

## **Planning Application 2017/6045/P Gondar Gardens Reservoir**

### **Objection from Fortune Green and West Hampstead Neighbourhood Development Forum.**

The Neighbourhood Plan has specific reference to this site as it was recognised that it might be developed and there was already a permission for development at the time of examination of the plan. This latter application has since expired, although another one for the frontage only has since been approved on appeal.

The reference to the site in the plan is as below.

*Pages 35/36 of Fortune Green and West Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan*

*C2. Gondar Gardens Reservoir: in recent years, three developments have been proposed for this site. All three have been rejected by Camden Council, although one has been granted on appeal. At the time of writing, an appeal on the third scheme is pending. In light of its designation as a Site of Importance to Nature Conservation in existing planning documents, any development should retain as much open space as possible and offer limited, managed public access consistent with maintaining suitable conditions for bio-diversity and wildlife. Due to the significant amount of open space the site provides, views across the site should be protected from significant damage or loss; of particular significance is the view to the east to Hampstead. Any development of the frontage on Gondar Gardens shall match the character of existing development and shall be no higher or deeper than adjacent buildings (see Policy 2).*

We also make reference to Policy 2 and Policy 16 of the NDP. These are shown at the bottom this document.

The NDF is objecting to the application citing:

- no precedent
- its height, size and bulk;
- building design and inconsistency with neighbouring buildings and the local area;
- overdevelopment in a congested area;
- no affordable housing;
- loss of views and green space;
- the impact on traffic and parking
- location

### **No Precedent.**

The applicant claims (Planning Statement 6.1.3) that the previous approvals do not rule out a more comprehensive development, subject to the collective impact being fully assessed.

This is either disingenuous or not true as it is clear from the Inspectors' Reports that both schemes were only approved because

a. the first scheme was ingeniously designed to not obscure the effect of open space and retained the views across the site, and

b. the second scheme retained, in perpetuity, over 90% of the site as green open space.

Both these approvals were therefore based on the premise that a double sized scheme would not be approved, and, from that, they are mutually exclusive.

### **Height, size and bulk.**

The scheme is constructed as single building giving it an overwhelming impact due to mass, bulk and density, out of context with the surrounding buildings.

The height of the buildings is above that of neighbouring buildings on the frontage in contradiction to Policy 2 (as above) of the Neighbourhood Plan. The extra height is well above anything that could be considered due to the topography of the site. We are strongly opposed to any development in the reservoir pit that rises significantly above the rim of the reservoir.

The depth of the frontage also greatly exceeds the depth of neighbouring buildings contrary to the site specific reference in the plan (as above)

### **Building design and inconsistency with neighbouring buildings and the local area;**

We believe that the design for the frontage does not adequately match the adjacent buildings, particularly due to the large glazing panels. The rear parts of the development have a very modern and irregular design, which does not reflect the consistency of the adjacent mansion blocks with their careful detailing. The bulk, mass and height of the rear part are very much out of context when compared to the mansion blocks. (Policy 2. i,ii,iii,iv,vi,vii,viii)

### **Overdevelopment in a congested area;**

Local facilities such as doctors, and water are already overstretched. The population of the area is growing very rapidly due to other development, and there are several hundred new dwellings already with planning permission in the area. Housing Development is running ahead of the Local Plan.

The site is located on a narrow road which already gives problems to commercial vehicles. The steepness of the southern access to the site makes the junction difficult to negotiate and dangerous, particularly for heavy vehicles.

### **No affordable housing;**

The scheme makes a case for avoiding a contribution for affordable housing. We believe that all large schemes in the Forum's area should have an affordable component as there is already a shortage, and demand is high.

*(NDP policy 1.1 Residential development shall provide a range of housing types, to meet a range of needs, as appropriate, related to the scale of the development. This shall be achieved by:  
i. The provision of affordable, social, intermediate, and shared-ownership housing - in line with the 50% target as set out in the development plan. .... )*

### **Loss of views and green space;**

The development would cause the permanent loss of open space with high environmental value and significant biodiversity (including a SINC designation). Protection of green space is one of the main thrusts of the Neighbourhood plan. (NDP Policy 16. i,ii,iii,iv,vi,vii,viii)

The scheme also destroys views across the area, north/south and east/west (NDP Policy 2.x)

### **The impact on traffic and parking**

This is an excessively large scheme in a congested residential area. Two visits to the similar Battersea site, suggest that vehicle movements will be much higher than those suggested by the applicant. We have grave concerns about the impact of traffic generated by staff, deliveries, services and visitors and the lack of space on site to accommodate vehicles, resulting in the blockage of Gondar Gardens. The visits to the Battersea site confirmed that staff do use cars to arrive on that site and we can assume that will occur on this site. The impact of Blue Badge holders is not clear in the context of a car-free development - they would add very significantly to parking pressure in the area.

### **Location**

The site, at the top of a steep hill, does not seem ideal for a large retirement home, given the elderly pedestrians, wheel chairs and mobility scooters.

Every (geographical) aspect of this scheme overlooks local residents' gardens. The high buildings will substantially reduce the privacy that rear gardens normally provide.

**The NDF supports the objections and comments being made by the local residents and resident associations.**

## **POLICIES**

*All development shall be of a high quality of design, which complements and enhances the distinct local character and identity of Fortune Green and West Hampstead. This shall be achieved by:*

- i. Development which positively interfaces with the street and streetscape in which it is located.*
- ii. Development which maintains the positive contributions to character of existing buildings and structures.*
- iii. Development which is human in scale, in order to maintain and create a positive relationship between buildings and street level activity.*
- iv. Development which has regard to the form, function, structure and heritage of its context - including the scale, mass, orientation, pattern and grain of surrounding buildings, streets and spaces.*
- v. A presumption in favour of a colour palate which reflects, or is in harmony with, the materials of its context.*
- vi. New buildings and extensions that respect and are sensitive to the height of existing buildings in their vicinity and setting. Tall buildings in the Growth Area will need to have regard to their impact on the setting of the two immediately adjacent conservation areas, in order to avoid any negative impact on them.*
- vii. Extensions - and infill development - being in character and proportion with its context and setting, including the relationship to any adjoining properties.*
- viii. The provision of associated high quality public realm.*
- ix. Having regard to the impact on local views across the Area and the streetscapes within the Area (as identified in A11 and Map 2).*
- x. Development which aims to fulfil the criteria set out in Building for Life 12 (as detailed in A18).*

Policy 16 page 60

*Development shall protect and improve, where appropriate, existing green/open space. Development that increases the demand for recreation or amenity shall provide for new green/open space. This shall be achieved by, where appropriate:*

- i. The protection of existing green/open space - from significant damage, or loss, through development.*
- ii. The appropriate provision (relative to the size of the development) of new green/open space, or contributing towards addressing the open space deficiencies in the Area as identified in the development plan.*
- iii. Appropriate contributions to the maintenance and enhancement of existing and new green/open space, where applicable.*
- iv. The offsetting of any loss of green/open space, ideally within the Area.*
- v. The protection and appropriate provision of green corridors through existing and new streetscapes.*
- vi. The appropriate provision of new small green/open space - such as pocket parks and active green spaces (eg green walls and green roofs) - and their maintenance.*
- vii. The use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in all development, unless there are practical or viability reasons for not doing so. viii. The appropriate provision of outdoor leisure facilities -*

*such as playgrounds, gyms and recreational spaces - and their maintenance, where applicable.*

- viii. Development that has a positive impact on the relationship between urban and natural features.*