

From: John Miles [REDACTED]
Sent: 13 September 2019 13:29
To: Planning [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED] Corinna Gray [REDACTED]
Subject: Comments on Planning application 2019/2879/P on behalf of the Camden Intergenerational Network

From Camden Intergenerational Network 13/09/2019

Dear Camden planning authority,

re: Eastman Dental Hospital site and buildings 2019/2789/P Item 7(1) for decision Planning Committee September 19th 2019

I hope you will take into account our response to this major development on Grays Inn Road.

I am submitting these comments as co-chair of the Camden International Network. I write as a gerontologist with forty years experience of community work with older people and family carers. The Network supports groups and projects in the borough to emphasise the importance of organising activities and programmes which involve people of all ages. This includes both the the development of opportunities for direct contact and the provision of safe and inclusive spaces. The Network is a working programme supported by Ageing Better in Camden, Tavis House, 1-6 Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9NA.

Calthorpe Project Community Garden has been in existence for 38 years. It is noteworthy because of the way its regular users (very many of whom live in the neighbourhood) experience a high level of both security and tranquility. This allows quite small children a freedom to potter about, making their own choices and connections in a way that is now rare in public spaces. People from a wide range of ethnic groups (including Somali, Bangladeshi and Latin American local residents) make use of different parts of the facility. They attend both within a structured timetable and at times that suit themselves. But in attending these diverse groups also overlap as users of the facility. On a recent Saturday, for example, there was impressive interaction between participants in the Somali-led football coaching and the family craft-making activities led by project staff next to the cafe. On a recent Friday in the school holidays the elders busy in the community garden were cheek by jowl with excited young children looking for frogs in the pond and minding the bees in the wild garden. At lunch times on a fine day most of the many benches are occupied by people taking a break, chatting to friends or reading: you quite often come across people sketching or tending parts of the garden. As one Spanish visitor, systematically picking fruit to make jam, said to me on a recent visit 'people think near the British Museum such a place cannot be'. There is a model here for developing facilities and structures which reflect both the GLA's strategy for social integration and the recent recommendations of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Social Integration.

I am concerned that the application for a research facility by University College London takes insufficient account, first, of the ways that its construction will disrupt

the functioning of the garden and, second, of the impact its design and scale will have on the experience of its users and beneficiaries in the longer term. It is ironic that a development focused on the issue of dementia has been designed and planned in this way at a point when research is highlighting both the value to people experiencing dementia of regular access to green space and contact with nature and the preventive effects of such contact on cognitive decline. The London Friends of Green Spaces Network, responding to the London Green Spaces Commission <http://www.lfgn.org.uk/our-response-to-the-london-green-spaces-commission/>, recently called for the amount of green space in London to be expanded generally. Rather than allowing this development to intrude on the Calthorpe Project and impose on its users, Camden might instead require the developers to hand over some of the Dental Hospital site to extend the Community Garden. This could serve both as a buffer and as a general recognition of the health and community impact of a green space facility.

My comments address three issues: the height of the new buildings, the loss of light and privacy and the impact of noise. The viewscape of the garden is already aggressively disrupted by the height of the existing Dental Hospital building. It is disappointing that Camden has not required the developers to pull back the perimeter of the proposed new building, and to stagger it and reduce the height closest to the garden. If other steps to reduce overlooking were taken it would then contribute to the well-being of the project's users and communicate an ethic of care on the part of the university and the planning authority. By respecting the privacy of users - about which parents of young children are necessarily sensitive in this era - this would communicate respectful insight regarding the importance of an experience of seclusion (something which strikes any visitor to the space) to users of Calthorpe Community Garden. Lastly, for the sustainability of the community garden and its capacity to retain the loyalty of its users the developers must be required at all costs to mitigate the impact of noise, vibration and dust during all stages of construction work on the site.

As my own recent observations suggest the Calthorpe Community Garden is an under-appreciated but highly sophisticated feat of social and communal organisation. I would be very grateful if the planning authority will take my comments into account and invite the developers to substantially rethink the most intrusive aspects of their scheme,

kind regards, John Miles

Dr John Miles
Co-chair, Camden Intergenerational Network

[REDACTED]

1 GLA strategy for social integration March 2018

https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/final_social_integration_strategy.pdf

2 APPG for social integration May 2019

<https://socialintegrationappg.org.uk/2019/05/16/launch-of-healing-the-generational-divide-report/>

3 Greening Dementia Natural England literature review 2013

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6578292471627776>

4 Is it Nice Outside? Natural England report 2016

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5910641209507840>

5 'Older People's Experiences of Mobility and Mood in an Urban Environment' *Environmental Research and Public Health* 2017 <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/14/2/151>

6 'Residential surrounding greenness and cognitive decline' *Environmental Health Perspectives* 2018 <https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/doi/10.1289/ehp2875>