

27 March 2015

To: Haringey Council

Dear Councillors

Response to Local Plan: Site Allocations DPD

Tottenham Civic Society was founded in 2006 to preserve and enhance the heritage and built environment in Tottenham, and to encourage sustainable regeneration.

We have considered the Council's Local Plan Consultation. We appreciate the London and Borough-wide need to build more housing, and to accomplish this in a logical manner that makes best use of available space. We believe that this need has to be balanced with a sustainable and improving environment for local people.

With reference to the Site Allocations DPD:

A. General Comments:

1. Open space

The value of open space is noted (page 11). The 'green grid' approach would appear to be a good idea, if it acts to connect the green spaces across the borough with improved landscaping, traffic calming, footpaths and cycle ways. Green grid approach should not be used as a pretext for any loss of open green space, for example parts of Lordship Recreation Ground.

2. Access to open space

The ambition to improve access from Wood Green to Alexandra Palace Park is noted. In our view this should be balanced with an ambition to improve access from Wood Green to Lordship Recreation Ground also, as this is only a few hundred metres from the edge of Wood Green, and offers at least as many recreational opportunities.

3. Major roads

There should be an ambition to improve the amenity and appearance of major roads such Lordship Lane, West Green Road and Philip Lane, among others, which are key connecting roads from the centre to the east of the Borough.

4. Relocation of certain types of business to protect residential areas

There should be an overall strategy to relocate some kind of commercial business that cause a nuisance in some residential areas – for example car workshops. These blight certain roads in Tottenham. Examples can be provided if necessary.

5. Reduction of vehicle crossovers

There should be a strong ambition to reduce the damage to gardens and streetscapes caused by parking, in the number of crossovers that are granted and also the number of illegal parking spaces created in the east of the borough. We have seen the response of Muswell Hill and Fortis Green Association and agree with it.

B. Specific Sites:

1. Open Space at Tottenham Green Leisure Centre

We are opposed to the principle of development on the open space (parking/grass) in front of Tottenham Green Leisure Centre. We agree with the submission of Clyde Area Residents Association in this respect. The site is an important open extension of Tottenham Green, and has enormous potential as future amenity space.

2. 315 Roundway

Regarding the site of 315 Roundway (numbered SA 65 or 66) we are in favour of redevelopment here. However in our view a five storey development would be much too high for this location. None of the surrounding buildings are more than 3 storeys in height; most are two storeys.

The area would benefit from a low level development that would not compete with Bruce Castle Museum, and which would complement and not impinge on surrounding conservation areas. This was the finding of the Planning Inspectorate when this principle was last tested around 2007, at which the Society made strong representations.

Although this site is not in a conservation area, it is bounded by conservation areas on all sides. The Inspector took the view that as such it has a key impact on all those conservation areas and in particular Bruce Castle. The site lies at the junction of Church Lane, which leads to a number of listed buildings including All Souls Church. For this reason we would be strongly opposed to a large five storey block at this location, at the gateway to Tottenham's historic village heart.

3. Broadwater Farm and Lordship Recreation Ground

Regarding the Broadwater Farm Area (numbered SA 63 or 64) we are strongly opposed to any suggestion of building on Lordship Recreation Ground, whether this is permanent or temporary. In our view the inclusion of part of the Recreation Ground in the Site Allocations DPD is unnecessary and highly undesirable, for the following reasons.

Lordship Recreation Ground is Tottenham's equivalent of Hyde Park. After years of relative neglect, in recent years it has received a massive investment in new landscaping and community activities, volunteering, recreation and engagement.

The main gate of the Lordship Recreation Ground is the Lordship Lane gate. This provides – at this high point – the main ceremonial entrance to the Recreation Ground, from which it can be viewed in its entirety. It is thus of vital importance to the identity and status of the Recreation Ground. We believe this part of the Rec is of inseparable integrity to the whole.

The designation of this major park as a 'recreation ground' might lead some to accord it less value than a formal park, but this would be entirely at odds with its value to the local community, to wildlife, and to the visual amenity and landscape of Tottenham.

The Rec is a haven for wildlife, and the northern part of the Rec has improved hugely in this respect in the last few years with creation of wildflower meadows and new tree planting. There remains more capacity for tree planting in the area. The site represents a remarkable contiguous green space with Downhills Park to the south.

In terms of its importance in the landscape, the views from Lordship Lane to the south, and from the southern end of the Rec up to Lordship Lane are sightlines of key importance and beauty. This is the landscape on which Luke Howard observed and formulated his new names for clouds.

Opposite the Rec, on the northern side of Lordship Lane, is the long parade of 1920s neo-classical model housing forming the southern boundary of Tower Gardens estate, which is a conservation area. These homes have just been restored under Decent Homes funding. They are also designated Article 4. Their position facing the open space of the Recreation Ground, with uninterrupted light from the south, is a key feature of the conservation area.

The origins of Lordship Recreation Ground are entwined with those of Tower Gardens Estate, and it has been the place where residents have gone for recreation for almost 100 years. To separate the Estate from the Rec would have extremely negative social and environmental costs to the Estate.

It is noted that there are no proposals to build on areas of green space in the west of the borough.

It is noted that the overall site includes a large number of private freeholds fronting Lordship Lane.

In our view the social and environmental costs of demolishing Broadwater Farm Estate and surrounding buildings are not justified.

Tottenham suffers from a range of social deprivations, all of which are ameliorated by the presence of the Recreation Ground, and all of which would be inclined to worsen significantly if such a large part of the Rec were to be lost to housing development.

We believe the Council has a clear and overriding duty to preserve and enhance this most important of Haringey's open green spaces.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Bradby (Chair) on behalf of the committee and members of the Society