


Councillor Nancy Jirira
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17th December 2013

Dear Sir,

Application Ref: 2013/7585/P

Thank you for writing to let me know that the above planning application has been made in relation to the **Gondar Gardens Reservoir site**.

1.

I wish to let you know of my objections to Application Ref 2013/7585/P for the following reasons:

- Loss of a Site of Nature Conservation Importance
- Loss of the amenity afforded by the existing public views of the Open Space from Gondar Gardens street
- Loss of the protected Open Space and the sense of openness of the area
- The cumulative impact on the public infrastructure of West Hampstead: transport links, NHS facilities, schools, parking. These services are already under stress from the ongoing numerous and sizable new developments in the area
- The planning application is incomplete and fails to accurately define the envelope of the development
- Light pollution
- Destruction of the reservoir structure

2.

I went to look at the proposed third plans that Linden Wates the developers made available at St Luke's church in Kidderpore gardens during the summer this year 2013. I noted that the look of the proposed plans were not materially or had not been substantially altered to reflect the reasons why the previous second plans which had been rejected by the Committee of councillors and also upheld by the planning inspector in April 2013. The current planning for the Gondar Gardens frontage has not materially changed

the design of the frontage so that the proposed plans will be in keeping with the rest of the houses on its sides on Gondar Gardens itself namely the Chase and South Mansions.

3.

I also wish to state my objections as a local councillor and following the strong views expressed by a resident Heydi, her son, Peter and on behalf of residents who live on Sarre Road whose houses back up to Gondar Gardens who stated they particularly object to the:

- o Loss of the amenity afforded by the existing public views of the Open Space from Gondar Gardens street
- o Loss of the protected Open Space and the sense of openness of the area

4.

Heydi and her son live at Number 32 Sarre Road. Heydi has been unwell and might not be able to attend a meeting at the council where she would have wanted to present her objections to the current development plans ([2013/7585/P](#)). They have said that the height of this application for homes to be built in Gondar opposite the back of their house in Sarre Road has not changed from the height of the previous planning application that whose rejection was upheld by the Planning Inspector in April 2013 as the whole frontage is very imposing onto the street and is very intrusive. They have also said that Linden Wates' wish to build this development is not taking regard of residents who have continuously been pleading and making their views known as they expressed their anguish and frustrations for not being listened to about the scale of this second development. The site of this second development is on the highest point when Gondar Gardens road starts narrowing towards Sarre Road on this Thames Water Reservoir site. When measurements and assumptions were done as part of the daylight analysis, if taken at the part of this frontage which is converging onto Sarre Road this was found to be a founded concern. If the measurements are taken at the end of Gondar gardens towards Mill Lane a different calculation can be misleading and it would give an inaccurate result as the Gondar Gardens road converges towards Sarre Road as it stretches onto Mill Lane. The residents of Gondar Gardens and Sarre Road have been so distressed and have consistently noted that Linden Wates have been insensitive when they have been informed that the plans for the a development in the frontage of Gondar Gardens if granted, the Sarre Road residents who live on the other side of the road especially those on No 18 to No 40 Sarre Road will be deprived of privacy and will no longer have full enjoyment living in their houses that have been standing for over 100 years.

When in the back rooms which could be the bedrooms of Sarre Road facing

Gondar Gardens they would have to keep their curtains drawn at all times thus reducing the access to natural light. Further when in the garden in Sarre Road, you currently look out to the skyline, if the development goes ahead those living in Sarre Road will no longer have this view as they will look to the new houses. I am concerned about the occlusion of light to Sarre road if this second development plans are accepted especially if more than ground floor and another floor are allowed to be erected.

Turning to documents submitted by the developer since the closing date of the last invitation to comment, we note that a daylight analysis implies that only South Mansions and Chase Mansions were considered. We believe that the rear windows in Sarre Road, which currently enjoy unobstructed daylight and in particular some very fine dawn views, are sufficiently close to warrant such consideration.

The new proposed plans 2013/7585/P have not been sensitive as they have not substantially revised the front elevation of the development to take into account the comments made to Linden Waites and to the Planning Inspector in April 2013. These included informing them about the style of the building (not consistent with the surrounding frontages with bay windows although slightly changed they have not been altered nor has the proportion of the elevation which is still presented as glazed. Some of the windows are excessively large bearing in mind that they overlook the backs of houses on Sarre Road.

The revised front elevation of the development does not take account of the comments made earlier about the style of the building (not consistent with the surrounding frontages with bay windows) nor with the proportion of the elevation which is glazed.

The narrowness of this stretch is probably why the opening, the open space section on the Gondar Gardens reservoir and the worms that have been found to live on the reservoir been the main reasons the whole has been designated as an open space thus making strong 'presumptions against development on this kind of designated land.'

5. The development will cause traffic nuisance and will be a road safety hazard to school children and their parents who use the passageway between Gondar gardens and Sarre road and also along Gondar and on Mill Lane .

I would like to state that this application by Linden Wates to build on the Gondar Gardens Thames Water reservoir open space should not be allowed to go ahead as it has not substantially changed. Local residents have formed a forum with several people who are opposed to the above application in the spirit of the Localism Bill on Planning. This development is insensitive to people especially those who have lived in their homes for so many years well

over 50 years how can they if they no longer have any privacy. Why build on this site the Water reservoir might yet to be needed if the projected draught in the south east continue to be a threat residents have seen reports that say it is still a viable water reservoir.

There is sufficient opposition on principle so much that Camden Council should take into account the views of residents.

6. To support the above statements I am asking you take into account what a resident, Mr Seaman has said again about historical information referring to maps including aerial maps showing demarcations of designated open space area on the Gondar gardens Thames Water reservoir... "that the site allocation document recently published....promotes sites that are capable of being redeveloped in line with the broad range of planning policies.

However as the majority of the site (apart from a relatively narrow section to the front) is designated as open space there are strong presumptions against development on this kind of designated land."

This issue is of major significance for the current planning application as the developer is claiming that only a small proportion of his development impinges on Borough II SNCI land whereas the majority of its footprint is over such land if the designation were to be as suggested by the evidence cited above.

I also wish to state that like the other objections of the Linden Waites Plans on Gondar Gardens we are interested in finding a long term future for the site that satisfies the needs of the current owners, local residents and LB Camden and respects the Open Space (including openness from the street) and SNCI and is sympathetic to our environment. However, neither the scheme under consideration, which would block the Open Space aspect from the street, nor the recently-consented scheme, which allows destruction of a large part of the Open Space and SNCI, respects our environment.

- Our objections to scheme 2 are based on loss of enjoyment of the Open Space from the street and loss of part of the SNCI; the impact on neighbours; a design which is not in keeping with the area; and the impact on parking, traffic etc. We welcome the developer's commitment to protection, funding and management of the remainder of the site as a nature reserve (it's much better than scheme 1 in that respect) and would expect to see this enforced as a condition in any agreed future for the site.

Kindly accept my objects and I hope that maybe Linden Waites would consider scaling down their current plans in terms of height.

Yours faithfully,

Appendix

The planning Inspector at the hearing of the 2012/0512/P planning application by Linden Waites of a development on Gondar Gardens Water Reservoir said the following that I note from Mr Seaman's comments..

In her decision at the recent enquiry into the previous application for this scheme (2012/0512/P), the inspector took issue with the detailed design of the frontage which she found incompatible with the surroundings and rejected the proposal on these grounds. She went into some detail (paragraph 18. of her decision) in itemizing several aspects of the appearance of this scheme which do not fit with the surroundings. The developers response to each of these points has, in our view, been inadequate and in some cases made the appearance and character of the proposed scheme less compatible with the surroundings. We do not see that there has been any significant change in the overall feel of the geometry of this frontage and the expanses of brick and glass are if anything worse than with the initial proposal. A particular feature which is clearly at odds with the surroundings are the "glass boxes" (intended to emulate bay windows) which do nothing of the sort either in terms of appearance or functionality. We note that the space provided by these appendages are not connected to the normal living space and are likely to be utilized as storage space thus degrading the appearance of the frontage which is so conspicuous for us. We therefore contend that the revised scheme is not adequate for the same reasons relating to its design as was put by the inspector in her report. We also note that the balconies proposed in the design are in fact not a requirement for providing amenity space in the provisions set out by the councils core strategies. The inspectors comments on the incompatibility of the design in the original submission are emphasized strongly in paragraph 19 of her decision and have not been overcome by the appearance of the proposed scheme. In particular the proposal remains "very different in character" from the surroundings.

In addition to the reason for rejecting the scheme, the inspector was moved to comment on the issue of "White Land" which had featured in the developer's rationale for the scheme. In Paragraph 21 of her decision she noted that "White Land carries no weight either for or against development". We noted at the enquiry that the "White Land" featured very heavily in how the development was formulated. The developer was apparently intent on maximizing the proportion of this land in the development although he appeared to be unaware of the precise meaning of this term nor how the "White Land" was so designated. This has the effect of forcing the shape of the development into an area which at best is arbitrarily defined and apparently has no significance in terms of development. We note that the recent Planning Statement seems to equivocate on this issue (paras 5.3.3 and 5.3.4.). However we contend that the shape, and particularly its height and proximity to nearby gardens and homes could be ameliorated if the development was not based on the arbitrary distinction. A scheme which was positioned a little further away from the street frontage and somewhat lower than the current proposal would allow a less offensive appearance from the point of view of our amenity to be produced.

With regard to the proposed scheme we note the comments of the inspector in rejecting the proposal as put to the enquiry. In her preliminary comments she stated that "the loss of views ...would reduce the enjoyment of their properties" although this would not be a reason for rejecting the scheme. We take issue with this since the proposed development has an obviously disproportionate impact on our current enjoyment of the open space.