



From: Tim Dobbs [REDACTED]
Sent: 09 November 2023 11:34
To: Daren Zuk <Daren.Zuk@camden.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Application 2023/3861/P

Dear Daren,

I'm writing with regard to the proposed permanent gating of Primrose Hill.

Further to comments I made online, I'd like to add the following questions to the file please:

- Has a **Health Impact Assessment** taken place, considering the effects of closing the park for extended periods. This will prevent people of all ages from exercising, and prevent dog owners from exercising their pets - with a consequent effect on their mental health?
- With regard to the Council's aim to improve health **equality**, has consideration been given to the fact that closing the park will exclude those who do not live in the largely very affluent neighbourhoods nearby? The Local Plan states: "The borough has some of the most deprived neighbourhoods as well as some of the most prosperous. There are also significant health inequalities in the borough. The Council wants to ensure that members of our community have access to... health and community facilities to help promote equality and inclusion, to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to succeed and nobody gets left behind. Achieving strong and resilient communities is a key challenge."
- How does the proposal align with Camden's local plan section 4.14, regarding Access to open space and nature states: "the benefits of open space are seen to be particularly important for physical exercise, relaxation and stress relief, reducing pollutants, cooling the urban heat island and providing areas for local volunteer groups and food growing (Policy A2 Open space). We will protect, maintain and enhance Camden's parks, open spaces and green corridors and seek to tackle deficiencies and meet increased demand for open space"
- The Open space policy itself aims to: "conserve and enhance the heritage value of designated open spaces and other elements of open space which make a significant contribution to the character and appearance of conservation areas or to the setting of heritage assets". Has due consideration been given to the fact that the Primrose Hill viewpoint is a unique, iconic and culturally significant space within the Borough: which has featured in poetry, film and music for generations: from William Blake to Madness?
- Have the Council been given full access to the consultation data collected by the Royal Parks? Several issues stand out from the way these 'findings' have been presented. No data from the 'open' sections of the form

have been presented. The form is framed as a series of questions about Antisocial behaviour on Primrose Hill. The question about gating is then asked. Even when multiple closure options are presented as the only 'solution' to the 'problems' raised at outset, 'never' closing is as popular as regular closure. As someone with lots of market research experience, I know precisely how skewed this questionnaire is - and still the community is strongly divided about gates. Have the Planning Department taken these findings at face value? Have they requested to see all the feedback and suggestions given? Have they considered the skewing of the data collection towards 1) local residents and 2) daytime visitors?

- I note that many supportive comments contrast the aesthetics of lovely and in-keeping Victorian-style gates with the current temporary gating. Will the Planning Department take into account the fact that many of these concerns would also be addressed by removing the temporary gates instead - and so restoring the park to the way it has been since (before and after) 1976?

I've copied in Richard Clarke and Tim Gallagher at the London Assembly, since the Mayor's office published a Green Spaces Commission report highlighting the social importance of shared green space. The report states: "There is an urgent need to champion green space in London and translate goodwill into action. Parks and their management services need to be repositioned and carefully tailored messaging used to raise their profile with local authorities and the public alike. This must be linked to: the climate and ecological emergencies; new public health demands, including mental health and loneliness; and measures to address social exclusion that aim for exemplary levels of increased civic engagement."

The report goes on to quote one participant as follows: "By aligning parks as a public health asset rather than just as a public realm asset changes the strategic context for why we have parks and what their primary purpose is. No longer are they nice to have for people to walk their dog, for the kids to play or to sit and have a peaceful cup of coffee; they are intrinsic to sustaining a healthy population. That might then influence where parks services sit within a local authority structure but is not essential. Increasingly we are working collaboratively across traditional departmental boundaries to ensure the focus is on working together to improve the lives of residents. It also changes the thinking about the funding for parks as they become an essential part of the solution to the social care and health challenges and not just a nice to have service."

Is the Council's Planning Department aware of this report? And how does the Royal Parks' application align with its findings?

Thank you.

For the record, I've been a resident for the past 20+ years.


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