

My name is Lola Soanes. I am the chair of the Godwin and Crowndale Tenant Management Organisation (“the TMO”). I am elected by the residents of Godwin and Crowndale Estate to carry out this role. I am submitting this response following consultation with the TMO committee and local resident and in my capacity as chair of the TMO.

The TMO’s Response

The TMO objects to the proposed development. The TMO notes that the proposal is to build over areas of communal open space in densely populated central London. This development will negatively affect the character of the estate.

In general the development will make the estate a less pleasant place to live for local residents:

- (i) The development is very large. The proposal is to build 10 two story houses (with front and back gardens) in a small space. The estate will become more built-up and (unacceptably) densely populated;
- (ii) The proposal is for a new terrace of houses directly facing Godwin Court and turning the current open communal garden into an enclosed courtyard. This is likely to make the estate much noisier for local residents;
- (iii) The houses are high. Each of the houses has a ground floor, a first floor and a second floor. There are balconies (referred to as terraces) on the first and second floor. There are roof terraces. The people using these balconies/terraces and roof terraces will look towards (and over) into the balconies/windows of Godwin Court and the people using the communal garden;
- (iv) The planning application deals with the issue of overlooking the school but not with the issue of overlooking people using the communal garden or overlooking balconies/windows of Godwin Court. We are concerned that in real terms this overlooking will affect the residential amenity of these residents;
- (v) At present residents in Godwin Court (on balconies and at windows) and residents using the communal garden look out onto open space, trees and green foliage. If these proposals are granted they will look out onto a row of terraces houses. This will obviously affect their residential amenity.

- (vi) The proposal includes cutting down 4 trees (and potentially damaging others) which will make the estate less green and less sustainable;
- (vii) The proposal includes building over a play area for children; and
- (viii) The proposal includes building over a car park which is valuable to local residents.

I have gone into more detail about two of the TMO's reasons for objection (the loss of parking and cutting down/damaging trees) below.

If, despite these objections, the planning committee is nevertheless minded (in principle) to grant planning permission, then the planning committee is asked not to grant planning permission for the development in its current form. Changes can and should be made to make sure that parking provision is preserved and to avoid cutting down trees. There should also be clarity about how much of the communal garden area will be eaten up by the development. At the very least the developers should be asked to look again at these issues before any permission is granted.

Parking

The proposal is to build over a car park. The car park has 18 car parking spaces (paragraph 5.24 of the Planning Statement). The planning statement says that six of these spaces will be re-located to elsewhere on the estate (partly by converting 2 of the existing visitor parking spaces) (see paragraph 5.26 of the planning statement). The planning statement says that this will lead to a loss of 12 to 13 car parking spaces in total (see paragraph 5.27 of the planning statement). These proposals will be detrimental to local residents.

Firstly 12 to 13 households on the estate will lose a parking space. The car parking spaces in the car park are rented out to residents only on a monthly basis. The developers have carried out a car parking survey which aims to demonstrate there is sufficient capacity in surrounding streets. However as the parking survey makes clear many of these spaces are short-stay car parking spaces where vehicles can only stay for two to four hours or single yellow parking. This is not in any sense a like-for-like replacement. At the moment residents can keep their cars in designated parking spaces. You cannot keep your car in a visitor's parking place that you can only stay in for two to four hours.

Secondly the proposal set out in the planning statement involves removing two of the nine spaces for visitor parking. This will negatively impact on residents. Firstly there is not enough visitor parking at present on the estate. This causes real practical problems eg. if friends or relatives are visiting residents or if leaseholders need to get repairs done in their flats. This is particularly important during the pandemic when older or more vulnerable individuals will be concerned about using public transport. But it should also be stressed that visitor parking permits are a source of income for the TMO. If these visitor parking spaces are removed (which seems to be a consequence of this development) the TMO will be deprived of some of this income which will have a negative impact on local residents.

In the past it has been suggested (by the developers to the TMO) that it might be possible to allocate some parking in Charrington Street to the estate to replace that lost by this proposed development. This does not seem to form part of that proposal. If the planning committee is, in principle, considering granting planning permission they should not grant planning permission unless and until arrangements are made to allocate more parking space to the Godwin and Crowndale Estate.

Cutting down Trees

There is an Arboricultural Report attached to the planning application. This Report makes it clear that the proposal includes cutting down four trees which are referred to in the report as T25, T26, T27 and T22 (see table 3 on page 11 of the Arboricultural Report). The developers also propose to prune 7 trees. There are also 7 trees which could be damaged by the developers in the roots, stem or canopy (see table 3 on page 11 of the Arboricultural Report).

The overall effect of cutting down and/or pruning these trees will be significant. The estate will be a less green, less sustainable and less pleasant place to live. The trees are what makes the Godwin and Crowndale Estate special. Local feeling is strongly against cutting down trees.

The most significant tree which is due to be cut down is the tree referred to in the Arboricultural Report as T25. T25 is a very large and very old London plane tree. It has a prominent position at the back of Godwin Court. This means it provides significant amenity to both the flats and the balconies at the back of Godwin Court and anyone using the

communal garden. Cutting it down will (on its own) change the entire character of the estate.

The Arboricultural Report agrees that T25 is an important tree. The report deals with T25 on pages 9 and 23. The report says T25 is a Category A tree (this is the highest category for amenity). The report says T25 is healthy and has a long life ahead of it (see again pages 9 and 23).

We understand that the developer's proposal includes planting replacement trees. Any replacement trees will necessarily be relatively new and young. In real terms they cannot replace a large and established tree like T25 either now or in the near or medium-term future.

The planning committee should, at the very least require the developers to re-design the development to avoid cutting down T25.

T25 is on the grass (in the communal garden) between the car park and Godwin Court. T25 is not on the car park or ball court. The plan on page 32 of the Arboricultural Report suggests that T25 is located where one of the gardens of one of the new houses will be. T25 is not located within the area where any building will actually take place. The Arboricultural Report and planning statement do not say why T25 needs to be removed (eg. the report does not say it is because of eg. foundations, access etc). It is not clear if it is actually necessary to cut down T25 or whether it is simply more convenient for the developers.

We think it must be possible to re-design the development so as not to cut down T25. This might be quite easy eg. leaving T25 in the garden of one of the new houses or pruning T25. It might be more difficult (eg. it might make the development more expensive, involve moving the houses and/or involve building fewer houses). However in principle it must be possible.

We have tried to speak to the developers to explore these proposals. We have been told a landscape architect is prepared to come and meet with the TMO committee. However we have also been told that the landscape architect will only be able to discuss proposals for the design of the landscape (including replacement trees) if the proposals go ahead. We

understand the landscape architect will not be able to discuss how we might be able to avoid cutting down these trees (in particular T25) in the first place.

We would ask the planning committee not to grant planning permission to any development which involves cutting down T25. However the developers should, at the very least, have to justify why it is necessary to cut down T25 and why it is not possible to amend the design to save it. When we have asked these questions, we have not been given an answer. We ask the planning committee to (at the very least) refuse this application for planning permission unless and until the developers have explained why it is necessary to cut T25 down. We suggest that the developers should also be required to explore possible amendments to the design that might enable T25 to be saved. The planning committee can then make an informed decision as to whether (and in what form) to grant planning permission. If these amendments come with eg. additional costs this can all be weighed by the planning committee.

Building on the Communal Garden

We understood that the proposal was to build on the car park and ball court (or play area). However we have seen the plan on page 32 of the Arboricultural Report. This shows the position of the new houses and their back gardens. Tree T25 is shown as falling within one of the back gardens. T25 is positioned on the communal garden area between the car park and Godwin Court. This suggests that the development will eat into this communal green space.

We object to any encroachment onto this communal garden area. We are particularly concerned that if the back of the gardens are too close to Godwin Court (particularly if the fences are too high) this will create an uninviting space.

Proposed Landscaping

We note that as part of this project the developers propose to landscape the communal garden area (which will form a sort of courtyard between Godwin Court and the new development). If this development does go ahead, there are various features that estate residents would like (as part of this landscaping). We consider that if, despite objections, the development goes ahead then local residents deserve these features. This development will put considerable strain on local residents and the local community.

The TMO notes that the planning statement says that the landscaping improvements include the introduction of gym equipment, seating areas, improved lighting and a community garden (paragraph 5.21 of the planning statement). The planning statement also says that new entrances into the courtyard area will be created from the existing stairwell and access points of Godwin Court (also paragraph 5.21 of the planning statement). These are all features suggested by residents concerned during the consultation period. We are concerned that the planning statement then goes on to say that the landscaping strategy is “yet to be finalised” (paragraph 5.21). We are concerned that this development might proceed and residents may not get the landscaping features they were promised. We would ask that planning permission is not granted until there is a guarantee that these features will be put into effect.

We also note that the planning statement appears to suggest that the landscaping will seek to incorporate recreational facilities for those aged 12 and above (as opposed to for young children) (see paragraph 5.21 of the planning statement). If this development does go ahead, residents are clear that they do want play equipment for younger children to be incorporated in this landscaping exercise. Residents said this when there was an initial consultation on these proposals. If the planning committee is minded to grant planning permission, we ask that planning permission is not granted unless and until play equipment for younger children is incorporated into the design.

If I can help any further or if I can provide any further information on behalf of the TMO please do get in touch.

Lola Soanes.