Property News

Report calls for action to rejuvenate Drummond Street in the wake of chaos caused by HS2

Artist impressions of how Drummond Street in Euston might develop, with space for community events

Vision to save street means business

IT is the world famous home of Anglo-Asian cuisine, a street that was the first to offer delicious curries to diners in the UK – and now plans have been drawn up to save Drummond Street.

The road in Euston has been hit by the colossal High Speed 2 rail project – and with this ongoing disruption in mind, a new report is calling for urgent action to help businesses in the area.

Commissioned by the Euston Town Business Improvement District (BID) and drawing on surveys and meetings held in February and March by Jan Kattein Architects, it recognises Drummond Street's long-term value to London.

Jan Kattein's practice has experience in looking at how high streets can be improved and has completed 25 similar projects across London – and Mr Kattein has highlighted a series of ways the street could be improved. He said: "Architecture can be about a civic contribution – not just about buildings or spaces."

The Kattein report says that as well as the chaos caused by HS2, Drummond Street also suffers from a clash of cars and people, "tired looking" amenity spaces, issues with rubbish collection and maintaining shops and building facades.

The report states: "The historic high street is best known for its unique offer of south Indian and vegetarian restaurants, which claim to be among the first to bring Asian street food to England."

Mr Kattein and his colleague Corina Tuna have studied the HS2 construction and looked at its effects on Drummond Street. After speaking with businesses and residents, they have identified three phases to instigate improvements, ranging from immediate

by DAN CARRIER

plans through to post-HS2 Euston.

"Without remedial action, many of the shops and restaurants on Drummond Street today are unlikely to still be there by the time the works are completed," the authors state.

The report cites how HS2 has brought "noise and air pollution, severely reduced access, inactive hoardings, ground works and increased traffic".

It adds: "Small high street businesses, already under pressure from rising rents and business rates, changing consumer behaviour and expectations and a lack of protection from wider economic pressures are perhaps experiencing the worst of these accumulated effects."

The report claims 87 per cent of businesses say they have seen customer numbers drop off, with lunch-time trade particularly effected.

"A key aim is to get stakeholders to come together. If they realise they are not in competition they can create a place that will attract more customers," the report says.

Adding to this, the loss of St James Gardens to HS2 has highlighted the lack of green space – and they suggest a series of initiatives that include widening pavements and planting trees. The pavements could also then be used for outside dining, and offer space for community events.

Enticing people into Drummond Street calls for work to be done, the architects say. Improving visibility would include options such as a permanent lighting and the gable ends at the entrance of the street at Laurence Corner decorated with large piece of Asian-influenced street art.

Mr Kattein said: "Drummond Street has long been orientated towards the eastern end where there is the station and hotel. To the west, there is a whole range of new potential customers. It is important to engage with Regent's Park and Hampstead Road."

The three-phased plan will work to make significant changes in challenging conditions, add the architects.

Mr Kattein said: "There are pressures high streets face, and we can't change the tax regime that big multinationals who can put their money through tax havens.

"But we can recognise what a place of innovation our high streets are. By considering what Drummond Streets strengths are, we can look at what we can do to make it more attractive."

The report will now be further considered by the BID and Euston's Neighbourhood Forum, before fundraising and planning applications are drawn up.

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