

St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Forum

Newsletter October 2019

Feedback from our Annual General Meeting

At the StQW/St Helens Residents Association AGM on October 23rd we discussed our usual overview of planning issues in this part of London.

Regeneration plans at Old Oak are largely on hold at the moment, pending the outcome of the Oakervee review of the HS2 project and the Planning Inspector's final report on the 'soundness' of the OPDC Draft Local Plan. Cargiant remain adamant that they are staying put and OPDC planning officers have plenty of re-drafting work to do on their Local Plan.

Thanks to those of you who sent in objections to the revised application at 'Mitre Yard' in Scrubs Lane. A decision is due at the OPDC Planning Committee on November 12th.

Meanwhile a new proposal for a residential tower has surfaced, at the junction of Wood Lane and DuCane Road. Womens Pioneer Housing in partnership with developers HUB are developing plans for a new 'co-living' accommodation, a new office space and affordable housing.

Housing Associations need to build more housing. But despite being designed by well known architects AHMM this latest proposal (see image below) was greeted with groans at our well attended meeting.



Proposed Womens Pioneer Housing scheme at 227 Wood Lane, opposite the Imperial White City campus and tower.

A planning application is expected before Xmas and will be decided by Hammersmith & Fulham Council. The 24 sq m 'co-living studios' will be on 25 floors, with communal spaces. Such developments are seen as boosting housing numbers for 'young Londoners' but feel like one small step from student accommodation.

Memorial Park proposals

The restored grass pitches with new drainage are now completed and in use. This is another small victory for StQW/SHRA (we lobbied hard against a proposed and expensive floodlit and fenced football pitch). The Council is now turning its mind to ideas to replace the present kiosk and changing rooms in the park.

A majority of respondents to the recent consultation favoured well designed modern buildings. As it happens our neighbourhood includes several architects with relevant expertise. We will be suggesting to the Council that it might like to strengthen local 'ownership' of the new buildings by choosing a designer who lives or works in the area.

Paving over of front gardens

This subject prompted much debate at our AGM. While many people remain unaware of the details of RBKC planning policies, the use of 'impermeable' surfaces in front gardens is a breach of planning controls unless specifically approved. We reinforced this policy in the StQW neighbourhood plan (other than for tiled front paths which are an important feature of the conservation area).

The Council has done little to enforce this policy in recent years. But the number of front gardens that are being covered with slate or paved over (often as part of a basement conversion) has continued to grow and RBKC are now taking a more active interest..

The issue is not just one of the appearance of the area (more high garden walls, more railings) but the very real risk of flash flooding. As permeable gardens disappear, this area's risk of flooding from very heavy downpours increases. And as the impact of climate change takes hold, the frequency of extreme weather events increases also. We live in a 'critical drainage area' so please accept that your neighbours may not be keen to see your front garden become 'impermeable' and may ask RBKC to intervene.

Short term lets and Airbnb

This is becoming another contentious issue in our neighbourhood. The number of properties advertised for 'short term lets' continues to grow in RBKC.

There are now at least 16 properties within the StQW boundary advertising on the Airbnb site. Most are whole houses and flats, where the seemingly friendly 'host' will not be living but will arrange entry via a key box. London has legislation restricting short term lets to 90 days in any one year unless planning permission for 'change of use' is obtained. Let us know of any problems with Airbnb near you and we will return to this subject at our next open meeting.