

**5/7 Lancaster Grove, Belsize Park  
Report on Community Engagement**

February 2015

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## 1. Background

- 1.1 This Report has been prepared by GKA on behalf of Opticrealm Ltd to provide an overview of the local engagement undertaken on proposals to redevelop Clifford Pugh House to provide 15 residential units.
- 1.2 Opticrealm Ltd has engaged with the local community so that local views and issues could inform the evolution of the proposals and be addressed. This report sets out the consultation which has been undertaken, the feedback received and the responses that have been given.

## 2. Policy background to consultation

- 2.1 This section summarises the national and local policy context for pre-application consultation.

### *National Policy*

- 2.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recommends that developers engage with local communities during the pre-application stage, referred to as ‘frontloading’. Paragraph 188 of the NPPF states: “Early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.”
- 2.3 Local Planning Authorities are to encourage developers to engage with the local community, even when not required by law, before submitting applications (paragraph 189). Early pre-application consultation with statutory consultees is also supported in the NPPF (paragraph 190).

### *Local Policy*

- 2.4 The London Borough of Camden’s Statement of Community Involvement was adopted in July 2011. Paragraph 4.8 states “We strongly encourage pre-application advice and pre-application consultation for major, or potentially controversial, proposals. Pre-application consultation provides an opportunity for local communities and stakeholders to raise any issues directly with the applicant and influence their proposals.”
- 2.5 Paragraph 4.11 continues “Where pre-application consultation is carried out, applicants should prepare a report summarising the type of consultation carried out, the key issues raised and how the scheme addresses these issues.”

### *Localism Act 2011*

- 2.6 One of the main aims of the Act is to make the planning system more democratic. It proposes the introduction of a new requirement that developers should consult local communities before submitting planning applications for certain developments. While advice on what constitutes “certain developments” has not been progressed, it is a clear indication that the Act expects developers to engage with the local community on their emerging proposals.

### **3. Consultation strategy**

3.1 In light of the modest scale of the development, the potential impacts were considered to be local. The strategy therefore was to firstly engage with the three local conservative Councillors for Belsize ward, followed by the Belsize Residents' Association (BRA) and finally with the wider community around the site. At a pre-application meeting, officers also recommended consultation with the Belsize Conservation Area Advisory Committee. The activities undertaken and the responses received are outlined below.

#### ***Consultation with ward members***

3.2 Contact was made with Councillor Jonny Bucknell on 8 July to provide him with a briefing and to suggest a site meeting which he accepted.

3.3 A site meeting was subsequently held with Councillor Bucknell on 11 August to explain the development proposals in some detail. It was also an opportunity to look around the local area and to inspect the interior of the existing building.

3.4 A copy of the latest pre-application document that had been discussed with officers was sent to Councillor Bucknell later that day for passing on to his fellow ward councillors for their information.

#### ***Consultation with the Belsize Residents' Association***

3.5 An email was issued to the BRA on 6 August with a brief explanation of the proposals and seeking a meeting to discuss them in more detail. An email response was received on 9 August with an apology that the Association did not have the resources to meet with prospective developers. The response also raised two issues; firstly that if student housing was to be lost it should be replaced by affordable housing, rather than luxury flats, and secondly concerns were raised regarding the proposed formation of a basement area.

3.6 As they were unable to meet, an email with a fuller briefing on the proposals, together with a response to the issues raised regarding affordable housing and the provision of a basement area, was provided in an email on 15 August. A copy of the email is included as Appendix A.

3.7 The exchange of email correspondence was also forwarded to Councillor Bucknell for his information.

#### ***Consultation with the Belsize Conservation Area Advisory Committee***

3.8 An email was issued to the Committee on 11 August with a brief explanation of the proposals and offering to come along to their next meeting to provide a fuller explanation. The Association responded on 19 August that it was not within their remit to comment on planning applications before they are submitted.

#### ***Consultation with neighbouring residents***

3.9 On 27 August a letter and attachments was issued to local residents around the site. 99 letters were issued to the addresses within the area identified on the OS map which is included as Appendix B.

3.10 The mailing included a letter explaining the proposals together with an image of the proposed development. A comments form and Freepost envelope was also included to enable residents to make their comments. The form also included an email address as an alternative means for submitting comments. The enclosures are included as Appendix C.

3.11 A copy of the letter and enclosures was also sent to the three ward councillors for their information.

#### **4. Feedback received**

4.1 As previously mentioned, the BRA commented that the development should be for affordable housing and also expressed concern regarding the impacts associated with the provision of a basement area.

4.2 In addition, six responses have been received from the consultation with the wider community – four comments forms and two emails. Two of the responses focussed on the potential noise and disturbance during demolition and building works, including the loss of parking bays. One of these respondents also expressed concern about the impact of the development on parking which they claim is already very difficult in the area. One of the comments form asked if the flats would be marketed in London or abroad indicating that the former would be preferable.

4.3 A comments form and email was received on behalf of residents of Gabrielle Court, the adjoining property, which asked detailed questions about the development. A meeting was held at Gabrielle Court with representatives of the residents on 7 October to discuss the following issues:

- Boundary wall treatment
- Extent of basement excavation
- Method of excavation
- Measures to minimise impact of development works
- Timing of development
- Survey of existing properties prior to demolition works

4.4 The final response received was anonymous and commented that the design does not pay enough respect to the architecture in Belsize Park.

4.5 The relatively low response rate suggests a general lack of concern with the proposals.

#### **5. Response to issues raised**

5.1 A response to the issues raised by the BRA was provided in an email on 19 August, which is included as Appendix A. A response has also been provided to the two residents who raised comments about noise and disturbance and parking and these are included as Appendices D and E.

5.2 The responses to the issues raised can be summarised:

- The loss of the student accommodation will be addressed as part of the application submission
- Where the loss can be justified, the Council expects the development to provide an equivalent amount of residential floorspace for permanent housing with an appropriate amount of affordable housing subject to viability, rather than a wholly affordable housing scheme
- A Basement Impact Assessment will be submitted in support of the application to demonstrate that there would not be any detrimental impact on flooding, groundwater and structural stability
- Opticrealm Ltd will incorporate all necessary measures within the development process to ensure that impacts on residential amenity and the loss of parking bays are minimised
- This will be reinforced by the Council who will impose and enforce conditions upon the planning permission to control impacts on residential amenity
- The development will be registered with the Considerate Constructors Scheme
- Contact details will be displayed at the site at all times there be any concerns
- There are no parking spaces included within the development at the request of the Council
- The council is likely to impose a restriction on future occupiers of the flats preventing them from applying for a parking permit to deter car ownership
- The replacement building would be of high quality design using brick with stone bay windows to reflect the materials used on the buildings in Crossfield Road, which is opposite the site, and Lancaster Grove itself, which is a mixture of brick and stucco
- The flats will be marketed in London

5.3 The issues raised by the residents of Gabrielle Court were discussed at the meeting with them and the responses are partly covered above. In addition the proposed boundary treatments were explained and it was agreed that the final detail will be discussed with residents should planning permission be granted. An explanation of the method of excavating the basement was provided and a commitment was made to undertake a condition survey of the flats in Gabrielle Court that adjoin the site. Opticrealm are committed to maintaining a dialogue with the residents during the planning process, and during development works if planning permission is granted.

## **6. Activities prior to the submission of the application**

6.1 Before progressing the application for the redevelopment for 15 units, Opticrealm submitted an application to convert the existing building into eight flats at the beginning of December 2014. That application is still under consideration. Ward councillors, the Belsize Residents Association and the residents responding to the pre-application consultation were advised by e-mail of the submission on 2 December.

6.2 The same people were also notified in February 2015 of the submission of the application to redevelop the site for 15 units.

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## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1 Opticrealm Ltd has ensured that an appropriate level of consultation and notification has been undertaken for a scheme of this nature. The ward councillors have been fully briefed on the proposals and have been kept informed of the consultation with the wider community. Meetings were offered to the local Residents Association and Conservation Area Advisory Committee which were declined, although a helpful meeting was held with representatives of adjoining residents in Gabrielle Court.
- 7.2 The response to the consultation with the wider community has been limited with the main concern relating to impacts during demolition and construction work. In light of the limited and focussed feedback it would not be unreasonable to conclude that there are no significant concerns for the local community regarding the proposals for Clifford Pugh House. In this light a planning application is being progressed.

End Report



**Appendix A**  
**Email response to Belsize Residents' Association**



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**From:** Barry Taylor - GKA  
**Sent:** 15 August 2014 16:46  
**To:**  
**Subject:** Clifford Pugh House, 5/7 Lancaster Grove

Dear

We write in response to your e-mail as we thought it would be helpful to provide further information regarding the development of the above site and to also respond to your comments regarding affordable housing and the excavation of a basement area.

Clifford Pugh House was previously used as student accommodation by University College and was somewhat incongruous with the residential use of the surrounding area. It is however no longer required by them and is now vacant. The building has been much changed both externally and internally and it is not considered to make a contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. It is therefore proposed that it be demolished to be replaced by a building of the same height comprising 14 residential units. The replacement building would be of high quality design using brick with stone bay windows to reflect the materials used on the buildings in Crossfield Road, which is opposite the site, and Lancaster Grove itself, which is a mixture of brick and stucco.

The Council's policies allow the loss of student accommodation if it can be demonstrated that it is no longer required. That will be addressed as part of the application submission. Where the loss of student accommodation can be justified, the Council expects the development to provide an equivalent amount of residential floorspace for permanent housing with an appropriate amount of affordable housing, rather than a wholly affordable housing scheme. The appropriate amount to be included within the development is subject to further discussion with Council officers based on a viability assessment.

The proposals would involve excavation to provide a basement area beneath the new building. This is made easier by the demolition of the existing building and a Basement Impact Assessment will be submitted in support of the application to demonstrate that there would not be any detrimental impact on flooding, groundwater and structural stability.


In conclusion it is believed that the replacement building would make a positive enhancement to the character of the Conservation Area and would not impact on the amenities of existing residents.

We hope that the above information is helpful but should there be any further questions regarding the proposals then do please contact us and the offer of a meeting remains.

Many thanks.

Regards.

Barry Taylor



**Appendix B**  
**Consultation area**

Consultation Area for Clifford Pugh House, Lancaster Grove





## **Appendix C**

### **Consultation letter and enclosures**

27 August 2014

Dear Resident

### **Clifford Pugh House at 5/7 Lancaster Grove**

We write on behalf of our clients Opticrealm regarding emerging proposals for the redevelopment of Clifford Pugh House at 5/7 Lancaster Grove.

Clifford Pugh House was previously used as student accommodation by University College and was somewhat incongruous with the residential use of the surrounding area. It is however no longer required by the University and is now mostly vacant.

The building has been much changed both externally and internally and it is not considered to make a contribution to the character and appearance of the Belsize Conservation Area. It is therefore proposed that it be demolished to be replaced by a similar sized building of the same height comprising 14 residential units.

The demolition of the building would take around five weeks with an overall development programme of up to 18 months.

The replacement building would be of high quality design using brick with stone bay windows to reflect the materials used on the buildings in Crossfield Road, which is opposite the site, and Lancaster Grove itself, which is a mixture of brick and stucco. We have pleasure in enclosing an image of the proposals with this letter.

The proposals would involve excavation to provide a basement area beneath the new building. This is made easier by the demolition of the existing building and a Basement Impact Assessment will be submitted in support of the application to demonstrate that there would not be any detrimental impact on flooding, groundwater and structural stability.

The level of affordable housing to be included within the development is subject to further discussion with Council officers based on a viability assessment.

Cont'd...

Opticrealm propose to submit a planning application next month but before doing so would welcome the comments of residents living around the site on the plans. We therefore enclose a comments form and Freepost envelope which you can use to return any comments you may have by post, or alternatively you can email them to Barry Taylor at [b.taylor@gka.co.uk](mailto:b.taylor@gka.co.uk)

If you require any further information or would like to discuss the proposals then please call on 01296 678 300.

Yours sincerely



Barry Taylor

Encs.

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# Clifford Pugh House, 5/7 Lancaster Grove– Comments Sheet

Opticrealm would welcome any comments that you might have on their proposals for the above site. Please provide your comments in the box below (please use the reverse if you need extra space).

Name: <sup>1</sup>	
Address:	
	Postcode:
Email:	
Tel:	Date:

If you do not wish to be contacted again, please indicate by ticking this box:

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS FORM**

Please send the form by Freepost to RLUX-TXHJ-HRRK, Aylesbury, Bucks HP19 8JR (you do not need to affix a stamp). Alternatively, email your comments to [b.taylor@gka.co.uk](mailto:b.taylor@gka.co.uk). Please provide your comments by Monday 8 September 2014.

GKA Limited is a registered Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). At all times, processing of personal data is carried out in accordance with the DPA and we adhere to the eight enforceable principles of good information handling practice. The information you provide to us will be held by GKA Limited and will only be used for the purposes of consultation and research. The results of the consultation may be shared publicly and/or with the London Borough of Camden but under no circumstances will personal data be processed for direct marketing purposes. Published survey results will never contain your name or anything that could identify you. <sup>1</sup> You do not have to provide us with your contact details but it does help should it be necessary to write to you, where appropriate, to respond to specific queries.



**Appendix D**  
**Response to adjoining owner issued 4 September 2014**

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**From:** Barry Taylor - GKA  
**Sent:** 04 September 2014 15:51  
**To:**  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** RE: Objections to proposed development of Clifford Pugh House at 5/7 Lancaster Grove NW3

Dear

Thank you for your e-mail expressing your concerns about the impact that the demolition of the existing and the construction of the new building will have upon your amenities. Should planning permission be granted, Opticrealm Ltd will incorporate all necessary measures within the development process to ensure that impacts from noise, dust and air pollution are kept to a minimum. This will be reinforced by the Council who will impose and enforce conditions upon the planning permission to control impacts on residential amenity.

Opticrealm Ltd will also register the development with the Considerate Constructors Scheme which is a national initiative to ensure developers do all they can to reduce any negative impact on anyone affected by their work. When work on the development commences, contact details will be displayed at the site at all times should you have any concerns.


With regard to your comments regarding parking, any future use of the site could generate a parking requirement. However, in this case, there are no parking spaces included within the development at the request of the Council. The council is likely to impose a restriction on future occupiers of the flats preventing them from applying for a parking permit to deter car ownership.

It is anticipated that a planning application will be submitted later this month. A report on the consultation feedback will be included as one of the submitted documents.

I hope this is helpful.

Regards.

Barry Taylor



**Appendix E**  
**Response to adjoining owner issued 9 September 2014**

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**From:** Barry Taylor - GKA  
**Sent:** 09 September 2014 09:23  
**To:**  
**Subject:** Clifford Pugh House, 5/7 Lancaster Grove

Dear

Thank you for returning a form with your comments about the impact that the demolition of the existing and the construction of the new building may have upon car parking and your amenities.

With regard to the loss of parking bays during the development work, Opticrealm Ltd are aware of the parking pressures in the area and will ensure that any use of parking bays will be limited, and for as short as time as possible, particularly in the evenings and weekends when parking demand is at its highest.

Should planning permission be granted, Opticrealm Ltd will incorporate all necessary measures within the development process to ensure that impacts from noise, dust and air pollution are kept to a minimum. This will be reinforced by the Council who will impose and enforce conditions upon the planning permission to control impacts on residential amenity.

Opticrealm Ltd will also register the development with the Considerate Constructors Scheme which is a national initiative to ensure developers do all they can to reduce any negative impact on anyone affected by their work. When work on the development commences, contact details will be displayed at the site at all times should you have any concerns.

It is anticipated that a planning application will be submitted later this month. A report on the consultation feedback will be included as one of the submitted documents.

I hope this is helpful.

Regards.

Barry Taylor