

Application Three Is Being Revised

The third application to develop the Campion House site was considered by the Isleworth & Brentford Area Committee (IBAC) on 19th June.

There were aspects of the meeting that gave us some concern but, overall, it was clear that councillors were far from happy with a number of major aspects of the Linden Homes proposals for the site.

The upshot has been that the developer has announced that the application is being modified in the light of the comments made. So far we have no details as to the extent of the changes.

We were more than a little surprised to find that the officers' report to IBAC failed to refer to any of the points, made well in advance, by Campion Concerns.

Our views only got a mention in an addendum to the officers' report which was circulated to councillors just before the IBAC meeting started.

It was as well that we had sent councillors a document in which we made our case in some detail.

Our case requires a full response

Given our clear and detailed analyses of the application, the failure to acknowledge our views in the main report was difficult to understand. We may be right or wrong but there can be little doubt that we have made every possible effort to provide a critique of the application which is based on careful analysis.

That would seem to be the developer's view since they have been at pains to criticise our case (or rather, what they take it to be).

Some residents' views (not all) were quoted in the officers' report, and rightly so, but it is strange that our views received no attention except in a last minute document.

The material we sent to the planning officers is available on our website so everyone can check its quality for themselves.

The developer strikes back!

Our materials on the development were placed on our website well before the IBAC meeting.

Despite this the company acting as the agent for Linden Homes (CgMs) chose to criticise our documents in two emails sent to the planning officers on the afternoon of the day of the IBAC meeting!

We eventually obtained these emails from the Planning Department and found that they contained the same low-level attempts to discredit our criticisms of the application that we encountered on previous applications.

How about an apology?

Protect Open Space!
We think that London's open space is too precious an asset for it to be regarded as a bargaining counter to be traded away on a site-by-site basis. London's space as a whole should be protected.

The London Plan says that open space should be "rigorously protected". We think so too.

Rather than attacking us in this way you would have thought that an apology might be in order.

For the previous application the developer put encroachment at 10%. We said that it was more than 20%. The Inspector agreed.

This time the developer has declined even to offer an estimate of the extent of encroachment. Why would that be? Even a cursory glance at the

maps we have produced shows that the encroachment this time is greater than for the previous application.

We have never claimed to represent everyone's views. How could we? On the other hand all the indications are (from petitions, letters and financial support) that a clear majority support our campaign.

We receive constant indications of appreciation and support but if any residents feel that we have ceased to represent their views we would ask them to contact us to let us know their views.

What are "Very special circumstances"?

The Hounslow **Unitary Development Plan** says that local open space (there are 2 hectares of it on the Campion site) should not be used for development except in "very special circumstances".

The developer has tried hard to justify encroachment onto local open space on the Campion site by reference to these "very special circumstances".

In our documentation we went through every point made by the developer and showed that their arguments will not stand serious investigation.

The developer's responses to our points are bizarre.

For example their response states that Campion Concerns “have not highlighted any reasons why all of the designated open land should be kept free of building in terms of what it can be used for”.

“In terms of what it can be used for”? We pointed out that London needs to protect its quantum of open space and that bargaining it away on a site-by-site basis will have the opposite effect. Open space, as such, is of value irrespective of the uses made of it.

A second argument is that the open space remaining after encroachment would serve the needs of the local community and that reducing encroachment would not serve the needs of an even wider community”. The words “barrel”, “bottom” and “scraping” leap to mind. This is just not an argument.

Government guidelines require the developer to consult the local community to demonstrate support for proposed changes to open space usage. Our Linden Homes critic says “Whilst the proposals are obviously not supported by members of Campion Concerns, they do not represent the whole community.

This is simple evasion. Has the community been consulted about the change? No. Has community

support been demonstrated? No. Dismissing our views on the grounds that we do not represent community views should convince no one.

Who does Campion Concerns represent?

For two and a half years of we have kept local residents well informed about development proposals.

We are sustained by contributions from residents and have received widespread praise for our efforts.

From the outset our aim has been to ensure that any development is (1) based on planning guidelines, and (2) in keeping with the character of the area.

We participated in a public inquiry in which the Inspector agreed with practically all our arguments.

We have kept residents informed by our **Newsletters** of which this is the 21st.

We think that the attempt to dismiss our arguments by claiming that we are unrepresentative shows how weak the case for “very special circumstances” is.

We are ready to call on residents to show their views on the Campion development and whether or not you support our case. We doubt that the developer will want to pursue that argument but if they do

Our Core Case

(1) Protecting London's Open Space is a key environmental objective. All the discussion about protecting the environment in recent years should have made the case clear for not allowing built development on spaces which have been set aside by local authorities to protect them from development.

We believe that planning officers and councillors have a duty to set each application in its borough-wide and London-wide setting. Open space bargained away on individual sites is a permanent loss of open space for the wider community.

(2) The density range used by the developer is incorrect. This is a relatively technical point (detail is available on our website). By following the Hounslow Unitary Development Plan's definition of habitable rooms we have shown that the indicative density range for this site is 35-65 dwellings per hectare (dph) and not the 50-80 dph as claimed by the developer. A detailed case on this was sent to the planning officers. We have asked if any of our claims about the facts of the case are incorrect. At the time of writing we have received no reply.

(3) The density of the development is, in any event, out of keeping with the setting of the Campion site. The inspector said in rejecting the second application that the Campion site is in a particularly sensitive spot of the Spring Grove Conservation Area. We agree with him.

The housing opposite the site is mainly two-storey family housing and the average density is about 30 dph. We accept that the site will increase average density in the area because that is what planning guidelines require (whether we agree with it or not). We do not accept that the change should be as steep as that proposed (from 30 to 76 dph).

(4) The buildings along the frontage are too high and some (blocks C and D) are too bulky compared to Campion House.

Further details are available on our website.

It's not too late to write

Given what we have explained in the this Newsletter you might think about sending a short note to the Planning Department to tell them what you think of the developer's proposals and/or our case.

If you have written before you can still write again. We hope to publish details of the latest changes proposed in our next Newsletter.

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You can also send your view by email to
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