

NDF AGM, 1 April 2019

Present: Nick Jackson, Keith Moffitt, David Brescia, Guy Shackle, Linda Sluys, Ian Cohen, Juan Jose Jamarillo, Reneé Banoun, Stella Tysall, Diane & Ray Dantzic, Christine Marchant, David Spiers, Ellie Tucker, Stuart Mills, Penny Brown, Rosa Van der Meersch, Eugene Regis, Helen Walher, Cllr Flick Rea, Tracy Shackle, Joanne Scott, Margaret Murphy, Sue Measures, Wayne Stalley, Mark Hutton, Helena Paul, Virginia Berridge, Jiu Ackrow, Agnes Peyser, Gregg Kohansky, Clare Craig, Nicki Cohen, Phil Taylor, Harry Stobart, Cllr Lorna Russell

1. Welcome and apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Peter Taheri, John Saynor (WHAT), Clarence Jackman, David Mass (GARA) Mike Poulard (GARA), Enid Norman.

Gondar and Agamemnon Residents' Association wished to record their thanks to the NDF for its support of their campaign in opposition to the development of Gondar Gardens.

Keith Moffit introduced the NDF Committee members present: himself (co-chair), Nick Jackson (co-chair), David Brescia (Secretary), Linda Sluys (Membership Secretary), Ian Cohen (Member), Sue Measures (Member), Juan Jose Jamarillo (Member), Guy Shackle (Member)

2. Minutes of last ordinary public meeting (19 November 2018) and previous AGM (26 February 2018)

The minutes of the previous meetings were formally approved for accuracy. (Nick approved, Ian seconded.)

3. Redesignation of the forum

Keith recounted how this body was originally designated as the area's Neighbourhood Forum in 2014, and following the passage of five years was required to apply for redesignation. The plan itself has a longer life. Keith remarked it was a long and bureaucratic process, and it was good to be finally out of the way. As required, the NDF had submitted a lot of documentation to Camden Council; the Council went out to consultation, and had 17 responses, all positive. Keith announced the NDF's redesignation would be formally signed off on 12th April 2019.

4. Update on recent planning applications

- Nick explained he would run through the applications in his chairman's report, later in the agenda.
- **O2 car park:**
 - Keith said, when planning this meeting, he had been led to believe there would be more information in the public domain by now; however, nothing further had been heard since the December 2018 Camden document which the NDF was about to show attendees today.
 - Keith recalled the O2 was a large site, next to public transport, with a surprisingly large car park. The land is designated in the Neighbourhood Plan and Camden's local plan for development. For its owner, Land Securities, the land was very valuable. In December, the NDF was approached by Camden, and informed that Land Securities had decided to begin the process of

- redeveloping the site. The NDF held a workshop regarding this site, with local residents, a couple of years ago, and produced a report on the suggestions arising. Camden do not have a specific plan themselves for the site: they showed representatives of the NDF and WHAT (West Hampstead Amenities and Transport) the aforementioned December 2018 presentation.
- Keith said the key issue for the NDF Committee included
 - Height: the development at 100 Avenue Road was an example of the huge buildings currently being approved in the area, and the NDF suspected Land Securities would be pressing for buildings as tall as possible.
 - Accessibility: Another big issue was whether the development will be accessible by road from West End Lane. The NDF is strongly opposed, as it does not want yet more traffic joining West End Lane from Blackburn Road – there is already a lot.
 - The balance between market rate housing and affordable housing: Camden is pressing quite hard for a lot of ‘affordable’ housing. The Liddell Road development has very little, but this is supposed to be offset by a larger amount in the 156 West End Lane redevelopment. (Nick remarked on the ambiguity of terms such as ‘affordable’ and ‘social’ housing.)
 - Finchley Road station: Given the development’s proximity, it would be opportune to consider improvements such as a second entrance to Finchley Road station, and a direct pedestrian walkway between Finchley Road and West Hampstead.
 - Nick and Keith recalled how Land Securities had previously stated, several years ago, that they would not go ahead with redevelopment of the site if Camden’s demands were too prescriptive.
 - Nick said Camden wanted to establish a “new neighbourhood” with this development. The NDF has responded that we do not want a gated community.
 - The NDF is calling for a comprehensive development, tied in with the adjoining vehicle showroom land.
 - The NDF has asked for detailed consideration of bicycle, vehicle and pedestrian movement, and an emphasis on Blackburn Road which is currently in a poor state.
 - Nick: We’d also like (lost jobs replaced) – ‘new town centre’ – route should be as wide as possible to increase provision and perception of public space. Camden don’t just want “way through” – want places for people to stop. NDF asked for retail spaces the full length of the development.
 - Guy talked through the December 2018 Camden presentation:
 - The whole site is in the ‘intensification area’ designated in the 2008 London Plan. This is referenced in the NDF’s Neighbourhood Plan. Residents participating in the NDF’s workshop in 2016 said they wanted a mixed use development, with accessible green space, and access to both tube stations.

- The future of the Homebase shop is uncertain: while 44 other Homebase shops around the UK have been earmarked for closure, this one has not. However, he made the comparison to 156 West End Lane: Travis Perkins had wanted to stay, but Camden Council as landlord had forced them out of their lease.
- Ideas requested by the NDF include an accessible green route, with buildings being only medium rise: 4-6 storeys. If the developers build too high it will negatively impact views of the conservation area. The way the service road works will need to be looked at.
- 800 homes have already been built around the West Hampstead 'interchange' site. The London Mayor is now interested in bigger sites elsewhere – the West Hampstead interchange no longer features in the newest London Plan. That may be what is pushing Land Securities to act now before it drops out of the Camden Plan too.
- There is potential for secondary access to West Hampstead underground station from this site.
- It is important for developers to look strategically at creating a cohesive link across the whole site. An opportunity will be lost if they do not tie in a redevelopment of the adjoining car showroom at this time.
- There is a big need for an additional GP surgery, given the scale of the population increase.
- This site is considered part of the Finchley Road 'town centre', but the gap between West Hampstead and Finchley Road stations is one of the shortest on the network. Consideration should be given to how to benefit both West Hampstead and Finchley Road residents – in particular how to leverage the sizeable CIL funding that will be generated from this project, to improve access to West Hampstead Underground.
- A lot of 'open space' designated along railway lines is not very accessible. It would be very good, considering the traffic pollution on Finchley Road, to have more green open space here.
- The existing environment has problems with anti-social behaviour.
- Post-redevelopment, Sainsbury's vehicles will still need to be able to access their delivery bay – the NDF workshop suggested providing new level deck access about a storey-and-a-half above where the vehicles would travel, for pedestrians.
- Camden is beginning to look at the constraints of the site, and hopefully they will avoid ad hoc development. Land Securities do not own the whole site (i.e. the car showroom), and might have to buy out some leases early if the scale of the development warrants it. Guy noted that Nido was looking to add further units on top of their student building on Blackburn Road, and hypothesised that 13 Blackburn Road and the Clockwork Housing building would probably be up for redevelopment in future.

- West End Lane peters out into Blackburn Road and the builders' depot; this would probably change in the context of redevelopment on the O2 Centre car park.
 - Guy elaborated:
 - The construction work would probably require access from both ends for vehicle deliveries, or the rails could be used to deliver materials by night.
 - The residential portion of the development would be "car free" in accordance with Camden Council policy (new residents denied parking permits, and no parking spaces provided for them), but parking would remain for customers of the supermarket – although the number of spaces could be reduced if the Homebase goes.
 - This site is not considered a good location for offices: Land Securities wants it primarily residential.
 - Provision of greenery is key.
 - Access roads will probably be simplified, with a parking deck for pedestrians.
 - There is a sliver of land between the railway lines with planning consent for student accommodation, but this development appears to have stalled – possibly due to declining land values.
 - There was high level briefing of councillors in November, but the project has been delayed since then.
 - The O2 Centre, opened in 1999, is fully let, and was refurbished fairly recently, so probably makes good money.
 - As land values get higher in the city, development becomes more intensified, which leads to larger retail (e.g. Homebase) moving out of the cities, requiring people to commute more in their cars.
 - It will not be feasible to shut all the car parking while the construction is underway; perhaps it will occur in phases, with different sections shut down and built over.
 - The current London Plan is sensible in terms of preferred building density (habitable rooms per hectare), but the density is going right up in the new plan. This could encourage the developers to try for a 'monster scheme': very dense, with high numbers of inhabitants.
 - Ian warned that because the parking lot is built on a dip, the developers will try to use the sightlines of the Lythos Road estate (7 storeys) and O'Henry's (8-10 storeys) to argue for a 12-story build. The NDF does not want another "West Hampstead Square" appearing on this site. Guy concurred that the developers would try this, but suggested since the site is visible from the West Hampstead Conservation Area, this will be grounds for opposition. A mansion block mix with family units on the ground floor, with access to outdoor space would be preferable.
 - A resident asked if this application could get to the Mayor's level. Guy confirmed: the Mayor can get involved in developments of more than 250 units, and this development will probably be for more than that.
 - A resident asked what the likelihood was that these new homes would be sold off-market to investors in Asia, instead of being available to Londoners – he referenced West Hampstead Square. David quoted a statistic that 75% of new-builds in 'Prime Central London' were sold to overseas investors, with the largest sources being Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia. Guy said things were getting better.

- A resident asked about the vibrations to apartment blocks built between the railway lines. David described a visit to West Hampstead Square, where he noticed the apartments' doors and windows rattling every time a train passed by on either side. He referenced conversations with West Hampstead Square residents complaining that the developer had promised them they would not be able to hear the trains – which had proven false.
- A resident suggested building decking over the railway lines. Guy cited the collapse in 2005 of a Waitrose built over the railway lines of Gerrards Cross.
- Guy suggested decking above the car park could make the Waterstones (first floor of O2 Centre) the new ground level, with enough space underneath for articulated lorries.
- Ian mentioned the neighbouring Blackburn Road builders' depot had renewed their planning permission, but were waiting to see what the larger development would do.
- Keith promised further meetings to discuss.
- Flick complained that the three 'blobs' drawn on the presentation document did not look as impressive as the cohesive green space councillors had called for. Guy described the document as an 'emerging framework' being put into the public realm to stimulate discussion. He said one could not be too prescriptive, or it would put off the developer, but the key to pedestrian connectivity would be to obtain a continuous park, rather than series of isolated 'pocket parks'.

5. Chairs' report

Keith recounted how when the West Hampstead & Fortune Green NDF was created, it was the first Neighbourhood Development Forum in Camden, and the second in the whole of London. Now in Camden there are NDFs for Highgate, Hampstead, and Kentish Town. Others are working on their Neighbourhood Plan, such as the Kilburn Neighbourhood Development. He praised the massive effort of James Earl in getting the West Hampstead & Fortune Green NDF to where it is today. He described how this NDF now advises people in other neighbouring areas, on how we operate.

Masters students have also researched our NDF as an example. Recent activities included:

- A meeting with a senior officer from Transport for London, regarding West Hampstead underground station, which Guy would talk about further.
- A number of meetings with developers. Keith said it was gratifying that various developers now approached the NDF, and recognised the value of trying to get us onside. He recalled the presentation Nido had given to residents at an NDF meeting about their desire to add units to their student building on Blackburn Road.
- The new owner of 307-309 Finchley Road, hoping to create new residential units, had also thought it worth interacting with the NDF.
- Keith had met in January with Camden's planning enforcement team, which is responsible for making sure people comply with rules (including making sure estate agents' signs are removed). Nick asked residents to report any concerns they see to the Camden enforcement team.

Nick spoke of having seen 132 notices so far in 2019. This included 70 planning applications – Nick estimated there would probably be 200 planning applications this year in total. The NDF had objected to about 8 of them (plus applications for telephone kiosks):

- Telephone mast outside student housing Nido: the NDF had pointed out it would clutter up the pavement in an area about to be redeveloped under the master plan. Unfortunately, the planners waved it through.

- Gondar Gardens: The application by LifeCare Residences to construct 81 'extra care' apartments and a 15-bed care home on this green open space, previously rejected, had gone to appeal at the end of January. GARA had been present all 21 days. Nick had attended for two days representing the NDF and its 500 members. A decision was due on 29th May 2019.
- 287 Finchley Road: The NDF had objected to an application to convert a shop into an estate agency.
- 58 Mill Lane: A recent application to convert part of the ground floor from retail to housing – the NDF objected to the loss of retail space, also pointing out that there had been no basement assessment, and the drawings were all wrong.
- 63 Hillfield Road
- Telephone kiosks: as described at previous meetings, the NDF objected to applications to clutter the pavements with additional telephone kiosks, which functioned primarily as advertising stands.
- Alliance pub: A plan had been approved previously to develop five flats in the building (while retaining the pub); then a new owner had applied to add a couple more flats – the NDF had objected to this scheme, and it was turned down. The landowner then came back with a better, smaller, scheme, which the NDF supported.
- For a small issue on Crediton Hill, the NDF had given advice to several homeowners who had asked for it, but had not otherwise gotten involved.
- 108 Fortune Green Road: As described at a previous meeting, the NDF considered an application to add a mansard roof acceptable, but objected to the addition of an extra side-storey as well. The NDF had suggested that the side-storey be added to the back of the building instead.

A resident asked what the latest situation was with 156 West End Lane. Keith said ownership of the building had passed to A2 Dominion, who were waiting for Travis Perkins' lease to expire later this year before they could start development. It was not known how the viability of the scheme might be affected by changes in the London property market. Guy suggested the proportion of 'affordable' housing mandated for 156 West End Lane might also affect the timing of when it would be commercially viable to proceed with construction.

A resident asked the Committee's opinion on the alternative smaller-scale 'frontage' scheme for Gondar Gardens. Nick explained permission had been granted for this scheme in the past, and successfully renewed recently, and was being kept on the back burner by the current owners, so that the site would have more value so they could sell it if they failed to get permission for their larger scheme.

Agnes mentioned that Liddell Road was in the process of being transferred to its new owners, who – having done some token work previously in order to prevent planning permission from lapsing, were due to begin work in earnest in December.

Keith asked if Agnes could inform everyone what she had heard at a recent residents' liaison meeting regarding the works at West Hampstead Overground Station. Agnes reported:

- Lifts had been installed and were working, but would not be available for public use until April, once they had been tested extensively.
- The contractors planned to fully open the station by July, and be completely out of the site by September.
- There was an issue: the façade of the old station building cannot be removed without some protection remaining in place – engineers are worried that if a truck were to veer off the road at that point, the bridge would collapse. Options are to have a new traffic barrier curb (a

very high curb with a railing), or to keep the historic station façade in place as a colonnade (standalone structure). TfL is proceeding with the colonnade option (which means keeping the steps in place), but Camden Council want the tief curb option (which would require extensive engineering works). Two surveys are being undertaken (sequentially, so if one fails, the second can be cancelled): one to test utilities, structure, and loading, and the second to determine what would happen if the station were removed.

- Although the contractors would be off-site by September 2019, the surveys will not be completed before the end of 2020, therefore the old station building would be boarded up in the meantime.

6. Priorities for 2019

- **West Hampstead Underground:** The NDF will continue to lobby for its proposal: a new station, constructed over the tracks on the other side of the from the existing one, with lifts, more barriers, the convenience of being on the same side of the street as the Overground station, and able to be delivered with minimal disruption to the existing station while construction is carried out. Guy recalled how in his previous meeting with TfL's Graham Kale, he had been told that TfL would have no capacity to examine the matter during 2018, but that they look at it 2019. Representatives of WHAT, and Nick on behalf of the NDF, would be meeting with TfL on 3rd April for a new feasibility study looking at the possibility of installing a lift in the existing station – although past studies have shown cost and viability issues. The works at the Overground station demonstrated the problems with attempting a phased development in and around an operational station. The NDF was seeking support for a workshop on this topic. Keith welcomed the co-operation between WHAT and the NDF on the tube station campaign.
- **O2 car park development / West Hampstead Growth Area Master Planning**

7. Financial report & accounts

Nick had been acting as treasurer. He distributed an Accounts sheet to the attended, and referred them to the 'creditors' item. He also stated that at last year's AGM attendees had donated £49 towards the running of the NDF – and this year he was hoping for £60. The NDF's net spending had been £400, at which rate the NDF would run out of money in five years' time.

Keith said the NDF had received grant funding early in its existence, and might get more in future. David suggested the NDF apply for £400 from the pot of CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) money allocated for spending in the West Hampstead & Fortune Green area.

Nick mentioned that organising another public workshop on the O2 Centre car park development – which the NDF wanted to do – would require a £1,000 budget, and therefore could not happen unless Camden and/or Land Securities paid for it.

8. Elections

- The following were approved by attendees:
- Co-Chairs: Keith Moffit and Nick Jackson co-chairs (proposed by David Brescia, seconded by Ian Cohen)
- Treasurer: Nick Jackson was prepared to continue to act as such (proposed by Keith Moffit, seconded by Flick Rea)

- Secretary: David Brescia (proposed by Keith Moffit, seconded by Linda Sluys)
- Membership Secretary: Linda Sluys (proposed by David Brescia, seconded by Guy Shackle)
- Communications Officer: (It was explained that Juan Jose would like to step down from this position, but remain on the Committee as a Member. The NDF would be looking to fill this role in the near future from the Committee.)
- Members: Ian Cohen, Alan Watson, Guy Shackle (proposed by Keith Moffitt, seconded by Nick Jackson)
 - Keith made the following announcements:
- Sue Measures wished to stand down from the Committee. Keith thanked her for having done so much work for the NDF, including the engagement strategy document for the original formation and redesignation.
- Two more local residents had indicated an interest in joining the Committee: Joanne Scott (co-chair of Fordwych Residents Association) and Margaret Murphey (of Pandora Road). Keith had invited them to attend a committee meeting to see if it is to their taste.
- Keith re-iterated that local councillors were always welcome to attend committee meetings. He would try to let them know the dates long enough in advance.

9. Any Other Business:

Helena reported she had gone to a meeting about Camden Air Quality Plan a few weeks earlier. She was not sure how effective a single council could be in tackling an issue of such scale – e.g. the air pollution generated by traffic on Finchley Road. She said strategy at the national Government level would be better.

Upcoming local events were announced for residents, including the WHAT AGM, a ‘Go West Hampstead’ quiz, and volunteers picking up litter from the Black Path.

Keith mentioned that the chair of the Conservation Committee (the advisory group for West Hampstead’s conservation area) had moved out of the area, leaving only a few active members remaining. Volunteers were invited to contact the NDF if they wished to get involved.

10. Date of next meeting

To be confirmed.