

Planning Application 2017/6045/P.

18th November 2017.

Dear Planning Committee,

I am writing to object to yet another attempt to turn our precious green lung, Gondar Gardens reservoir, into a money-making proposition. LifeCare Residences' plan, involving building a retirement home for rich people, doesn't even pretend to have any social benefit. At least previous applications went through the motions of offering affordable housing.

In 2013, a Planning Inspector described the reservoir as a "green lung of high environmental value." Nothing has changed in the last 4 years. The reservoir remains a cherished oasis in a heavily built-up area, where major developments have recently occurred on Fortune Green and are occurring by the train station. West Hampstead simply cannot cope with further major projects. West End Lane is gridlocked for most of every day. We are full.

The reservoir is the habitat of protected species and birds under threat. That habitat would be destroyed and the building work would create huge levels of noise, light and air pollution, besides making Mill Lane even more of a nightmare for motorists than it is now. An exclusive enclave would be created that would not be part of the community and would be of no benefit to the community. This development would be wrong on every possible level.

I note that the plan is to build six-storey blocks. This would destroy the view of residents on the south side of Gondar Gardens, apart from being wholly out of keeping with the Victorian and Edwardian architecture of the surrounding streets. It would be a nightmare and an eyesore for local residents. When people spend large sums of money to buy houses and flats in an area, they do not expect it to be transformed into something entirely different which will inevitably reduce the value of their homes. But that is a minor consideration compared to the impact on our quality of life.

Clearly, such a development would generate much extra traffic and parking through visitors and servicing. With 82 flats for retirees and 15 nursing beds, one can imagine ambulances attending day & night, often with sirens blasting. The serenity of this quiet enclave would be destroyed.

I have no doubt that there are plenty of brown-field sites in North-West and West London with appropriate space for such an ambitious development. Why should our crowded suburb be subjected to this greedy and inappropriate plan?

Yours sincerely,

Michael House.
5 Kenmare Mansions,
Gondar Gardens.

