature.

BACKGROUND

The residents of Canada Water area have been campaigning for a new, state of the art swimming pool for over a decade. The promise of an Olympic sized Aquatic Centre with transparent walls abutting Canada Basin by BL-CQ in their vision for the area was the major factor in the community selecting them for CW master plan contract in 2003. .

Alas the Aquatic Centre quickly disappeared from the BL-CQ's 2003.

The community were very hopeful that their aspiration would be fulfilled when BL acquired 100% interest in the Surrey Quays Shopping Centre (SQSC) and Harmsworth Quays sites and commenced their Master Planning Exercise in 2013.

The community's optimism was further increased when Kings College expressed an interest in moving a faculty to a portion of the former Harmsworth Quays Print Works site and providing leisure facilities for the community as well as their students.

BL have held numerous high level conceptual consultations with the community. However, in Spring 2015 BL announced their acquisition of the Mast Leisure site and as a consequence they would be reviewing their master plan ideas as their land holding in the area was now over 45 acres. The 'new' master plan would be subject to consultation in Autumn 2015.

Hence there was considerable surprise within the community when in July 2015 CWCF happened upon an LBS issues paper regarding a 'preferred site for a new CW leisure centre' .

Cllr William's confirmed at CWCF 6/7/15 that LBS had indeed identified a 'preferred site' within the 45 acres. The site was ::

- Currently the SQ Wildlife Area
- Abutting the London Overground rail lines and tunnel,
- Next to Hothfield Place, Hithe Grove and China Hall Mews dwellings

The vast majority of the community were incredulous.

In the community's opinion this was the most inappropriate location for their long awaited and much needed community facility. Not only were there likely to be major construction issues, the impact on the adjoining residents and the destruction of the SQ Wildlife Area was totally unacceptable.

This was also a departure from the CWAAP (Figure 24 clearly shows a landscape buffer to the 3 streets)

The community are also of the view that to legally ring fence a 'preferred site' and the related re routing of roads etc etc in order that buses could pass the preferred site, imposed serious restrictions any further consultation and discussions on the wider BL CW master plan.

SPECIFICS RELATING TO OSC CALL IN .

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As already stated

In our opinion the decision to proceed with expensive consultation on the preferred site is premature and based on a somewhat flawed report and jeopardises further meaningful consultation on the wider master plan.

Our reasons for reaching this opinion are as follows :

A. LACK OF EVIDENCE AS TO WHY LBS PREFER THIS SITE

1. There is no appraisal and comprehensive evaluation of all the alternative sites that were considered or may be available in the near future.
2. There is no supporting evidence
 - in relation to the minimum requirements for the leisure centre requirements as set out in Para 9. of the report.
 - that the elderly, disabled and school children have been consulted as to their needs, ie that a hydro pool has been considered
 - that existing accessible leisure provision in the area outside the CWAAP has been analysed, nor that users across all 5 wards have been consulted on their requirements.
 - to support how the estimate of 400,000 users per year of the new facility from across 5 wards was calculated.
 - in the report in relation to other swimming pool and leisure facilities accessible to the residents of the 5 wards Livesey, Riverside, Rotherhithe, South Bermondsey, Surrey Docks. Exhibit C LBS ward map shows the area.
 - to show that the residents of the 5 wards will use CW Leisure Centre as opposed to the other facilities ie. E & C, Greenwich, Lewisham etc. and others in the pipeline.

To-date there has been no public consultation on the preferred site proposal.

Without this information it is not possible to make a judgement.

3. To recommend targeting the 100 or so residents on the western boundary – currently a very quiet cul de sac - as they will 'disproportionately effected' is unacceptable.

Wandle Housing Association and the wider Southwark catchment area must be included in the discussions on the preferred location and specification of this major public facility in the context of the whole CW master plan.

It is therefore not possible to accept the report's recommendation.

4. TfL are notorious for protecting their infrastructure. LBS would be unwise to legally define a 'preferred site' without a formal undertaking from TfL that they will agree to the re routing of buses along a realigned Deal Porters Way.

There is no Information in the report in respect of

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- the time scale and costs to re route and reinforce Deal Porters Way should such agreement from TfL be forthcoming
- TfL being in agreement that such a structure as a swimming pool could be built so near to the London Overground track, tunnel and ventilation shaft.

The response to CWCF's FOI indicates that LBS have had little discussion with TfL on this subject.

5. Pedestrian access routes for the predicted 400,000 users appears to be via Hothfield Place, thus turning a quiet residential cul de sac into a major pedestrian route. .

The report is misleading in the Para 18 description of the vegetation to be destroyed. The 'preferred site' is the established SQ Wildlife Area. See Exhibit A.

The 'preferred site' is part of the Green Corridor See Exhibit B .

B. LACK OF TRANSPARENT CONSULTATION

6. To date all CW Master Plan public consultations have been carried out solely by BL. They have been at a conceptual high level. No consultation on either the location or specification of any particular building.

A leisure centre in the 'preferred location' is likely to be airless and have very little natural light. Quite different to the current 7 Islands which has floor to ceiling windows on both sides and overlooks a garden.

To determine the location of a large and very important community leisure building and re routing roads at this early stage imposes unnecessary limitations on any future consultation on the wider master plan.

7. There is no evidence in the report in respect of the on going running of such a facility. LBS tends to lease out such facilities – usually to *FUSION*. If so this would seem at odds with the statement in the referenced Cabinet report 18th November which talks about parameters for negotiations with BL one being:

"The council will require a site in its ownership for a new public leisure including a pool etc".

There is no evidence that other options have been explored such as contracting BL / A Another for build and run such a facility in accordance with LBS policy.

What LBS Policy states that LBS do not want to have dwellings / commercial above a pool?.

Lewisham to name but one local authority seems to have successfully achieved this arrangement. Para 14

It is therefore questionable that it is vital for LBS to decide on the 'preferred site' before entering into an LBS / BL Development Agreement.

C. VALUE FOR MONEY / DEPARTURE FROM CWAAP

8. There is no evidence in the report as to why it is not
 - 'value for money' to rebuild on the current 7 Island site.

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- possible to continue to operate 7 Islands whilst constructing a new pool along side the existing pool.

The & island site has been home to baths for a long time. As the information board outside the 7 Island building state the land was marsh and comprised 7 islands and spring fed the baths.

The current 7 Island site has a very large ground floor internal garden / courtyard of a similar size to the existing pool.

CWAAP Figure 24 indicates a landscape buffer to Hothfield Place and residential properties.

CWAAP "The Seven Islands Leisure Centre provides a swimming pool as well as gym and sports hall. We will be developing plans to refurbish the centre and improve the dryside and wetside facilities. £8m has been committed through the Council's 2011 capital refresh programme to complete this work. We will use this to extend the life of the Seven Islands by up to 10 years. In the long term however there is an opportunity to provide a new leisure centre in the town centre."

LBS made no indication before the recent CWAAP EIP that they were considering a change of policy.

We therefore reiterate our contention that the decision to proceed with expensive consultation on the preferred site is premature and based on a somewhat flawed report. Such a decision would seriously jeopardise further meaningful consultation on the wider master plan.

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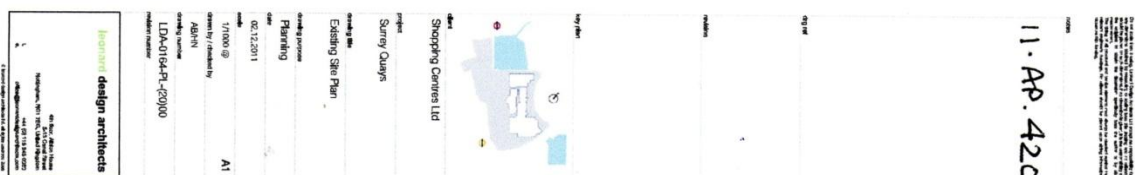
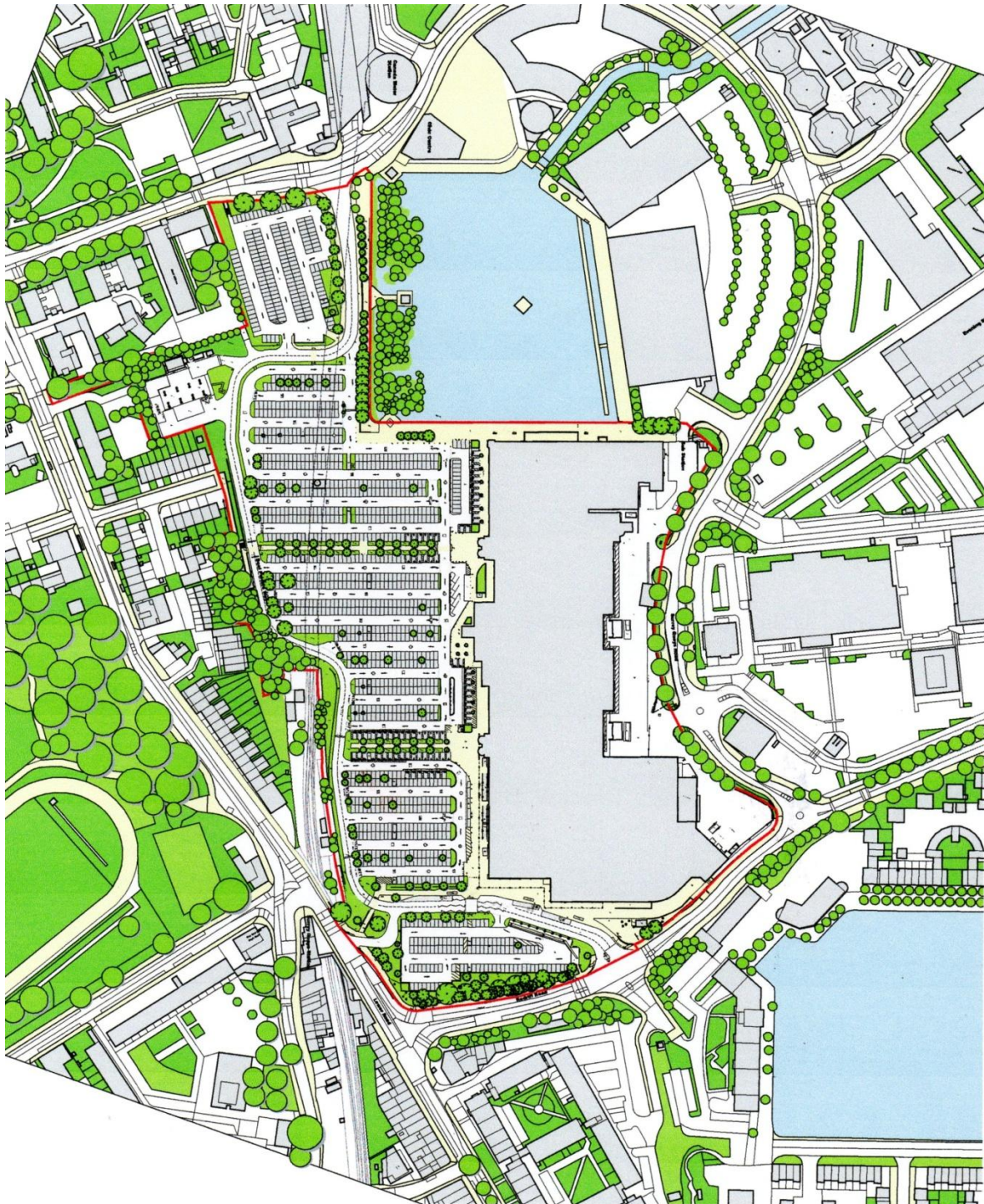
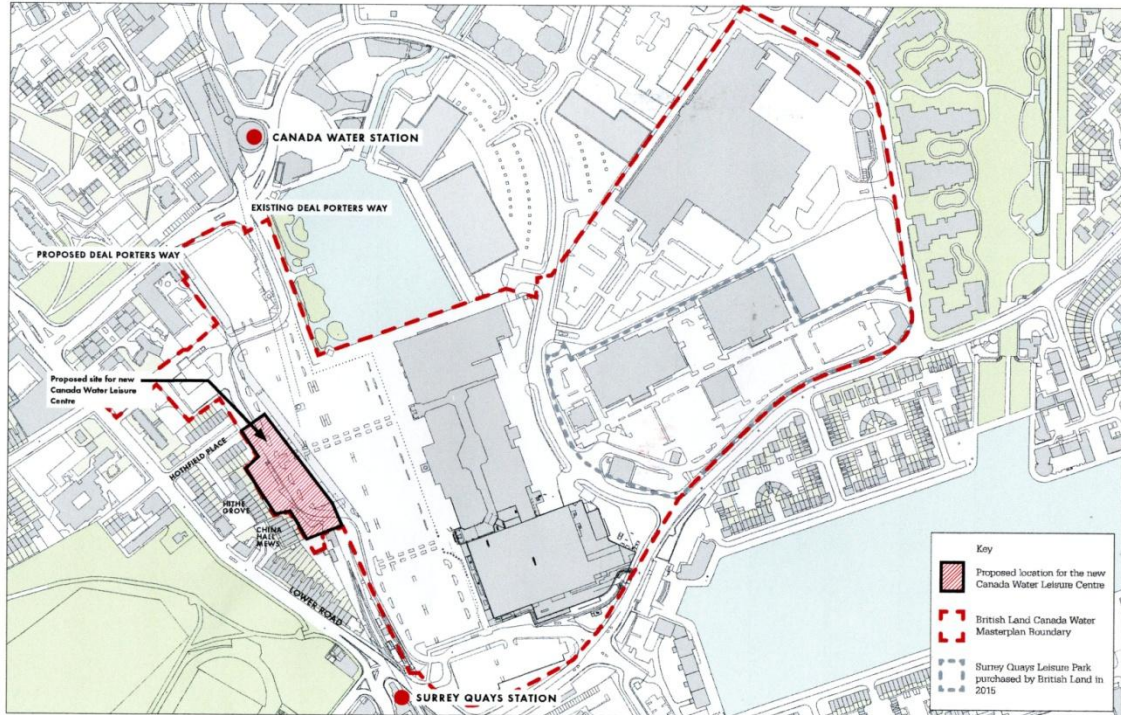


EXHIBIT A SQSC as it is today ... BL application 11/AP/4206 ... SQSC Nature Reserve clearly shown

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Appendix 1
Existing Site Plan showing preferred location
for the new Canada Water Leisure Centre



<http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?lId=50007229&Opt=0> - Appendix

www.canadawaterwest.org describes the existing status of the preferred site, namely the SQ SC Wildlife Area Nature Reserve

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is/urban_open_space_study_2010.pdf



EXHIBIT B Green corridor / LBS Open Spaces Strategy

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EXHIBIT C

