

City of London Local Plan Consultation

John Schlackman [Redacted]

Mon 6/17/2024 2:19 PM

To: Planning Policy Consultations <PlanningPolicyConsultations@cityoflondon.gov.uk>

📎 1 attachments (196 KB)

Bevis Marks RJD letter 170624.pdf;

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THIS IS AN EXTERNAL EMAIL

Please find attached a submission to the consultation on the Local Plan from Rabbi Joseph Dweck, Senior Rabbi of the Spanish and Portuguese Sephardi Community.

Many thanks,

John Schlackman
PA to Rabbi Joseph Dweck, Senior Rabbi



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John Schlackman
Senior Administrator



W: www.sephardi.org.uk

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June 17, 2024

To whom it may concern,

I make this representation as the Senior Rabbi of the Spanish and Portuguese Jewish Community, the founding Jewish community of British Jewry, est. 1656. In my capacity as Senior Rabbi, I am responsible for the spiritual wellbeing of British Jewry's Sephardi Jewish community. It is in this capacity that I am particularly concerned about the manner in which the City of London has treated our founding synagogue, Bevis Marks Synagogue, est. 1701. Despite clear representations demonstrating the unique sensitivities of its site, particularly its need for unobstructed sky-views for religious worship, this Local Plan has disregarded this religious necessity. It has done so by tightly defining an 'immediate setting' and at the same time rejecting the existence of a 'wider setting'. In particular, it rejects the impact that the encroachment of tall buildings to the synagogue's south, that sit just outside this 'immediate setting', would have on the synagogue.

This disregard of the religious, cultural, and historical requirements and sensitivities of such an important religious community, tramples on the values that we hold dear as British citizens. It is an affront to all those who value the heritage and tolerance of this country. As Bevis Marks Synagogue is both a symbol of Britain religious diversity, and of unequal value to Jews worldwide as the only synagogue to have maintained regular worship back to 1701, its preservation is of the highest importance. The Local Plan should be an opportunity to ensure it is protected, and yet, it has failed to do so, and may in fact, to all our horror, be a roadmap for justifying harm to it. It is clearly unsound in its current form.

I therefore make the following representations regarding the Local Plan 2040 generally, and specifically in respect of Policies HE1, S12 and S13 and the Policies Map.

The draft is 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 exists. 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.

The S&P Sephardi Community

2 Ashworth Road, London, W9 1JY

Tel: 020 7289 2573

info@sephardi.org.uk

www.sephardi.org.uk

The home of the Sephardi community since 1656

S&P Sephardi Community is the working name of charities in connection with the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' Synagogue
Registered charity number 212517



- 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 the same way as The Monument is treated.
- The current Local Plan Policy CS14 presumption against tall buildings in Conservation Areas must be retained in the new draft. As well, a sentence should be added to clarify that the Tall Buildings Area does not override heritage and townscape considerations.

I reserve the right to add or amend my proposed changes [and I should welcome being invited to participate in discussion at the Plan's examination].

Yours sincerely,



Rabbi Joseph Dweck
Senior Rabbi