

Time For Residents To Have Their Say

All residents in the catchment area for the Campion development (see map) should have received a consultation letter from the Hounslow Planning Department – as should anyone who wrote a letter about the last application. The Council letter of 8th April starts a 21-day consultation period over the third application to develop the Campion site.

There will be an exhibition on 22nd April on the latest proposals to develop the Campion House site. The details are given in the box below. If you can possibly set the time aside to attend that would help to show that residents' concern about this site has not diminished. It would also help to increase the effectiveness of any representations you make to the local authority if they are well-informed.

Balanced judgements will count most

We have always recognised and accepted that there will be a development on the Campion site. Two inappropriate proposals have been rejected and residents' opinions have contributed greatly to this.

Exhibition for 3rd Application

The exhibition is being organised by **John Thompson and Partners** for **Linden Homes**.

Date/Time: Tuesday 22nd April.

Venue: St Mary's:

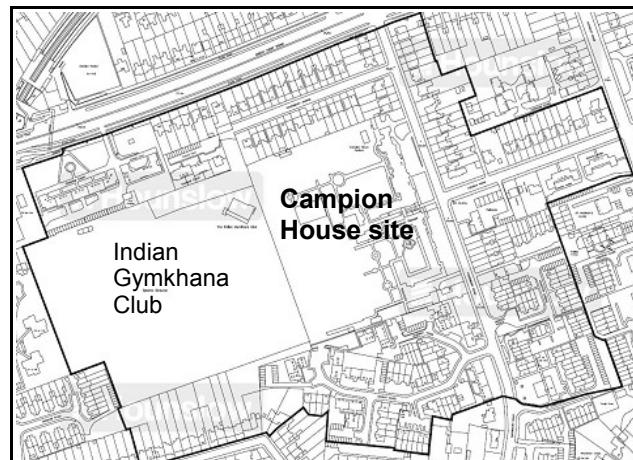
- (1) 4.00 to 7.00 in the Centenary Hall;
- (2) 7.45 to 9.15 in the Millennium Hall.

The architects of the project will be there to answer questions. Please try to attend.

We suggest that residents consider the third application carefully. Is it an improvement on previous designs? Are there things you like about it?

If you can see things in the development which you like then say so. The things which you don't like will then be seen as part of a balanced view rather than rejecting anything that the developer might propose.

There is a wide range of opinions among residents about different issues related to the development. These range from those who simply want everything to stay as it is to those who don't mind what is built so long as they have a chance to buy one of the units.



This original catchment area for the consultation was later extended to include Spencer Road. Residents living outside the catchment area have a full right to make representations about the development.

The experience of our campaign has shown clearly that the great majority of residents are somewhere between these two extremes.

We know that there will be a development on the site. We know that it will bring a significant increase in the local population. This in turn will lead to increased demand on services and more traffic.

But we know also that it is going to happen. What we have always campaigned for is a development that will be sensitive to the Spring Grove Conservation area and which will respect planning guidelines. It will be helpful if your letters to the Planning Department make this clear.

Some problems can be dealt with by special agreements. Others are so serious that they are grounds for refusal (see page 3). It would be helpful if you could indicate when you feel that the points that you make are serious enough to require refusal of the application.

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Do You Remember The Previous Proposal?

Residential action, support from councillors and planning officer opposition prevented a disaster from being inflicted on the area. Had the previous proposal been accepted we would have had a monstrous block along Thornbury Road as shown in the photograph below of the developer's model of the design.



The scale of the block compared to the surrounding housing is clear from the photograph. The Inspector had no doubt about the matter and said in the clearest possible terms that the block proposed would have been unlike anything in the area and would have been particularly inappropriate at such a sensitive spot in the Spring Grove Conservation Area.

The Inspector's comments set down basic guidelines to be respected for subsequent applications. You can read his report on our website. It is not very long and gives a clear account of the problems of the previous application.

How Is The Current Application Different?

Everyone will make up their own minds about the current application on the basis of the evidence available to them. That evidence can be gathered in various ways.

(A) You can see the full set of application papers in **Osterley Library**. If you do this we suggest that the key documents are (1) the Design and Access Statement and (2) the Planning Statement.

(B) All the application papers are available through **our website**. If you have an Internet connection you can look at them at home. Our website address is on the first page of this Newsletter.

(C) If you cannot get to the library then you could see the papers at 101 Thornbury Road. If you want to do this then please try to let us know in advance. Contact details are on the first page.

Some significant changes

(1) The first application was for 273 housing units. The second one was for 239 units. The current application is for 168 units.

(2) Community consultation for the first application was a farce. For the second it was non-existent. For the current application there have been some genuine exchanges – even if we have our criticisms of the process (see below for more on this).

(3) The monolithic block approach has gone. The frontage along Thornbury Road has been broken up

into separate much smaller blocks – as we had suggested. The scale of these blocks is not so far from that of the original Davies houses which used to be nearby on Thornbury Road.

(4) The frontage blocks have been set further back from the road than the current buildings. This would provide a wider view along the road making Campion House more visible.

(5) There is no attempt in this application, unlike the previous ones, to denigrate the conservation area. Its qualities are recognised in a comprehensive survey.

(6) Because the monolithic block approach has gone it has been possible to create a number of views onto the site. This makes the idea of a publicly accessible open space much more realistic.

(7) Different blocks have been designed in different styles to avoid an “estate” feel for the development and to reflect the diversity of architectural styles in the conservation area.

(8) Tigar Hall would be kept as a community facility both for the residents of the site and for the wider community.

(9) There seems to be a commitment to provide 10% of the development's energy from renewable sources.

(10) There is a greater ratio of houses to flats than in the last application – 41 houses and 127 flats compared with 21 houses and 218 flats previously.

Despite Changes Serious Problems Remain

After two and a half years of argument about this site we are as keen as anyone to see the development go ahead. *But it has got to be right for the area.* Once built, residents will live with it for a very long time.

Having reviewed the documentation for the current application we think that there are some key issues for the site which remain unresolved.

Issues for “conditions”

It is possible that some of the problems can be dealt with by special agreements (“conditions” set by the local authority) before building is allowed to go ahead. Residents may well be able to help point out good candidate issues for such agreements.

Many residents are concerned about the traffic implications of the development. From our experience at the public inquiry for the second application we can say that the application is not going to be turned down because it is going to add to the traffic along Thornbury Road.

This does not mean that the additional traffic is not a problem. It just means that there is no point in objecting to the development on this ground. On the other hand if you can suggest measures that you think might improve traffic conditions along Thornbury Road (e.g. traffic calming measures, road widening etc., energy policies) then please do so.

There are some key issues that could, in principle, be resolved by agreeing the appropriate “conditions”. These could include issues of building materials, building standards, sustainability of construction materials, energy policy for the site and a commitment to sustainable urban drainage policy.

You may think of many other issues. If you do then by all means raise them. All that we suggest is that you try to be clear about the difference between matters that you would like the council to insist once approval is given and other, more fundamental matters, which might be considered as reasons to refuse the application in its current form.

Grounds for objection

There are some substantial issues which we think should constitute grounds for refusal. It is important to remember that these must be based on planning considerations and that is what we have tried to do.

(1) There should be no loss of local open space. The Campion site has an area of 3.22 hectares. Of that 2.1 ha is designated local open space. Guidelines at every level say that permission should not normally be given to develop on local open space.

We have studied all the relevant planning documents on this question and it seems clear to us that it would



The master plan for the Campion application

be contrary to all planning guidelines to encroach on open space. There are “very special circumstances” which allow for exceptions. We believe that none of these special circumstances apply in the case of the Campion development.

The latest, and probably the most important, planning document dealing with open space is the London Plan. Objective No.1 of the London Plan is “To accommodate London's growth within its boundaries without encroaching on open spaces”.

The London Plan also argues that open spaces should be “rigorously protected”. That is our view too.

The current proposals would encroach on about 50% of the existing open space. Even if the open space released at the front were to be designated as local open space (and we don't know about that yet) the encroachment would still be of the order of 30%.

Encroachment is contrary to the letter and spirit of all relevant planning guidelines. If you agree with us then please make your objection known on this issue.

If you want more on the open space issue we have produced a detailed paper (10 pages) with relevant quotations from guidelines along with maps showing the various areas on the site. This paper can be obtained by contacting us or by downloading it from <http://campionconcerns.org.uk/app3/spacecase.pdf>.

(2) The consultation process was incomplete. While we do not expect to have every suggestion we make adopted, there were clear shortcomings in the process. From the start there was an effort to persuade

residents that a loss of open space would be a valuable trade for public access and better design.

We pointed out that the London Plan calls for *good design which protects open space*. There is no residential approval of a trade on open space. The Government's guidelines on open space (PPG17) say that any loss of open space would require community approval. That approval has not been obtained and yet the application has gone in based on a substantial loss of open space.

(3) Some buildings are too high and too large.

One of the Inspector's main points in rejecting the last application, was that the proposed buildings did not respect those of the surrounding housing and also did not give due deference to Campion House.

The original Council Planning Brief for the site said that buildings of 3 to 4 storeys might be appropriate. The Inspector said of the second application "*At 4 to 5 storeys high above basement level, this would be unlike anything in the surrounding area. I consider that the building would not relate well to the scale, height, nature, massing and character of its surroundings*". These problems still remain.

In the last application the developer made a point of saying that the proposed buildings did not rise above the *eaves* of Campion House. In this application the *ridge* is taken as the reference point.

(4) Massing

The 3-D impact of buildings is crucial. In this respect we have serious concern about blocks C and D. The massing of these buildings will not allow them to show deference to Campion House. This is true as seen from the street and from within the site. The height of these buildings is of concern to residents in Thornbury Avenue. Finally, buildings adjacent to the publicly accessible open space need to be lower in order to allow that space to "breathe".

(5) Density is still too high. Whenever density is mentioned planning officers remind us "*It is not density in itself that constitutes a ground for objection but the effects of density*". We understand that. The effects of density include comparison with that of neighbouring housing. We think that in this low-density suburban conservation area, a sharp increase in density is just such an undesirable effect.

The indicative (guidelines) density range for a low density suburban area with poor transport links (all confirmed by the Inspector) is 40 – 80 dwellings per hectare (dph). Density is calculated in different ways but even by the developer's calculations it is 74 units per hectare. Given that the density of the conservation area housing round the site is less than 40 dph, it seems to us reasonable to expect that the density on the site would be nearer to the lower end of the density range.

From the Consultation Letter

"Comments must be received in writing within 21 days of the date of this letter (8th April). Comments received after this date will still be considered if a decision has not been made. Objections made on previous applications will not be taken into account."

*The letter also explains that applications which comply with the **Hounslow Unitary Development Plan** will be considered favourably.*

Make Your Views Known In A Letter

Residents' view have been influential so far because so many of them have been prepared to write letters. Many of us have written several. Now it is time to do so again. Previous letters will not be considered.

As before our advice is that letters must be in your own words and must express the things that concern you. We are sometimes asked to produce a model letter for people to copy but we do not think that is a good idea.

Sometimes people feel that they need help with letter writing. That is fine. We will help in any way that we can – but the letter must be your words and your concerns.

We have helped people with dyslexia and others who felt that they could not express themselves sufficiently clearly in English. We are more than ready to do that again.

Please try to get your letter in by the 29th April. The written representations from residents have so far been exceptionally high for the Campion applications. That has been a major reason why residents' views have been taken so seriously. When the public inquiry on the last application opened last June one of the first things the Inspector said was that the development had attracted a very high level of residential interest. He knew that because of the volume of letters the planning authority had received (and which were passed to him along with the other relevant paperwork).

Send your letters to the Campion development Case Officer.

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