



St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum

Newsletter February 2019

Cargiant scraps its plans for Old Oak Park and demands an inquiry into spend by the OPDC

We have discussed the plans for the regeneration of Old Oak (the area north of Wormwood Scrubs) on several occasions at our open meetings.

The Old Oak and Park Royal Development Corporation has been the planning authority for this area since 2015. It is also a development body, preparing its own masterplan for the area.

The OPDC has stuck rigidly to a 2015 'vision' for the area which involves 24,500 new homes being built on this 'brownfield' land – the largest regeneration area left in London. The OPDC Board and its Planning Committee have ignored representations from local groups (including the StQW Forum) which have pointed out that the resultant housing densities would require residential towers at heights new to London.

Equivalent exist in Hong Kong and Shanghai, and the first few residential towers of 70 storeys and above are under construction in London (on the Isle of Dogs).

Last week came an unexpected announcement from Cargiant's owner Tony Mendes. He summarised the position as follows: *In short, the development simply doesn't stack up and no developer can afford to meet the costs of developing the land. Cargiant's window of relocation has been lost. The OPDC doesn't have worked-up designs for the land, doesn't have a development partner and hasn't solved the huge technical challenges of delivering the infrastructure to the site.*

Cargiant say they have spent £8.3m in working up their detailed proposals for Old Oak Park. There have been a series of public consultations on these plans, which many local residents have attended in recent years.

We had thought that discussions between Cargiant and OPDC were continuing and would lead shortly to a planning application. It seems now that this is not the case, and that the development arm of the OPDC has been working up their own plans through a team of consultants led by AECOM.

An impasse now looms. The Examination in Public of the OPDC Local Plan is in April. StQW will be there to argue that the proposed density levels require very tall buildings of such complex design that financial viability will make the whole development unviable as well as unliveable. It seems that Cargiant will be making the same case.

We and other groups who make up the Old Oak Neighbourhood Forum will argue the case for a Plan B. More than ever, it looks as though this will be needed.

Open meeting on February 27th – Heathrow's consultation on new flight paths

There will be an open meeting of the Forum (and St Helens Residents Association) on **Wednesday 27th February at 8pm in St Helens Church Hall.**

The current consultation by Heathrow airport on a set of new flightpaths looks ominous for North Kensington. Aircraft noise could increase significantly in this part of the borough. The consultation closes on 4th March.

The changes to flightpaths are designed to increase the 'efficiency' of the present two runways (i.e. more planes taking off and landing). This is a separate issue to whether a third runway should be built at Heathrow

The technical content of the consultation is complex, and we hope to have someone at our meeting (from either RBKC or the Heathrow campaign) to explain the details. There will then be a week in which representations can be submitted from StQW/SHRA and individual residents.

Support our local shops

As across all of London, retail and service activity in local shopping parades is under huge pressure. Rents and business rates require a level of turnover and profit that many outlets cannot sustain.

In the StQW Neighbourhood Plan, we widened the range of permitted uses in our three parades in an effort to keep shop units in use.

Adriana's café in St Helens Gardens (the re-opening of which is a story in itself) has been a very welcome arrival. The opticians next door would welcome more custom. The conversion of No.73 St Helens Gardens to an extension of Bassett House school is an unorthodox use of a 'shop'. This has been supported by StQW as the sort of creative thinking that ensures that units in neighbourhood parades are refurbished, bring footfall, and do not sit empty and shuttered..

North Pole Road is currently struggling harder than St Helens Gardens. There have been two recent applications to re-open the corner store at No.18 (empty for 15 or more years). The first, as a hot food takeaway was withdrawn (StQW and RBKC policies resist such use). A second, for a café/restaurant, is attracting objections over concerns that this will in practice be a Deliveroo/Just Eat outlet very akin to a takeaway. We can discuss what is needed in NP Road at our open meeting.