

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Consultees Addr:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2016/6088/P	Elizabeth Goodburn	4 Bramshill Gardens NW5 1JH	13/12/2016 17:47:02	COMMNT	<p>Highgate Newton Community Centre has been and still is a wonderful central amenity for our community. Our children and ourselves have attended a wide range of activities there over the years and continue to do so.</p> <p>The existing building is coming to the end of its life and is becoming increasingly and unsustainably expensive to run and maintain. Recognising that the building is now at the stage when it is too expensive to repair it is clearly essential that it should be rebuilt so that it is fit for the future and will be affordable to maintain and run for many years to come.</p> <p>The plans show clearly that the planned new Community Centre will have approximately the same floor area and amenities as the existing old building. We have also been informed that the services and activities will be maintained at other sites during the period of construction so that they can return to HNCC following completion. This reassurance is very welcome.</p> <p>It is clear from the consultation process that the only practical way of financing the construction of the new Community Centre is to develop a significant part of the site as residential units for sale. Although some members of the community seem to believe that Camden Council should finance the reconstruction it is clear that in the current climate and for many years to come this is not going to be possible. Camden has many competing priorities for its shrinking funds and while services such as elderly social care will be a priority, the major expense of rebuilding a community centre will not be affordable. If the new HNCC cannot be funded by partial residential development of the site then it will gradually continue to decay and in a very few years would be forced to close.</p> <p>Although I can totally understand the concerns of residents who live very close to the site it seems that considerable efforts have been made through a lengthy consultation process to take their views into consideration. This effort should be continued where the feedback is constructive. It is also understandable that the residents of Bertram Street are worried about increased traffic during the construction period and possibly afterwards but it is good to hear that the new flats will not have attached parking permits (and that maybe the parking restrictions in surrounding streets will be extended – this would be very welcome!) .</p> <p>One of the concerns raised by local residents is about the number of residential units that will be included in the development. We recognise that we live in an urban environment and it makes sense to make optimum use of available space. However, if a simpler less dominating design with fewer units were considered, would these not possibly be able to generate sufficient capital to fund the HNCC rebuild? It would also be good to consider the inclusion of at least some ‘social housing’ as this will help to preserve the social diversity of our neighbourhood and also provide additional affordable accommodation for those who play an important role in the community such as teachers and nurses. Some of the architectural points made during the consultation also seem very sensible such as having the living room balconies facing inwards to encourage a community environment (maybe similar to the arrangement at Chester-Balmore?).</p> <p>It will be important that this building respects all Camden’s Planning and the Conservation Area Restrictions so that no precedent is created for commercial developers in other parts of the locality. I think that if the above issues can be taken into consideration then the development should go ahead and be completed as soon as feasible so that HNCC can return to its central role in the neighbourhood as soon as possible.</p>

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2016/6088/P	Dr. JP Lob-levyt	4 Bramshill Gardens NW51jH	12/12/2016 19:53:57	COMNOT	<p>Highgate Newton Community/FYA centre is an important and proud part of our local community. Our children, now grown up, were active users of different facilities and I myself continue to use and support the centre. I have attended and valued the many consultations and the opportunity to comment on the developing designs. I have also discussed with local councillors and trustees and welcome their strong support to the future of the centre. I recognise their support to the scheme, including housing, as it is now proposed.</p> <p>My own experience of fund raising and charring charities, suggests that the viability of the community centre will be greatly enhanced by the construction of a purpose built new building. I doubt that in the current financial climate it can survive otherwise. The financial window of opportunity may also be limited. Future funding challenges and trade offs in Camden have never been more alarming. The design of the community centre seems to meet our community needs now and in the future. I also support the conceptual base of using private housing to fund this development. Sadly in the face of this governments vindictive cuts there is no alternative.</p> <p>I also recognise that for immediate neighbours there are legitimate concerns as to scale and design of the housing element. I have no objection to high density 'in-filling' in our area, this is after all the historic nature of London's development. But I would wish that these neighbouring views be considered and, that where possible and even at this stage, the design be adjusted to address legitimate concerns.</p> <p>I am unqualified to comment on the detailed objections that have been submitted in common. I also note many comments in support. I have been struck by some views that an overcomplicated design has resulted in the need for additional units in order to raise the necessary funds for the core purpose of this project. I thus conclude that whilst overall supporting the proposal, at a strategic or conceptual level I would wish to see careful consideration and be assured of the following;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Would a simpler design meet the original core architectural ideas behind the project and in less units generate sufficient funds, but with fewer compromises to the conceptual design. b. At a minimum, there must be flexibility to include social housing (not so called "affordable" housing) – vital to reversing the decline in social mix and diversity of our area. I consider this key to our idea of community here. c. That no precedent be set in terms of infringement of planning policies that would allow developers to ride a coach and horses through future planning proposals in Camden. <p>JP Lob-Levyt</p>