

Development Control Forum: 1-7 Mill Lane NW6

**Meeting at the Tenants Hall, Templar House, Shoot up Hill, NW2
TUESDAY 19TH April 2008**

Present:

Lisle Alden	Mill Lane Action Group
Diana Frost	LCG West Hampstead
P Collin	Mill Lane Action Group
Marilyn Shacter	MARA
James Earl	Fordwych Residents Association
Yiannis Pareas	Mill Lane Traders Association
A Rossmuir	GARA Residents Association
Lynne Clare	Fordwych Nursery School
Amos Sivan	ASB Architects
Louise & Alfred Goldschmidt	
Judy McNaught	
Maria Anapni Bunnin	
Govind Gunjan	
Mr Joffe	
Geoffrey Shaw	
John Doyle	
L Da Costa	
N.Lewis	
C O Neill	
Rozelle Pope	
Adrian Pope	
Sue Measures	
Alan Paling	
Lindy Stehher	
Glynnis Joffe	
Vane Milanov	
Simon Hough	
Fiona Hough	
A J Evans	
Katherine Paterson	
Barbara Salmon	
Suzanne Pawaroo	
Leon Ferera	
Gemma Raiher	
Gregg Lapins	
Marnix Elsenaar	
Joan Moffatt	
Sarah Rogerson	
Anthony Grenville	
Sally Irvine	
M & G Oxlade	
L Fox	
Peter Colley	

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Patrick Shea
Liz Petrie

Cllr Russell Eagling	Member
Cllr Flick Rea	Member and Development Control Committee
Member	

Daniel Smith	Smith Lance Bechtol Larcade Architects (DS)
Andrew Wade	Smith Lance Bechtol Larcade Architects
Alex Newman	Smith Lance Bechtol Larcade Architects
Philip Arevalo	Smith Lance Bechtol Larcade Architects
Katharina Walkowski	Smith Lance Bechtol Larcade Architects

Frances Wheat	Major Developments Team Manager (Chair) (FW)
Alex Bushell	Camden Planning (AB)
Kathryn Redfern	Camden Planning
Vallence David	Camden Planning
Dawn Allott	Camden Planning

Introduction by the Chair

FW welcomed everyone to the Development Control Forum. She explained that the purpose of holding a DC Forum was to provide an opportunity for local people to find out about and understand a proposed development before an application is made and to talk to the architect about their initial reactions to the proposals.

FW stated that the Council acts as a neutral partner at the meeting and is there to facilitate an exchange of views and not to express opinions or make judgments. She stressed the point that the DC Forum is an informal meeting which does not replace the statutory consultation process and that no decisions would be made at the meeting. If a planning application were to be made for the land at 1-7 Mill Lane the Council would have a statutory duty to formally consult those affected by the proposals.

FW introduced Vallence David and Kathryn Redfern whose purpose at the meeting will be to take notes, which will be sent out to all who attended this meeting.

FW then set out the agenda and format for the rest of the meeting. She notified the participants that Alex Bushell (Camden Planning Officer) would give a brief presentation followed by the developers.

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After the presentation there will be a period for participants to ask questions and raise concerns for the developer to respond to.

Overview by Camden Planning Officer

AB provided summary information about the site and its history and gave a short presentation setting out the physical characteristics of the site and its surroundings and explained the London Borough of Camden Unitary Development Plan 2006 (UDP) policy basis for considering a planning application

AB set out the UDP policies that are relevant to the site itself with specific reference to impact of the development on the designated open space, the designated Borough Site of Nature Conservation Importance and the protected trees. AB then described the policies that would apply to a residential scheme, including requirement for affordable housing, a scheme that is accessible to all, and the incorporation of a suitable mix of unit sizes to meet residential need in the local area. He then set out the policies that would apply to the issues associated with the construction of a building on the site; specifically that the Council would be seeking a high standard of design that is sustainable and respects the site and its setting. He also set out the range of material considerations that are relevant to the protection of residential amenity. AB then summarised other relevant policies including those relating to additional vehicles on the highway, the promotion of sustainable transport and the requirements for an energy efficient building that incorporates on-site renewable sources to meet a proportion of its electricity needs.

The relevant UDP policies are listed in Appendix 1 to the minutes.

The development proposals

DS, of Smith Lance Larcade and Bechtol Architects who are the architects and developer for the development, illustrated his presentation of the proposals with slides. The slides are available in the Development Control Forum section of Camden's website at www.camden.gov.uk/planning.

The address of the architects website for Mill Lane is listed in Appendix 2 of the minutes.

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DS introduced himself and his role and gave a brief history of the site and informed the meeting of:

- Two potential partners depending on planning permission
- Confirmation that the previous owner was responsible for cutting down trees at a very early stage
- He had held meetings with residents to get their views

- Confirmation that the present site is being used as a tip

Before presenting the options DS repeated that he hoped to answer all questions raised by participants of this meeting in the question and answer session at the latter part of this meeting. He stated that any future development would have to be financially viable for banks, and hoped to find a solution, in conjunction with local residents and Camden, to the future development of 1-7 Mill Lane that will test the test of time?

Options in relation to access and management of open space:

Option 1 – Controlled Public Access

DS explained that this would mean having controlled access points along Minster Road and with the site allowing members of the public a landscaped green space. Operational hours would be restricted to daylight hours. A similar site in Brent (Hoveden Road, NW2) is operational and has provided local residents with accessible open space.

Option 2 – Controlled Private Access

DS explained this option would mean a locked gate being in place along Minster Road with access by pre-agreement. The site would be for school groups as the area would be an area of biodiversity and future local wildlife.

Both options 1 & 2 would mean a transfer of the open space to Camden Council who would manage and maintain the space with a contribution of £600,000 towards remediation of the space.

Option 3

DS explained this option was not worth pursuing. He mentioned a good model of open spaces was London Garden Square where access to the area for local residents is via a card reader at the gates.

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Options for development:

Scheme B

DS explained that this was the architects' original scheme but have stopped pursuing this scheme after meeting with local groups though Scheme B is:

- Cheapest to build as the buildings are further away from the railway tracks
- Communal gardens not as large
- Scheme B still complies with Council standards for new developments i.e. it is 19 metres away from windows of the present occupants on Fordwych Road.

Scheme A

DS explained that this was the architects' preferred scheme. The proposals meant:

- New properties built are 39 metres away from the properties in Fordwych Road
- 2-storey houses being built with patios
- A car lift and barrier to access and exit the site that will have a tyre block system. All this, he hopes, will help car movements on Mill Lane
- Includes 36 units of which 3 are terraced houses, which would include key worker houses.

Sun studies were commissioned in March and June 2007. Those studies concluded that shadows would not adversely affect neighbours, as there would only be a minimum amount of shadowing.

The development is the same elevational height as Mill Court and Scheme A meets all requirements set by the London Plan which states there should be 450 – 700 habitable rooms per hectare. DS informed the meeting that the new development would be 558 habitable rooms per hectare and 307 for Open Space.

DS ended the presentation notifying the meeting of the partners who are working alongside his company and stated that at present there is no definite date for submitting a planning application but will endeavour to continue to speak to local groups and the Council. He thanked everyone for attending this meeting and for giving him an opportunity to put his company's ideas forward.

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Questions, comments and discussion

FW said that she was going to take 3 questions at a time to enable a full discussion.

1. James Earl (JE) (Vice Chair Fordwych Residents Association)

JE gave a summary of the views and concerns of the Fordwych Road Residents Association- covering the following areas:

- Scale of the development- potentially x 3 people per unit possibly an extra 100 people on the site.
- Height of proposed building- considered that proposed building should be 4 storeys rather than 5.
- Proximity of proposed buildings to Fordwych Road
- Materials of proposed building should be more in keeping with the surrounding buildings
- Impact of development- the development could take 18 months to build and therefore impact of construction noise and existing parking spaces
- Land sloping towards the railway- subsidence issues
- Proposed underground car park: 33 car spaces- commented that the preference would be for car free housing. The proposed car lift would be dangerous facing onto Mill Lane. There are not enough parking spaces at present in the area but there are good public transport facilities.
- Increase in rubbish and impact on drainage of the site
- Green Space: commented that the developer should focus on development. The green space should be used for either a nature reserve/ square with access for local people.

JH concluded that the group appreciated that the development is likely to take place, but at present the proposal is too big.

2. Comment on the increased density on site and the impact on on-street parking. Should be a car free zone.

Response

DS: Sympathised with some of the concerns raised.

Car parking: there would be 28 spaces serving 36 flats. He commented that it would be hard to get funding for the scheme without off street car parking spaces, unless smaller units were proposed which would increase density and bulk on the site. The scheme from the developer's point of view has to be viable and fundable.

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In this location there is a large burden on traffic wardens as the site is very close to the border with the London Borough of Brent- so therefore hard to police on-street parking.

The car lift would not be as fast as a ramp, but no health and safety concerns have been raised from the consultants employed.

The developer emphasised that the proposal is not set in stone.

He agreed that the development would probably generate an extra 100 people, but considered that the neighbourhood would benefit from these extra people, considering it to be an imperceptible increase in population.

He disagreed that the open space was a 'red herring' as he considers that the 2 developments go hand in hand.

Subsidence: Bore holes have been done for preliminary report with a fuller report to be compiled. He commented that the site is on firm London Clay.

1. P. Collins (PC)

PC commented that the main drain that runs along Mill Lane which is Victorian collapsed in 1995- concerned that this drain would not be able to cope with the additional capacity, and consequently increase the risk of flooding to the surrounding houses.

Response

DS: The proposal would involve rainwater harvesting on site and green roofs thereby assisting in mitigating surface run-off.

Grey water and waste are being discussed with Thames Water, although nothing to suggest that the development would cause a problem.

AB (Camden Planning Officer):

Did not have detailed information to hand in respect of the capacity of the local drainage system and explained that the issue is generally one for the Building Regulations. He also explained that the issue of flood risk and the incorporation of measures to minimise excess water run off were material planning considerations and the Council would seek to negotiate measures to ensure that the additional building footprint does not increase flood risk.

Policy SD9 looks at capacity of drainage in the area to mitigate against flooding.

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1. Joan Moffatt (Residents Association)

Commented on the lack of children's play areas.

2. St Cuthbert's Road resident

Questioned the affordable housing element of the proposal and asked whether the accommodation would be given to people with mental health problems, and would there be control of the quality of people who live there.

3. Louise Goldschmidt

Raised concerns regarding during and post building works impact of diverted traffic along other residential streets.

Response

DS:

Children's play area: DS stated yes there could be a play area within the green space, but not a decision he would take and commented that previous concerns had been raised from residents regarding noise impact from a play area.

Affordable housing: Genesis Housing Association is a major player. DS responded that the decision on who would live in the accommodation would not be in the hands of Genesis but Camden's Housing Department.

Increased traffic from site: The developer re-iterated the fact that the scheme provides car – capped housing. He would be willing to have car free housing but this would then require an increase in the number of units provided on site.

1. Jane Evans (JE)

Commented that at a meeting last week of the Mill Lane Action group it was agreed that the green space should be restored to how it was before (nature reserve) and there should be no access for residents/ general public. However, JE stated there must be adequate security provided.

2. Sarah Rogerson

Commented that she had concerns from her building with regards to size and scale of the proposed development, loss of privacy and visual appearance.

3. Flick Rea (FR) (Local Councillor)

Commented on the front of the sites proposed car waiting area- are there visitors' spaces/ delivery space?

Also FR suggested that there should be a play area for small children on the north edge of the developed part of the site close to the houses.

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Response

DS:

Green Space: Developer is indifferent to what happens with the site, as he will not be the final decision maker. But agreed the site must be secure.

Building size: Impact of building on light, the developer has looked at the BRE Standards and the development falls well within the normal requirements. He appreciated that the view of the sky would be reduced, but the development would be a considerable distance from nearby buildings.

Small play area: Agreed that a small children's play area would be good

Car waiting area: DS commented that there would be a porter for the block, plus a system at the control gate so that if a visitor was going to a particular flat there would be a visitor's space available.

1. Florence

Raised concern regarding impact on safety of school/ nursery children. Secondly, water pressure, how would the proposed development impact on other residents?

2. Lisle Alden

Raised concern regarding impact of excavation for the car park on nearby residential buildings.

Also, concerned regarding change in outlook- having previously been used to looking at woodland.

Response

DS:

Traffic safety: Transport consultants have been employed. It is early days as yet, but further research will be taking place.

Excavation of car park: The developer confirmed that constructing a basement would mean that the building works would take longer and that there would be more lorry movement.

With regards to cracks in residential buildings, this would be monitored whilst the works are taking place. The proposal would be scientifically designed and built.

The developer commented that contractors would have to sign up to the Considerate Contractors Scheme and he will make sure all contact details are available.

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AB:

Outlook: Not a precise science, but the overbearing physical impact of the structure will be considered as part of the planning application.

Conclusion

FW brought the formal question and answering session to a close. Residents commented that they would like the opportunity to ask further questions.

FW stated that both the developer and Camden Council planners would be available until 9pm for further informal questions/discussion whilst attendees viewed the model and displayed boards.

Flick Rea (Local Councillor) offered to arrange a further public meeting at a suitable point in time, and requested that the developer and, if appropriate a Camden Council planner attend.

Contact

**Business and Customer Support Service
Planning Division
London Borough of Camden**

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Website: www.camden.gov.uk/planning

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Appendix 1

London Borough of Camden Replacement Unitary Development Plan –
relevant policies

Site Specific Designation

Private Open Space/Borough Site of Nature Conservation Importance/TPO
trees

Strategic Policy:

Policy S8 The Council will seek to protect and enhance the Borough's open space and conserve and enhance the Borough's biodiversity

Key Section 4 Natural Environment Policies:

Policy N2 (A) Development on open space – The Council will not grant planning permission for development of public and private open space shown on the proposals map... , unless it is for development ancillary to a use taking place on the land for which there is a demonstrable need that cannot reasonably be satisfied elsewhere and

Policy N2 (B) Development bordering open space – The Council will not grant planning permission for development bordering open space that it considers would cause harm to its wholeness appearance or setting, or is likely to intrude on public enjoyment of the space

Policy N5 Biodiversity – The Council will expect development schemes to have considered conserving and enhancing biodiversity, including by creating wildlife habitats

Policy N6 Nature conservation sites – The Council will not grant planning permission that it considers would cause harm to ... sites of nature conservation importance

Policy N7 Protected species and their habitat – The Council will not grant planning permission development that it considers would cause harm to protected species or species identified in Biodiversity Action Plans

Policy N8 (B) Protected Trees – The Council will not grant permission for works that result in harm to the health of amenity value of protected trees unless it can be demonstrated the trees has a poor life expectancy or is proven to be damaging to buildings

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Residential Policies

Strategic Policy:

Policy S4 The Council will seek to meet strategic housing needs... It will seek to ensure net additions to the housing stock where possible... Housing is the priority use in the UDP

Policy S5 The Council will seek affordable housing for those on low and middle incomes

Policy S6 The Council will seek a range of houses (size and type) to meet local and strategic need. All housing shall be designed to be accessible to all

Key Section 2 Housing Policies:

Policy H1 New Housing – The Council will seek to meet and exceed the strategic housing target for the Borough. The Council will grant planning permission for development that increases the amount of land and floorspace in residential use and provides additional residential accommodation, provided that the accommodation reaches acceptable standards. The Council will seek to secure the fullest possible residential use of vacant and underused sites and buildings, and may require suitable sites to be developed for primarily or wholly residential use.

Policy H2 Affordable Housing – The Council will expect all residential developments with capacity for 15 or more dwellings and residential development sites of 0.5 ha or more to make a contribution to the supply of affordable housing. The Council will seek to negotiate on the basis of a target of 50% affordable housing in each development,

Other Section 2 Housing Policies:

Policy H7 Lifetime Homes and wheelchair housing – accessible to all

Policy H8 Mix of units

Built Environment Policies

Strategic Policy:

Policy S8 The Council will seek to protect and enhance the Borough's historic environment and ensure that all development is designed to the highest standard and protects and enhances its surroundings.

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Key Section 3 Built Environment Policy

Policy B1 General Design Principles - The Council will grant planning permission for development that is designed to a high standard. Development should:

- a) respect its site and setting;
- b) be safe and accessible to all;
- c) improve the spaces around and between buildings, particularly public areas;
- d) be sustainable by promoting energy efficiency and efficient use of resources;
- e) be easily adaptable to changing economic and social requirements;
- f) provide appropriate high quality landscaping and boundary treatments; and
- g) seek to improve the attractiveness of an area and not harm its appearance or amenity.

In assessing how the design of a development has taken these principles into account, the Council will consider:

- h) building lines and plot sizes in the surrounding area;
- i) the existing pattern of routes and spaces;
- j) the height, bulk and scale of neighbouring buildings;
- k) existing natural features, such as topography and trees;
- l) the design of neighbouring buildings;
- m) the quality and appropriateness of detailing and materials used;
- n) the provision of visually interesting frontages at street level; and
- o) the impact on views and skylines.

Residential Amenity

Policy SD6 Amenity for occupiers and neighbours – The Council will not grant planning permission for development that it considers causes harm to the amenity of occupiers and neighbours. The factors the Council will consider include:

- a) visual privacy and overlooking;
- b) sunlight and daylight levels;
- c) artificial light levels;
- d) noise and vibration levels;
- e) odour, fumes and dust;
- f) the adequacy of facilities for storage, recycling and disposal of waste; and
- g) microclimate.

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Other Policies to take account of:

- Policy SD9 – Resources and energy
- Policy T1 – Sustainable transport
- Policy T3 – Pedestrians and cycling
- Policy T8 – Car-free and car capped housing
- Policy T9 – Impact of parking

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Appendix 2

Architects website for Mill Lane is www.1mill-lane.org/home.html