



St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum

Newsletter October 2015

Outcome of Examination of the StQW Draft Neighbourhood Plan - support for the Plan's key proposals.

The independent Examiner of our draft neighbourhood plan, John Parmiter FRICS MRTPI, chaired a public hearing on 22nd September, at St Helens Church.

His role has been to establish whether the policies and site designations proposed in the Draft Plan meet the necessary legal requirements. These include 'due regard' for the National Planning Policy Framework and 'general conformity' with 'strategic policies' in the RBKC Local Plan.

His report to the Council has now been published. Its two main conclusions are:

- **All three of the St Quintin backlands should be designated as Local Green Space, and protected from development. This includes the land leased until earlier this year to Clifton Nurseries, at Nursery Lane.**
- **New housing should be allowed in the EZ sections of Latimer Road as and when any of the light industrial Units 1-14 are redeveloped, with residential above commercial floorspace and within height limits as per StQW policy 8e.**

This outcome supports the key policy proposals in the Draft Plan. The first was fought against by planning consultants acting for the Legard family and developers Metropolis Property Ltd. The second was opposed by the Council which wished to retain the current restrictions on housing use in those sections of Latimer Road designated as an Employment Zone (EZ).

The evidence and justification for the Plan's proposals, as provided in its documents and as backed up by many consultation responses from local residents, has led the independent Examiner to accept these as making better sense for our neighbourhood.

The Save our Green spaces petition, signed by over 2,500 people, helped to make the case that all three of these pieces of undeveloped land are 'demonstrably special' to local people. This is a big success.

The next step is for the Council to issue a 'Decision Notice' on the Examiner's recommendations. This stage is being discussed with the Forum, and there are no indications that the Council will do other than accept in full the outcome of the examination process.

An StQW/SHRA open meeting will be held as soon as we can find a free evening at the church hall.

What next for the land at Nursery Lane?

As many local residents know, this 'backland' forms part of the original layout of the St Quintin Estate. The site passed from the St Quintin family to the Legard family in the 1950s.

Clifton Nurseries leased the land in the mid 1960s, and sheltered housing was built on its southern part. The northern part, with its row of weeping willows, has since been in continuous agricultural/horticultural use.

When we wrote to the Legard family in late 2013, explaining that a neighbourhood plan was in preparation, their response was to have the site marketed as a 'residential development opportunity'.

We immediately notified the Legard family, and the Council, that this was not how local residents saw the future of the land. But they chose to proceed with a sale.

It remains unclear whether the Legards, or developers Metropolis Property Ltd, are now the owners. Or if the sale was always 'conditional on planning'. Metropolis then spent many months preparing detailed plans for a scheme of 20 four bedroom homes, but last May withdrew their planning application to await the outcome of the StQW Plan.

They now have their answer. Local Green Space is a planning designation as strong as Green Belt land. The prospect of any housing development on the land has been knocked back, we hope for good.

The site's owner's will now review their options. They may or may not choose to discuss this new position with local residents and the StQW Forum, as well as with the Council. Continued horticultural use of the site, compatible with Local Green Space designation, would be one possibility. We do not believe the assertions from Metropolis that they could choose to 'intensify' what they claim to be some form of 'waste recycling use' on the land. No planning permissions for such use exist.

Other options, including the creation of some form of communal garden for the area (and for the sheltered housing residents) are there. Ideas for a 'community market garden' (suggested previously by the RBKC team who manage the local 'kitchen gardens') could also be back on the table.

We hope that the site's owners will prove more willing to talk to the local community, this time round. They underestimated the strength of local feeling, and our capacity to put work into preparing a neighbourhood plan.