



WEST HAMPSTEAD NDF

Neighbourhood Development Forum

Minutes of meeting held on Monday, 18th November 2013 at West Hampstead Library

Present: James Earl (Chair), Linda Sluys (Minutes), Jack Knadjian, Pauline Atlas, Brigid Shaughnessy, Mila Tanya Griebel, Pamela Kovachich, Nalan Bedding, Ines Ferreira, Cllr Nancy Jirira, Paul Wright, Alan Watson, Elizabeth Pearson, Pamela Frazer, Branko Viric, Maria Elena Brady, Mike Borgeaud, Bob Doran, Jill Hood, D Thompson, H Paul, Stuart Drummond, Joseph Joy, Cllr Keith Moffitt, Sue Measures, Mark Stonebanks, Richard Olszewski & Candice Temple.

1. Welcome & apologies

Apologies for absence were received from: Mark Hutton, Joan Moffatt, Carlton Johnson, Nivan Samarai, Cllr Flick Rea, Cllr John Bryant, Cllr Gillian Risso-Gill, Virginia Berridge & Richard Loftus.

Members of the new People's Centre, which is seeking to take over a Camden Council property on Shoot-up-Hill had asked to attend the meeting. They informed the NDF about their activities and gave out leaflets. They can be contacted at peoplescentre4change@gmail.com

2. Minutes of the last meeting – 17th October 2013

West Hampstead Square – a meeting has been arranged by one of the local councillors with Ballymore with the aim of setting up a consultative group. The trees issue is ongoing. LB Camden have decided not to save trees and therefore any comments regarding should be addressed to the owners of the land (Network Rail) and the developers (Ballymore). It was noted that the pavement on West End Lane had been impassable for about two weeks and that no signage or allowance for pedestrians was in place. This needs to be more rigorously inspected and monitored by Camden officers/traffic control.

Liddell Road – the NDF submitted comments on the consultation, they can be seen on the NDF website.

Leaflet delivery – Approximately 10,000 leaflets were distributed. A few leaflets remain. Apparently St James Mansions hasn't been leafleted. This would have been due to the security in place at this mansion block. If anyone is aware of any other location not leafleted, please contact the NDF via email.

3. Survey results

The leaflets had a brief 3-question survey on the back page. A paper showing the results of the 238 responses was circulated. These show the top three priorities of the respondents to be transport, open spaces and shops. Three most liked things about West Hampstead are transport, location and village feel. Two most disliked aspects are rubbish/fly tipping and traffic with expensive housing/lack of shops coming joint third. The final comments are being annotated and will be placed on website at the end of the week.

James said the main point of the leaflet was to raise the profile of the NDF and to spread the word about its work to as many people as possible - and enable them to have their say. The mailing list has now increased to more than 270 people and the Twitter account now has more than 600 followers.

There was feedback that many of the shops say they weren't aware of the proposals. There was then discussion about whether the NDF needs a business section and whether businesses feel isolated in particular as many feel let down by the Council, particularly in relation to the lack of assistance vis relocation caused by West Hampstead Square. It was noted that Cllr. Russo Gill has visited all shops and has set up a business forum which so far hasn't had a strong attendance. The forum is due to be relaunched soon.

Overall, it is felt that the leaflets have raised the profile of the NDF. The survey results - along with the more detailed responses - will be posted on the NDF website.

4. Site Issues

153-163 Broadhurst Gardens (south of West Hampstead tube) – there has been a meeting with local residents associations and the design features were discussed, including density and affordability. The meeting wanted red brick to match existing buildings, and green features to be incorporated into design. There is due to be a Development Forum public meeting in December or January.

159 Iverson Road – the design has changed and is now reduced to 19 units (from the proposed 29 units) with a reduction in the amount of affordable housing. The change was due to comments from the Camden Council planners. Planning application is due to be submitted.

There were some questions about what appear to be inconsistencies in recent applications and density and this was also related back to affordability, about which there is a lack of transparency. The developer of the Blackburn Road student development, explained that there is in essence a 'toolkit' against which developers (be they land owners or private sector or public sector) measure commercial viability which in turn determines the ratio of affordable :market price: social housing units.

Apparently, Camden usually likes to have around 35% affordable housing, despite its target being higher.

There was a general concern that the current planning policy in London is pricing housing for 'ordinary' Londoners out of the market, whilst foreign landlords are making a huge profit. Therefore, the question about the mayor's policy, and who it benefits, needs to be addressed.

Emphasis was put on the importance of commenting on planning applications, and in particular on any inconsistencies in order to highlight these.

The NDF requested a copy of the policy relating to affordability, in order to obtain a clearer understanding.

5. 6th Draft

The comments received by the end of October closing date were mainly positive. The document will go to planners to agree wording (see comments about this in Agenda Item 6) before publication of the next and final draft.

6. West Hampstead Growth Area

The Growth Area is defined in Map 3 on page 11 (Chapter 4, Section B) of the 6th draft of the NDP. It has been so defined by the London Plan produced by the Mayor's office. Due to this, the West Hampstead NDF is facing unique challenges. There was considerable discussion on what we can hope to achieve and a feeling that we

must be careful not to allow developers to dictate local needs and that it is important to make our needs felt in order to make a degree of difference.

Within parameters, the planners are open to what we suggest. Although we may not be able to restrict height or numbers in the growth area, we can affect the design of the development, and we should therefore take each individual site/development within the growth area on its own merits and comment accordingly.

With regard to wording the NDP, it was argued that wording should not be specific in relation to the number of storeys, and that – equally within and outside of the growth area – and that each individual site should be regarded in relation to its neighbouring properties and developed accordingly. Therefore some sites would not be developed, for instance, higher than 3 storeys. (Gondar Gardens development was cited as a case where height restrictions were applied in line with surrounding rooflines). It was strongly felt that we shouldn't cave in.

156 West End Lane was discussed. There remains a strong concern that the housing units in the developments in the growth area will be purchased by foreign investors, pricing local people out of the market and that it will become a gated community closed to locals; the Forum discussed whether the trade-off of height ratio : units was the possible way to achieve the character of the area that was felt desirable to retain (by designing in green areas, etc. Possibly even an increase in the height would allow extra affordable units to be incorporated into the design) and bearing in mind that the that the NDP ought to be a strong enough document to make a difference. There was also a strong feeling that this old council building, should be leased to small businesses at reduced rents whilst it remains empty and that the council is derelict in its duty by not allowing this.

With regard to the number of housing units to be developed and jobs to be provided, it was pointed out that there is a discrepancy. For instance, 200 jobs have been lost from 156 West End Lane (plus job losses at the tyre centre and other site in Maygrove Road) and yet only 100 jobs are required to be provided for in the growth area. (With regard to jobs, it was noted that it's hard to know what will work in current economic climate, as the Blackburn Road developers are still unable to let the workspace in the student housing building.)

A minimum of 800 housing units are to be provided in the growth area and it was pointed out that there are already 680 in the agreed developments. If other changes are taken into account (for instance many local properties have been subdivided into more and smaller dwellings) it is more than possible that the 800 quota has been reached. In some sense Camden are overriding their own policies at expense of people in the area and we need to have more information as we may already be at 'saturation' level. Can we get this information from Camden and ask if the Council has accounted for this?

It was felt that the NDF is in danger of not getting its point across because wording of the document may not be precise or professional enough. It was therefore suggested that we get the assistance of an architect and/or other professional to help not only with reviewing the proposed designs but also the precision of wording (i.e. what professional term should be used in lieu of 'village feel'). Bridget is to request if Peter Barber (architect) can attend the next meeting and James could ask a local architect to attend as well.

Framework for growth area. Land Securities have asked Camden to put plan on hold until Land Securities have time to have their say. However it is better not to delay plan and we must make our opinion clear. It was suggested that a Saturday workshop would be of use when considering options. DMFK Architects will be asked if they will run one for us.

7. Final Draft

The time line is as follows. The final draft will be approved and published early in the new year and then there follows a 6 week consultation with residents. Plan is then amended accordingly and submitted to LBC who assess to see that it meets the local fit and then LBC have their own 6 week consultation (this will be after the local elections in May). It then goes to an inspector and after that it goes to referendum, which will be in second half of next year. Because the timing is somewhat compromised due to forthcoming local elections, it is important to keep the timing on track.

8. Dates of next meetings:

Tuesday 10th December - NDF meeting - 7.30pm, West Hampstead Library

Monday 27th January - public meeting to discuss the final draft - 7.30pm West Hampstead Library