



To: **Mr Gavin Sexton**
From: **Iceni Projects**
Date: **29 August 2014**
Title: **Public Realm Management and Security**

Introduction

The purpose of this note is to respond to officers concerns regarding the installation of gates into the comprehensive development proposed at 277A Gray's Inn Road, London (ref. 2014/4267/P).

The email from officers considers that:

Text supporting policy CS17 (para 17.5) makes it clear that "The use of a site and the layout can have a major impact on community safety and the Council will seek 'active frontages' which attract people and allow streets to be overlooked. The Council wants to ensure that Camden's spaces and places can be used by all members of the community. People will make more use of high quality, safe streets and places and this increase in use will, in turn, increase perceptions of safety and reduce the opportunities for crime. Development which restricts movement into or through a scheme, such as 'gated' developments will not be permitted."

The Proposal

It is important to note that the scheme would not be a 'gated development' or 'gated community' in the normal sense of the word.

'Gated developments' and 'gated communities' are defined by visually dominant and impenetrable gates which are permanently shut and which are only open for very short periods of time. Examples of such 'gated developments', include the Birkenhead Estate, which is immediately adjacent to the application site. This Estate is owned and managed by Camden Council. The Estate has gates which are permanently shut with access only available to residents.

The proposed development at 277A Gray's Inn Road would not be like this. One of the fundamental objectives of the scheme and one of its principal planning benefits is to provide inclusive pedestrian access into the site and to encourage pedestrian permeability.

Good accessibility is crucial to the open space and the public realm. It is also is important for the legibility of the scheme, is key to the delivery of the land use mix and active frontages and is a fundamental part of the scheme in general. As such, it is not the intention of the applicant to 'gate' the scheme or indeed to do anything which would dilute the permeability of the scheme or restrict access.

Public Consultation

However, given the comprehensive nature of the proposals, it is necessary to consider the wider public interest and balance the strategic planning objectives and benefits of accessibility with public safety and security especially at night.

As officers are aware, the applicant undertook extensive public consultation prior to the submission of the planning application. This included engagement with local residents, businesses and elected members of the Council.

One of the clear comments arising from the public exhibition and as evidenced within the Statement of Community Engagement (SCE) was security after dark and late at night. One of the principal concerns is that the site could be used as an 'escape route' for persons evading the police (given its location and permeability) or as a location to commit opportunistic crime.

These concerns are shared by The Designing Out Crime Officer to the London Borough of Camden who has confirmed as such within his formal consultation response to the Council.

"Gating at the two entrances/exits to this development will be fitted. These should be of a substantial height above 2.4m high. The design should not lend itself to climbing. Examples of suitable fencing are available on the SBD website. Opening these gates during the day and closing at night may be appropriate. Should crime occur these gates can be controlled to prevent further access."

The proposed development would have gates but would not be 'gated'. It is proposed that the gates would be permanently open except for between the hours of 22:00 and 06:30 each day when they would be closed. The hours of operation and opening and shutting of the gates could be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition.

It is considered that this period of time provides the appropriate balance between ensuring access and permeability which is fundamental to the scheme with safety and security at a time of day when the site is unlikely to be heavily occupied except by residents.

As officers are aware the site would be additionally monitored by an on-site 24/7 dedicated concierge as well as CCTV. The on-site concierge would be responsible for closing the gates and controlling out of hours access to the residential and commercial buildings. When the gates close, there would be a pedestrian gate that would be opened by electronic passes which would be linked to the concierge, when the pass is swiped it would notify the concierge who has come through and what unit they are in.

In addition, to the above, the gates provide an important window of opportunity where the site can be cleaned (e.g. sweeping and cleaning the hard landscaping) and maintained (e.g. tree pruning, maintaining the play space) efficiently without concerns being raised with regard to public access when this is going on.

Summary

In summary:

- The scheme would not be a 'gated development' or 'gated community'.
- Indeed the inclusive accessibility and permeability of the scheme is crucial to its success overall.
- The scheme therefore seeks to provide an appropriate balance between providing access and securing public safety and security after dark.
- This is the right thing to do and is in the public interest.
- It was also highlighted as a key point in the public consultation by local people to such an extent that the applicant felt it would be unreasonable to ignore.
- The comments from local people were additionally supported by the designing out crime officer in his formal consultation response to the London Borough of Camden.

- The proposed gates would be shut for very short periods of time and alongside the other security measures proposed would result in a safe and attractive site, which can be controlled, managed and maintained appropriately.

We trust that the above is helpful to officers.