# Opposition mounts against Southwark development amendments



Proposed amendments to the masterplan for a significant development in Southwark, London, have met considerable opposition, on account of plans to alter the height and use of various buildings within the scheme. The masterplan, originally approved in 2020, encompasses 40 new structures and three clusters of high-rise towers, located on the former Daily Mail printworks site as well as the Surrey Quays Shopping and Leisure Centre, Dock Offices, and the former Rotherhithe Police Station.

The application for these amendments was submitted to Southwark Council on 29 January this year and seeks to increase the height of 11 buildings by between 1 and 13 storeys. This proposal also includes alterations to the building's intended uses and overall massing. British Land, the company behind the development, intends these changes to adapt the project to evolving regulatory demands and economic factors, such as the need for additional staircases in buildings exceeding certain heights due to updated safety regulations.

However, the response from the community has been overwhelmingly negative, with 1,020 formal objections lodged against the application. Critics argue that the revisions represent a significant departure from the original proposal, with one objection noting that the new plans render the masterplan ‘unrecognizable’ from prior approvals. Concerns have been raised regarding the potential impact of taller buildings on local infrastructure, which is already under strain. This includes heavy usage of the Canada Water Station and the Jubilee Line, alongside fears that the new structures may overshadow existing areas, limiting sunlight and altering the urban landscape detrimentally.

Among the most contentious aspects of the proposed amendments is the reduction of affordable housing from an initial commitment of 35 per cent to just 10 per cent. Accusations of ‘corporate greed’ have been levied against British Land, with residents expressing dismay over the perceived shift away from community-centric development. The viability report accompanying the planning application states that while the proposed changes would help restore project viability, they would not support the previously secured level of affordable housing. It indicates that design and massing changes would allow for just 10 per cent of the total homes to be affordable.

Concerns regarding tall buildings were previously voiced during the original planning phase, during which the project garnered 233 objections and 48 supporting letters. Historical preservation body Historic England intervened, leading to a reduction in proposed heights in response to worries about views of iconic London landmarks.

In initial discussions about the recent amendments, a spokesperson for British Land indicated that the changes are intended to maintain community benefits while addressing new regulatory requirements and rising construction costs driven by global economic trends. Notably, the amendments call for all residential buildings above 18 metres to increase their height to accommodate the new safety requirements.

The project has already secured a £39.1 million Greater London Authority grant in 2019 and is being developed in phases, with the first phase on track for completion this year. Achievements thus far include the completion of 79 council homes, which were occupied last year, alongside upgrades to the public realm, including a wetlands area and improved access points designed by Townshend Landscape Architects.

The future phases are being developed by panels of prominent architects, including Allies and Morrison, HawkinsBrown, and Maccreanor Lavington, and the entire masterplan is anticipated to take approximately 15 years to fully realise. British Land and Allies and Morrison have been approached for further comments regarding the ongoing situation and community objections.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://canadawater.co.uk/news/news-update-canada-water-masterplan-minor-changes-planning-application/> - This URL supports the information about the Canada Water Masterplan, including its original benefits and minor changes submitted to Southwark Council. It highlights the project's focus on community benefits and housing.
* <https://www.alex-matteo.com/blog/se16-in-2025-a-year-of-transformation-and-excitement/> - This URL provides context on the broader regeneration efforts in SE16, including the Canada Water Masterplan, and how these projects are transforming the area into a vibrant urban center.
* <https://aecom.com/uk/projects/canada-water-masterplan-a-new-urban-centre-for-southwark/> - This URL corroborates the scope and ambition of the Canada Water Masterplan, detailing its sustainable features and its role in creating a new urban center in Southwark.
* <https://www.southwark.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-applications> - This URL would provide access to Southwark Council's planning register, where documents related to the Canada Water Masterplan and its amendments could be found, supporting the discussion on community objections and planning applications.
* <https://www.britishland.com/our-projects/canada-water> - This URL offers insights into British Land's involvement in the Canada Water Masterplan, including their approach to community engagement and development strategies.