



Dear Sir or Madame,

I am writing in relation to 2018/2340/P Removal and re-siting to the Hampstead figure sculpture.

I object to Option 4 which sites the statue in a quiet spot to the rear of the Sports Hall on the Adelaide Road side of the site.

The grounds of my objection are as follows:

- (i) Option 4 fails to enhance the setting of the sculpture and its relationship with the library
- (ii) Option 4 fails to follow the Inspector's recommendations in allowing the 'Swiss Cottage Avenue Road development' in his Report dated 18 February 2016 (ref. APP/X5210/W/14/3001616).

The Inspector sets out the special architectural and historic interest of F E McWilliam's 1964 sculpture Grade II listed statue "The Hampstead Figure, 1964".

As the Inspector accepts, the figure was commissioned as part of the group of civic buildings for the borough of Hampstead by Sir Basil Spence, and forms a close and complimentary grouping. He says: 'In terms of the setting's contribution to significance this is clearly strong in terms of its relationship with the library and historic intention... This interest and significance is reinforced by the fact that the designer of the civic buildings arranged it to be complementary to the Swiss Cottage library. (284).

Moreover, he complains that 'currently the sculpture is very cut off from the library' due to distance, but also because 'a quantity of very prominent and utilitarian sports equipment' has been placed between: 'In my view these spoil the relationship of the library and sculpture, so repositioning with careful thought is likely to substantially enhance the setting of the sculpture and its relationship with the library.'

By moving the sculpture to a location behind the sports Hall, close to the Children's soft play area and rock climbing wall, option 4 does not enhance the setting of the sculpture. Option 4 substantially harms the setting of the sculpture and its relationship with the library. Even the developer's own Design and Access Statement admits: 'the setting of the statue'... will be 'set further away from the nearest building...' (4.2)

(iii) Option 4 contravenes the Inspector's recommendation that the relocation should enhance the sculpture's 'relationship with the library and historic intention' (284).

(iv) In particular, Option 4 moves the statue to an anonymous site at the rear with little relationship to the Spence Library. This unprecedented in the history of this site and goes against the Spence's intentions; the statue has always been viewed with the front end of the library. The area selected for the re-siting adjoins the Sports Hall. The Sports Hall is a highly controversial 1990s redevelopment with no link whatsoever to the 1960s Civic Plans.

(v) Option 4 ignores the Inspector's recommendation that relocation should offer the opportunity to 'provide all around viewing' which 'would be a major benefit'.

(vi) In particular, by siting the statue so far from the main pedestrian thoroughfares of the Open Space, the statue would only be visible to people approaching the site from Adelaide Road. This would limit the ability of certain vulnerable groups who might be put by the sharper drops, higher pollution and steps on that side of the sports hall- in particular children and people with disabilities – to enjoy views of the new statue. The back of the Sports Hall is less visible and less accessible than the other options put forward.

(vii) The Inspector's report makes it clear that the test for relocating the statue should be about enhancing setting and visibility. As a result it is not appropriate to determine the relocation by reference to the 'historical statue location'. This part of the civic site is so much changed as to be unrecognizable now- the old swimming baths were demolished and a new leisure centre built in the 1990s. The old site is now part of the sunken football pitches. Thus, the original location of the statue is of no help in determining the current re-siting.

In the Heritage Statement and proposed statue location plan, the developers imply that option 4 is in some way preferable because it is closer to the original setting than the other options implying that this fits the Inspector's view that that 'When the sculpture was first positioned it was closer to the library than currently as it has been repositioned in the past' (para 282). Yet, using the 'historical statue location' to decide on where the statue should be repositioned is ridiculous.

(viii) By relocating the statue so that it is invisible from the Swiss Cottage Green Space, Option 4 contravenes the Inspector's view that the significance of the setting is determined by a combination of its relationship, not just with the library, but also 'the historic intention.' The statue was an integral part of Sir Basil Spence's vision of the Hampstead Civic Site of which the Open Space is an important part. The sculpture should be visible and available to users of the Swiss cottage Open Space as it has been for so many years. It is an integral feature of the Open Space and its setting is determined by the open space. The communal value of the sculpture comes from the fact it was commissioned 'specifically to form a feature amongst a cluster of communal buildings within an open public space.' It cannot be suggested that the quiet and depressing area to the rear of the Sport's Hall is a part of the open space in anything other than name. It is patently false to suggest that the area outlined in option 4 is 'a more open location'. (D and A 4.2)

(ix) Option 4 contravenes the Inspector's stipulation that 'The area of the open space itself would not be physically changed by the proposal.' (285) Moving the sculpture to the area to the rear of the Sport's Hall and away from the busy parts of the Open Space would contravene this requirement. There can be no question that to remove the statue from the Open Space and the area to the front of the library, the Open space would be changed forever and the setting of the statue irrevocably harmed.

(x) By moving the statue towards Adelaide Road side, Option 4 also contravenes the Inspector's assumption that the statue's setting is clearly linked to Avenue Road: the 'appeal site, Swiss Cottage Open Space and Avenue Road, these form a civic/town centre environment appropriate to the sculpture.' (285)

(xi) Option 4 ignores the Inspector's strongly held view that the new buildings should be a backdrop to the statue's setting: 'The proposed building is within the setting of the sculpture and would form a backdrop to

the sculpture.’ (285) The setting of option 4 offers a totally novel backdrop including elevations of the 1980s Marriot Hotel, the 1990s Sports Hall and the 2000s UCL academy school. At no stage does the Inspector express the view that such a backdrop would be an improvement.

(xii) It shows the bad faith of the developers that at no stage in the re-siting proposals do they say that a full and comprehensive refurbishment of the statue will occur. It is astonishing that Camden’s officers with whom they have been working on this relocation have not insisted on this.

(xiii) I have real concerns about the ability of the developers to move the statue without causing it damage. At no stage does this application set out the technical details of how the move will be achieved other than and which specialists in sculpture relocation will be retained. Moreover, there is no specialist report from a suitably qualified conservator who can comment on these issues. The only detail offered is the sentence: ‘The statue and plinth will be removed in their entirety’. In this context, Mr Richard Evans’s statement in his cover letter (28/5/18) that ‘no negative impact to the listed statue are anticipated’ is not very reassuring.

(xiv) Option 4 ignores the strong communal value of the statue which primarily stems from its place within a collective memory. The statue holds an important place within the Swiss Cottage local community. It has been an element of life for successive generations of local people since the 1960s. It is for this reason that option 4 is so distasteful to local people. Option 4 ignores the historic imperative to place the statue on the Open Space where people can see and appreciate it. By placing the statue on the Adelaide Road end of the site and introducing the Leisure Centre as a backdrop, the option introduces unprecedented changes to the setting which go directly against the Inspector’s recommendations. Moreover, the area to the back of the leisure centre is less frequented than the side on the Green Space.

(xv) Option 4 goes against the Inspector’s requirements that the development improves the legibility of the Swiss Cottage Town Centre. The removal of the leisure centre sign would adversely affect people with disabilities who are often less able to use the Adelaide Road approach.

(xvi) Of the options set out, options 1 and 2 are the only ones which respect the Inspector’s stipulations. I do not agree that Option 1 would be a danger to passers by. With a decent planting around the statue and an extended plinth area, any dangers could be obviated. Option 2 is the best option and we do not believe that children would climb on the statue if it is placed near the outside gym. The children’s play area is fenced off and very separate. The outside gym is not a children’s play area. In any case, the proximity of Avenue Road mean that it would be rare for children to use it unsupervised. I do not agree that with appropriate landscaping option 2 would lead to physical harm to the statue or to passers-by.

(xvii) This is such an important issue that I would request a proper public consultation with the local community about the appropriate location.

I would be grateful if you could redact my personal details when this objection is published on the Council's website.



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