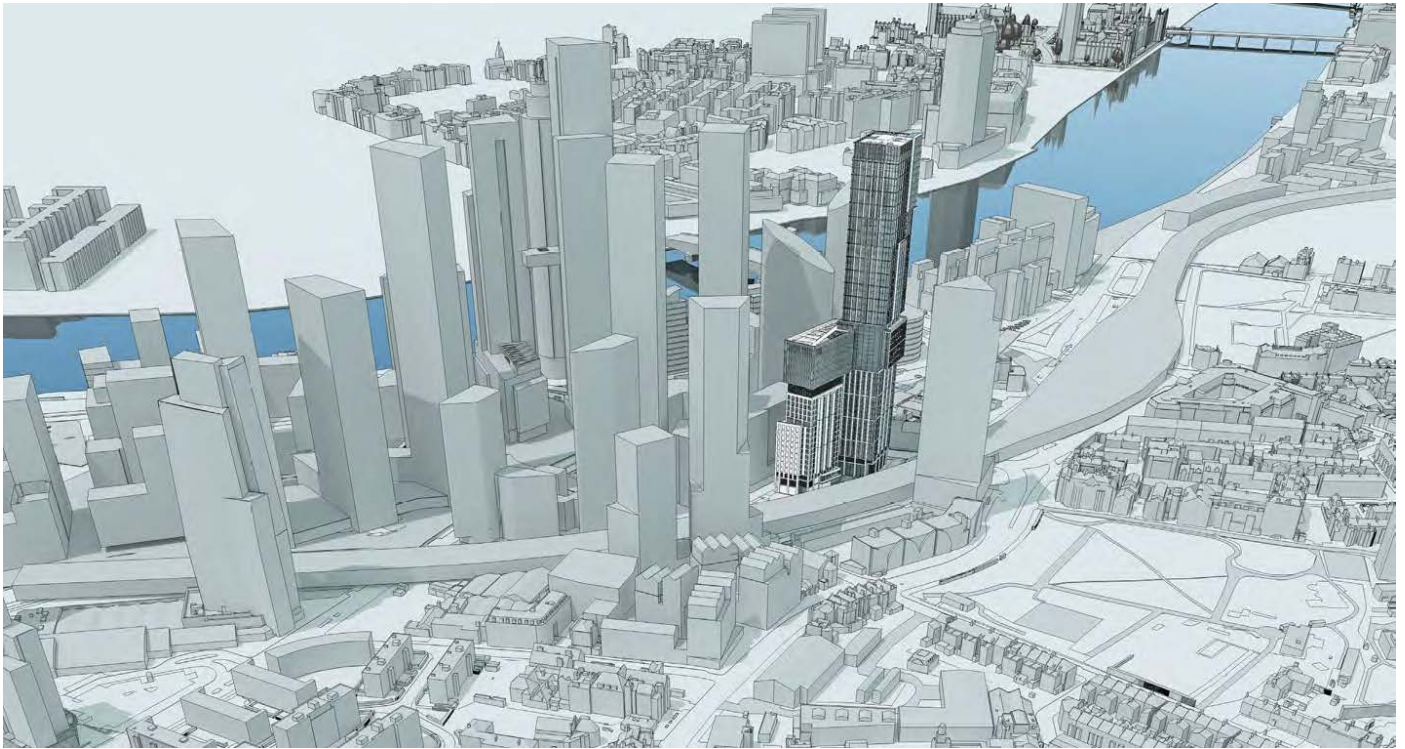
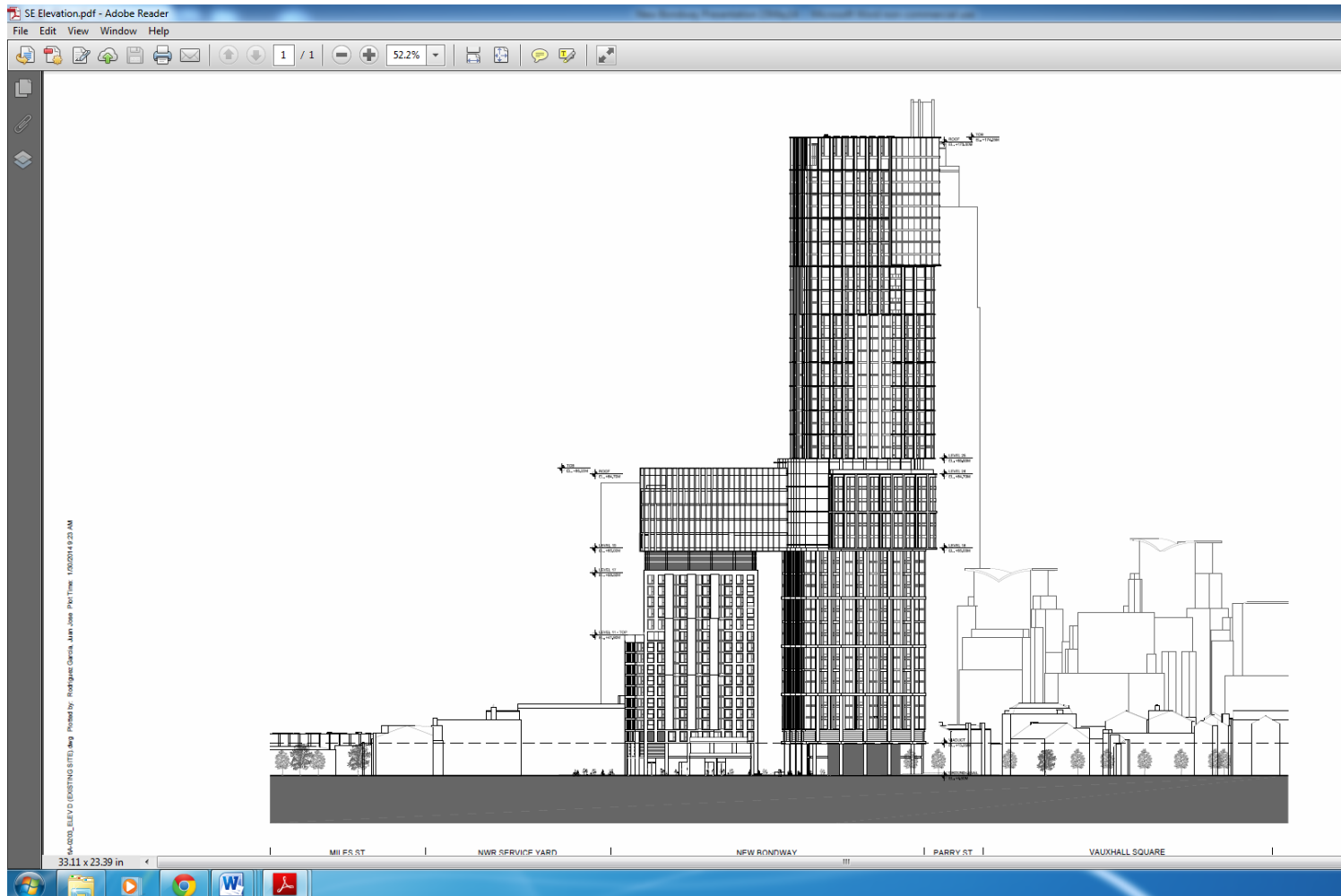


The New Bondway Proposal in its Cluster Context



“What Hath Man Wrought?”

The View through the Gap



The Old Proposal:



The New Proposal:



Then height 149m above ground level (AGL):



And **now** 170m AGL (an extra seven storeys):



Then 1513.5 sqm public open space

and now 1542.8 sqm public open space:

Design Statement V.pdf - Adobe Reader

File Edit View Window Help

83 / 99 74%

Tools Sign Comment

Sign In

Export PDF

Adobe ExportPDF

Convert PDF files to Word or Excel online.

Select PDF File:

Design Statement V.pdf

1 file / 27.50 MB

Convert To:

Microsoft Word (*.docx)

Recognize Text in English(U.S.)

Change

Convert

Create PDF

Send Files

Store Files

COMPARISON WITH FORMER PROPOSALS IN THE SITE

PUBLIC REALM AND GROUND FLOOR QUALITY

Former proposals on this site by MAKE Architects

Continous inactive heritage

Proposal	Public Open Space (sqm)
Former Proposals - MAKE scheme - public realm	1513.5
Former Proposals - MAKE scheme - site coverage	960.52
Current - New Bondway Proposals - site coverage	1542.8
Current - New Bondway Proposals - site coverage	1282.11

Current - New Bondway Proposals - site coverage

1513.5sqm2

960.52sqm2

1542.81sqm2

1282.11sqm2

Current - New Bondway Proposals - Public Realm - Design and Access Statement | 3 February 2014 239

19:36 21/05/2014

Old Bondway, as refused by the Secretary of State (9 February 2011) compared with New Bondway proposal [extracts in bold from the Secretary of State Decision Letter about Old Bondway, *italic KOVF commentary*]:

- **The Secretary of State considers that provision of a substantial number of new homes, of which at least 20% would be affordable, and a likely increase in employment numbers at this highly sustainable location are significant benefits of the proposal.** *[So this is in principle a sensible place for residential development and on this site, 20% affordable housing was acceptable, despite the headline policy calling for 40%, because of a “viability” study that said that more would prejudice the economic viability of the overall development. But KOVF is highly critical of such studies and their assumptions, and strongly opposes their “confidential” character. Note that an **estimated** increase in “better quality” employment would trump the **actual** reduction in employment floor space that the Old Proposal would have made. In the event, taking account of retained floor space, the New Proposal claims to increase both actual employment and employment floor space [just!]]*
- **He considers that the design of the proposed tower is of high quality in many respects and would not harm the wider historic environment.** *[Here the Secretary of State adopts the views of the Inspector that the proposed Old Bondway Tower would have been a high quality design, in itself, in many respects, with interesting textures. The Inspector also systematically reviews the impact of that Tower on all the local conservation areas (particularly Vauxhall Conservation Area and Park), listed buildings and the Westminster World Heritage Site, and found it acceptable. But the New Tower would be 20m taller than the Old one, with box like profiles (one supporter characterized it as a muscular set of stacked boxes) so these arguments must be addressed afresh. Opposition from Westminster Council and English Heritage, expressly raising the World Heritage issue, are noted below. CABE/Design Council are yet to express an opinion]*
- **He also considers that, in principle, the appeal site is an appropriate location for a tall building.** *[This accords with the now adopted Core Strategy, and is consistent with the unadopted Tall Building Design Study for Vauxhall of 2009. But as a tall building counts, on this site, as anything in excess of 30m tall (the proposed Old Bondway Tower would have been 149m tall), there is plenty of room for argument, and scope for sensible planning guidance, on just **how** tall and where, tall buildings will be acceptable in future. The New Bondway Tower is in fact 170m tall, 20m over the 150m guideline from the Mayor, while there is no new useful guidance from the planners since the Secretary of State decision in 2011. The New Tower is in fact taller than some of the towers closer to the de facto centre of the cluster (the 200m tall One Nine Elms in Wandsworth), and must be questionable on cluster design grounds alone.] [See also the English Heritage objection, below]*
- **However, he considers that the absence of complementary public open space from the proposal is unacceptable,** *[This was the killer argument, and has set the terms of debate for all the other high density developments at Vauxhall for the foreseeable future – the Secretary of State and the Inspector both put great emphasis on a part of Planning Policy Statement Number One covering Design (PPS1 – Sustainable Development), a piece of overall planning guidance that otherwise might be regarded as a bland statement of motherhood and apple pie – “**High quality and inclusive design should create well-mixed and integrated developments which avoid segregation and have well-planned public spaces that bring people together and provide opportunities for physical activity and recreation.**” This has been replaced by similar statements in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)*
 - eg para 57 “**It is important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development, including individual buildings, public and private spaces and wider area development schemes.**”*
 - para 58 “... **Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments:***
 - ***will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development;***
 - ***establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive and comfortable places to live, work and visit;***
 - ***optimise the potential of the site to accommodate development, create and sustain an appropriate mix of uses (including incorporation of green and other public space as part of developments) and support local facilities and transport networks;***

- *respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation;*
- *create safe and accessible environments where crime and disorder, and the fear of crime, do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion; and*
- *are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and appropriate landscaping.]*

and para 69 “...*Planning policies and decisions, in turn, should aim to achieve places which promote:*

...

- *safe and accessible developments, containing clear and legible pedestrian routes, and high quality public space, which encourage the active and continual use of public areas.”*

The New Proposal increase the area of public realm/gathering space around the building from 1516 sqm (Old Proposal) to 1543 sqm, an increase of 29 sqm.

- **that the tower would be overbearing in relation to its local surroundings despite some relief being provided by its form,** [*so arguments about local impact still have traction – per the Inspector at para 551: “**Moreover, without associated public space, the visual mass of the building would be overbearing in relation to its local surroundings**”, even though he regards the visual impact on the nearby Vauxhall Park as “acceptable”. And the New Bondway Tower is 20m taller than the previous one, so more overbearing relative to surroundings.]*
- **that there are insufficient opportunities for pedestrian movement linked to the wider public realm,** [*a criticism of the Old Bondway design was that it did nothing directly to encourage permeability of the railway embankment which divides the centre of Vauxhall. Neither does the New Bondway Tower – instead of confronting the pedestrian with the blank face of the railway embankment at the **south** of the site, instead the new proposal confronts the pedestrian with that blank face through the archway in the **middle** of the building]*
- **that the absence of adequate dedicated play space within or very near the building is materially harmful,** [*even though the Old Proposal nominally met the target for overall private amenity space for its residents, (by including an amenity floor that affordable tenures would have had to pay for separately), the failure to earmark on-site childrens’ play space within that total, and reliance instead on Vauxhall Park, counted against it. This is an important argument in relation to other proposals, especially if they fail even to meet the total amenity space target. But the New Proposal addresses this criticism, with plan compliant childrens’ play space on site (1094 sqm supplied, versus 980 sqm required), and more private amenity space on site (5252sqm supplied, versus 4550 sqm required). But it is worth noting that the 450 flats now planned are estimated to generate fewer children than the 376 flats of the Old Proposal (98 versus 117). Pied Piper at work with the numbers, perhaps...*
- **and that the intensity of use to which Vauxhall Park would be subject would erode its recreational function and character.** [*Given the categoric way in which this argument is formulated, this makes the provision of new public space a touchstone for development at Vauxhall – as the Inspector says (para 658 et seq): “**The Park is not large and is well used. Although the functions of a park and a public square differ, inevitably the Park would come under increasing pressure were public spaces not provided within the area of redevelopment to the west. The effect would be cumulative as further elements were added to the projected cluster of towers. This would be so irrespective of financial contributions to improve the Park and its play facilities. Under the proposals, no complementary public space would be provided, nor is any assured in the future. Without it, the pressure on Bondway, the surrounding areas and the Park would be unacceptable.**” Old Bondway was estimated to hold 376 flats with 2.27 residents per flat, or 854 people. At 1.6 ha per 1000 inhabitants, the extant Lambeth metric for open space requirement, this amounted to 1.37 ha, an area about a third the size of Vauxhall Park, and a measure of the extra intensity of use of the Park which contributed to the Secretary of State’s decision to reject Old Bondway. On the same metric, New Bondway would contribute even more extra intensity, at 1.63 ha of excess demand, or about 39% the size of Vauxhall Park. But note that the Inspector acquitted the Old Tower on grounds of overshadowing and overlooking, saying bluntly that you cannot expect privacy in a public park. So these sorts of argument are not likely to be persuasive in future, though the taller New Tower will cast a longer shadow.]*

- **For these reasons the Secretary of State concludes that the proposal is in conflict with the development plan and with the aims of PPS1, PPS3, and PPG17. He has taken into account the benefits which would be offered by the proposal, but considers that these benefits do not outweigh the significant conflict with the development plan and the aims of national policies in other respects.** *[So, as is clear from comments above, no amount of S106 contribution could have sweetened the old Bondway proposals enough to make them acceptable, in the absence of new open space]*

Extract of English Heritage views 26 February 2014

“However, we are deeply concerned that the design principles of the VNEBOAPF master-plan appear to be subject to change every time a new tall building is proposed at Vauxhall and therefore the protection of the setting of the World Heritage Site and the listed buildings within it is being endangered by a failure to implement recently established policy.

The original aim of the master-plan was for development to rise up from the Albert Embankment to 1 St George’s Wharf which would form the ‘pinnacle’ of the cluster, but this ambition changed with the emergence of the 200 metre-high high Market Towers proposal. As you are aware, English Heritage objected to this proposal on the basis that that the 200 metre height challenged the visual dominance of the Palace of Westminster in views from the Thames Bridges. It therefore failed to pay due regard to the setting of the Grade 1 listed building and the setting of the World Heritage Site. We were not a party to the workshop which decided that the emerging cluster would be more visually pleasing with Market Towers as its pinnacle, which is regrettable, given the collaborative approach taken to the development of the original master-plan and we therefore found ourselves in opposition.

We understand that the design premise proposed by the architects of Market Towers - who are also responsible for the Vauxhall Bondway proposals - was that moving the pinnacle of the cluster from 1 St George’s Wharf to Market Towers would result in a picturesque modulated skyline, which (crucially) avoided the emerging cluster appearing as a wall of development when viewed from the Thames Bridges. It is therefore with great regret that we note the current proposals for the Vauxhall Bondway site envisage a further change to the form of the emerging cluster of tall buildings.”

D J BOARDMAN

KOVF Board Member for Planning

4 June 2014