

**From Councillor Sian Berry, Highgate Ward**

**Comments on Planning Application: 2017/5395/P  
Parliament Hill School, William Ellis School & La  
Swap Sixth Form, Highgate Road**



I broadly support the new proposals for a modified new teaching block and sports hall proposal for Parliament Hill School made in this application and enthusiastically welcome the investment in quality school buildings.

As an elected representative of the local community I have listened carefully over the various iterations of these plans to the views of the residents of Grove Terrace and Lissenden Gardens, particularly those covering the impact on views, light and privacy of local residents, and to their concerns about the process of demolition and building on this site so close to their homes.

In brief, although I regret the demolition of the current Heath Building, as it represents a large loss of embodied carbon and will lead to the majority of disruption faced by residents, I believe the new proposals are broadly compliant with Camden planning policy. However, I believe strong conditions are needed to ensure the wellbeing of residents, such as:

**a) Conditions to ensure amenity for surrounding residents**

These should include

- ensuring privacy without direct overlooking from the new teaching block
- a green wall or sensitively provided vegetation to mitigate the very stark and blocky rear aspect of the new sports hall

(Relevant Camden policies: CS5 – managing the impact of development, DP 26 – impact on occupiers and neighbours, CPG6 – amenity.)

**b) Conditions on the construction management plan to allow for respite for vulnerable residents**

More detailed comments on the plans and these conditions are given below.

**Sports hall and views on Highgate Road**

The proposed sports hall has been moved back since the last plans to be more in line with the current buildings, and the building has been redesigned. I believe this looks much better and more in keeping with the current school than before and appreciate the efforts made to match appearance with the modern drama centre at the other end of the main building (although the colour is not an exact match and could be looked at again).

Officers have allowed local residents to see a sample of the cladding proposed and have reassured them about the fire safety issues that concern everyone at the current time. I would like to see reassurance that the spec of this cladding is not to be downgraded as part of contracting/tendering. I would also like to echo local concerns about the longevity of this finish and its maintenance over the lifetime of the building.

Residents have also asked that the new boundary for the school is an opportunity to widen the pavement on this stretch of Highgate Road to relieve the congestion that occurs around school opening and closing times, particularly around the bus stop. If possible this should be considered when detailed designs of the new boundary are made.

I also support resident comments asking for a further assessment of the large chestnut tree proposed to be felled as part of the plans, and asking that the avenue of plane trees alongside Highgate Road is restored and maintained as part of these plans and into the future.

### **Sports hall aspect onto Clevedon Mansions and Lissenden Gardens**

The rear aspect of the sports hall has been redesigned without windows and this is positive in terms of protecting resident privacy on Clevedon Mansions. However, its overall appearance, clad in white render, is now very blocky and stark.

I would like to see a planning condition in place that would mitigate this aspect with either a green wall on the building or sensitive climbing planting mandated to be provided.

### **New teaching block views and privacy for Lissenden Gardens**

The previous plans came within less than 18 metres of several windows in private residences, with classroom windows facing these residences. This was a serious risk to privacy and as a result of previous objections, plans were amended to include screens to obstruct views into homes.

The new building is now further away, which is good, but the new windows are very large and currently unscreened in the plans. This is a concern for me as a local councilor as I can foresee having to deal retrospectively with problems of overlooking if this is not considered now. The current plans online do not show the views of the new building from the relevant flats, or the views of the flats from the new building.

Residents, officers and the Planning Committee members need to see these views, in order to make an informed judgement of the impact on privacy and overlooking. If any problems are seen then, once again, strong planning conditions need to be included to assure privacy for residents. These could include oblique screens on the classroom windows, and/or new trees planted in the new larger space between the buildings to provide screening.

### **Demolition of the Heath Building and construction management plan**

Residents are rightly concerned at the likely noise and levels of construction traffic that will be caused by the proposals, particularly during the demolition of the Heath Building.

I was disappointed that the demolition phase of the other buildings on the footprint of the proposed new teaching block and sports hall was done without resident consultation (I imagine the school was consulted but no notification of the demolition proposals was made to residents or councilors). This meant that residents had no prior input into issues like dust monitoring or working hours before these works went ahead.

With many residents nearby who are elderly or working in their homes during the day and who will be severely impacted by noise, and with schoolchildren at the site during term time, it is very

important that meaningful consultation is carried out on the proposed construction management plan for these new proposals before they go ahead.

The detailed CMP at a minimum should include extensive monitoring of dust, comprehensive mitigation plans for dust and noise during demolition, and noise respite periods (for example a lunchtime break) included in working time plans for the demolition phase.

The detailed CMP also needs to include more about pedestrian safety, speed limits for vehicles on site and the use of bankspeople when entering and exiting, and routes for lorries and heavy construction vehicles. The only acceptable route for these vehicles for local residents is one which approaches the site from the south, avoiding the centre of Highgate Ward and Highgate West Hill.

Measures also need to be written into the CMP that will ensure that all contractors are aware of this route during construction.

**October 2017**