

Campion Application Gets Frosty Reception

The Isleworth and Brentford Area Committee (IBAC) discussed the second Try Homes application to develop the Campion House site at its meeting on 15th February. The meeting place (Brentford Free Church) was attended by residents and by a large team from Try Homes.

The Planning Officers presented a 50-page report on the application to IBAC. The Committee does not decide major applications such as Campion. Instead it is asked for comments so that these can be passed to the **Sustainable Development Committee** (SDC) which makes the local authority's decision, and gives reasons for acceptance or refusal. Developers can challenge this by appealing to the Planning Inspectorate.

It was clear from the IBAC discussion that councillors did not feel that the changes made to the second application were enough for them to commend the application. All the questions asked showed that they were apprehensive about it and it was clear that many of them thought the proposal was inappropriate for the area. Councillor Carey in particular said that the design and density of the proposed development were clearly out of character with the area and that it was unforgivable that something so inappropriate should be proposed.

Councillor Reid pointed to the large number of reports which had not yet been received. There was, for example, no assessment of the proposals from the Conservation Officer. Similarly there was no independent traffic report and no report

from Thames Water on the impact on foul water and surface water sewage. Councillor Reid said that even if they wanted to, councillors did not have enough material to make a judgement.

This last point highlights a serious problem with the planning process with regard to a major development such as this. The required responses to consultation tend not to be ready until shortly before the final meeting. This means that up to that point the consultative process is based on inadequate information.

We noted the large team of representatives from the developer who attended the meeting. We guess that this included legal specialists looking for anything that they might be able to use against the Council should their application be refused by the SDC.

Three of the twelve members of the Committee were absent for various reasons. One of them (Ruth Cadbury) had written in to say that she felt that the developer had not made sufficient changes for the application to be acceptable. She felt that it was still too large, too dense and suffered from some serious design faults.

* The background to the meeting was that even though the first Try Homes application to develop the Campion site was unanimously rejected by the SDC the developer has, nevertheless, appealed to the Government Planning Inspectorate in the hope that they will overrule local opinion. This process continues at the same time as their second application.

Residents Make Their Opposition Clear

We had a much shorter period to get written responses in to the Planning Department than for the first Try Homes application. Nevertheless, residents responded and, like last time, they did so in grand style. The Area Committee (report above) was told that 119 letters had been received at that point. We have seen many of these letters. They are individually written and often very detailed. A response on this scale is

exceptional so this gives a very clear message to planners and councillors. Try Homes is still claiming that they consulted residents and that residents approved their plans but it is unlikely that anyone believes this.

It seems that the Campion application is likely to be considered at the 28th March meeting of the SDC – this means that **you still have 10 or so to write a letter if you haven't already done so**.

Try Homes Complains about our Newsletter

A small note in the addendum to the papers for the IBAC meeting (see page 1) mentioned a complaint about Campion Concerns from Try Homes.

We phoned the Planning Department the next day to ask for a copy of this complaint (Try Homes had not had the good grace to send us a copy).

We now have a copy and have responded to each of the points in the Try Homes letter. We have sent this to the Planning Department and to Try Homes (but have had no response or acknowledgement from the latter).

The Try Homes letter criticises the last issue of this Newsletter. It claims that Campion Concerns is misleading residents by not explaining the changes they have made to their original design and that we are making false claims.

Had we been in the business of misleading residents about the Try Homes application we would hardly have organised an exhibition at which we put on display **every single drawing and document of the Try Homes application**.

Our only regret is that we did not have the time to give residents more notice and to give the event greater publicity. Even so those who attended (over 100) commented that we had done a very thorough job.

One of the most ridiculous points in the Try Homes letter is a complaint that the exhibition did not treat the Try Homes application fairly. We displayed ALL of their materials without comment. We also offered Try Homes space for extra materials (which they did not accept).

We did everything we could so that residents could see the application for what it is, in the developer's own terms. We think that the application is a very poor one and that the area would be harmed by it. We are confident that the overwhelming majority of residents who have familiarised themselves with the application agree with us. There is nothing we want to hide in the application – the more people that go to the library to study the application the better.

It is interesting that the Try Homes letter claims that the development is one of mainly family homes. Their application clearly states that

"The accommodation is mainly flats and the two-

bedroom units", i.e. the great majority, "are likely to be occupied by single people or couples rather than by families with children."

Who is misleading whom?

There is much in the letter that purports to answer our points but does not do so. That's no surprise since it has been like that from the outset. Copies are available for anyone who wants to read the letter for themselves and we hope to put on our website in the next few days.

You still have time to write a letter!

It is hard to exaggerate the importance of individually written letters. About 150 residents responded to the first application. That was over a much longer period than was available this time. The Try Homes application may be considered at the 28th March meeting of the SDC. As of 15th February 119 letters of objection had been received. It would be excellent if in the extra time this number were to be brought up to at least the number received for the first application. **You still have about 10 days to send a letter.**

If you have not already written, please try to take the time to do so. If your objections remain the same or similar to last time then send a letter which is the same or similar. Contact us if you need information and/or read the submission we have made to the Planning Department at

<http://campionconcerns.org.uk/yellowbook>

You might even care to get hold of a copy of the Try Homes letter complaining about Campion Concerns and let the Planning Department know what you think of their points.

And the Fence?

At the IBAC meeting on 15th February the question of the Fence erected along the Campion site was raised. An enforcement order to remove it has been issued. The day of the IBAC meeting was the last day for an appeal against that order to be received. Try Homes representatives at the meeting were heard to say that they had put in an appeal but the Borough Solicitor said he had not yet seen it. Whether they have appealed or not, the point is that the erection of the fence without permission and the refusal to take it down when instructed to do so are worrying signs of the attitude of this developer to local opinion.