



Friends of Maygrove Peace Park

Maygrove Peace Park meeting
Tuesday 27th Jan 2015
7.30pm at Sidings Community Centre

Response to Proposals to redevelop Liddell Road site – Planning Applications 2014/7649/P and 2014/7651/P.

At the meeting of Maygrove Peace Park Friends Group on Tuesday 27th Jan, members present considered at length the above planning applications and made the following response:

1) Phase 1: the school and catchment area.

Those present questioned whether it was still possible to have a single separate school managed through a federate arrangement with Kingsgate rather than a split site school. This was considered a good way to solve the problems raised by the dual-sited catchment area.

2) Phase 2 – new office block, street, and residential units including the 11 storey tower block

i) 11 Storey Tall Building:

- **Impact on Park:** Members present considered this to be an “eyesore” in relation to the park, ruining forever the present outlook of the park which is regarded as an oasis in this densely residential area.
- **Views:** It was considered somewhat insulting and deliberately misleading that lots of “views” of the tower block from different angles and distances much further away by West End Lane Bridge and the “conservation areas” were included in the PDAS (Planning, Design and Access Statement brochure) but that the much starker photo of the tall building towering over the park was NOT included in this document. We have attached it to show the much barer image, not hidden by any foliage.

It will also block views from the other side of the railway on Sumatra Road, Broomsleigh and Ravenshaw Streets.

- **Design of tall building:** This photo reveals a very warehouse style looking building with floor to ceiling windows which we consider inappropriate for this site. People from the tower block can look out onto the park, which Friends members considered could give a feeling of voyeurism and being constantly overlooked by strangers – something not presently happening – especially a concern as lots of children playing in park. Also problem for residents as people can look in. What has happened elsewhere is that people put all manner of different window coverings to prevent people seeing into their apartments. Unlike the uniform image presented in the photo - the reality is that when lived in, the windows can

look scrappy and messy. We do not consider ceiling to floor windows to be suitable for this design and location.

- As we believe there will be no affordable housing in proposed tower block , it could end up being mainly rental properties – some being left empty for lengthy periods – or constantly changing occupancy - which will damage community cohesion potential in neighbourhood.
- **Location of Tall Building:** this tall building is located right next to the wooded area at the eastern end of the park. Maygrove Friends Group had made it clear that we wished to extend and enhance the park at this end – opening the wooded area up and creating new play and fitness opportunities to cope with the increased use of park facilities. We wanted to create a unique small woodland feature which is now completely threatened by the close proximity of the base of this block, making it more difficult to develop without retaining a fenced-in space due to the nature of the solid wall and narrow corridor in between the block and existing fence. This introduces the potential for anti-social activity if left open .
- **Plant machinery:** we believe the small electricity sub-station (currently on left corner of Liddell Road entrance) will be re-housed in a combined heat and power plant room underneath the tower. We would seek assurances that no fumes or noise from this will be forthcoming onto the park.
- **Wind effect:** we also believe that wind patterns can be created by lone tall buildings and are concerned that what is now a pleasant side of the park and outdoor gym space might become a windy corridor, lowering the quality of experience in the sports and fitness area. Has this been assessed?
- **Out of Character:** we believe that this building is out of character with the rest of the immediate area, and sits on an elevated position already 2 storeys higher than the road level – again impacting visually on the lower entrance area to the park.
- **Lack of affordable housing:** we are very disappointed at the low amount of affordable housing offered within this development , and would like to see this amount reconsidered as we believe the level on offer is not in line with Camden’s policies.

Therefore we believe that the construction of such a tall building, its design and impact on the Peace Park will result in a downgrade. This goes against the London Plan policies – Section 7 on London’s Living Places and Spaces. This encourages the enhancement of Open Spaces – section 7.2 “ ...which makes the most of and extends the wealth of open and green spaces...”, and builds Lifetime Neighbourhoods. We do not consider a 11 storey block improves the park’s visual or physical connection to the rest of the redeveloped site or makes a positive contribution to the character of the park (reference section 7.4 London Plan). As in 7.25 – we consider this building to be substantially taller to the immediate surroundings, and will have a detrimental impact on the local character – in particular Maygrove Peace Park.

We therefore **strongly object** to the proposal for an 11 storey tall building on this site, and in particular the location right next to the Park. Any tall buildings would be better relocated at the eastern end of the park.

- ii) **Loss of Trees:** we are concerned as to potential loss of trees which are situated very close to the tall building base and potential loss caused by deep pile driving during construction works. We would want assurances that all trees in the wooded area will **not be harmed**.

iii) **Community Safety issues:** in addition to concerns re visual access to children from proposed tall building, we have concerns for community safety on the new public square or open space at the junction of the proposed tower block, school entrance and office block. Whilst the front entrances to the Maygrove Mansions are along Maygrove Rd, the entrance to the tower block is set back. All the drawings are of the open space and new street during the day with lots of people around. However, this would be very different for those walking to the tower block late at night up an empty street, with the school and office block closed and having to cross an open square across the darker open entrance to the park. There is supposed to be a janitor/caretaker in reception , but as many of us know, once built economies take over and this may not be the case. We consider that this area at night could attract anti-social behaviour and have asked the local Safer Neighbourhood team to come and give their assessment for community safety issues on this new site. The design of the tall building and office block do form something of a pinchpoint which could create safety issues at night time. There do not appear to be any night-time images of what the development will look like and this should have been provided.

Mixed Vehicle & Pedestrian use: there have been safety issues elsewhere with mixed vehicle and pedestrian use. We would have concerns that there are clear delineations for pedestrian and vehicle use to avoid accidents.

iv) **New Play area:** the Friends Group members did not know anything about this but it seems restricted to some simple raised blocks and spinning disks. We hope that this small area will be well maintained but is hardly likely to compensate for serious increased demand for extra play space in the park.

v) **Maygrove Walk or Open Space:** we were surprised to note that this is not classed as a protected Open Space as we were led to believe, although its value is noted within the PDAS document. However, it is a designated green space in the WH Neighbourhood Development Plan. We are concerned that there will be considerable loss of this much loved open space by the creation of the new entrance "street". However, it now seems that some of the existing entrance to the Liddell Road site will also be partially retained as an emergency and occasional vehicle access route. No measurements were available at the consultation meetings for the width of these 2 entrance areas. We also note that the partially retained western exit route is included in separate application for Phase 1 (school) and Phase 2 includes the new street. We would have concerns that overall there will be **NO LOSS of open space** as originally promised, and that compensatory greening of the western end of the open space will indeed be implemented. ***We would, however, formally ask that exact measurements for these two entrances/exit areas are provided*** as it is hard to make assessments on unknown facts.

vi) **Japanese Knotweed:** we note with concern that there is Japanese Knotweed on the open space, and that the 2 options are to treat it or bury it up to 5 metres. We do not know if burying something on a slope is likely to solve this issues, as it is known to spread under the soil so would want to request effective treatment is carried out by proper professionals.

- vii) **Construction Works:** we are concerned once again that no loss of trees or land happens to the Open Space when the heavy deep-pile driving happens. This is particularly sensitive as there were several trees lost due to the construction works at the bottom of the park at the 65/67 Maygrove Road Development. We are also adamant that there is NO LOSS of use of park land or facilities during the construction works, and that there is a construction management group set up to negotiate when particularly heavy or loud works are to be carried out so as to minimise effect on the park users.

- viii) **Traffic:** we are concerned at the prospect of increased traffic along Maygrove Rd, and in particular that parents will use cars to drop-off children, causing traffic blockages. We have particular concern that some will find their way onto the estate and attempt to drive along the park pathway as park maintenance vehicles often leave the bollards down. We would like to make a specific request that the park entrance for maintenance vehicles is stopped and that park maintenance vehicles use the new street – being able to park near the entrance to the park. We would like to discuss this further.

- ix) **Groundwater Drainage:** as the River Westbourne flows in a combined sewer under the eastern side of the outdoor pitch, we are concerned that the impact of the overall construction works and deep pile driving will not adversely affect the natural ground-water drainage which is on a gradual gradient down from the Heath. We also believe there is another small culverted stream running along the bottom of the site to the eastern end of Maygrove Road. We would want clear indication that a suitable assessment for groundwater drainage has been undertaken with a satisfactory outcome, as we would not want to have any adverse affects on the natural drainage in the park, or local neighbourhood.

Overall, we do not consider that the value of Maygrove Peace Park has really been recognised. We think it has enhanced the development prospects without the development in any way promising any enhancement of the park and its facilities. As stated, we believe the proposals, and in particular the proposed 11 storey block are a downgrade to the park.

Friends Members then undertook an assessment of what enhancements were needed to bring about some much needed improvements to the park as it had not had any injection of capital spend since 2009/2010. We looked beyond the period of continuous building works and considered how to improve capacity in the park, which could be requested as part of any S106 contributions or other funds available. These included:

- More opportunities for Green and planting activities
- picnic tables and defined areas
- A refresh of the play equipment - both the toddlers play area and pathfinder adventure equipment – adding an extra swing-type play feature
- Extra free-standing fitness equipment (suggested by Sidings Community Centre sports staff in response to requests from park users who were using the pathfinder play equipment inappropriately for this purpose)
- Outdoor table tennis table
- Possibly use of some of ground floor of office block – we believe this has been suggested by some other groups also – could this be part of S106 funding? This could house various activities, but also possibly some park equipment if local people were to take over some aspects of park maintenance in the future, to help create more local job opportunities.

- Welcome use of school facilities if it helps green activities locally – but must be free or low cost and community to have say in who uses any community facilities.

In our earlier comments on the expansion of Kingsgate School , we also indicated clear priorities for the following improvements:

- 1) Resurfacing of the outdoor sports pitch – long overdue – to facilitate and develop fuller use of the outdoor pitch
- 2) Special project to redesign the wooded area to east of pitch in an exciting multi-sensory area, also usable by children with disabilities, with some urban forest features
- 3) Better lighting down all pathways – inserted into walls or paths and renewal of higher level lighting.

We also considered that much emphasis had been placed on the new site being a “high quality” development, and considered that this high quality experience should flow and continue into the park . For this reason we are also requesting that the pathways are resurfaced, reflecting the high quality pathways of the new development bringing cohesion to the interface between the park and new development.

Heritage Features: we also think it is important to retain some heritage features in the park. One exciting suggestion was to create a train type feature which could also offer train viewing opportunities as many young children like to walk up to the fence near the railways and look at the trains with their parents. Yes – we must remember the joys of childhood and looking at trains! The railway heritage could also be reflected elsewhere – eg train logos and artistic referencing similar to artistic design of manhole covers shown in PDAS document.

As the Maygrove Peace Park Friends Group we are bitterly disappointed at the loss of opportunity to extend the park. We realise that this is the last opportunity for some time to help really lift the park facilities to enable it to become an even better and special place for the existing and newer community. The park will play a vital role in community cohesion for the significantly increased community. We would want to enter discussions before the final planning application is submitted on the points and requests made.

Yours sincerely,



On behalf of Maygrove Peace Park Friends Group
(contact base at Sidings Community Centre, 150 Brassey Rd, London NW6 2BA. 020-7625-6260)

(photo of park and tower block to be attached).

