

From: Kate Williams, Clapham Junction Action Group  
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Following Metro's withdrawal, any plan which existed would appear to be in some disarray, and the 1000+ people who wrote to the Council or signed petitions against high rise development at the station, might be somewhat surprised to see another tall building being given the go-ahead so soon after. **We need a period of reflection during which the views of local residents must be canvassed as to the type of development we want to see take place in the area.** If this includes high rise, then so be it. But let us at least have a debate about what level of high rise is thought to be acceptable. To many people, 16 stories will be too high. To others, this may be acceptable provided it is not exceeded in other buildings proposed in the vicinity. **Without such a plan, the fear is that a 16 storey building [Hotel proposed for 155 Falcon Road] will be quickly followed by a 20 storey building, and then there will be no answer to two 42 storey buildings being proposed once again. Before we know it, the character of Clapham Junction will have changed for ever, and the 'regeneration' which few of us thought was necessary in the first place, will have taken place by stealth.**

Lest any of this should be taken as negative, here are my own ideas as to what should be included in a new plan for Clapham Junction:

- **A new station building funded by Network Rail** which truly places Clapham Junction on the map as London's greatest transport interchange. If this can be done for Birmingham New Street and St Pancras, it can be done for the busiest rail interchange in Europe!
- **New office developments** and, yes, a hotel, on the site of the station and areas off Falcon Road which are currently underdeveloped and dowdy. Such developments should be well designed and should not overwhelm the existing town centre which should be defined as the area south of the station at both junctions of St John's Road (to include Northcote Road and Battersea Rise).
- **New affordable housing** instead of yet more executive apartments on land at Battersea Power Station and along York Road.
- **Attention to the estates north of the tracks** in terms of proper community services, arts centres, children's playgrounds (paralleling those on Wandsworth Common and elsewhere), lighting and open throughfares.
- **A stop to schools being closed and replaced by executive flats!** New schools for Northcote and Shaftesbury Wards which are woefully under-provided for leading to more private schools being set up in this area that anywhere else.
- **A medi-centre at Clapham Junction Station** in line with those provided now at many main line stations including Victoria;
- **A re-think for plans for Bolingbroke Hospital.** Why should we have to travel to St George's or St Thomas' for essential emergency care?

I realise that many of these plans are aspirational, but without a sound plan for the area we are left at the mercy of the Council and developers to decide what is best for us. Maybe it is time that the local community took a hand in deciding what is right for the area and what we are prepared to see happen.

**Please do send in your comments on this article, including your own ideas for a new plan for Clapham Junction.** We know that many Council officers take the trouble to follow this site and expect that many of them will be very interested to know what people think in the run up to next May's Council elections.

Kate Williams