**Draft Lambeth Site Allocations DPD** 

#### SA17 332 – 336 Brixton Road, SW9

#### Evidence



January 2022



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This evidence demonstrates the approach taken to understanding the design-led optimisation of the site to inform the content of the draft site allocation policy for this site.
- 1.2 This evidence is in several parts. Part 2 contains an assessment of the site and its context and analysis of the opportunities and constraints these present. That assessment has informed the key design principles for approaching development on the site as set out in Part 3. The detailed analysis has allowed an indicative approach to massing and height to be developed which is set out in Part 4. The indicative approach has been tested to ensure it meets the key design principles and this testing is explained in Part 5. Part 6 concludes the evidence with the identification of key design considerations to be included within the SADPD Policy itself.
- 1.3 The indicative approach included in this evidence is one way to achieve design-led optimisation of the site, assuming it is comprehensively redeveloped. The indicative approach is for testing purposes only and does not have the status of planning policy or guidance. It is not intended to be prescriptive. Applicants and their architects are expected to develop their own approaches to optimisation of capacity within the context of the parameters, constraints and opportunities set out in the site allocation policy.
- 1.4 The indicative approach massing, in combination with land use analysis, has informed the approximate land use quantums included within the draft site allocation policy. As the indicative approach does not include detailed floor plan designs, a number of standard assumptions have been used to approximate the potential number of residential units, including London Plan space internal standards, London Plan and Local Plan external amenity space standards, Local Plan requirements for dual aspect residential units, Local Plan policy for dwelling size mix, and best practice separation distances for that context. For this reason, the indicative quantums included in the draft allocation are approximate and should not be read as absolute minima or maxima. Applicants and their architects may be able to demonstrate a different figure based on alternative design solutions to the site. Detailed planning assessment of design proposals at pre-application and planning application stage may also result in a variation on the indicative figures included in the draft site allocation policy.
- 1.5 Building height definitions can be found in Local Plan Policy Q26 . As storey heights vary according to the building use, they are not an accurate means to gauge height. For that reason, building heights are expressed in metres rather than storeys. Additionally, above Ordinance Datum (AOD) height is used to aid understanding of site and context topography in those circumstances where the topography is varied.
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# 2. SITE APPRAISAL / ANALYSIS

# Site Overview

2.1. Site Address – 300 – 336 Brixton Road, SW9

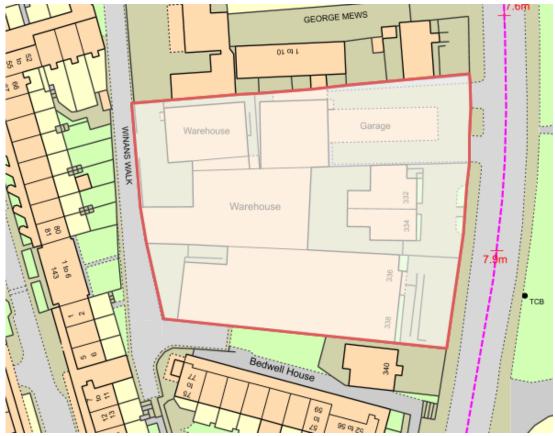


Figure 1 – site boundary map

- 2.2 The site comprises:
  - <u>A.</u> <u>No. 330 Brixton Road</u> a modern petrol filling station with retail building and forecourt canopy. In and out vehicular access is provided from Brixton Road.
  - <u>B.</u> The warehouse to the rear of the petrol filling station is currently occupied by Nero Glass Designs and is accessed from Winans Walk.
  - <u>C.</u> Nos. 332 334 Brixton Road a very heavily altered pair of late Georgian houses which were merged into a single office block c1995. The former front garden space is now a parking forecourt and the rear garden has been lost to post-war warehouse development accessed from Winans Walk
  - D. Nos. 336 338 Brixton Road is a post-war development which comprises a large office building to Brixton Road with a substantial warehouse behind which is accessed from Winans Walk. The existing buildings are varied in character but have a scale proportional to historic plot sizes and share a front building line. To Brixton Road is a parking forecourt and to Winans Walk there is a double loading bay.

- 2.3 The petrol filling station presents an unwelcome gap in the street frontage and its advertisement banners and totem harm the visual amenity of an the otherwise attractive street scene. Similarly, the car dominated forecourts of the adjoining buildings have a very poor effect on the visual amenity of Brixton Road.
- 2.4 Brixton Road is an old Roman Road which urbanised with ribbon development in the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Until the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Brixton was lined by large Georgian houses like that at no. 340 Brixton Road (immediately to the south of the site). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century neglect, war damage and post-war redevelopment took its toll on the historic character of Brixton Road. For example, during the 1970s, opposite the site to the east, the old housing was cleared to create a public park as part of wider estate regeneration and to the west and south of the site old housing was also cleared for the construction of the Stockwell Park Estate.

# **Historical Maps**



2.5 The historical development of the immediate area is illustrated by the maps below

Figure 2 - 1890s OS map shows both sides of Brixton Road lined with rows of substantial houses setback from the street behind gardens. The location of the site can be identified by the slightly anomaly in building line on the western side of the road (this is at no. 330) which is caused by a slight shift in the road alignment.



Figure 3 - 1950s OS Map shows that Second World War bombing has created gaps in the urban fabric. The rear gardens backing onto Winans Walk are starting to fill with commercial buildings. No. 330 appears to be the original house but is annotated 'garage'. The unbroken historic townscape surviving on the opposite side of the road will be cleared in the 1970s for the Angel Town Estate and Max Roach Park.

## Site Context

## Local Character

- 2.6 The character of the locality today is varied with much post-war development. The remaining groups and fragments of the Georgian townscape now benefit from conservation area designation and the best examples are statutory listed (see later).
- 2.7 The locality of this part of Brixton Road benefits much from numerous mature trees and generous open space including Max Roach Park. Additionally, Brixton Road curves gently which means many of the views up and down are pleasantly verdant.
- 2.8 Winans Walk has a mixed character. There is no through traffic and the western side is wholly residential in character making it fairly quiet. Public footway provision is limited only to the western side and is quite narrow.

## **Building Heights**

- 2.9 Historic development is between 4 and 5 modern storeys in height and the historic buildings that do survive are around 20m AOD; and much of the Stockwell Park Estate to the south and west of the site is of similar height.
- 2.10 No. 336 338 is the tallest building in the immediate locality standing at c30m AOD. However, further to the north there are tall buildings at Robsart Street and to the south within Brixton Town Centre; including a newly completed tall building within the Stockwell Park Estate.

#### **Building Uses**

2.11 Residential uses prevail locally with pockets of light industrial uses and warehouses at Winans Walk. Some buildings have been converted into offices. There are a cluster of local centre retail uses to the north opposite the junction with Loughborough Road. These small units support a wide range of independent businesses.

#### **Heritage Assets**

## Affecting the Site

2.12 All of the buildings but for the warehouses at the rears of nos. 330 – 334 Brixton Road are within the Brixton Road and Angell Town Conservation Area.

#### Adjoining the Site

2.13 Additionally, 340 Brixton Road (Grade II) adjoins the site to the immediate south. The site is in its setting.

#### **Designated Heritage Assets**

2.14 <u>Brixton Road and Angell Town Conservation Area (BRATCA)</u> comprises a large part of the central section of Brixton Road and the historic roads off it to the east. The Conservation Area Appraisal (2003) is not up-to-date but provides some useful information on the character of the conservation area:

"clearly defined by the arterial nature of Brixton Road - large terraced, detached or paired townhouses set back from the main road behind generous front gardens. In the middle section this character changes markedly with later C19th and C20th buildings extending to back of pavement or set back behind later bungalow shop units. This is the local shopping area which occupies four blocks on the west side of Brixton Road. The large houses set back from the road resume again on the western side to the south, but the road has a more unkempt character in marked contrast to the generally wellmaintained properties in the northern part of the conservation area. The original streetscape is more damaged along this southern stretch ... Little remains of the early to mid C19th townscape on the eastern side south of Loughborough Road with the notable exception of Nos. 309 - 313 - a small group of late Georgian houses. The remainder were redeveloped in the late C19th ... and the post-war years to make way for the Angell Town Estate, Leys Court (1960) and Max Roach Park."

- 2.15 Leafy front gardens and mature trees are a key characteristic of the Brixton Road frontage within the Conservation Area. These characteristics are notably absent within the site.
- 2.16 The character appraisal dating from the designation in 2003 gives a useful insight into the character and development of the area but some of its content is now dated and doesn't reflect current thinking. Its assumptions have therefore been revisited where appropriate for this study.
- 2.17 Each of the buildings within the conservation area is appraised below:

#### No. 330 Brixton Road

2.18 The 2003 character appraisal states:

'4.35 The site of No. 330 is now occupied by an Esso filling station and a mini market. It is hoped that one day this site can be redeveloped and the petrol station will be replaced by a more worthy development of 3-4 storeys on the same building line as No.328, to a design in keeping with the character of the conservation area'



Figure 4 - The petrol filling station has a very poor effect on the conservation area.

2.19 Current position - the petrol filling station makes a negative contribution to the conservation area – a gap in the street frontage dominated by signage fascia and totem) – both out of keeping with the character of the conservation area. Redevelopment presents an opportunity for significant enhancement.

## Nos. 332 – 334 Brixton Road

2.20 The 2003 character appraisal states:

'4.35...Nos. 332–334 is much altered 4 storey (including semi-basement and attic) property dating from c1830. Now combined to create one office building, it was formerly a pair of semi-detached villas, remodelled in 1994 with a new central entrance replacing the original individual recessed entrance porches. Its forecourt is sadly dominated by parked cars.'

2.21 Current position - These properties have been heavily altered and compromised by poorly considered conversion which has merged the two houses into one and placed a pastiche porch centrally on the shared party wall and similarly added a central dormer – distorting the proportions and façade composition of the original design intent and eroding the locally distinct form of the original. The rear elevation has been rebuilt and extended. The absence of authenticity diminishes its contribution to the conservation area. The forecourt parking and absence of an appropriate boundary treatment detracts from the conservation area

character. Sympathetic redevelopment and the recreation of a soft landscaped front garden would cause no harm to the conservation area.



Figure 5 - A local example which is similar to what nos. 332 – 334 would have looked like when built.



Figure 6 - The heavy remodelling and additional of a central entrance and central dormer has significantly diminshed the authenticity of this pair of properties. In adidtion the rear elevation has been completely rebuilt which has dimished authenticy further.

<u>Nos 336 – 338</u>

2.22 The 2003 character appraisal states:

'4.35....Nos. 336-338 built in 1966 in the Brutalist style, is probably the ugliest and most obtrusive building on Brixton Road, inflicting enormous harm upon the character of the conservation area. It is woefully out of scale with lumpen, top-heavy proportions reminiscent of a second rate example of soviet architecture in eastern Europe. The frontage is dominated by a forecourt is crammed full of cars and a long ramp.'



Figure 7 - The façade at no. 332-228 is a subtle response to historic parapet lines

2.23 Nearly twenty years have passed since the 2003 character appraisal was written and the appreciation of post-war architecture has moved on significantly. Over the following decades, appreciation of Brutalism from conservation bodies and the general public has grown. The 20<sup>th</sup> Century Society, supported by Historic England, prepared its 'C20 Society Conservation Areas Project Report' in 2017. That report sees negative perceptions to post-war architecture as a particular threat to its conservation. It states:

'The speed at which post-war development is either being demolished or is coming under threat of major change, and the acquiescence of local planning authorities and communities in this work, suggests that little or no regard is given to such developments in heritage terms and they are not viewed as 'historic. ... ...There is also a language issue around the subject of post-war development. Negative perceptions are promoted through the descriptive language used by writers and journalists and there needs to be a movement away from terms such as 'challenging', 'ugly' and 'bleak'. In much written comment on post-war architecture there is an overriding focus on aesthetics and the perceived absence of 'beauty' which many people feel to be an essential characteristic of historic buildings and places. This in turn leads to little or no consideration of the significance of post-war development in heritage terms.'

- 2.24 Current position The building was built in 1966 to design by George, Davies and Webb. It is a bold response to context which uses a shift from glazed to solid, and façade cantilever to acknowledge the parapet line of its grade II listed neighbour at no. 340. The articulated silhouette at rooftop breaks down the massing. The building respects the historic building line, and plot width.
- 2.25 The building is a characterful, good quality, confident and self-assured example of the architecture of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century which, in its own way, responds to its historic context. It is the only post-war building of clear architectural quality within the Brixton Road and Angell Town Conservation Area. This makes the building one of architectural and historic interest despite its divisive style, and worthy of its place as a positive contributor to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

#### Development elsewhere within the Conservation Area

- 2.26 As stated above, the BRATCA is extensive and its character is varied. Across the conservation area there are numerous examples of where eyesore sites have been transformed in recent years. Examples are shown below:
- 2.27 The redevelopment of the petrol filling station at no. 235 237 Brixton Road and its sympathetic replacement with flats c2012 included the removal of a large advertisement billboard. See below



Figure 8 - No. 235 – 243 Brixton Road 'before'



Figure 9 - No. 235 – 243 Brixton Road 'after'

# Statutory Listed Buildings

- 2.28 <u>No. 340 Brixton Road</u> stands to the immediate south of the site and is a grade II listed villa. Both of its post-war neighbours respect its building line. No. 336 – 338 has a cantilever which is a positive design response to its parapet line which the buildings to the south have a similar scale.
- 2.29 <u>309 313 Brixton Road</u> stand opposite the site and are set back from the road at an angle. They are late Georgian Houses set in mature gardens behind a high wall. Their garden and immediate settings on either side contain numerous mature trees which provide significant screening. This means that the properties are not readily appreciable in views up and down Brixton Road when they might be appreciated along with the site.

## **Designated Views**

2.30 No strategic views affect the site. Local views (Policy Q25): C(i)(c) View N and NNE from Brockwell Park to the City.

## Routes, Access, Servicing and Public Realm

2.31 The site currently has six vehicle entry points to Brixton Road and three to Winans Walk. Pedestrian access is largely from Brixton Road. The Tesco Express convenience store and ATM at the petrol filling station is a magnet for pedestrians who currently have to traverse the forecourt for access; this leads to a degree of conflict between vehicles and pedestrians. A gated residents-only pedestrian entrance situated between no. 340 Brixton Road and Bedwell House to its immediate south links Brixton Road to Winans Walk. Further to the south there is a similar, public route.



Figure 10 – On Brixton Road vehicle crossovers compromise pedestrian safety

# Planning and Emerging Context

2.32 Policy PN3 of the Lambeth Local Plan sets out the neighbourhood policies for Brixton.

# Site Constraints and Opportunities

2.33 The constraints and opportunities are outlined below

# Constraints

Neighbour Amenity	The proximity of the rear garden of no. 22 Brixton Road presents a constraint to the north of the site.
	The proximity of nos. 1 – 9 George Mews (to the rear of
	no 228 Brixton Road) presents a constraint to the north
	of the site.
	The residential amenity of residents of no. 340 Brixton
	Road, in particular their rear garden, presents a
	constraint to the south of the site.
Trees	The two mature trees in the rear courtyard of no. 332-
	334 Brixton Road.
Built Heritage	The character and appearance of the Conservation Area must be preserved or enhanced.

Opportunities	The setting of no. 340 must be respected. There is no opportunity for height over or above that of the tallest building already on site given the low-rise prevailing character of the conservation area.
Public Realm / community safety	The removal of vehicle dominated forecourts along the Brixton Road frontage presents a significant opportunity The redevelopment to Winans Walk presents an opportunity to create a pedestrian footway and reduce commercial vehicle movement.
Petrol Filling Station	The redevelopment of the discordant petrol filling station and the removal of its visually obtrusive canopy and signage present an opportunity for the enhancement of the character and appearance of the BRATCA.
Visual Amenity	The redevelopment of the buildings to Winans Walk presents an opportunity to enhance the general residential character of that street.
Built Heritage	Reinstatement of the historic front building line to Brixton Road will enhance the conservation area Opportunity for reinstatement of boundary treatments to Brixton Road Opportunity to better integrate no.366 into the conservation area townscape
	authentic remodelling of the frontage of nos. 332-334 Brixton Road could address current inauthenticity. Alternatively, redevelopment of 332-334 could be an option so long as no harm to the character or appearance of the conservation area.
Neighbour Amenity	The redevelopment to Winans Walk presents an opportunity to introduce complementary residential uses.
Uses	The level changes across the site – a lower ground level to Brixton Road than that to Winans Walk presents opportunities for non-residential uses at lower level.

2.34 The map below illustrates the key site constraints and opportunities.

Кеу	
Site boundary	① Height in metres of existing neighbouring but
Building line to be restored	Building to be retained
Sensitive residential neighbour	New footway
	Øpportunity to improve landscaping/urban

# 3. Design Approach

# Key Principles

3.1 In seeking to achieve a design-led optimisation of the site, site -specific design principles include:

Access	Reduce the number of vehicle crossovers on Brixton Road to improve pedestrian safety
Public realm	New footway to Winans Walk
Cause no heritage harm	<ul> <li>Preserve / enhance buildings of value</li> <li>Improve forecourts (former front gardens) to Brixton Road, including through urban greening</li> <li>Reintroduce appropriate boundaries</li> <li>Remove petrol station clutter</li> </ul>
Terreserve	Destans building line

Townscape

Restore building line

# 4. Indicative Approach

# **Indicative Approach - Overview**

4.1 The Indicative Approach layout retains the striking office building at no. 336 -338 Brixton Road and redevelops all the other buildings on the site. The lost historic building line to Brixton Road has been reintroduced thus recreating a built frontage line aligning with the neighbours to the north and south.

# Indicative Approach - Site Layout and Access

- 4.2 Vehicular access to Brixton Road is limited to disabled parking only and the extent of vehicle crossovers can thus be reduced. Reduce parking also presents significant opportunity for urban greening and the reintroduction of a strong boundary to the back of pavement. No new west -east pedestrian route is considered necessary given the existing levels of permeability.
- 4.3 The Indicative approach anticipates any required provision of community and office uses to be limited to ground floor. This is aided by changing levels on the site. The upper floors are arranged primarily as two west east ranges of deck access dual aspect units (facing north and south). Communal residential amenity spaces are provided at podium and roof top level.



Figure 12 – Aerial view of the indicative approach in context

# Indicative Approach - Massing and General Building Height

- 4.4 The approach places increased mass behind the retained office building to a similar height (c30m AOD). Next door at no. 332-334 is a block of similar height (c30m AOD) and on the site of no. 330 a slightly lower block (c25m AOD) which seeks to step down to no. 228 to its north which stands at c20mAOD
- 4.5 The approach to height thus seeks to step down gradually from south to north from the retained highest building (no. 336 338). The site is not suitable for height above and

beyond what already exists on the site, which is itself one of the tallest in the conservation area.



Figure 13 - The indicative approach 3D model overlayed on a birds-eye view.

# Indicative Approach - Daylight and Sunlight

4.6 In planning the Indicative Approach the objective has been to ensure that it is generally consistent with the established parameters for daylight and sunlight best practice for inner urban / urban locations, having regard in particular to sensitive residential neighbours (the locations of which are identified in the draft site allocation policy), and to the quality of new residential accommodation on the site. That said, any scheme that comes forward would be required to demonstrate an acceptable response to daylight and sunlight constraints and overshadowing and will be independently tested at planning application stage in accordance with the BRE's publication: 'Site layout planning for daylight and sunlight: a guide to good practice (BR209)' and relevant Mayoral policy and guidance.

# 5. Appraisal of the Indicative Approach

# Townscape and Visual Impact Assessment (TVIA) Summary

- 5.1 A townscape and visual impact assessment has been undertaken with three principal objectives:
- firstly, to ensure that the impact on Strategic and Local views is acceptable in relation to view composition and appreciation.
- secondly, to ensure that the townscape effects of the development are acceptable; in this
  regard the starting point has been that a degree of noticeable townscape change is
  inevitable but it should not be discordant or unduly dominant in its context; and
- thirdly, to ensure no harm to the significance (including setting) of heritage assets.
- 5.2 In accordance with best practice there has been no presumption that change within the setting of heritage assets is automatically harmful. Instead, the contribution of setting to the significance of the asset has been at the forefront of assessments and thus how that significance might be influenced by changes to the context.
- 5.3 This height and massing exercise has informed conclusions about whether the site is an appropriate location for a tall building(s) as defined by Policy Q26 of the Lambeth Local Plan. The indicative approach is considered to constitute the optimum level of development capacity for the site. This does not preclude other possible approaches to optimisation coming forward, in different forms, through the planning process.
- 5.4 Four views were tested to understand the impact of the Indicative Approach on its context. The detailed analysis on each view is contained in Appendix 1 and the findings are summarised below:

View Location	Effect
View 1 - East pavement of Brixton Road opposite junction with Wynne Road	The increased mass of the indicative approach at no. 332- 334 screens no. 336- 338 from view. The petrol station has been replaced by a building frontage which reinstates the building line and brings back a parapet line also. The massing sits comfortably within the conservation area street scheme and the building line is improved. No heritage harm. Beneficial townscape effect.
View 2 - East pavement of Brixton Road outside no. 328	The increased mass of the indicative approach partially screens no. 336-338 from view. The petrol station has been replaced by a built form which reinstates the building line and reintroduces a welcome sense of enclosure. No heritage harm. Beneficial townscape effect.

View 3 - East pavement of Brixton Road at junction with Villa Road	The indicative approach can just be glimpsed beyond no. 336 – 338 (pink). Negligible effect on heritage and townscape.
View 4 - East side of Brixton Road on pavement outside nos. 309 – 313 Brixton Road.	The indicative approach can be seen completing the building frontage and stepping down in height from the south to north (away from the viewer). It sits comfortably within its heritage and townscape context. No heritage harm. Beneficial townscape effect.

# **Effect on Heritage Assets**

5.5 The Indicative Approach has been assessed for its effect on the significance (including setting) of heritage assets. The has required an understanding of the significance of each asset and especially the contribution that the setting makes to that significance. The objective has been to ensure no adverse effect on significance. The conclusions are set out in the below.

<b>Asset</b> Brixton Road and Angel Town Conservation Area	<b>Effect</b> The retention of no. 336 Brixton Road will preserve the conservation area. The removal of the harmful petrol filling station and its distracting advertisements will be beneficial to the conservation area. The reinstatement of a built frontage / building line will be beneficial to the conservation area. The recreation of front gardens and front boundary treatments will be beneficial to the conservation area.
Archaeological Priority Area no. 4 – Line of Roman Road linking London and Lewes	Development in accordance with established archaeological best practice (policy Q23) should cause no harm to this non-designated heritage asset.
340 Brixton Road (Grade II)	The recreation of a front garden and front boundary treatment at no. 336 Brixton Road will be beneficial to the setting of this listed building.

#### 6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The indicative approach has been informed by site constraint analysis and has been tested at the level of general massing and height to ensure acceptable impacts in relation to daylight and sunlight, views, townscape, and heritage. This analysis has found the approach to successfully address the various opportunities and constraints identified. In light of this work, it is recommended that the site allocation policy includes the design points outlined in the table below:

Торіс	Recommendation
Heritage	<ul> <li>Preserve the character of appearance of the Brixton Road and Angell Town Conservation Area by:</li> <li>Retaining the frontage building at no. 336 Brixton Road as it is a positive contributor to the conservation area</li> <li>Enhance the character of appearance of the Brixton Road and Angell Town Conservation Area by: <ol> <li>Redeveloping / remodelling nos. 332-334</li> <li>Removing the petrol station and re-instating a building on the historic building line to Brixton Road</li> <li>Reinstating boundary treatments to Brixton Road</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
	<ol> <li>Replacing car-dominated front forecourts with front gardens to Brixton Road</li> </ol>
	<ol> <li>Improve the setting of no. 340 Brixton Road by enhancing the front gardens space and boundary to no. 336</li> </ol>
Townscape	At Winans walk create a new pavement

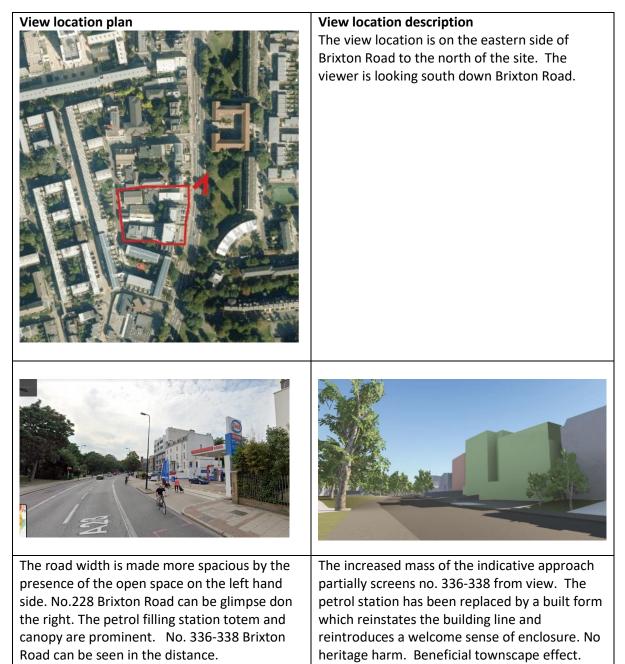
#### **APPENDIX 1**

#### Townscape and Heritage Views analysis

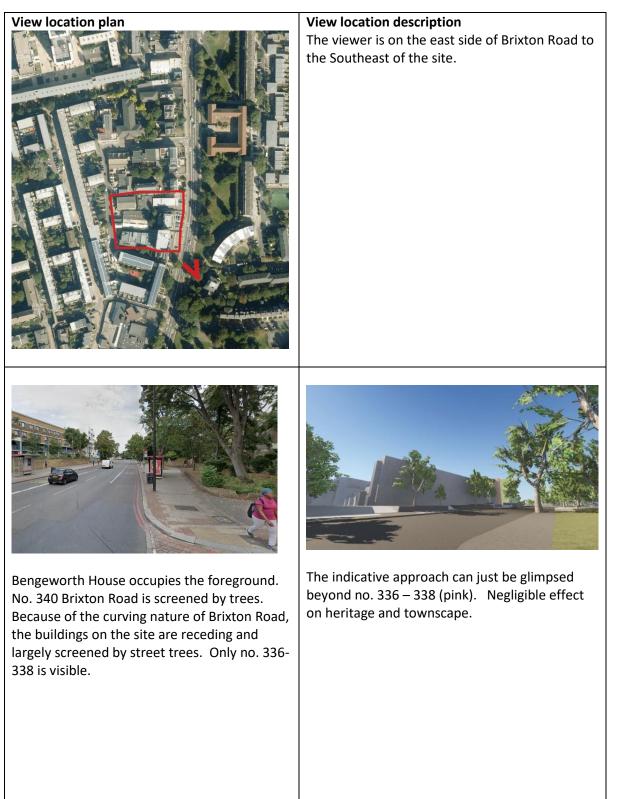
# VIEW LOCATION MAP VIEW LOCATION NARRATIVE The view location is on the eastern side of Brixton Road to the north of the site. The viewer is looking south down Brixton Road. **EXISTING VIEW** VU CITY MODEL The road width is made more spacious by the The increased mass of the indicative approach at no. 332- 334 screens no. 336-338 from view. presence of the open space on the left hand side. Nos. 226 and 228 Brixton Road occupy The petrol station has been replaced by a the foreground. In the distance the uppermost building frontage which reinstates the building part of no. 336-338 Brixton Road can be line and brings back a parapet line also. The glimpsed. The petrol station canopy is visible massing sits comfortably within the also. conservation area street scheme and the building line is improved. No heritage harm. Beneficial townscape effect.

#### TVIA IMAGE 1 - East pavement of Brixton Road opposite junction with Wynne Road

TVIA IMAGE 2 - East pavement of Brixton Road outside no. 328



# TVIA IMAGE 3 - East pavement of Brixton Road at junction with Villa Road



## TVIA IMAGE 4 - East side of Brixton Road on pavement outside nos. 309 – 313 Brixton Road.

