
From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 28 May 2024 15:43
To: Planning Policy Consultations
Subject: Local Plan 2040, representations
Attachments: Bevis Marks representations.docx

Categories: CONFIRMED

THIS IS AN EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please see my representations as attached.

Simon Tabbush

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in order to make a representation in relation to the proposed developments in the neighbourhood of Bevis Marks Synagogue, and more generally to submit that the Local Plan 2040 as drafted is defective. I make this representation generally, but specifically in respect of Policies HE1, S12 and S13 and the Policies Map.

I consider the draft unsound on the following grounds:

HE1 does not adequately protect heritage assets. It is not enough that development should “consider” enhancing conservation areas; enhancement should be actively sought and pursued. HE1 also does not adequately protect Bevis Marks Synagogue. As drafted, HE1(8) refers to the Synagogue’s defined immediate setting; however no such concept of “immediate setting” has been authoritatively defined, or would provide adequate protection if it were. As with other heritage assets, the whole setting of the Synagogue should be protected. This is particularly important because the Synagogue is included in the Tall Buildings Area, and the permissible height contours in Figures 14 and 15 clearly impinge upon the Synagogue and its setting.

S12 and S13 tall buildings policies are also inadequate. They should not simply “take into consideration local heritage assets” as 12(5) states, but must pay full regard to and preserve and enhance the significance of those assets. S13 should protect views of and from the Synagogue in a similar way to the way The Monument is treated, albeit special regard should also be paid to the culturally and religiously important setting of the Synagogue.

The presumption against tall buildings in Conservation Areas as contained in the current Local Plan Policy CS14 must be retained in the new draft. In addition, a sentence should be added to clarify that the permission for a Tall Buildings Area must not override heritage and townscape considerations.

Bevis Marks Synagogue is arguably the most important Jewish religious building in the United Kingdom and is regarded as the flagship synagogue for communal events such as thanksgiving at coronations and royal jubilees, the installation of senior rabbis and the service at the opening of the legal year. It is also a building of great beauty and historical interest, comparable to Wren’s City churches. It is already hemmed in by surrounding buildings and has no “churchyard” area as one might expect for a building of this significance; however, the existing buildings are of an acceptable height and do not unduly obstruct the light to the synagogue. Placing tall buildings in the immediate vicinity would make the synagogue appear to be at the bottom of a deep dark well and obstruct the light that at present shines through the monumental windows and adds so much atmosphere to services, especially around the hour of sunset. Properly enhanced and protected, the synagogue and its surroundings could become a major tourist draw.

I reserve the right to add or amend my representations.

Yours faithfully,

Simon Tabbush