
From: Gentet, Matthias
Sent: 16 October 2018 14:49
To: Gentet, Matthias
Subject: FW: Response to Headteachers statement

From: berry casey <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 15 October 2018 16:50
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RESPONSE TO HEADTEACHER'S STATEMENT

While we commend the headteacher's response to the concerns of the school's near neighbours, the statement itself affords us little comfort.

Usage of the barge

Several months ago, after learning of the plans for the floating classroom from a newspaper article, we arranged a meeting with the school during which we were assured that the barge would be used solely for educational purposes; in essence an 'extension' to the existing teaching facilities. We did not oppose this initiative on that basis.

However, subsequent publicity and the recent statement from the school; *'anything beyond the day to day purposes of the barge as an educational facility is not our priority. However, we cannot say that we would not consider using the barge outside of hours at some point in the future'* is not what was agreed at the initial and subsequent meetings with the school, and prompts serious concern.

To have additional late activity on the canal, which is already affected by increasing levels of unsocial behaviour; (eg only last night the London Fire Brigade was called to deal with two separate fires on the canal towpath at the rear of Waterside Place), would fill residents with dread. The towpath is becoming an increasingly dangerous place to be after dusk, and the overwhelming majority would be strongly opposed to the commercial use of the school barge.

Hours of activity

The period of operation between 8.45am and 4pm is acceptable, but it is hard to understand how these hours can be adhered to if activities unrelated to the school are permitted.

Location of the barge

The first designated position of the barge was directly at the rear of numbers 7, 8, 9 and 10 Waterside Place. Having experienced the nightmare of barges being moored immediately at the rear of our homes, an agreement was reached with the school that the barge would be positioned no less than 3.5 metres from the end of our houses. The school's statement that *'3.5 metres cannot be consistently guaranteed by events beyond our control'* is alarming, and in the light of possible lack of strict guidelines, the Association would like to revert to their original request that the barge should be positioned exactly outside the school's rear

gate. This would afford the children a much higher level of safety wherein they don't have to walk any distance along the towpath to the barge, thus avoiding the crowds of visitors and numerous cyclists.

It transpires that CRT is not able to issue a licence to the school before planning permission is granted by Camden Council. We therefore urgently request the school amends their application to site the mooring to the immediate rear of the school, rather than 3.5 metres from Waterside Place.

Noise and Disruption

Many of the schools residential neighbours have lived in the area for many years and there have never been any objections to the sound of children coming from the school. On the contrary, it is lovely to hear and there are few concerns relating to the additional noise from pupils from neighbouring schools, on the understanding there will be restrictions to the school's working hours of 8.45 to 4pm. However, increased numbers of children reinforces our view that the mooring should be immediately next to the school rear gate.

Community use.

Again, the majority of neighbours support sharing this facility with neighbouring schools, (although it has to be pointed out that there are individuals who remain vehemently opposed; principally on safety grounds), there remain significant suspicions relating to an obvious agenda in the statement;

'However, we do want to make sure the classrooms' use for Primrose Hill School is established first as an enriching educational not a commercial venture'.

It is clear from this statement that commercial usage at some point is part of the agenda of the school. This does not reflect the agreements reached with the school and its next door neighbours who remain strongly opposed to the commercial use of this barge.

Consultation

While there has been improved engagement with neighbours; certainly when compared to the total lack of communication during last year's new classroom planning process, where the concerns of residents were completely ignored and/or dismissed without any dialogue. This of course is not relevant to the barge planning application, but it heightens concerns regarding the true agenda and tactics of the school.

It has been a continual source of dismay that items agreed during these meetings have consistently not been reflected accurately in subsequent statements of intention.

While the time spent in issuing the school's response to our concerns is appreciated, it affords us, as next door and near neighbours little in terms of dispelling the impression that the school's real agenda is to let this barge out as a commercial venture with all the attendant questions and disruption this will implicate, and we remain determinedly opposed to the commercial use of this barge in any form.

In summary, the majority of residents of both WPRRA and Princess Road and Neighbours Group do not have an issue with the concept of a floating classroom per se; indeed it has been welcomed as an excellent and imaginative initiative for the children. Our principal concerns in the light of the significant increase in pedestrian volume and cycling activity, is the safety of the children, and given the recent surge in anti-social behaviour, any increase in after hours activity on the towpath.

Waterside Place Residents Association

Princess Road and Neighbours Group.

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