

Brixton

Tall Building Heights Study, 2018



Introduction

1.1 This study was undertaken to support Lambeth's approach to tall building in Brixton as part of the Lambeth Local Plan Review, 2018.

Background

Brixton tall Building Study, 2014

2.1 This desk based assessment of the heritage, views, townscape and character of Brixton identified the implications these had for potential tall building development in Brixton. Site selection was informed by the Brixton SPD (2013). The study concluded that most of central Brixton was inappropriate for tall building development due to the high concentration of heritage assets.

2.2 Rudimentary 3D modelling undertaken as part of the 2014 study concluded that it was difficult to make informed judgements about appropriate heights given the varying site conditions and adjacencies. No locations were identified as 'appropriate' for tall building development. However, three areas were identified as 'sensitive' to tall building development. These were:

Ref	Site
BC	Brixton Central and Canterbury Estate
SG	Southwyck House and Moorlands Estate
MDO10	Hambrook House, Brixton Hill

2.3 The resulting 'Tall Buildings Sensitivity Map' for Brixton can be found on page 12 of the final Brixton Tall Buildings Study (see Appendix 1). A version of that map was subsequently reproduced in Annex 11 of the Lambeth Local Plan (see Appendix 2).

Lambeth Local Plan, 2015

2.4 The area based policy for Brixton is set out in Policy PN3 of the Local Plan (2015) and contains site specific policies. The sites below have references to building heights:

Site	Name / Location	Tall buildings Advice
Site 15	Popes Road	<i>Locates any tall building on Brixton Station Road frontage</i>
Site 16	Brixton Central (between the viaducts)	<i>Avoids creating a canyon on either side of the railways</i> <i>Proposes low building to protect amenity of new residential development on Coldharbour Lane adjoining the site.</i>
Site 17 (MDO 10)	Your New Town Hall	<i>Any increase in height would require careful consideration...</i>

3. Changes since Local Plan adoption in October 2015

3.1 The following key changes have occurred since 2015:

Site	Implications
The Brixton Recreation Centre was added to the list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest on 28 October 2016. This brings statutory protection and a presumption in favour of retention.	It can no longer be considered a development opportunity. The proximity of its façade to the Brixton Central site also presents a constraint if its setting is to be respected.
Hambrook House has been demolished and the replacement building is one site nearing completion.	The site is no longer a development opportunity.
Permission has been granted for development on Somerleyton Road site.	The site is no longer a development opportunity.

3.2 Revisiting the map in relation to the Brixton Conservation Area boundary has identified anomalies which should be addressed. The conservation area boundary, over laid with the 2014 map can be found in Appendix 3. A number of sites identified as 'sensitive' to tall building development should be omitted:

Site	Implications
Beehive Place	This intimate streetscape contributes to the special interest of the Brixton Conservation Area.
Brixton Police Station, Brixton Road	This prominent site at the junction of Gresham Road is in the heart of the Brixton Conservation Area. It is not deemed suitable for tall building development.
Dover House, Canterbury Crescent	This building is locally listed and a positive contributor to the conservation area. It is not deemed suitable for tall building development.
Brixton Railway Station, Brixton Station Road	This site is within the conservation area. The Site 16 site allocation seeks low buildings. It is not deemed suitable for tall building development.

3.3 The Moorlands Estate (including Southwyck House, the open space to its north and Hillmead Primary School) were marked as 'sensitive to' tall building development in the 2014 study. The school is locally listed and not a development opportunity. The open space benefits from protection and is not a development opportunity. The Estate itself is not earmarked for redevelopment. These sites should be omitted.

Conclusion on Sites

3.4 When the considerations identified in sections 3 and 4 above are mapped the tall buildings locations are significantly reduced in comparison to the 2014 map. The remaining tall building locations proposed to be taken forward are International House (site 1) and the combined Canterbury Arms / Pop Brixton sites (Site 2). See Appendix 4.


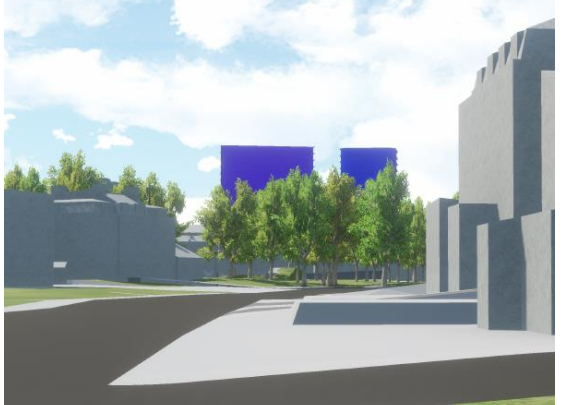
4. Identifying Suitable Heights

4.1 Policy D8 (B) of the Draft London Plan requires that general building heights be identified as well as locations.

4.2 The existing building on Site 1 is International House is 59m AOD. The nearby Chartham Court is 57m AOD. Site 2 sits between International House and Chartham Court. The presence of these existing tall buildings of similar height has been useful in identifying their current impacts on the wider townscape and the potential impacts of taller development in their immediate vicinity. Given the close proximity of Sites 1 and 2 the same view points have been utilised.

4.3 An initial model height of 70m AOD was extruded for both sites. The model for Site 1 mimics the footprint the existing International House on that site but to a greater height. Site 2 is larger and would not be suitable for tall buildings across its extent. However, for the purposes of analysis the whole site has been extruded to illustrate the maximum potential impacts of a tall building anywhere on the site. The models were analysed in VU City.

4.4 The analysis for the 70m AOD on both sites is below.

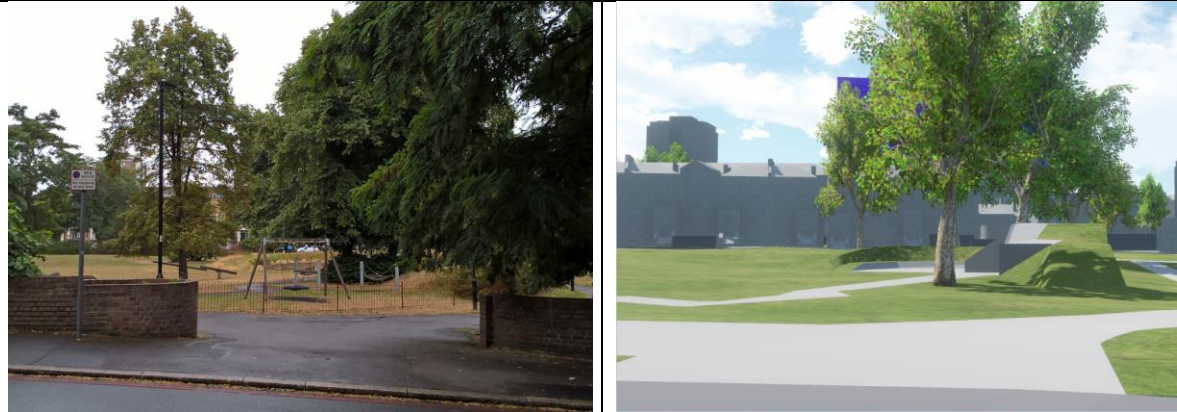
View 1	Brixton Rd north of junction with Wynne Road
	
<p>Existing: This view location is on Brixton Road which is one of the main routes into Brixton from the north. The exact location was chosen because it is the place at which the alignment of Brixton Road changes; at this point the view is facing due south towards both sites. Further south the road bends and the view moves away from the sites. The existing tall buildings of Chartham Court and International House are visible above the tree line of the mature trees of Max Roach Park. Receptor sensitivity – moderate.</p> <p>Proposed: Site 1 is the right hand side. The top five storeys are visible above the treeline. The proportion of height to width is comfortable in the view. The distant siting of the building beyond the trees is not unattractive in townscape terms. Seasonal change unlikely to affect impact at this distance. Magnitude of impact – medium.</p> <p>Proposed: Site 2 is in the centre of the image. The full site extrusion appears bulky and dominant in this view. The modelled mass is dominant. Seasonal change unlikely to affect impact. Magnitude of Impact – large.</p> <p>Proposed cumulative: The cumulative impact is large / medium. This is due to the broad mass and dominant form of the Site 2 model which is a result of the extrusion of the full site footprint. Magnitude of Impact – large.</p>	

Discussion: The site 2 full extrusion has an unacceptable impact in this view. However, two point blocks of similar proportion to Site 1 in this view would result in a medium magnitude of impact.

Recommendation: The proposed height and form of site 1 is acceptable. The full extrusion of site 2 to the height modelled is unacceptable and should not be recommended going forward.

View 2

Villa Rd at the entrance into Max Roach Park



Max Roach Park is a spacious open space to the immediate north of Brixton Town Centre. It was created as a result of post-war urban clearances. This entrance on the north side allows a view due south towards both sites. Chartham House and the existing International House are visible forms through the trees in the photograph – rising behind the houses on St John’s Crescent which are in the middle ground. Receptor sensitivity – moderate.

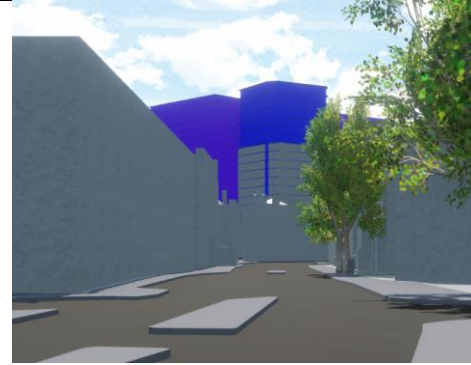
Proposed: Site 1 is the right hand side and is completely screened by trees in this view. Seasonal change unlikely to affect impact. The existing presence of Chartham House in the view and the slender form of the proposal are considerations. Magnitude of impact – medium.

Proposed: Site 2 is the centre of the model in blue. It is screened by trees in this view but will be more visible in winter. Whilst not appreciable in this view because of the trees the extruded mass of the whole side will produce an impact similar to view B1. Magnitude of impact – large.

Proposed cumulative: The cumulative impact is large / medium. This is due to the broad mass and dominant form of the Site 2 model which is a result of the extrusion of the full site footprint. Magnitude of Impact – large.

Discussion: This view should be considered cumulatively with view 1. The site 2 full extrusion has an unacceptable impact in this view. However, two point blocks of this height of similar proportion to Site 1 in this view, when considered with Chartham Court would result in a medium magnitude of impact.

Recommendation: The proposed height and form of site 1 is acceptable. The full extrusion of site 2 to the height modelled is unacceptable and should not be recommended going forward.

View 3**Stockwell Road at corner with Chantrey Rd**

Stockwell Road is one of the key routes into Brixton. This view point has been selected because the road bends to align with International House. The existing Chartham Court is not visible. The townscape is fragmented. Receptor sensitivity – weak.

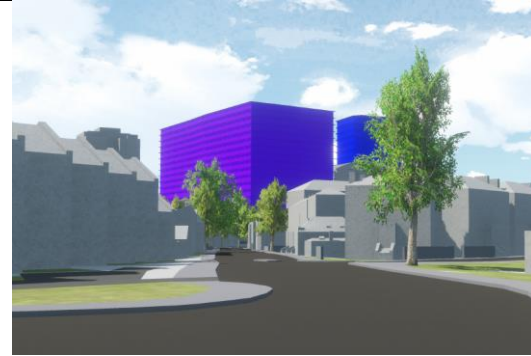
Proposed: Site 1 is in the centre and can be seen extruding out of the mass of the existing international House. The elongation of that built form makes it more elegant in this view. As a terminating form at the end of the view it has a positive impact. Magnitude of impact – medium.

Proposed: Site 2 is in the centre of the model in blue behind International House. It is viewed obliquely and long elevation of the full site extrusion can be appreciated also. The height is not in itself problematic in this view. However, the mass of the full extrusion of significant and dominant. Magnitude of impact – large.

Proposed cumulative: The cumulative impact is large / medium. This is due to the presence of broad mass and dominant form of the Site 2 model. Magnitude of Impact – large.

Discussion: The site 2 full extrusion has an unacceptable impact in this view. However, two point blocks of this height of similar proportion to Site 1 in this view, when considered with Chartham Court would result in a medium magnitude of impact.

Recommendation: The proposed height and form of site 1 is acceptable. The full extrusion of site 2 to the height modelled is unacceptable and should not be recommended going forward.

View 4**Wiltshire Rd at junction with Angell Park Gardens**

Wiltshire Road is straight and views from its northern end look towards both sites which lie to the right hand side of the road beyond the tree line. The view is made attractive by the straightness of the road and the presence of a significant number of mature trees. The upper floors of Chartham Court are visible on the left. Receptor sensitivity – moderate.

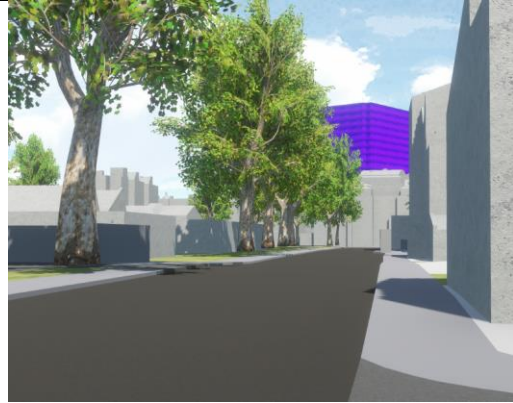
Proposed: Site 1 is the centre and can be seen in the model but in reality would be screened by the mature foreground trees. Seasonal change unlikely to affect impact. Magnitude of impact – medium.

Proposed: Site 2 is the centre of the model in blue terminating the vista. It is viewed obliquely and long elevation of the full site extrusion can be appreciated also. The height is not in itself problematic in this view given the visibility of Chartham Court. However, the significant mass of the full extrusion of significant and dominant. Magnitude of impact – large.

Proposed cumulative: The cumulative impact is large. This is due to the presence of broad mass and dominant form of the Site 2 model. Magnitude of Impact – large.

Discussion: The site 2 full extrusion has an unacceptable impact in this view. However, two point blocks of this height of similar proportion to Site 1 in this view, when considered with Chartham Court would result in a medium magnitude of impact.

Recommendation: The proposed height and form of site 1 is acceptable. The full extrusion of site 2 to the height modelled is unacceptable and should not be recommended going forward.

View 5**Somerleyton Road at corner with Broughton Drive**

Somerleyton Road is straight and views from north end look towards both sites which lie to the centre of the view. The street is largely post-war in character and the view terminated by a modern apartment block. Redevelopment is approved along the left hand side of the road which will increase the built forms all the way to the end of the view. Receptor sensitivity – low.

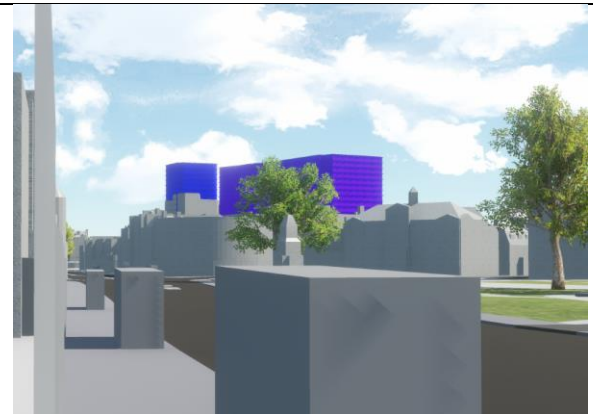
Proposed: Site 1 is not visible because it is screened by the full site extrusion of site 2. It would be visible as a distant, slender form. Magnitude of impact – nil.

Proposed: Site 2 is the centre of the model in blue terminating the vista. It is viewed obliquely and long elevation of the full site extrusion can be appreciated also. The height is not in itself problematic. However, the mass of the full extrusion of significant and dominant. Magnitude of impact – medium.

Proposed cumulative: The cumulative impact is large. This is due to the presence of broad mass and dominant form of the Site 2 model. Magnitude of Impact – medium.

Discussion: The site 2 full extrusion has an unacceptable impact in this view. However, a point block of this height would result in a small magnitude of impact.

Recommendation: The proposed height and form of site 1 is acceptable. The full extrusion of site 2 to the height modelled is unacceptable and should not be recommended going forward.

View 6**Brixton Hill outside Civic Office entrance**

Note – solid nature of the bus shelters in VU City have been taken into account when assessing this view. The photograph should be considered more accurate for assessment purposes. Brixton Hill is a busy arterial road into Brixton from the south. The landmark St

Matthew's Church is just out of site to the right of the view and the landmark Tall is just out of sight to the left. Whilst Tate Library is clearly visible in the model it is not the case in reality – the mature trees in St Matthew's churchyard providing a significant screen. The top storey of international House is visible terminating the vista. Receptor sensitivity – medium.

Proposed: Site 1 as an extrusion of International House is clearly visible at the end of the vista. As a solitary form it will draw the eye more than it does at present. Magnitude of impact – medium.

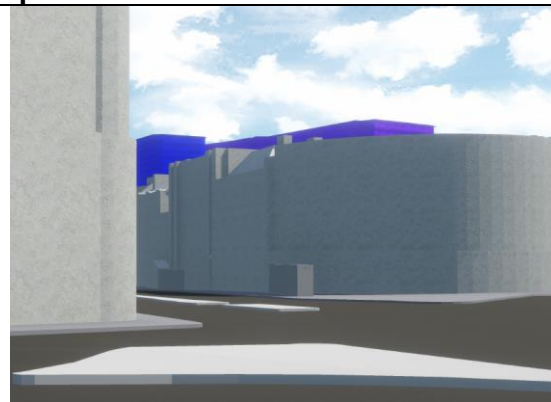
Proposed: Site 2 is the centre right of the model. It is partially screened by tree but will be more visible in winter. The extruded mass of the whole site, viewed obliquely will produce will be highly dominant. Magnitude of impact – large.

Proposed cumulative: The cumulative impact is large / medium. This is due to the broad mass and dominant form of the Site 2 model which is a result of the extrusion of the full site footprint. Magnitude of Impact – large.

Discussion: The site 2 full extrusion has an unacceptable impact in this view. However, two point blocks of this height of similar proportion to Site 1 in this view would result in a medium magnitude of impact.

Recommendation: The proposed height and form of site 1 is probably the maximum acceptable. The full extrusion of site 2 to the height modelled is unacceptable and should not be recommended going forward.

View 7	Brixton Hill on Town Hall steps
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The intersection of Acre Lane and Brixton Hill is a heavily trafficked junction within Brixton Town Centre. The viewer here is at street level outside the Town Hall and is looking north east towards Brixton Road. The foreground buildings include a locally listed interwar pub. Receptor sensitivity – medium.

Proposed: Site 1's upper storeys can be glimpsed rising behind distant buildings (Iceland) on Brixton Road. It is an oblique view and the form sits comfortably within the exiting townscape. Magnitude of impact – low.

Proposed: Site 2 is the centre right of the model just visible behind the middle ground buildings. It reads as a substantial horizontal form. Magnitude of impact – medium.

Proposed cumulative: The cumulative impact is medium. This is due to the broad mass and dominant form of Site 2 model which is a result of the extrusion of the full site footprint. Magnitude of Impact – medium.

Discussion: The site 2 full extrusion has an unacceptable impact in this view. However, two point blocks of this height of similar proportion to Site 1 in this view would result in a low magnitude of impact.

Recommendation: The proposed height and form of site 1 is acceptable. The full extrusion of site 2 to the height modelled is unacceptable and should not be recommended going forward.

View 8	Ferndale Road outside new post office
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Ferndale Road is a side street west of Brixton Road. It is framed by locally listed buildings – Department Store (left) and Bon Marche (right). A handsome red brick building terminates the view and behind it the serrated roof of the Recreation Centre is visible. The townscape and architectural quality are both high. Receptor sensitivity – high.

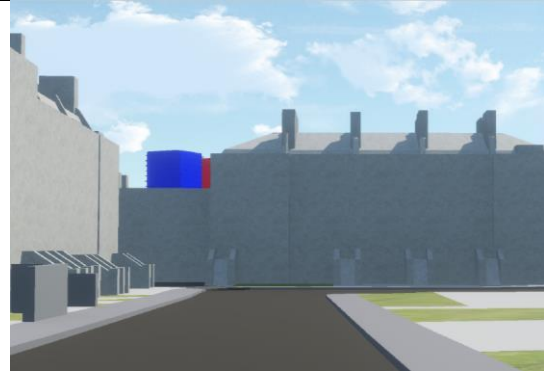
Proposed: Site 1 is not visible. Magnitude of impact – nil.

Proposed: Site 2 fills the full backdrop of the view as a broad, horizontal mass. This is because the full extent of Site 2 has been extruded for modelling purposes. Magnitude of impact – large.

Proposed cumulative: n/a.

Discussion: The site 2 full extrusion has an unacceptable impact in this view. However, it is the relentlessness of the horizontal impact rather than the height which is problematic.

Recommendation: The proposed height and form of site 1 is acceptable. The full extrusion of site 2 to the height modelled is unacceptable and should not be recommended going forward.

View 9**Trinity Gardens outside no. 35**

Trinity Gardens lies on the western side of Brixton Town Centre. Some of the foreground houses are grade II listed. The middle ground brick houses are locally listed. International House can be glimpsed over the rooftops in the north east corner of the square from this view location. To left out of view is the Trinity Arms PH which occupies a cul-de-sac corner within the square. Receptor sensitivity – high.

Proposed: Site 1 the current International House can be viewed in the distance beyond the middle ground buildings. The additional height proposed with site one would bring it up to the same ridge height as the foreground buildings. Magnitude of impact – medium.

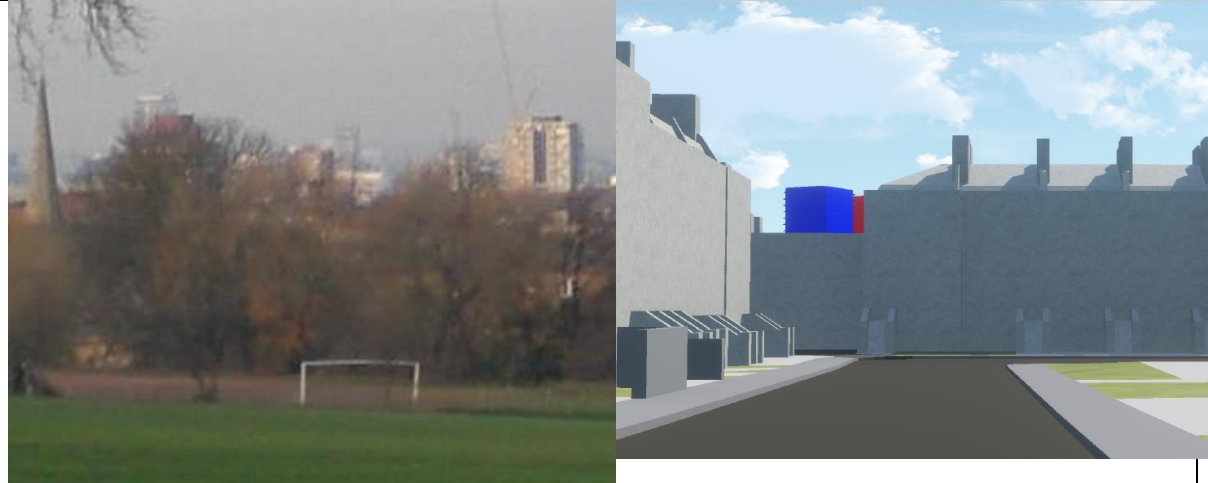
Proposed: Site 2 is barely visible. Magnitude of Impact – nil.

Proposed cumulative: n/a.

Discussion: The site 1 full extrusion, although noticeable, will be acceptable impact in this view given the distance. Further impact mitigation can be achieved by the using a pale and recessive palette of creams and browns (stock brick tones) to blend in with the local context.

Recommendation: The proposed height and form of site 1 is acceptable.

The site 2 full extrusion has an unacceptable impact in this view. However, two point blocks of this height of similar proportion to Site 1 in this view would result in a low magnitude of impact.

View 10**Local Plan – Q27 (1) (i)View NNW form Brockwell Park of Brixton landmarks and the city**

Brockwell Park is a historic open space on elevated ground to the south of Brixton. One of the main pathways, running parallel with Dulwich Road, allows excellent views northward towards Brixton and the city. As the viewer moves along the path distant landmark buildings come in and out of view from behind foreground and middle ground buildings. The park is the foreground (spire of former St Jude's Church, Dulwich Road) on left. Brockwell Lido just out of sight to right. This is a winter view photograph when the trees are bare. The broad panorama image has been cropped for illustration purposes. Chartham Court (57m) is visible to the right and Receptor sensitivity – high.

Proposed Site 1 - International House (59m) is barely visible behind the tree to the left. The modest increase in height will make the building slightly more visible in this view. Magnitude of impact – small.

Proposed Site 2 – This appears in the middle of this view and screening International House. The full extrusion of the building has a dominant impact. Magnitude of impact – High.

Proposed – cumulative – n/a

Recommendation: The proposed height and form of site 1 is acceptable.

The site 2 full extrusion has an unacceptable impact in this view. However, two point blocks of this height of similar proportion to Site 1 in this view would result in a lower magnitude of impact.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The 3D modelling and views assessment leads to the following conclusions.

Site 1

5.2 The existing International House building is 59m AOD. The modelled height to 70m AOD illustrates that the further extrusion upwards is not problematic in many

instances because the building already has a noticeable presence in the townscape. However, given the sensitivity of the views from the south – within the Brixton Conservation Area a cautious approach to height be taken. A general height of 65m AOD is suggested.

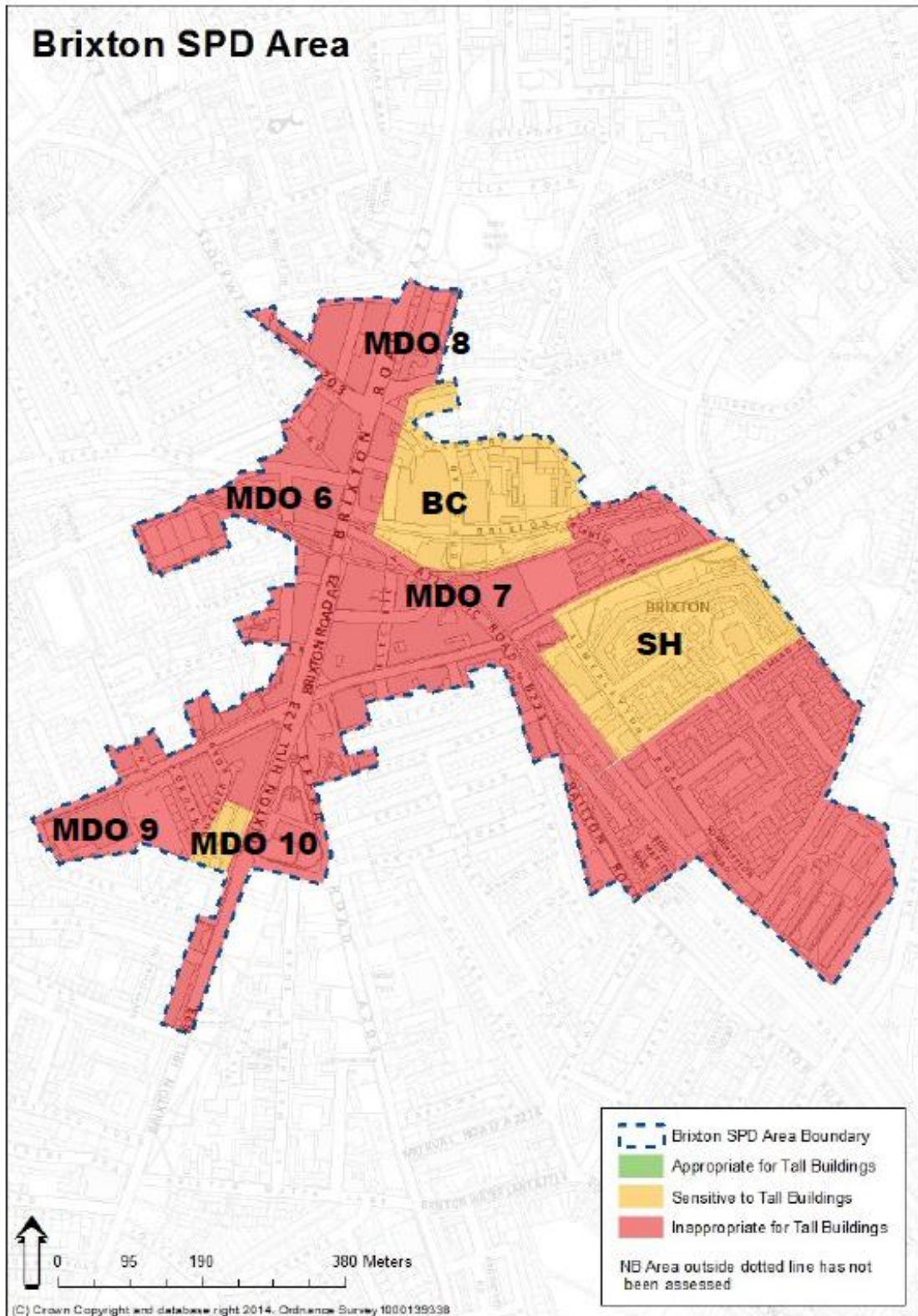
Site 2

- 5.3 Given the extensive area of this site the modelling has shown that its full extrusion as a tall building would present such a large and dominant mass that it would be unacceptable. It is therefore recommended that a development of varied heights is sought. Again, the greatest sensitivity lies in views from the south – with the Brixton Conservation Area. For that reason an upper height of 65m AOD is again suggested. A general heights range from 15m AOD to 30m AOD to 65m AOD would significantly reduce the bulk and mass and thus lessen the visual impact in wider views.

APPENDIX 1

Tall Building Sensitivity Map from Brixton Tall Building Study, 2014

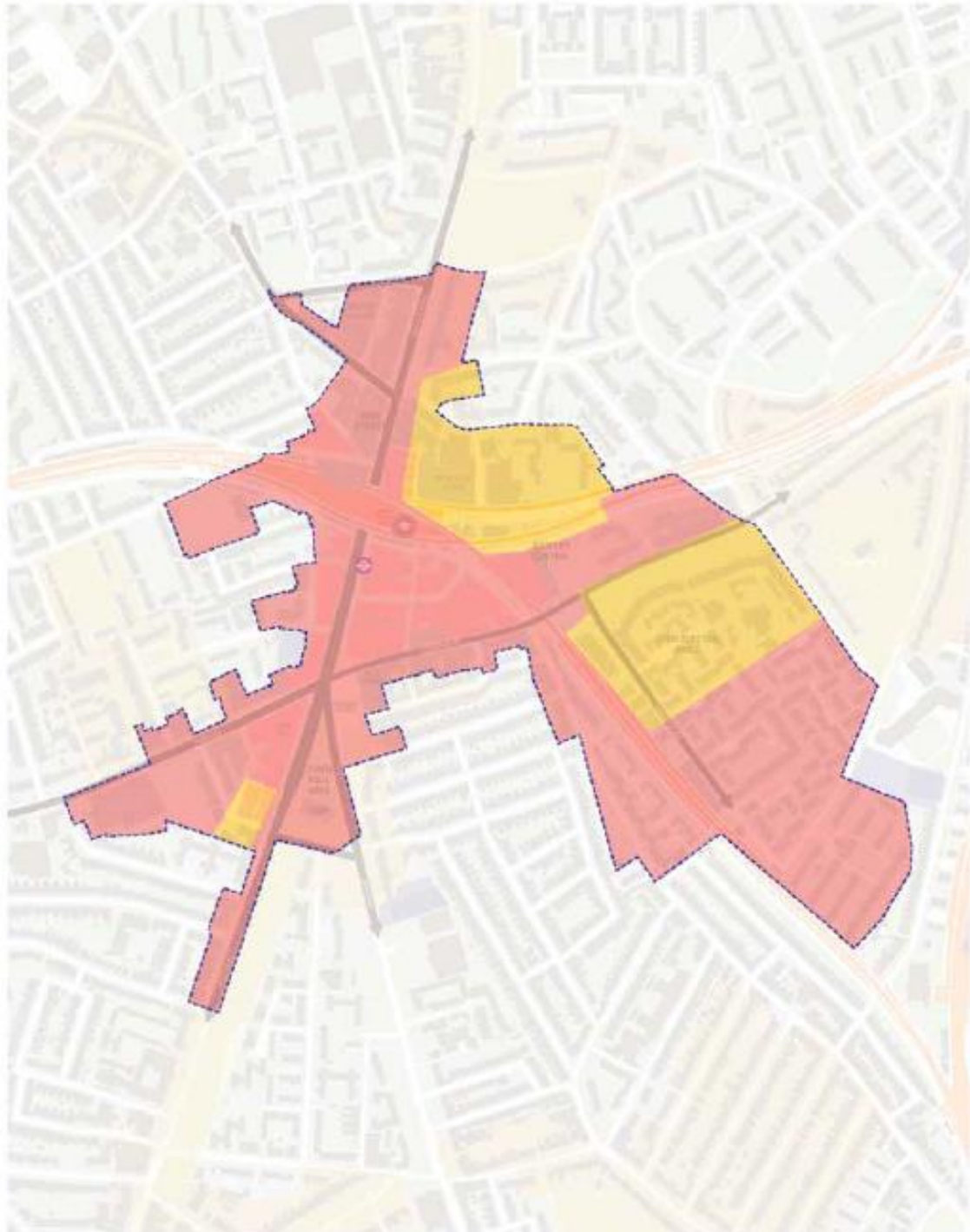
Tall Building Sensitivity Map for Brixton



APPENDIX 2

Local Plan Annex 11 Map

Brixton SPD Area



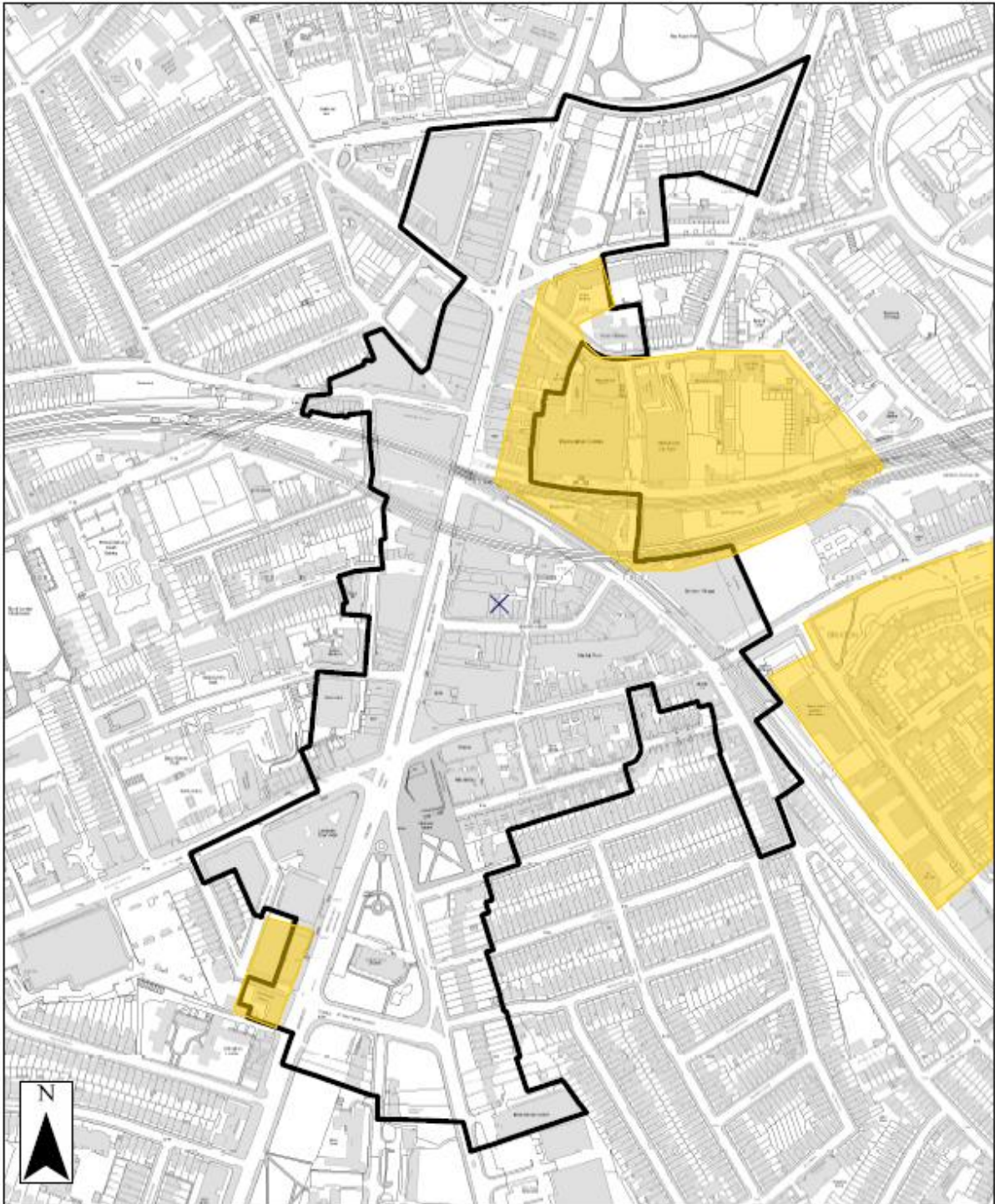
Source: Lambeth Tall Buildings Study 2014

-  Brixton SPD Area Boundary
-  Sensitive to Tall Buildings
-  Inappropriate for Tall Buildings

NB Area outside dotted line has not been assessed

APPENDIX 3

Conservation Area Map (black line) overlaid with the 2014 'sensitive to tall buildings' areas (yellow).



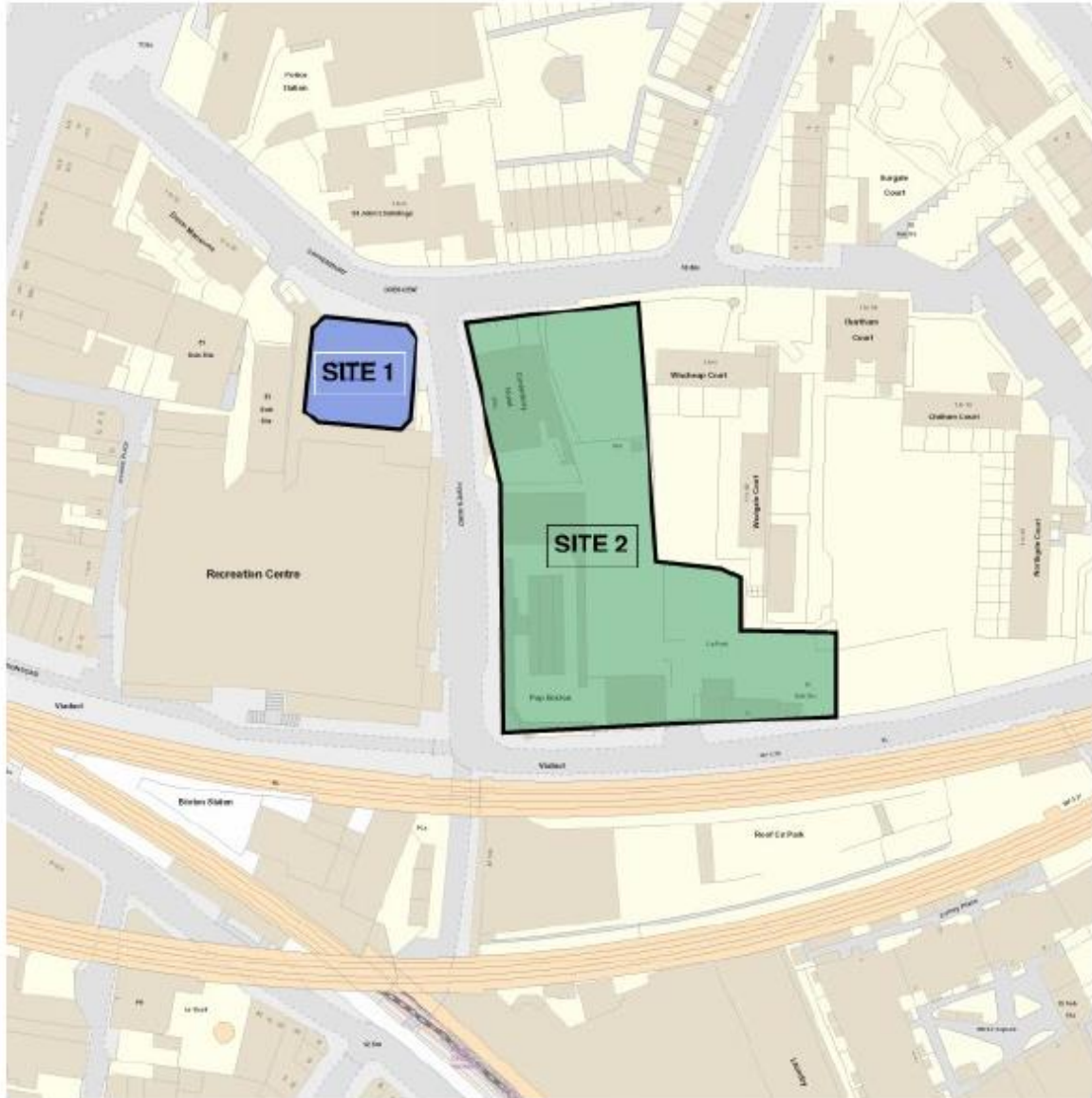
APPENDIX 4

Brixton sites suitable in principle for tall building development



APPENDIX 5

Recommended tall buildings map for Brixton



SITE 1 International House

Point block to a general building height up to 65m AOD.

SITE 2 Canterbury Arms / Pop Brixton

A development of varied building heights ranging from 15m AOD to 30m AOD to 65m AOD ensuring that the tall elements are arranged to optimise daylight and sunlight, ensure no over-bearing impacts and be sympathetic to the scale and form of surrounding buildings especially in relation to the character and appearance (inc. setting) of the Brixton Conservation Area.