



# **WEST HAMPSTEAD NDF**

## Neighbourhood Development Forum

*Minutes of meeting held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at West Hampstead Library*

**Present:** James Earl (Chair), Diana Frost, Stewart Drummond, Adam Webster, H Maag, Brigid Shaughnessy, Pauline Atlas, Janet Crawford, Mary Murphy, Gillian Riso-Gill, Cllr Flick Rea, Carlton Johnson, Andrew Saywell, Mike Borgeaud, Jennifer Creswick, Anne Heymann, Nancy Jirira, John Saynor, Richard Best, Mori Sped, Celine Castelino, Branko Viric, Cllr Lorna Russell, Sue Measures, Maajid Nawaz, Catherine Ford, Mark Hutton, Enyd Norman, Paul Matolson, Ines Ferrerira, Nalan Bedding, Cllr Clare-Louise Leyland, Jill Hood, David Richards, Milat Magrierra, Andrew Parkinson, Jonathan Turton, Ian Cohen, Oliver Cooper & Cllr Angela Pober.

### **1. Welcome & apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from: Mark Stonebanks, Keith Moffitt, Nick Jackson, Stephen Nathan, Virginia Berridge, Eli Abt, John Eastwood, Linda Sluys, Michael Poulard, Helena Paul, Cllr James Yarde & Joan Moffatt.

### **2. Minutes of the last meeting – 11<sup>th</sup> November**

- Paper copies of the Plan are still available.
- Ballymore Construction Working Party: next meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January; James will go.
- Gondar Gardens: still no news on the outcome of the appeal on the 3rd scheme. The developer is now coming forward with a 4<sup>th</sup> proposal – there's a meeting to discuss this on Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January, 7-9pm, Emmanuel School hall.
- Lottery grant: this has now been confirmed, and will be made public tomorrow. The main spending will be on publicising the Plan and future workshops.
- Iverson Tyres site: the NDF had objected to the developer's alternative scheme for a development going up to 7 storeys (a scheme up to 6 storeys has already been approved). Planning officers had rejected the new scheme – mainly to do with height. This will be relevant to the Liddell Road planning application – if officers don't consider a 7 storey building to be appropriate and planning compliant on this site, it will be hard to approve an 11 storey building at the neighbouring Liddell Road site.
- 156 West End Lane: Stewart said Camden Council had remarketed the site in December; they've now selected a preferred partner and are agreeing heads of terms.

### **3. Public hearing – 11<sup>th</sup> December**

This seemed to go well for the NDF. James said it was good to have the support and input of our planning consultant, Vincent Goodstadt, on the day. The examiner gave the NDF time to explain its position on the issues being examined at the hearing. The examiner's views on the points raised are reflected in his report.

### **4. Examiner's Report**

The examiner's report was published last week. It was sent out to all on the NDF mailing list; it has also been published on the NDF website and Camden Council's website. The main reaction to the report is that the examiner has been fair and even-handed; he appears to have understood the aims and objectives of community planning, and the aims and objectives of our Plan. Overall the Neighbourhood Plan, and its

supporting documents were judged to have met the 'basic conditions' (legal requirements) and – subject to the changes outlined by the examiner – can proceed to the final stage, the referendum.

James highlighted some sections of the report:

- The height policy in Policy 2 stays in the Plan.
- The basement policy in Policy 2 has been struck out. James said this issue had always been difficult to address in terms of a policy. Flick said that Camden Council was now looking to introduce a borough-wide basement policy, which would have a similar effect as our intended policy.
- Policy 5 (Other Sites) had been struck out by the examiner. This appeared to hinge on a rather technical debate about whether the Plan was allocating these sites for development or not. James said that while the loss of a policy appeared to be a drastic step, as pointed out by the examiner, the requirements of the policy are effectively covered elsewhere in the Plan (in Policies 1, 2 & 11).
- Most of the other policy changes are minor changes to the wording.
- Both the public transport and community facilities policies have been split in two – but the meaning and intention is largely unchanged
- The examiner sets out "recommendations" but there isn't really any leeway for us to reject his advice – we have to do what he says.

James and members of the Committee were congratulated on their work on the Plan and for successfully steering the Plan through the examination process.

## **5. Next Steps – meeting with Camden Council planners**

James had met the Camden Council planners earlier in the day to discuss the report. They are broadly happy with its content and suggested changes. The Council has to respond to the report in a 'Decision Statement' which will set out how the Plan will be changed before the referendum. James said work had already started on this. The document has to be agreed by the relevant cabinet member (Cllr Phil Jones) and a decision is due to be made on 27 February. James said that in the meantime, work would take place with the graphic designer and map designer to make the required changes. It's hoped the final version of the Plan, which will be the version people vote on in the referendum, will be ready and published in early March.

## **6. Referendum**

The next step is to agree a date with Camden Council for the referendum to take place. It had been hoped that the vote could take place in early March, but due to the Council's decision making processes and timescales, this will not now be possible. James said the 'plan b' would be for the referendum to take place on the 7 May (the same date as the general election), although the Council had previously indicated they did not wish this to happen. The next option would be to have the vote in late June or early July. James said he hoped to reach agreement on the date in the next few weeks.

The NDF will then have to plan for the referendum campaign – this will be the main subject of our next meeting in March.

## **7. TfL presentation of WH Overground station plans (planning ref: 2014/7966/P)**

Three representatives from TfL – Gary Nolan, Peter Herridge & Dean Parry – had come to the meeting to discuss their plans for the new station building. The planning application has now been submitted; the deadline for comments is Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> January.

Details of the plans had already been circulated with the agenda – TfL made the following points:

- They are planning for 4% yearly growth in passenger numbers at the station.
- The width of the pavement outside the station will be expanded from 2.5 to 5 metres.
- There will be two 16-person lifts.

- There will be more ticket gates.
- The new station has a high roof so it will be visible from the tube station & to passengers coming from the Thameslink station.
- The station will be bigger, brighter and better lit; and will be built to modern standards.
- It's designed to fit in with the neighbouring Ballymore/West Hampstead Square development.

The following points and issues were raised during a question and answer session:

- Many people felt the design was “ugly”; one described it as looking like a “petrol station”.
- What is the retail unit for? If a café, is it really needed?
- What are the plans for greenery? Two trees will be cut down; the embankments are being cleared due to the platform work and to remove Japanese knotweed; there was a suggestion from TfL that there could be new planting on the embankments.
- There were questions about the building line; the pictures aren't clear; the plan of the station layout is correct.
- Will the platform be raised for wheelchair and buggy users? Unfortunately, this can't happen due to the freight trains which use this section of the line. There will be ramps on the platforms; it's not possible to have ramps on the trains.
- Will there be an increased frequency of services? Trains are being extended from 4 to 5 carriages. There are up to 8 trains an hour. TfL is discussing with Network Rail about increasing the frequency.
- Can there be more than one entrance to the station? TfL remain opposed to this suggestion; they say the Thameslink station is different and not comparable. More than one entrance would require extra staff and more space (which could take away from the pavement).
- There was a request for a drop-off point, particularly for disabled passengers; this could be incorporated close to the Ballymore site. TfL said this was something they were looking at.
- The total station cost is £5.5m – a significant cost for TfL and much more expensive than other similar stations.
- TfL should have presented a series of options and had a proper pre-application consultation; they seem to be presenting a fait accompli.
- The figures for the growth in passenger numbers was questioned; has Crossrail and HS2 been taken into account? TfL say yes.
- Some people are unhappy about extra walking time for those coming from the north, particularly for those with luggage and the elderly.
- Concerns about the glass panels and the roof – could they be designed better?
- Would like to see views at night – and what sort of lighting is there? TfL say there will be a range of LED and safety lighting; the station has to be well lit for CCTV.

TfL were thanked for coming. The NDF will submit comments about the planning application. Others are encouraged to submit their comments/concerns to Camden Council.

### **8. Liddell Road redevelopment (planning ref: 2014/7649/P & 2014/7651/P)**

The responses to the NDF's survey had been circulated with the agenda. In all, 128 people responded to the survey. While people tend to support the development in principle (the school, the housing, the employment space) – there is a clear majority against the proposed height of the tower block and the minimal amount of affordable housing. In response to the question: “Overall, do you support Camden Council's current proposals for the redevelopment of the Liddell Road site?” the response was Yes 27%, No 73%.

The written responses were also interesting and worth looking at. James said there was a range of views. On the school, people remain concerned about the split site and traffic/parking issues. There is concern that the employment space will remain empty, like Handrail House. On housing, people don't want more expensive flats

for investors. James said the tone of comments about the lack of affordable housing was quite striking – words like “ridiculous...trivial...offensive...disappointing...disgusting...astonishing...a joke” were among the replies. People are also clearly opposed to the 11 storey tower block – the strongly felt view is that it is out of character for the area, and as it’s not in the Growth Area, not suitable for the site. There’s also concern that, if approved, it could set a precedent, which would lead to tower blocks popping up across the area.

In discussion, the following points were made:

- There remains considerable concern about the lack of affordable housing.
- Are people considering viability? Camden has not published their viability assessment due to commercial confidentiality. One member of the NDF has submitted a Freedom of Information request to have the assessment published. There was a feeling that the Council should prove their case and show their workings – particularly as public land and public money is involved.
- Camden has been given £6.7m by central government; this should be used in the scheme; the finances and the viability are being affected by political decisions.
- Views are also of concern.
- The electricity sub-station will be relocated into the base of the tower block; is this safe?

Detailed documents about the planning application are available at West Hampstead Library and at Sidings Community Centre. The deadline for comments on the planning application is Friday 30<sup>th</sup> January.

The NDF will be objecting to the scheme – particularly on the issues of height and affordable housing - the detail of the response will be agreed by the NDF committee in the coming weeks.

James and local councillors urged all those interested to submit their views.

Cllrs Flick Rea & Lorna Russell said they had been at a meeting with Council officers about the ‘admissions point’ for the new co-sited school. It had been previously suggested that it would be equidistant between the two sites, but this is not now the case (the Council’s legal advice appears to be that the point has to be a school building). The officers had suggested that the admissions point should be Liddell Road – but, due to strong objections from the Kilburn councillors, the consultation will give the option of having the admissions point at: Kingsgate School, Liddell Road, or another point.

James said he was shocked that the proposal had gone so far without this important fact being known. He questioned whether the officers had misled the local community. Details of the consultation about the admissions point will be circulated and are being published on the Camden Council website.

## **9. AOB**

James mentioned that the NDF is one of the community causes at the new Waitrose in West Hampstead – please put your green tokens in our box!

## **10. Date of the next meeting:**

Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March - 7.30pm, West Hampstead Library.