

Minutes of NDF public meeting, 11 June 2018

Attendees: Nick Jackson, Keith Moffitt, David Brescia, Alan Watson, Ian Cohen, Guy Shackle, Batel Yossef Ravid, Richard Burdett, Cllr Flick Rea, John Eastwood, Charles Marks, Andrew Allaz, Cllr Peter Taheri, Reneé Banoun, Stella Tysall, Mary Tucker, Nicki Cohen, Robert Lastman, Stephen Frazer, Gregg Kohansky, Diana Robin

1. Welcome & apologies for absence

Keith (Co-Chair) thanked everyone for attending.

Apologies were received from Sue Measures, Linda Sluys, Juan José Jaramillo, John Saynor, Virginia Berridge, Mary Murphy, Mark Hutton

2. Minutes of last meeting (AGM held 26 February 2018)

The minutes of the previous meeting were formally approved for accuracy.

3. Update on recent planning applications

Nick (Co-Chair) recounted how there had been 140 new planning applications in the NDF's West Hampstead & Fortune Green area in the year to-date, with 112 decisions. He singled out several of interest:

- An advertising company had wanted to build a 7-metre by 3.5-metre illuminated sign on the wall of the **JW3 accommodation block**. The NDF objected, and Camden refused the application.
- Following the refusal of an application to build a 15-metre **communications mast on Blackburn Road** (2016/7213/P), an application was submitted for a 20-metre mast (2018/0774/P) in an even worse position in the middle of the Blackburn Road pavement opposite the Nido student building. The NDF objected, but Camden approved the application, and the mast has now been built. (A resident expressed incredulity at the decision.)
- The NDF objected to an application to instal a **telephone kiosk** outside 10-12 Cricklewood Broadway (2018/0860/P), as its primary purpose was an LCD illuminated digital advertising screen.
- Applications 2018/1515/P and 2018/1516/P proposed to add an extra floor (mansard roof extension) to accommodate additional flats above **the Alliance pub** at 40-42 Mill Lane. The NDF had objected, pointing out that the applicant was incorrectly claiming that that no floorspace would be lost by the pub, whereas the plans showed a wider staircase and entrance for the flats which would result in the loss of pub floorspace.
- New details had been submitted for approval (2018/1902/P) in relation to the development at **317 Finchley Road**. The drawings appeared to show the front of the building encroaching onto the pavement – therefore Nick intended to object to the loss of pavement space.
- An application had been submitted to erect mansard roof extensions on three buildings **100-104 Fortune Green Road** (2018/2014/P): application put in for mansard roofs on top of three buildings opposite the new building to convert the properties from five 1-bed and one 2-bed flats, into form four studio and two 2-bed flats.
- A resident reported that a 3-metre high advertisement stand had been erected and bolted outside the **Studio Society** (37 Fortune Green Road) in the last week, and wondered if it had received planning permission. Nick said the NDF would investigate.
- Following the approval of two applications regarding **32 Kylemore Road**, five more applications had gone in. The NDF would keep an eye on the development, as the plans included a basement excavation going quite deep under a weak building.

- Similar to 34 Mill Lane (2017/5147/P), an application had been made for a mansard roof extension on **36 Mill Lane** (2018/2313/P) to allow a two-bedroom flat (recently expanded by a previously granted mansard roof extension 2017/2062/P) to now be divided into two one-bedroom flats. Nick observed that even though these two extensions would still be shorter than the Alliance, the landlord was citing them as a precedent to argue that the Alliance building should now be allowed to expand even higher.
- John Eastwood reported that he had heard no recent news from Camden on the application for **23 Ravenshaw Street** (2017/0911/P – demolition of existing building and erection of three-storeys plus basement for eight flats). Nick had tried without success to get hold of the relevant planning officer, but said he would try again.
- Keith said the site of the former One Bourbon Tavern (291 Finchley Road) appeared to be building a permanent framework outside the building, for which a planning application had not been submitted. This breach would be reported.
- Residents discussed the **decking in front of Alice House** (283-285 West End Lane). They believed it had been erected without permission, then following enforcement action been allowed on appeal at slightly reduced size.
- A resident recalled the **Banana Tree** (237-239 West End Lane) had likewise built decking without permission. Camden had refused retrospective planning permission and this decision had been supported at appeal.
- A resident brought up **126 Fordwych Road** (2018/1155/P - application for erection of a single-storey rear extension associated with the conversion of four residential units into six). Nick and Keith responded that the NDF tried to avoid getting involved in minor disputes between neighbours, but advised that if anyone thought an application was violating a clause of the Neighbourhood Plan, they should email Camden Council's planning officers directly, citing the breach.
- A resident complained that they no longer received letters from Camden informing them of nearby applications. David advised registering with the Camden website, to receive email notifications of applications within a requested radius of one's address.
- Alan mentioned a recent newspaper article about a Victorian House in West Hampstead being converted into "14 'micro flats' smaller than Travelodge hotel rooms" (Evening Standard, 6 June 2018). David said the photograph appeared to be 11 Dennington Park Road. The NDF agreed to investigate.
- Cllr Flick Rea said that Camden was keen to 'provide more homes', but did not prioritise family homes – a position she said she objected to, as it led to subdivision of three-bedroom flats into multiple one-bedroom flats. Nick agreed that the NDF Neighbourhood Plan called for a mix of different housing types.

4. Progress with re-designation of the Forum

- Keith explained that although the Neighbourhood Plan itself has a 20 year lifespan, the Forum needs to be re-designated every five years. He said the Committee had been advised to hold off until after the local elections (May 2018) so that they did not run afoul of purdah rules. He said the NDF would be emailing its members, including those present, requesting they reply confirming their support. He explained that the members collectively, including everyone present, were 'the forum'. Nick requested that all councillors should record their support as well.
- Keith recounted how the NDF's steering committee had debated how to comply with the new GDPR regulations from the EU. He said they had concluded that the NDF met the 'legitimate interest' legal basis for presenting its mailing list subscribers with an opt-out choice rather than opt-in, as the members were local residents and the NDF mailing list was on local planning matters that affected their lives. Keith added that the NDF had created a privacy policy on its website, and had also emailed it to its members – he stressed that they

were taking the regulations seriously. In response to a question from a resident, David confirmed that the NDF's stall at the Jester Festival would be GDPR compliant, as was the sign-in sheet which attendees had been asked to sign today. Keith said the NDF held very little information about its members compared to many organisations: name, email address, and in some cases postcode. Keith added that the NDF's turnover was only about £1,000 which made it unlikely to attract a substantial fine should a breach of the regulations occur.

5. Current issues and initiatives

Lift for West Hampstead Underground Station

- **West Hampstead Growth Area master planning.** Nick reminded the forum that they hoped to hold a workshop at some point this year to push forward the underground station step-free access proposals. Ian asked the councillors present if they could help the NDF get some CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funding from Camden Council.
- **Meeting with Transport for London.** Guy showed the leaflet the NDF had distributed during the local council elections. He said the NDF had felt the election was a good time to highlight the issues around the tube/train stations interchange. He expressed gratitude to the GLA Transport Committee Chair for visiting West Hampstead and introducing the NDF to Graham Craig, commercial manager at TfL, whose brief is to maximise commercial value on TfL's assets. Guy and Keith had spent about an hour with Graham, showed him detailed plans, and walked him between stations. Graham had acknowledged how difficult and costly it would be to install a compliant lift in the existing tube station, and recognised that it would not add a huge amount of capacity. Guy said Graham had seen the merits of what the NDF was proposing: if TfL could add one storey to the single-storey shops it owned around station, then combined with money from the Mayor of London's fund, CIL, and Camden Council, it might be sufficient to construct a new tube station across the street from the current one, with lifts and twice as many ticket barriers. TfL had indicated that they would not be able to undertake a detailed feasibility study this year, but next year could assign someone from Graham's team of 70 to follow up. The NDF had requested that someone from TfL come to observe our master-planning workshop on this subject. Guy asked councillors to support the application for 'step-free access' funding from the Mayor of London for West Hampstead – which had been denied in the previous two rounds, and also for CIL money which was the responsibility of local councillors.
- Alan asked if an escalator had been discussed in the meeting, considering amount of footfall. Guy replied that there was not a huge level change from street to platform level. He said that technical issues needed to be considered, and designs worked up.
- Guy added that when the current Overground station façade is removed, pedestrians should be pleased by the extra pavement space that would be created.
- Guy mentioned that passenger numbers at West Hampstead Underground Station had levelled off – to TfL's surprise – but that at 11 million passengers per year this was still significantly higher than most other stations applying for funding from the Mayor. He suggested that the Mayor preferred to spreading his £200 million fund in small amounts around a large number of stations in the interests of gaining votes all over London. Guy said the NDF had always tried to emphasise the strategic benefit the West Hampstead interchange has to the whole of London. He added that the Overground would eventually expand to seven-carriage trains, which would likely lead to a resumption in the increasing number of people using the interchange.
- David clarified that if a new underground station was built across the street, the historic architecture of the existing station could be kept and simply repurposed – e.g. for retail.

6. Jester Festival

- Keith reported that the NDF would, as usual, be having a stall at the annual Jester Festival in Fortune Green (7th-8th July 2018). As happened last year, the NDF would be sharing its stall with GARA (Gondar and Agamemnon Residents' Association) to support their objection to proposals to develop the Gondar Gardens Reservoir green open space. Keith said the festival had proven to be good opportunity to engage with people about NDF, including many who didn't hear about us any other way.

7. Presentation on state of play of major developments in West Hampstead

Guy reported on three major developments in West Hampstead that had received planning permission but had not started yet:

- The **school on Liddell Road** opened last year with only three reception classes instead of four. They were waiting to see if will go up to four, or if other activities will be housed in building. 'Phase 2' of this development on this site was to be another 106 residential units in an 11-storey tower and 5-storey mansion block. Guy had wondered whether the planning permission for this phase could be argued to have lapsed, since the approval had stipulated that work needed to commence by March 2018; but a drain had been built, which was probably sufficient. Guy noted that the school had cost £18 million to build (£6 million of which came from the government, and £12 million from the council tax-payer): substantially more per square foot than a school would typically cost. Guy suggested, since the Council had not yet been able to find a buyer to develop the residential portion of the site, that there might be an opportunity to consider changing the development plan to include more 'affordable' units than the four permitted currently. He spoke of the danger to small children from having the school and the planned residential development construction site served by a single access road.
- **156 West End lane.** Permission had been granted to demolish the current former council office building and erect new buildings with 164 residential units, of which 79 would be 'affordable' (50% by area, although not by number of units). Current ground-floor retail tenant Travis Perkins had gone to the High Court in 2017, challenging Camden Council's attempt to evict them, and arguing that the process was flawed. However, their case had been rejected, and so the development would proceed. Guy said the new development would change the look of the area, and part of the desirable view into the West Hampstead Conservation Area would be lost. The details of the developer's s.106 contribution were still to be agreed, but were expected to generate approximately £3 million, of which 50% was supposed to be spent in West Hampstead ward.
- **Midland Crescent.** Permission had been granted in 2015 for a development of 60 units of student accommodation (Guy spoke of the market for high-cost accommodation for students from overseas), and nine residential units – which Guy pointed out was one below the number which would require an 'affordable' housing contribution by the developer. The developer was currently applying for individual conditions.

Guy spoke of likely future developments:

- **Broadhurst Gardens.** Guy wondered if the existing terrace of Victorian properties would be in a Victorian style, with a double-mansard expansion, or if they would be replaced by something more modern.
- **Taverners** on Iverson Road had stated at a public consultation that they intended to submit a planning application for their site before the end of 2017, but had not done so yet.

CLlr Flick Rea mentioned the existence of the **Medley Orchard** open space behind Iverson Road, which she believed was "not owned by anyone" and she wanted it to remain to remain this way. David said that neighbouring residents on Medley Road had complained to him about the amount of fly-tipping on this site and the difficulty they had getting Camden Council to remove it. Flick replied that Medley Road residents tended to look after it themselves.

- Guy mentioned the possibility of the **Homebase, car showroom, and O2 Centre car park** being replaced with approximately 400 residential apartments (retaining parking spaces at the ground floor level) over the next 4-5 years. Guy said the NDF was keen to see the sites developed all at once rather than separately, so that access issues regarding the tube station could be addressed in a holistic way. Alan asked if such a development might help fund the station. Guy theorised it might fund secondary access or primary, if it was large enough. Ian said he had heard that the Homebase lease runs out in 2019. Keith said that the landowner, Land Securities, had previously stated that they had so many other sites in development that they did not view this one as a priority currently.
- **Gondar Gardens Reservoir.** Nick reported that LifeCare Residences (the landowner) had put in an appeal against the previous refusal of their proposal to build a multi-storey retirement complex on this green open space. The appeal will take place over two weeks, starting 15th January 2019. Gondar & Agamemnon Residents Association have put a statement submission to the examiner, as have the NDF and Sarre Road residents' association. Nick noted with satisfaction that Camden Council's grounds for refusal had referenced the NDF's Neighbourhood Plan extensively.
- **Nido, Blackburn Road.** Nick recounted the intention of the owners of the Nido student accommodation building on Blackburn Road, presented at a previous NDF public meeting on 12th September 2017, to apply to add a extra 41 additional units on top of it.

A resident asked whether, in light of the Grenfell fire, councillors present could consider developing something other than a tower block on the Liddell Road site. Cllr Peter Taheri answered "Your point of view will be taken into account." Ian suggested it would be preferable not to blight the neighbouring school with un-necessary building works, with little demand in the current market for such flats. Cllr Taheri said "It is worth looking at what we can do."

8. Any Other Business

- Keith mentioned he was a member of the West End Green Conservation Area Advisory Committee, which now only had four people on it, and so was "on its last legs". He requested that anyone interested in joining speak to him.
- Keith said he would be in touch with the newly elected councillors about who of them would like to join the NDF Committee now that former councillor Phil Rosenberg had stepped down. He observed it might be difficult for a councillor if they were also on the Camden planning committee. Ian said the NDF would ideally like to have one councillor from the West Hampstead ward and one from the Fortune Green ward.
- Residents complained of 'for sale' signs creeping back onto West End Lane, in spite of a prohibition from Camden Council. Ian recalled the Council had removed every sign on West End Lane about 18 months earlier. Cllr Rea said there had been talk of the prohibition on estate agents' boards being expanded to cover the whole borough, but it had not happened yet. Cllr Taheri said he thought "something is in the pipeline". Keith said the planning officers responsible for enforcement had many other priorities to deal with, so would not take action unless they were nagged. Ian suggested that residents contact the offending estate agents directly to complain of their breach.

9. Date of next meeting

To be confirmed.