

Application Made for Massive Development

The Application has been registered

Try Homes finally had its application registered on 22nd June. This was after a number of false starts. The application was found to have essential papers missing and the Planning Department had to remind the developer to supply papers that they had quite clearly been asked to provide. This is symptomatic of the way this developer has worked throughout. They have continuously pushed beyond reasonable limits in an effort to see what they can get away with.

The submission consists of a series of 11 reports and statements along with 38 architect's drawings. This material was produced by the various companies hired by the developer Try Homes. A brief guide to the papers is given on page 2 of this **Newsletter**.

Try Homes propose 273 residential units

This is no surprise as it has been clear for a long time that the developer has one interest only and that is to maximise the return they can get on their investment. They have no interest in making the development sensitive to the conservation area nor to the immediate built environment. Any resident reading the developer's documents will be struck by the total lack of regard for the area.

The major change from earlier indications is that the major block of flats and houses has been moved to the south of the site i.e. from Thornbury Avenue towards Kilberry Close. Residents' activity almost certainly contributed to this change which has improved things for the northern side of the site. Now we need similar improvements for the southern side.

This development would harm the area

Whatever the reason for the changes it remains that this is a massive overdevelopment which could not but change the character of the area very much for the worse.

- (1) There is no other development in the area with such a mass of flats in one block.
- (2) The ratio of houses (21:252) to flats is totally unacceptable. The residential character of the area is established predominantly by 2/3 storey houses.
- (3) Residents were told in November that the development would be for a "variety of family needs". It is now described as being for



The descriptions of the area fail to mention the attractive Edwardian houses facing the Campion site.

"predominantly non-family accommodation".

- (4) The development would increase the population of the catchment area by nearly 50% with the consequential increased pressure on local services and roads.
- (5) Taken in conjunction with Brunel there would be $366 + 273 = 639$ new homes in just one part of the conservation area.
- (6) It is not acceptable that the area has further erosion of its open spaces (15% is proposed at Campion).
- (7) The Try Homes talk of 'opening up the view from Thornbury Road' cannot be taken seriously. We would be confronted with a vast 5-storey frontage to a block that will dominate the whole area.

You can see the plans

The papers can be viewed

- 1. At the Civic Centre (take the consultation letter with you)**
- 2. At Osterley Library. Open**
Mon: 9.30-8.00, Tues: 9.30-5.30
Thur: 9.30-8.00, Sat: 9.30-4.30

HOW TRY HOMES MAKES ITS CASE

(1) Rubbish the conservation area

The Conservation Area report is the key to the submission. It is claimed that nothing significant of the 19th century Davies Plan remains and that subsequent developments are without interest. The argument is therefore that there was no good reason for setting up the Spring Grove Conservation Area.

(2) Quote guidelines selectively

The various application papers repeatedly quote guidelines to the effect that land should be used “efficiently” and that housing density should be increased. They mention that developments should respect the surrounding area but never investigate what this might mean. The point is therefore lost.

(3) Make up figures/Distort facts

There are repeated attempts to suggest that the public transport rating (PTAL) for the site should not be 2 (“poor”). The rating has been confirmed by Transport for London. The suburban status is questioned many times by suggesting that the distance from the town centre is only just over 10 minutes walk away! The town centre is said to be less than 2km away when in fact the RAC maps confirm that the distance is over 2km. There are many more such examples.

(4) Use gibberish/inflated English

Plain English is avoided where it might mean making the developer's intentions too clear. The terraced houses are “punctuated” at each end by flats. Houses are the “dominant physical form of the new buildings” - all 21 of them! The proposed quadrangle would be “clearly visible” from Thornbury Road. Would that be through the tunnel forming the entrance to the quadrangle? The area behind Campion House is said to be “scrubby” with one or two “undistinguished trees”. Look at the aerial photo to see the extent of these “undistinguished trees”. Pages could be filled with such quotations. You get the idea.

(5) Conclude that the case is proved

After cherry-picking the planning guidelines and repeating unjustified claims about the conservation area the documents end up with the conclusions which just happen to be those required by Try Homes to maximise its profits. For example it is concluded that the proposed development is at an “appropriate density” even though there has been no discussion anywhere of the density of the surrounding housing.

WHAT'S IN THE APPLICATION?

When viewing the documents it may help to have a list explaining what they consist of.

(1) Planning Statement On Behalf of Try Homes.

This document by *CgMs Consulting* summarises the overall case for the development. It contains many references to planning guidelines. Links are available to all of these guidelines on our website.

(2) Conservation Assessment. In many ways this is the most revealing of the documents. It seeks to undermine the idea that the Spring Grove Conservation Area has any integrity or meaning. That prepares the ground for arguing that the monstrous block proposed will “enhance” the area.

(3) Landscape & visual statement. This gives the landscape management plan for the site and details of site topography, vegetation etc. Also has maps and photographs.

APPLICATION EXHIBITION

St Vincent De Paul Church Hall
Witham Road, Mon July 10th

2.00 to 8.00 pm.

Campion Concerns members will be there with leaflets. Badges will be given to those who would like to show their support for our work.

(4) Campion House Design Notes.

A 3 page document by the Architects. Easy to read. Lots of estate agent language (“warm rosy brickwork” etc). The only document that admits to any 20th century housing being of interest (a passing reference to “some pleasant pairs of Arts-and-Crafts semis”).

(5) Architect's drawings. These include (a) site plans, (b) various elevations, (c) access plans (d) floor plans etc. The drawings are 2-dimensional only and many are difficult to interpret.

(6) Transport Assessment. 300 pages full of statistics and analysis from measurements going back some years. We have already found some of the data to be highly unreliable. If you are concerned about traffic it would help if you could spend some time on this document checking it and then let us know your views.

(7) Travel Plan. Ideas to reduce traffic impact. Work at home, walk more, get kids to cycle to school, car share schemes, give new residents subsidised public transport for 3 months, give residents public transport timetables, appoint a travel plan coordinator.

(8) Sustainability Checklist. Deals with measures concerning the environment.

(9) Daylight and Sunlight Report. Consists mostly of technical graphs only meaningful to a specialist. A few notes on the impact on some adjacent properties.

(10) Statement of Community Engagement. The *Green Issues* report on the workshops and exhibition that it organised. The report was first issued in January. It hasn't improved with age.

(11) Access Statement. Details how the design deals with needs of people with disabilities.

MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN

Questions/points for the exhibition

We Want Family Housing. We were 'consulted' on a development for a variety of family needs. Why has it become a development for 'predominantly non-family needs'? This is an area of family homes. This development would turn it into something very different. To fit in with the area we need a far greater ratio of houses to flats. The flats should be in small blocks, not monumental ones. It follows that the development needs to be completely re-thought.

Design. It is claimed that residents wanted a 'classical design'. What alternatives were they offered? The front of the building looks like a prison and would spoil an attractive area. Isn't a block of flats vastly bigger than any other near the site out of character? Why are only some of the homes being built to 'life-time standards'?

Sustainability. How many of the homes will be built to life-time standards? What energy saving standards have been set for the development? How will rainwater be re-used? Will any rainwater be fed into the main sewer?

The Conservation Area. The development gives an opportunity to open the visual space across the Campion site. Despite the claims this plan fails to do that. Would it be acceptable to reduce London's open space by 15%? If not then why is acceptable here? The local housing density is around 40 units per hectare. The proposals are for more than double that. Why? To what important features of the local surroundings has the development been sensitive? The massive loss of trees (about 50), and the pond will harm bio-diversity.

Consulting and Informing Residents. Residents were manipulated at the time of the consultation. They were not given the information needed to judge the proposals. Why was the Green Issues website not updated for the past six months to keep us informed? Why did the developer never reply to the residents' petition despite many letters asking them to do so?

Pressure on the Area. What studies have been made to show the joint impact of this development with that at Brunel? What studies have been made on the ability of the local services to bear the increased demand. Significant traffic problems are already being encountered around Thornbury Road. This development will worsen them.

WRITE TO THE PLANNERS

The planning department will judge residents' reactions largely by the letters they receive. To be most effective letters should be handwritten and express the views of the writer. If many residents make the same points that will be a good thing.

We suggest that you use any points on this page that strike you as important plus any individual concerns or feelings that have occurred to you.

It would be very helpful to us if you could let us know when you have sent a letter. If you are willing, it would be useful if you could let us have a copy.

You could use any of the points on this page plus those of your own.

Try to make it clear the ways in which you think the development will harm the area. It would be good if some themes were to emerge in the letters that the planners receive.

We suggest the following.

Loss of open space. There was loss of open space at Brunel. Other developments in the conservation area have reduced open space. It is time to call a halt to this process. London needs its open spaces more than ever.

Harm to the conservation area. The height of the main block would dominate the surrounding housing. This building mass is out of character. It is more monumental than the existing buildings.

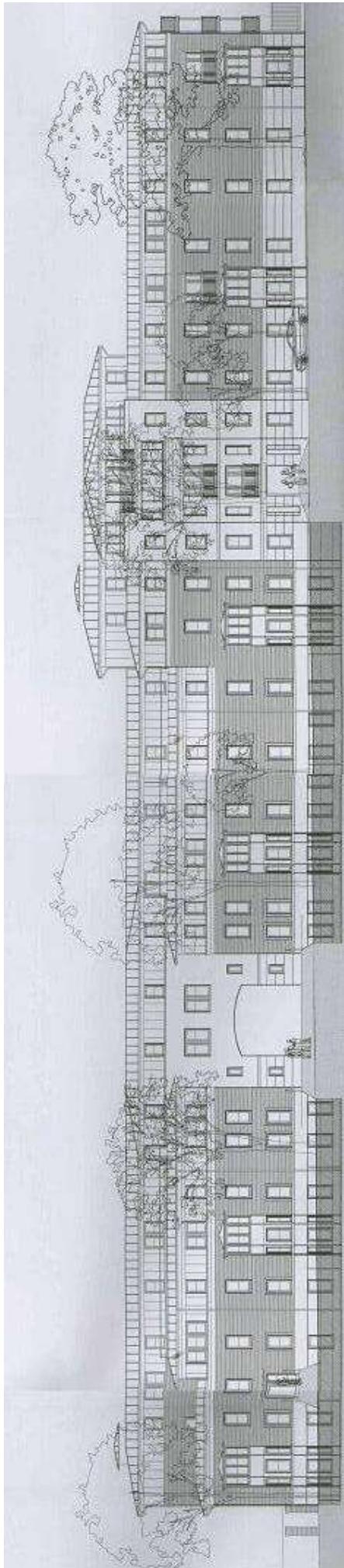
The proposals don't preserve or enhance the area. The large increase in population many of whom would be transient would change the character of the area for the worse. It would also add pressure to existing traffic/parking problems.

A sports pitch would be lost with no adequate replacement. The residents were never consulted about the loss of a sports pitch.

This would be the second major development in a small area. The strain on services would damage the quality of life in many different ways.

Write to **Burnetta Van Stipriaan** (the case officer for the Campion development) at

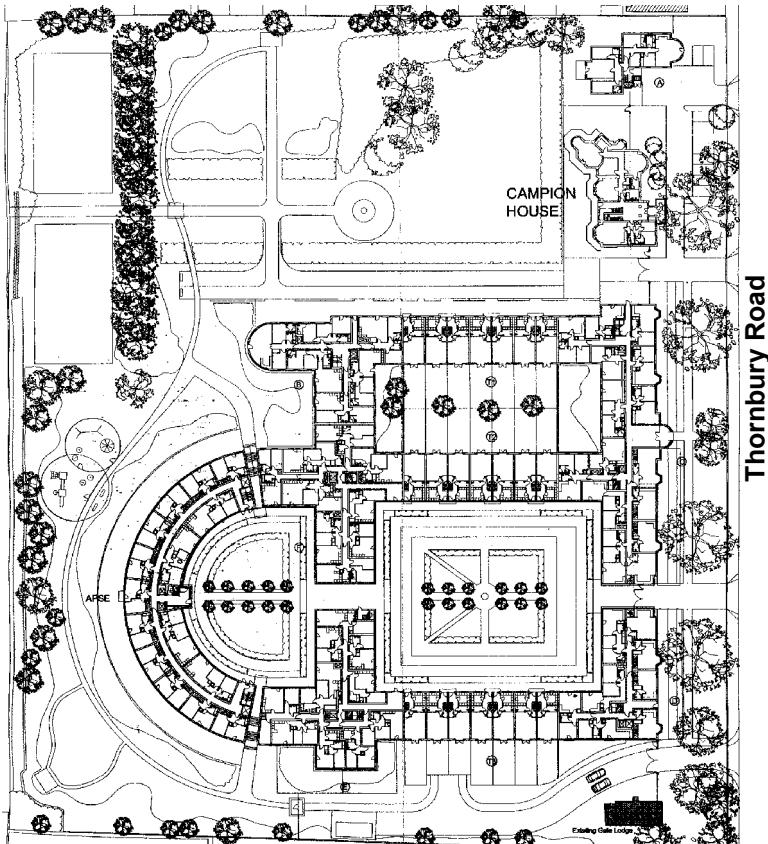
**The Planning Department
London Borough of Hounslow
The Civic Centre,
Lampton Road
Hounslow TW3 4DN**



Many residents have already commented that the main block of the development looks like a prison. Given that it is designed for predominantly non-family accommodation and that much of the affordable housing is of poor design this could well lead to the development becoming a sink estate.

The Architect's Drawings Present us with a Monstrous Block

The drawing on the left gives a view of the main block as seen from Thornbury Road. It is monstrous. There is no way this would not do tremendous damage to the visual character of the area. It must be admitted that the present seminary block is no pinnacle of architectural beauty; on the other hand, it is modest enough not to completely dominate the whole visual environment. The proposed block would become the visual focus of the street.



This plan view shows the monumental nature of the main block.

CHECK LIST

If you think we are exaggerating then please go and look at the application papers for yourself.

You can write more than once. If you send a letter to the planning department and then get more ideas later (this is almost certain to happen) then write another letter.

Send your letters to the Planning Department before 17th July. They may be considered if you send them later but it would be good to meet this deadline.

Go to the exhibition at St Vincent's on the 10th July. Let the developers and, more importantly, the planners, know what you think about the application.

Attend the Isleworth and Brentford Area Committee meeting that will consider the application. This meeting is likely to be on 17th August. Information will be available from the Civic Centre and on our website.