

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2020/3801/P	Richard Harrison	09/11/2020 07:40:35	INT	<p>Regent High School would like to raise an objection to the proposed 'New Residential Development' comprising of the erection of 10 family-sized houses on the Godwin and Crowndale Estate.</p> <p>In the first instance, Regent High School is disappointed that it was not approached directly for comment regarding this development. The reasons for this are two-fold: it will have a direct impact on the operation of our site; and a number of our students live in existing dwellings on the site, and the proposal has the possibility of reducing the standard of living for some or all of these families. We note that engagement activities have taken place with local residents; we would have been expected to be invited to these events to provide comment at an earlier stage in the planning application cycle.</p> <p>While Regent High School applauds Camden's desire to build new homes for its residents, in part to alleviate the chronic overcrowding of many family units, particularly in Somers Town, we believe that this cannot be achieved at the expense of outdoor space for existing residents. As has been demonstrated during lockdown periods in 2020, the ability to easily access outdoor open spaces has a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing, as well as reducing the likelihood of infection from Covid-19 compared with being indoors.</p> <p>We are disappointed that the proposals, as they currently stand, require the removal of a much-used sports court. Anecdotally, we know that Regent High School students and other young people use this space; removing it will reduce the amount of easily accessible play space for young people, especially those young people whose parents/carers want to be able to see them from their flats to ensure their children's safety. We are also concerned that the Design, Access and Landscaping Statement (August 2020) references the expected accessibility of the school's MUGAs (p.19), without referencing that these form part of the Somers Town Community Sports Centre and are hired to a range of users – many with long-term hiring arrangements – to provide additional funding for the school at a time when costs are increasing and budget levels are remaining relatively static. Unless there is funding provided by Camden Council, Regent High School cannot afford to provide its outdoor spaces in lieu of the removal of the space at Godwin and Crowndale. It should further be noted that the space of our fourth MUGA is still occupied by a temporary building that continues to be used as part of the Central Somers Town redevelopment works. Further, while we applaud the intention to improve the remaining open spaces, we do not believe this will sufficiently replace the loss of the MUGA. The Statement also provides a suggestion that Regent High School 'could use facilities' in the new courtyard space (p19); additional information must be provided on this for this to have relevance to our school as, at present, we cannot foresee a need to use this space.</p> <p>We are also concerned at the proposed removal of mature trees and the impact on species that live in and around these trees. While new trees may be planted, they will not be as effective environmentally as the continuing presence of the mature trees already on the site. In an area where air pollution is a concern, and where green open space is dwindling, we are saddened at the potential removal of these trees.</p> <p>Of significant concern to Regent High School is the proximity of the proposed development to our school boundary and classrooms in our North Zone (typically used for the teaching of mathematics, computing and business). We recognise the need to improve the environment along our northern boundary to reduce the regular anti-social behaviour that takes place and to provide more pleasant access to our site for students, staff and families. We do not believe, however, that placing housing with windows that will look into and be looked into from classrooms, is appropriate, especially where those windows are onto bedroom spaces. Our first concern in this regard is that of safeguarding, but our additional concern is over the ability of students and</p>

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staff in classrooms to have the freedom to learn and explore without feeling, or being, watched. While there is clearly housing surrounding the school site, the plans suggest that this housing will be closer to classrooms than at any other part of the school site, which is why we are concerned about the development. The potential impact on light into these classrooms is a concern, especially at a time when we want to reduce our reliance on artificial lighting. We are also concerned about any rise in person or vehicle traffic that may attend such a new development, given the size of the dwellings and the likely number of inhabitants.

Of some concern is the removal of parking. While Regent High School is cognisant of the need for families to reduce their dependence on private vehicles, the necessity of cars to some families is acknowledged. We are concerned about the impact on families who rely on this transport either because of disabled, unwell or aged family members, noting that many of our families – and those of the Godwin and Crowndale Estate – live in multi-generational households.

We are concerned that, in the Construction Management Plan Rev 0.1 there is no reference given to the potential impact on Regent High School or our students, staff or families, of this project in a difficult-to-access space. There is undoubtedly going to be an impact on the operation of the school, and we would have expected to have had such conversations with the relevant parties. Additionally, no consideration is given to amended works at the times of public examinations to reduce the impact on students and their results, which often determine the opportunities available to them later in life. We are also concerned that work is proposed on Saturdays, when we would expect our students and their families to have an opportunity for quiet enjoyment of their dwellings to facilitate homework and home learning on Saturdays and during weekday evenings.

Finally, it is with significant frustration that we continue to see ourselves referred to in documentation as Regents High School. This has never, and will never, be the name of our school. Please ensure that, along with appropriate direct communications with the school, you refer to us as Regent High School on all further documentation. We are a proud Camden community school and it suggests a lack of accuracy on the part of the parties involved in this project that the name of one of the Council's schools is written incorrectly at a number of points in the documentation.

We reiterate that we are supportive of Camden's desire to build additional social housing and to alleviate the often cramped and overcrowded situations in which residents are living, but do not feel that this particular proposal provides adequate positive impact against the negative impacts outlined above. We commend the design of new family homes, but urge the Council to explore other locations for the development of these dwellings while working with Godwin and Crowndale residents to improve their outdoor open spaces without this being as a result of the building of the new dwellings on this constrained site.
