

KINGS CROSS RAILWAY LANDS

OVERVIEW OF CURRENT SITUATION: 8th November 1988

This paper is deliberately brief. For a fuller consideration of the issues and further discussion, you are invited to attend the Kings Cross Exchange details of which will appear in the local press shortly.

1.0 THE SITE

Location: The site is a rectangular area of about 125 acres, bounded by York Way on the east, Euston Road on the south, the north London Line on the north and the St Pancras Mainline on the west.

Current uses: The stations occupy the southern end of the site. There is a small amount of short life housing (Stanley and Culross Buildings), operational gas holders, a number of businesses occupying the goods yard (in the centre of the site), and a concrete batching plant in the north. The site contains a number of listed buildings. The southern half is a conservation area. The canal crosses the site in the middle.

The owners: The land owners are as follows

British Rail	own the southern and northern part of the site
National Freight	own the Granary and goods shed
British Gas	own the gas holders and ancillary land
British Waterways	own the canal and towpaths
LB of Camden	own Stanley Buildings
London Residuary Body	own Camley Street Natural Park

There are a number of minor land owners as well. British Rail own over 70% of the site.

2.0 RECENT HISTORY

Developers:

- Summer 1987 - Rosehaugh Stanhope (developers) approach BR and the Council about the likelihood of comprehensive redevelopment.
- Autumn 1987 - BR set up a competition to select a developer. Participants were: London Regeneration Consortium (combination of Rosehaugh and Stanhope), Speyhawk, Greycoat and London and Edinburgh Trust
- December 1987 - BR select LRC and Speyhawk who then have to develop their ideas further, rumours of Channel Tunnel Terminus enter the field.
- Spring 1988 - BR carry out a public consultation exercise, with an exhibition and a social survey.
- June 1988 - BR select LRC who in turn select Foster Associates as their architects. LRC/Fosters start to work up their proposals in more detail with a view to submitting an application in January 1989.

The Council:

- Autumn 1987 - draft KX Brief is put out to public consultation.
- January 1988 - KX Brief agreed by Committee
- April 1988 - Minor ammendments to Brief
- Summer 1988 - Council embarks on a series of meetings with LRC/Fosters to clarify the Council's detailed requirements

The Community:

There are two organised umbrella organisations; the KX Railway Lands Community Development Group, an umbrella organisation representing over 100 local groups (Chaired by Lesley Klein), and Crossfire an equivalent umbrella group in Islington. Regular meetings between the Council and local groups take place.

3.0 THE PLANNING BRIEF

The community planning brief is in four parts; a main volume supported by three appendicies on consultation, physical and social infrastructure and civic design. The brief will be used as a framework against which to consider a planning application and is additional to (ie does not replace) existing policy in the Borough Plan and GLDP.

In summary the Brief looks for a co-operative approach to development, and expects the development to be balanced, diverse, integrated and to contain a substantial element of social provision. A lot of preliminary background work has already been done to prepare the department for dealing with an application, in particular there is a fairly sophisticated computer model which helps asses the physical and financial impact of proposed levels of development.

The brief sets out the main issues and the council's objectives as well as making a number of requirements;

HOUSING: A substantial and wide ranging housing element is required, with an emphasis on low cost/ low rent housing for local people. A chart in appendix B of the planning brief gives the proportions of housing types required. This is currently under revision, and does not set any upper or lower limits on how much housing is required.

EMPLOYMENT: The brief requires a genuine increase in jobs in the local economy. Existing firms must be relocated either on or off the site, and additional industrial floorspace also provided.

SHOPPING: The area needs a shopping centre and convenience shopping. A superstore, relying on car borne shoppers would not be acceptable.

SOCIAL INFRASTRUTURE: The brief in appendix B gives a list of social and leisure uses that will be required. This is also currently being reviewed.

LEISURE AND RECREATION: New open space is required as well as protection / enhancement of the canal, existing natural park and listed buildings. A heritage centre is required and sports facilittes too.

URBAN DESIGN: The buildings must respect existing buildings and urban forms of the wider area. Building heights must respect the strategic views of St Pauls from Parliament Hill and Primrose Hill. A wide variety of uses is required.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT: Improvements are required to the interchange between trains and from buses. Accessibility to the northern part of the site must be improved.

TRAFFIC GENERATION AND PARKING: The site must be designed so as to minimise the need for vehicle movement. Adequate parking must be provided for the operational needs of the uses on the site. Parking should be controlled, both within and around the site.

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT: Traffic must be managed to prevent rat runs, and to meet the needs of all road users including pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.

4.0 DEVELOPERS PROPOSALS TO DATE

The developers have to strike a balance between;

- LB of Camden's planning brief
- BR Brief for new rail links to St. Pancras, possible Channel Tunnel terminal, new concourse between KX and St. Pancras to replace existing facilities.
- Own requirements to achieve a surplus for the landowners and a profit for themselves.

The problem is how to achieve a financially viable scheme without the scale of development being so great that it causes a lot of adverse impacts on the surrounding area. The possible impacts would be;

- traffic
- overloading the underground system
- overloading the transport interchange
- noise and vibration during development
- visual impacts on skyline and on local and strategic views
- overloading other services eg. sewers
- pressure on local businesses and residents due to rising land values and a "ripple" effect around the site, including pressure to redevelop adjoining sites.

The developers have produced a masterplan based on one scheme, which consists of a central park surrounded by 10m square feet of development. The park would contain the existing buildings in the centre of the site. No details have been submitted as to building heights or the precise content of the scheme. However, it is clear that there will be at least 6m sq ft of offices, 1.2m sq feet of housing (of an unspecified type) and 0.5m sq ft of shopping in a high street along the eastern part of the site. Building heights would probably be an average of about 8 storeys.

The masterplan can be viewed at Regeneration House, off York Way. The developers will answer any questions.

5.0 BRITISH RAIL'S PROPOSALS

On November 27th British Rail and London Underground Limited will table their Bill, seeking parliamentary approval for railway works associated with the redevelopment. This consists of a low level station under Kings Cross and links between the Kings Cross and St Pancras Mainlines in the north of the site. The low level station is to be constructed using a cut and cover technique and would involve demolition of buildings. The Bill includes plans which outline an area where Compulsory Purchase Orders will be sought. Some buildings (But not all) will have to be demolished within this area. The low level station may also become a second channel tunnel terminus (in addition to Waterloo). BR have yet to decide.

6.0 THE CURRENT ISSUES

Urban design/height: The Council's view is that the scheme does not meet the requirements of the Brief and is an overdevelopment of the site. The council is also pressing for alternative approaches. Although details are not available, it is clear that some buildings will be very high (average 8 storeys, some may be 13 or 15 stories.). This would, according to the calculations in the planning brief, obscure views of St Pauls. The planning brief implies a maximum storey height of 7 storeys in order to protect views (however, 7 storeys across the whole site would not be acceptable).

Housing: Studies have shown that a housing led scheme cannot replace offices AND produce an economically viable scheme (assuming that the full planning brief requirements are met), unless housing density is very high and/or other aspects of the brief are cut. University College London have also produced an analysis, which shows that in order to achieve an about 9,000 rooms of housing (about 2000 units), housing density must rise to over 200 hra (equivalent to Frederick St and Acton Street), offices must be at an average height of 10 storeys and open space cut by half. This scenario would still require 3m sq of office floorspace. The density standard recommended by the housing department is 100 hra.

Traffic: This is one of the more worrying aspects of impact. Traffic levels are already high at the moment, and the impact of even a small scheme would be severe. Currently there are 35,000 passengers arriving by train (5,000 of which are Thameslink users), 114,000 people enter and change between the tube lines, and 56,000 vehicles travel along Euston Road each day. Around 30,000 jobs could be created, which would mean about 18,000 to 20,000 additional people arriving in the peak hours. If the layout of the development discourages vehicle use and measures to encourage use of public transport are successful, this may mean another 16,000 people coming by train and an additional 2,000 vehicles during the morning peak.

Businesses/land values: The question of what impact a scheme would have on the surrounding area is very difficult to ascertain. It depends on whether the scheme is a success and starts land values spiraling. It may be the case that there is a slump in commercial property (especially with competition from the Docklands). Assuming that the scheme is economically successful, then there is bound to be pressure on surrounding land to be redeveloped.

Channel Tunnel: The Council is totally opposed to the scale of demolition envisaged by British Rail, and would like the option of a Stratford terminal to be fully investigated. A major concern is the potential

overdevelopment of the site should the terminal be funded through the development proposals. The Council is seeking more information from British Rail and will decide on whether to petition the Bill and the issues of concern in January.

7.0 WHAT HAPPENS NOW

3 November 1988 onwards	LRC exhibition at regeneration House
24-27th November 1988	Kings Cross Exchange
27th November 1988	BR and LUL table Bill to parliament
31st January 1988	Final date for petitioning BR/LUL Bill
January/February 1989	Outline planning application submitted Environmental Impact Assessment submitted
Mid 1990	Decision on planning application. Prior to committee decision, application to be referred to the Secretary of the State for the Environment who may "call" it in.
1990-1997	Construction period (if permission given)