

[REDACTED]

Sent: 18 August 2014 20:07
To: Planning
Subject: 2014/4270/P [REDACTED]

As a nearby resident in Oak Village, I object to this application on the grounds that these three sites are **NOT** 'vacant, derelict, with no usable amenity value to the estate as a whole.'

The original layout of the Barrington Court Estate, 60 years ago, was well planned with its high rise block, terraces of family houses, a play area, communal and private gardens and space for trees to grow properly. Grafton Road was treated simply as a link between Oak Village and the railway bridge and the angled alignment of the road deliberately played down by planting large growing trees at the ends of the terraces. There was no frontage on this boundary. The birch trees may be reaching the ends of their lives now and need to be replaced but the beeches have many years left.

Recent measures to restrict traffic and define cycle lanes only further this intention. The road is now a pleasant, tree-lined walking/cycling/limited vehicle route linking Gospel Oak to Kentish Town with several housing estates and two schools on the way.

Mature trees are invaluable in built up areas. They help reduce pollution and noise from the trains and traffic nearby and give an ecological value especially with the biodiversity from planting native species. Birches and Beeches are well worth having.

I am concerned that this application now claims to, 'significantly improve the biodiversity and ecological value of all three sites'

Sites A and B provide only space for very small trees, nothing that could possibly replace the scale or value of the existing trees.

I am also concerned that the application makes no mention of the necessary maintenance of the various planters, trees, green roofs and their inherent drainage/irrigation problems.

Under private ownership, I fear there will be no way of ensuring these bits and pieces of greenery continue.

I have one further objection to the external layout of Site A. It is proposed to, 'straighten out the corner of the site over the public highway' with no mention on the drawings that this corner is part of a busy crossing with a central road island in Grafton Road. When used by groups of children, this corner needs all the pavement it now has.

I am extremely concerned about the future of the magnificent Purple Copper Beech on Site C, now taller and wider than the adjacent buildings and with great individual character and shape. The trunk divides at about head height into three huge leaders and a fourth smaller branch, making the effective diameter of the base more than any small courtyard could contain. As it is not a pavement tree, the dense canopy remains low, casting deep shade over the whole site.

The architect's computer generated drawings are misleading. They show a tree with a tall straight trunk and no side branches. (This same tree appears on all the drawings)

The proposals include elaborate precautions for protecting the roots, but the tree shown is just not the tree growing in Grafton Road with its dense, low canopy.

Beeches cannot take severe pruning. It will die, and where then is the amenity value of a dying tree with an odd little house wrapped round it.

Is the financial reward really worth all the trouble ?

Pat Bullivant

