

OONA AREA 3 – ATLAS ROAD JUNCTION

6.1 The concept of the Atlas Road junction as a new ‘neighbourhood hub’ was one suggested by members of OONF in the first round of OPDC consultations on the Regulation 18 version of the OPDC Local Plan. The Forum welcomes the fact that this idea has been carried through into the Regulation 19.2 version. Currently the OONA lacks any obvious location that provides even basic amenities in terms of convenience shops, a post office, or any choice of cafes and restaurants.

6.2 The opening of the Collective building has brought to the Atlas Road junction a new community, living in a co-ownership housing scheme of 700 privately rented studios. As part of the building a smallish supermarket has opened, and the Collective’s café/restaurant now provides a valued addition to the very limited range of food and drink/meeting places within the OONA. The Collective has provided no cost meeting space for the Forum’s monthly meetings and this has been much welcomed.

6.3 While the Collective is playing an important part in the early regeneration of this part of the OPDC area, it must be recognised that its resident population cannot alone sustain a significant volume of new retail, commercial and class A3 premises at Atlas Junction. The co-ownership living style of the Collective is intended to be largely self-contained, offering on the premises most of the facilities that a ‘young Londoner’ or postgraduate student needs to meet their daily needs.

6.4 This neighbourhood plan seeks to allocate sites and encourage development at the Atlas Junction in a manner that is realistic and which accepts that the level and pace of regeneration at this location remains very uncertain. Local people would rather seem comparatively modest redevelopment applications come forward, which then actually get built, than over ambitious schemes framed around what remains a rail interchange which could still be a decade away – for which permissions are granted but nothing then happens on the ground.

6.5 A map of the OONA Area 3 Atlas Junction is shown below. This predates the construction of the Collective building and the Oaklands development.



Figure () Map of Atlas Road junction. Broken line shows the LB Ealing and LBHF borough boundary.

Current planning policy context

6.6 The LB Ealing 2012 Core Strategy has no place-specific policies or site allocations for the Atlas Junction area, or for this section of Old Oak Lane. The OPDC Draft Local Plan on the other hand has detailed aims and policies for the area P8C1: Atlas Junction Town Centre Cluster. These are illustrated in the diagram below:

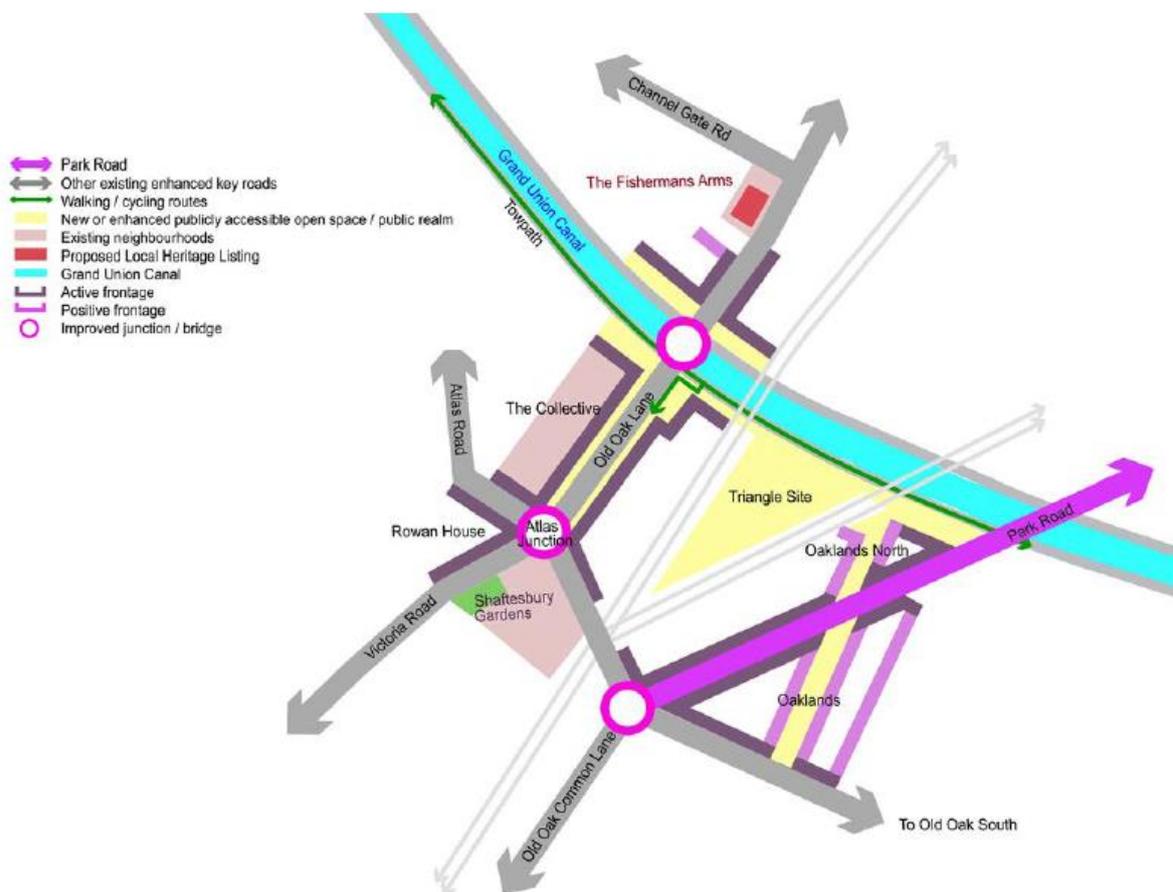


Figure () Diagram of OPDC Policy P8C1 for Atlas Road junction

6.7 For reasons explained above at paragraph 1.27, the Forum does not accept the assertion by OPDC that all policies in the 'Place' chapters of its Draft Local Plan can legitimately be defined as 'strategic' policies in terms of NPPF and NPPG definitions. Hence we consider that this neighbourhood plan can vary OPDC draft policies for the Atlas Road 'cluster' where such variation is based on sound evidence and justification.

6.8 Moreover the boundary of OPDC's Atlas Road cluster is not delineated within the OPDC Draft Local Plan and overlaps with other 'Places' so it is not entirely clear where Draft Policy P8C1 is intended to apply.

6.9 This neighbourhood plan supports the main principles of the OPDC Local Plan for the Atlas Road 'cluster'. Which are to provide a neighbourhood centre with local services, and increased activation of the canalside. We also support the proposed 'Park Road' (now renamed Union Street) between the Oaklands site at Scrubs Lane. We also support PC81(c) encouraging leisure, eating and drinking uses along the south side of this stretch of the Grand Union Canal.

6.10 While we agree that this location is suitable for relatively tall buildings (given that Oaklands North at 26 storeys is already under construction, we see no justification for policies such as P8C1(h) which encouraged 'taller buildings closer to the canal' when the canal is itself a conservation area. Heights for buildings at several locations are prescribed in Policy P8C1 in a manner which we consider incompatible with such a policy also being defined by OPDC as 'strategic'.

6.11 Apart from the 605 unit Oaklands scheme under construction, development proposals are being consulted on at pre-application stage for a site at the Atlas Road roundabout. This scheme (badged as Victoria Terrace) is for a mixed use development (mainly residential) including a 16 storey tower. These proposals have been reviewed by the OPDC Community Review Group at pre-application stage. The outcome of this assessment has not yet been published. An image from exhibition boards for the project is shown below. The larger building on the right of the image is the part constructed Oaklands development.



Image of proposed Victoria Terrace development

6.12 As shown at Figure (above) the OPDC Local Plan sees the Oaklands site as the western end of a new key road link (Union Way) running eastwards to Scrubs Lane. The alignment of this road is the subject of a major dispute between OPDC and landowner Cargiant. Cargiant has proposed an alternative alignment which avoids the need for land to be taken from their business operation. OPDC has currently rejected this alternative. This dispute remains very relevant to the viability of OPDC plans for the first stage of redevelopment of Old Oak North.

6.13 One of the OPDC 'Early Activation' projects is for improvements to the canalside (southern bank) including including public realm enhancements, towpath access improvements and supporting a community canoeing initiative and boaters' facilities. This project will lie next to the towpath already improved as the exterior of the Collective building and is welcome.

6.14 As noted on the OPDC Victoria Road Development Framework Principles document *Victoria Road and Old Oak Lane form the only continuous north south route through the area. The route is heavily used by private residential and business related traffic, in addition to public transport, construction traffic, pedestrians and cyclists. As construction traffic is due to increase, the corridor comes under increasing pressure to cater for the need of all users.* The principles document

recommends widening of vehicle and cycle carriageways (where possible) but there is no evidence that this will happen within the 5 year life of this neighbourhood plan. Meanwhile the Atlas Road roundabout will continue to be a severe congestion point at peak hours.

Other potential development sites at the Atlas Road Junction

6.15 In the OPDC Victoria Road Development Principles document, the areas to the immediate west and east of the Atlas Road roundabout are identified as ‘development opportunity’ sites. The area to the west is planned for use as a HS2 construction compound. The site has been acquired by HS2 and its former building (Rowan House) has already been demolished.

6.16 The Draft OPDC Local Plan notes that this site is currently designated as SIL and Policy PC8C1(b) proposes *Supporting the functioning of SIL by delivering high density high quality SIL compliant broad industrial type activities with active frontages at the Rowan House site on the western corner of Atlas Junction*. OONF considers this would be a wasted opportunity in terms of creating a neighbourhood centre at the Atlas Junction.

6.17 As and when released by HS2 (which could be sooner rather than later depending on the outcome of the Oakervee review) we consider that this specific site on the edge of the SIL area of Park Royal should be de-designated from industrial use and assigned for mixed use redevelopment. The combination of ‘*industrial type activities*’ with ‘*active frontages*’ lacks plausibility. If a neighbourhood centre at the Atlas Junction is to succeed, this site needs to provide a location for a range of retail and social and community uses (post office, health centre, A3 café/restaurant).

6.18 This site provides a suitable location for a taller building, across the road from the Collective and on the other side of the roundabout from the proposed Victoria Terrace development. A substantial mixed use development at this location would provide much needed housing and would be a more appropriate location for a 10-20 storey residential tower than that being proposed for Goodhall Street on the boundary of the Old Oak Conservation Area (see OONA Area 2 above).

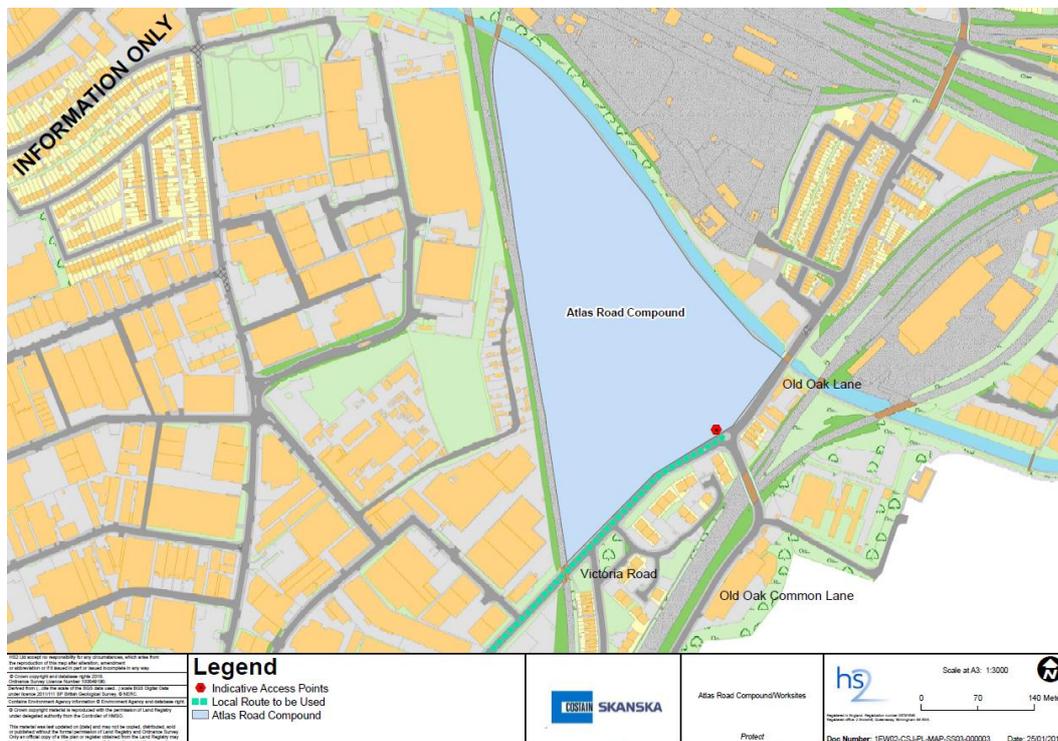


Figure () Map showing extent of proposed HS2 construction compound north of Atlas Junction, for which the former Rowan House site has already been cleared.

6.19 Other potential future development sites at the Atlas Junction 'Place' (as defined by OPDC and covered by Draft Policy P8C1) are the Power House and the former Willesden Junction Maintenance Depot. The former is a block of 10 flats, and the latter is a 1960's Brutalist building recommended by OPDD for local listing. These sites lie between the Atlas Road roundabout and the canal, opposite the Collective building.

6.20 Both sites were included in the original 285 hectare neighbourhood boundary originally proposed by the Interim Old Oak Neighbourhood Forum, but were excluded from the tightly defined boundary approved by OPDC (probably because lie on the LB Hammersmith & Fulham side of the borough boundary and LBHF 'refused' the Forum's original cross boundary designation application). This means that this neighbourhood plan cannot propose a site allocation for these sites. The same applies to the 'Oaklands North' site on Old Oak Common Lane. This will hamper efforts by local people to shape the creation of a successful neighbourhood centre at the Atlas Road junction.

Proposed policies for OONA Area 3 (Atlas Road Junction)

Policy OONA 3A – to work with local the local highway authority (LB Ealing) and OPDC to progress highway improvements and traffic mitigation measures on those stretches of Old Oak Common Lane, Victoria Road and Old Oak Lane lying within OONA Area 3.

Reasoned justification – located on the only north west route through this part of the OPDC area traffic congestion is already severe and will worsen as and when major HS2 construction works reach their peak in the period 2020-2028.

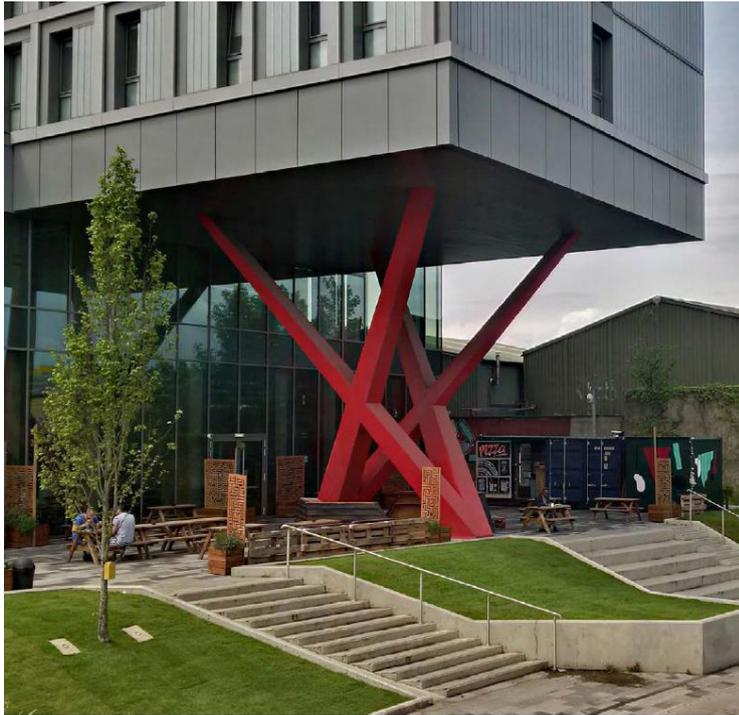
Policy OONA 3B – to de-designate from Strategic Industrial Lan (SIL) the former Rowan House site and to re-allocate this for mixed use (subsequent to HS2 use as a construction compound) in order to encourage the creation of a vibrant and commercially successful neighbourhood hub at the Atlas Junction, providing space for retail, social and community uses, and helping to meet the indicative housing target set for the Old Oak neighbourhood area.

Reasoned justification – two sides of the Atlas Road roundabout are already developed (the Collective building and Shaftesbury Gardens (residential)). A third side is the subject of pre-application proposals for mixed use development (Victoria Terrace). The former Rowan House site is a suitable location for high density mixed use, with a taller building, as opposed to a SIL compliant use for which 'activated' frontages are an unlikely outcome.

Policy OONA 3C – to encourage the improvement of the towpath of the Grand Union Canal, as a cycle/pedestrian route and as a location for canalside activities including additional moorings.

Reasoned justification – this section of the canal has already seen recent improvement as a result of the opening of the Collective. The proposed OPDC Early Activation project at this location should consolidate this. The canal towpath has potential for greater use as an east/west cycle

route provided that conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists can be overcome.



The canalside outside the Collective building on Old Oak Lane

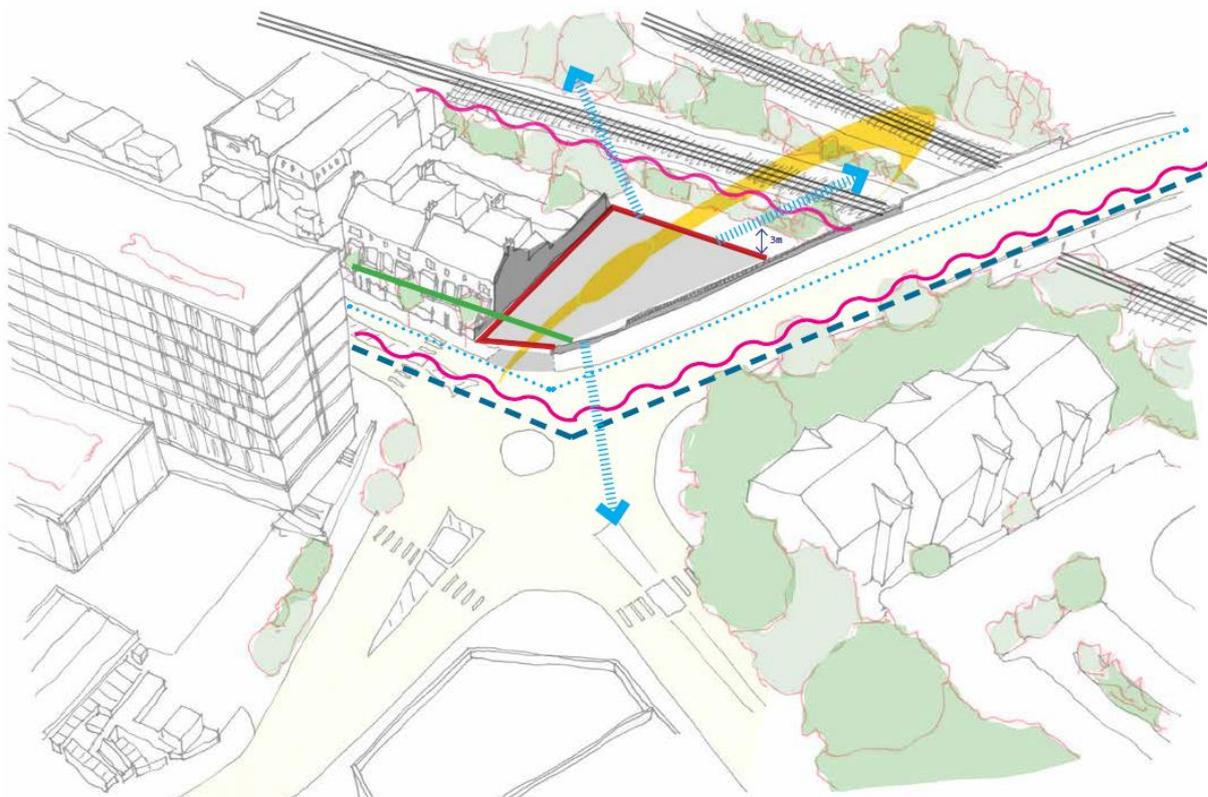


Figure () Image of Atlas Road junction showing site of proposed Victoria Terrace development, the Collective building (to the left) and the now cleared former Rowan House site (in foreground)

