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St Helens Residents Association

St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum

Proposals from Northcare (Scotland) for a 72 unit care home at Nursery Lane

The exhibition of proposals by Northcare at Brickfields Hall on 2nd March was well attended by several groups of StQW/SHRA members - who arrived in an (unplanned) sequence to ask awkward questions of the developers and their team of consultants.

The development director from Northcare was present. The explanation of why the company alighted on this site as having any development potential remains a bit of a mystery. We were told a land agent for the Legards happened to be talking to an agent seeking a London site for Northcare's first London venture.

Even more of a mystery is why Northcare chose to engage Savills, Concilio and a team of architects to work up proposals before talking to anyone in the neighbourhood. The planning obstacles to their proposals were rehearsed at the exhibition, and also repeated by local residents in a consultation webinar a few days earlier.

A revived Nursery Gardens Action Groups has delivered flyers to the three streets around the site. Please email sthelensassn@aol.com if you would like to be put in touch with this group. The image below shows the proposed extent of coverage of the site, with just one of the row of willow trees remaining.



The consultation page on the Concilio website for the project is now closed, although comments and queries can still be directed to cbegg@conciliocomms.com. Northcare say they are now 'heavily invested' in the project (i.e. have spent large sums in preparing proposals). So a planning application seems likely. The Examination in Public of the new Draft Local Plan is now underway, with Louise Nurser BA (Hons) Dip UP MRTPI appointed as the Planning Inspector. She has yet to identify the 'matters and issues' on which she wishes to hear evidence at public hearings.

Northcare and their agents Savills made representations during last year's Local Plan consultation that lack of future RBKC provision for extra care beds in the Borough makes the Plan 'unsound'. The Council rebutted this claim in its response to representations and also stated that there is no justification for removing the Local Green Space designation on the land at Nursery Lane. There the issue stands at the moment,

Unit 10 Latimer Road

The planning application for a five storey mixed use redevelopment on the site of the light industrial building at Unit 10 has now attracted over 90 objections. These include several from residents in Eynham Road and one from a LBHF ward councillors for College Park and Old Oak ward.

The StQW Neighbourhood Forum has objected, on the basis discussed at our open meeting on Zoom on March 1st. Our objection is [posted on the StQW website](#). Although the proposed upper

two storeys of the building are set back from the street frontage, we think the building is one floor too high at 18m. In our view this meets neither the requirements of RBKC's own 2021 Design Code for Units 1-14, nor the height policy in the 2018 StQW Neighbourhood Plan. But the applicants argue that pre-application advice has been supportive on the issue of building height.

There are 8 representations on the RBKC website supporting the application. It is not clear how swiftly a decision on the application will be made by the Council. The application for a redevelopment at Ivebury Court on the same side of Latimer Road was submitted in May 2022 and has yet to be decided.

Imperial's application for 12 storeys of student accommodation on Wood Lane

The StQW Forum has also objected to this application. The proposal bears no relation to the 3-5 storey 'administrative building' originally approved by LB Hammersmith & Fulham for this corner site (on Shinfield Street). This lower building, allowing some sunlight to reach the 'public square' in the centre of the development, formed part of the 2013 masterplan for Imperial's 'White City campus'. Another 'public benefit' which will not be delivered from the overall scheme..

Around 20 other objections have been submitted to the application for more student accommodation. Copies of these representations have had to be requested from LBHF, as this council does not publish them on its website (unlike most Boroughs).

It remains surprising that residents in Eynham Road and surrounding streets remain relatively accepting of the extreme building heights and site densities packed onto this site. It was mainly St Helens/StQW members who campaigned and raised funds to try to fight off the 35 storey 'Imperial Folly' - the first building of this height in this part of London and since followed by too many more.

We have suggested in the StQW objection that any planning consent for this further block of student accommodation **should be made conditional on Imperial first making a start on construction of the pedestrian/cycle underpass to Latimer Road.**

In a significant new step, the Mayor of London is no longer granting 'Stage 2 approvals' to any buildings above 30m in height without a second staircase for evacuation in a fire. Applications at or above this height, across London, are deemed 'strategic' and must be referred to the Mayor. His new requirements on fire safety have come in advance of expected changes to national Building Regulations, following the Grenfell Inquiry.

Imperial's application for this final building on the Woodlands site includes only a single staircase from the 3rd to 11th floor. So it looks as if this proposal will be caught up in what came as a shock to the London development industry, and that there will now be a delay for a redesign.

Kensal Canalside and tall buildings in London

The Mayor's new requirements on second staircases, and their overnight introduction, are having a wide impact. Peabody Housing Association has said that many of their schemes will be delayed while redesigns take place. Berkeley Homes has a new delay on its 39 storey tower at Paddington Police station, and is reported as saying that the company *will no longer focus on tower schemes and build more low-rise developments in future if the government's proposed ban on single staircases in blocks above 30m goes ahead.*

Schemes within the OPDC area at North Acton and Old Oak Lane are also likely to be delayed, including some with planning consent but without GLA Stage 2 approval.

It took the example of a partial collapse of a tower block at Ronan Point in Newham back in 1968 (in which 4 people died) to bring about public loss of confidence in residential towers. Many unpopular local authority blocks were demolished in subsequent decades. The 'second wave' of large numbers of 30-60 storey residential buildings across London did not get under way until the last couple of decades.

It is a Berkeley Homes subsidiary (St William) which is the landowner/developer of the that part of the Kensal Canalside proposals nearest the Grand Union Canal. Following a 'Developer Forum' held by RBKC in November 2021, little more has been heard about these St William proposals (although pre-application discussions with RBKC may well be continuing).

Sainsburys/Ballymore have been much more active in holding a series of further consultations on their proposals at Kensal Canalside (badged as [Project Flourish](#)). Ballymore learned their lesson on second staircases following refusal of proposals at the Isle of Dogs. Their latest designs for Kensal Canalside have already been reworked to include such staircases. Submission of a planning application is expected this summer/autumn, with a new Sainsburys built by 2027 if the scheme proceeds.

St Helens Gardens streetscape improvements

After long delays, these works appear to be more or less complete. The 'rain gardens' have been planted. Some extra bollards have been added to stop parking on the forecourts (but not bad parking on the pavement and 'Copenhagen crossings').

No sign yet of the results of the road safety audit which the RBKC transport commissioned. No physical obstacles as yet installed to stop vehicles cutting corners at the Kelfield Gardens junction. We have asked RBKC to follow up on these points and await more news.

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