

City Plan 2040 CAF representations

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📎 1 attachments (25 KB)

CAF - City Plan 2040 Representations (FINAL) 170624.docx;

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Please find attached representations on the City Plan 2040 on behalf of The City Architecture Forum.

Submitted on behalf of Andrew Reynolds, Chairman, City Architecture Forum

Kind regards

Lee Mallett
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From: City Architecture Forum - Representations on the draft City Plan 2040

The City Architecture Forum held a discussion on 14 May, entitled *City Plan 2040 – shaping a more humane City*, to provide members with an opportunity to express views on the Draft Plan and the impact of these on the design of buildings and the built environment. Based around that discussion, the Forum makes the following representations:

Destination City

CAF agrees with the thrust of the City 2040 policies to make the City a destination, but is concerned about the ability to deliver them, and by some gaps.

The ability of the City to deliver this ambition requires a more considered detailed evidence-base to deliver projects on the ground, in its cultural, retail, and amenity offers, in particular locations that actually work and achieve the desired objectives.

For example, the public riverside policy seems underdeveloped, and the pedestrian links between the City, the Tower of London, and Tower Bridge remain unsatisfactory.

Enhancing the retail offer of the City will be hard to deliver through policy alone. Testing and adjustment will be needed, based on evidence. A robust economic equation has to be achieved that requires the right mix of physical environment, a retail offer people want and use, and some intense curatorial effort.

Cultural and vibrancy policies seeking such ground floor uses generally may be a broad and blunt instrument, leading to unused space and wasted effort.

Similarly, seeking publicly accessible upper-level terraces or enclosed public spaces generally may be excessive. The public demand may already have been sated whilst costs are a major burden on development, to create, to ensure the security of, and to manage such facilities. It is felt this general, rather than particular requirement, in addition to other new policy requirements, could constrain viability and retard sustainability efforts.

The ground plane is by far the most important amenity level for the public and the trend to lift buildings above open ground space is welcome.

The overarching objective of enhancing the City as a destination is sound. This animating concept should make the City a more humane and attractive place for all, enhancing its role and ensuring sustainability in all senses. But to be successful, and to avoid unused space and unnecessary financial burdens, it requires careful visioning and testing of proposals.

Offices and tall buildings

CAF supports the policies regarding office space growth. It resists the argument that demand will fall, post-Covid. Indeed, demand may exceed the 1.9m sq m envelope envisaged. CAF would urge a regular review of this target which should remain flexible.

Managing the ‘trellises’ which define acceptable massing may prove difficult, balancing the perceived ‘charisma’ of proposals with strict adherence to policy. There are concerns about potentially increased levels of uncertainty and associated cost, which can reduce resources to generate the best quality architecture and spaces.

We urge the City to refute arguments that less major new office space is needed, and not to be too prescriptive about height, architectural style, or precise location.

Flexibility in use in relation to uses for older office buildings, in less central locations, afforded by the Plan policies is welcome and to be encouraged so that so-called 'stranded assets' are quickly reassimilated so renewed ground floor spaces and, where possible, associated elements of public realm help reinvigorate these locations with new focal points.

Providing a 'vision'

Finally, CAF considers that the City could steer development better by providing a vision for areas where improvement is needed. Visualisation to stimulate ideas might be encouraging, rather than inhibiting.

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About the City Architecture Forum

City Architecture Forum is formed of a cross-disciplinary group of professionals with a common interest in the quality of architecture and public realm in the City of London.

Formed in 1991 when there was a clear difference of view in the City about the appropriate architecture for the present. The Forum has a rich history of collaborating with leading designers, developers and planners; conducting 'behind the scenes' tours of many of the City's landmark projects to get the definitive story of the project by those in the know, as well as debating the virtues of the wave of development.

It is not a campaigning society but hopes to influence policy makers and participants by spreading understanding of issues and approaches amongst its members.

Membership is balanced across disciplines to promote rounded discussion. Typically members are drawn from amongst Architects, Engineers, Surveyors, Planners, Developers, Financiers, Conservationists, Media and those with an inherent curiosity for the built environment.