

Fortune Green and West Hampstead NDF response to the first public consultation on the proposal from Lifecare Residences for Gondar Gardens.

On 30 Mar 2017, at 15:06, West Hampstead NDF <ndpwesthampstead@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Amanda,
Please find below some comments from the Fortune Green & West Hampstead Neighbourhood Development Forum (NDF) following the exhibition earlier this month.
Regards,
Nick Jackson
(Co-Chair, NDF)

There was little detail in the proposals presented on 16 & 18 March 2017 - but some issues were apparent.

1. Size:

This is an excessively large scheme in a congested residential area.

We have grave concerns about the impact of traffic generated by staff, deliveries, services and visitors and the lack of space on site to accommodate vehicles, resulting in the blockage of Gondar Gardens.

The impact of Blue Badge holders is not clear in the context of a car-free development - they could significantly add to parking pressures in the area.

2. Height:

The space is currently designated "Open Space" and the height and density of this scheme will remove views across the site from all directions.

The height of the buildings appears to be above that of neighbouring buildings in contradiction to Policy 2 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

We are strongly opposed to any development in the reservoir pit that rises above the rim of the reservoir.

3. Location:

The site, at the top of a steep hill, does not seem ideal for a large retirement home, particularly for elderly pedestrians. Servicing such a development is likely to generate more traffic than residential schemes of a similar size and vehicular access to the site is difficult.

4. Design:

There was little design detail at the exhibition. There was however the suggestion that the design would reflect the underground structure of the reservoir. We believe that more attention should be given to reflecting the existing architecture of local buildings as described in Neighbourhood Plan Policy 2. The proposed density appears to be very high in relation to the neighbouring mansion blocks

5. Affordability:

There is no reference to affordable housing within the scheme. Affordability is an important issue in the London Plan, Camden's Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan Policy 1.

6. Environment:

The development would cause the permanent loss of open space with high environmental value and significant biodiversity (including a SINC designation). The initial plans also suggest

a proposal to develop land designated as Local Green Space in the Neighbourhood Plan - any such development is completely unacceptable.

7. Previous planning permissions:

We note that previous planning applications have been approved for inside the reservoir pit and in the frontage - not both. The planning inspector who approved the reservoir pit scheme was very clear he was only doing so because there was no development on the frontage - so views across the site and the sense of open space were preserved. The approval for the frontage scheme was only granted as more than 90% of the site was retained as open space. To be clear, there is no planning precedent to combine both schemes into one very large development. We further note that the planning permission for the reservoir pit scheme has now expired and is no longer valid.

8. Conclusion:

We are strongly opposed to the plans outlined at the recent consultation events. The proposals represent an excessive and highly damaging over-development of the site, which breaches all levels of planning policy - including the Vision, Objectives and Policies in the adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

And the reply from the developers planning advisors:

Dear Nick,

Many thanks for your responses to the proposed scheme on Gondar Gardens reservoir site. We are somewhat disappointed in the negativity following our detailed explanations and discussions around various issues on the day, however we do take note of your points and are addressing these in the latest design iterations for development proposals on the site.

kind regards,

Amanda Reynolds
Director

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