



NATIONAL HOSPITAL FOR NEUROLOGY AND NEUROSURGERY

Comments on amended redevelopment proposals

21 July 2003

These comments have been prepared by a Residents Association Select Committee comprising most members of the Select Committee that produced the paper approved by the RA Council on 3rd December 2002. Henceforward that document is referred to as the “RA’s original paper”. This paper follows the main paragraph headings of the RA’s original paper for ease of comparison and should be read in conjunction with the original.

Relocation of Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute

The RA continues to support the principle of an Institute on this site.

London Borough of Barnet Planning Brief

Apart from the fact that an Institute is planned for the site, the proposed development still does not appear to conform to any of the major stipulations of the London Borough of Barnet Planning Brief for this site.

The Effect on Residents in Existing Properties

We remain concerned about the effect on residents whose land and properties border the site. The proposed Institute building would have a particularly devastating effect on numbers 26 and 24 Edmunds Walk and, to a slightly lesser extent, on numbers 22 and 20 Edmunds Walk.

1. Height and scale of the proposed buildings

The Institute

- 1.1 The roof design of the Institute has been altered to remove dormers, which may reduce the apparent bulk of the building. However, the ridge height has been increased by one and a half metres and the height of the central light well feature by one metre. The increase in height is unwelcome.
- 1.2 There is no change to the footprint or orientation within the site.

- 1.3 None of the amendments to the proposals address the basic problems of the Institute building, which are that its footprint is too large, it is too high, and, it is located too close to the relatively short rear gardens of the houses in Edmunds Walk adjacent to the northern boundary of the site. This is totally unacceptable.
- 1.4 There is no apparent reason why the building could not be reoriented to be parallel with East Finchley Station (which it purports to relate to) and its northern and southern wings “slid” each side of each other about the top lit central circulation area. This could reduce the size of the building’s footprint. The whole building could then be relocated further south, well away from the Edmunds Walk boundary.
- 1.5 We have seen a scale model of the development which appears to show that there is significant overshadowing of the windows and gardens of Nos. 26 and 24 Edmunds Walk contrary to claims made by the applicant.
- 1.6 Minor amendments to the fenestration on the elevation to Edmunds Walk are insignificant as improvements.

The Residential Blocks

- 1.7 The footprint of Block A has been slightly reduced and Block B has been re-orientated. However the blocks, particularly block B, are still overpoweringly large in relation to the residences that surround the site on three sides.
- 1.8 The ridge and eaves heights of both blocks A and B have been reduced by some two metres.
- 1.9 The distance of block A, from the nearest point to the northern boundary with Edmunds Walk, has been increased by one and a half metres. The distances between block B and the Edmunds Walk boundary and between blocks A and B have been increased by one metre and six metres respectively. The distance between block B and the southern boundary with Bishops Avenue remains the same.
- 1.10 However, part of block B has been moved three metres closer to the western boundary with Deansway, at a point where block B will be on higher ground than the houses in Deansway. (Please refer to RA’s original paper, drawing number 4). This is of further detriment to the amenity of most of the residents of Deansway.
- 1.11 The number of apartments in block B has been reduced by one, from 18 to 17. However, the number of bedspaces in the amended block remains the same, at 101.
- 1.12 All of these amendments, except the move closer to Deansway, are welcomed as small steps forward in the right direction. However, the density of the residential blocks is still considerably higher than that of the residences which abut the proposed development on three sides.
- 1.13 Enlarged balconies at roof level and reconfigured balconies at lower level still overlook the rear of properties in Edmunds Walk and Deansway.

2. Noise

The repositioning of the café from the Edmunds Walk side of the Institute Building to the side facing East Finchley Station is welcome. There may still be a problem of noise from the proposed patio doors in the basement adjoining Edmunds Walk. Conditions on the use (e.g. no noise at the perimeter of the site) and hours of use may be appropriate for rooms on the elevation over-looking Edmunds Walk.

3. Design

Both residential blocks have been redesigned in an attempt to reduce the appearance of their bulk and to more sympathetically complement the design of nearby residential buildings. These amendments are welcomed. However the bulk and scale of block B in particular is still overpowering in relation to the existing houses in Deansway.

4. Protection of trees

- 4.1 An attempt has been made to preserve existing trees and to provide additional landscaping which could screen the development from existing residential buildings on three sides of the site. If any development is given planning permission, care must be taken to enforce the provision of this landscaping through strict planning conditions.
- 4.2 Our previous submission stated that we were concerned that no trees subject to preservation orders on the perimeter of the site should be removed or threatened by buildings which would interfere with their root systems. We continue to have serious concerns on this issue and feel the Council should obtain its own report on each of the trees affected.

5. Basements

Our original comments regarding tree root disturbance have not been addressed.

6. Access

- 6.1 The access road to the site has been moved approximately one and a half metres to the east. A landscape buffer together with a lit footpath is proposed between the road and number two Bishops Avenue.
- 6.2 These amendments do not seriously address the concerns of the owners of number two Bishops Avenue.
- 6.3 A planning application for an access road to the Neurological Hospital in the same position as now proposed, was refused on appeal in 1993. (See Planning Inspectorate report reference T/APP/N5090/A/93/218619/P2 dated 12 May 1993). The traffic generated by the current proposals would far exceed that generated by the hospital at the time of the appeal and traffic flow on adjacent roads is greater today.
- 6.4 It is felt that an alternative access, which might by agreement be combined with the existing rear access to East Finchley Station from Cherry Tree Hill, would be both possible and desirable.

7. Traffic and Parking

- 7.1 Commuter parking around East Finchley Station is controlled by a CPZ. However intermittent parking during the day, such as would be typical for any Institute use, would not be controlled.
- 7.2 Concerns about traffic and parking, as expressed in the RA's original paper remain, especially with regard to the likely situation during the evening, when the Institute Building will be open.

Conclusions

The proposed amendments do not cause any substantial amendments to the conclusions of the RA's original paper as follows:

- The spirit of this part of the Hampstead Garden Suburb Conservation Area would be harmed by the over development of this backland.
- The RA regrets that the amended proposal contains no reduction in size, no improvement in design and no change in location of the proposed Institute building, and no substantial change to the bulk and location of the two residential blocks. Without these it seems impossible for the development to conform to criteria set out in *PPG 15 Planning and the Historic Environment, The London Borough of Barnet Unitary Development Plan, November 1991 and The Revised Deposit Draft London Borough of Barnet Unitary Development Plan, March 2001*, as applicable to the Hampstead Garden Suburb Conservation Area.
- The amended proposal would have a detrimental impact on the amenity of its neighbours through overlooking, traffic and noise generation, loss of existing trees and the existing visual permeability of the site.
- The amended proposal would still be out of scale with and, unsympathetic to the grain of its surroundings, in spite of amendments making some attempt to alleviate this problem. The amended proposals will still impinge detrimentally on those houses in Hampstead Garden Suburb which share a boundary with the site and will also be apparent from the public areas of Deansway and Edmunds Walk which are part of the Conservation Area.
- A smaller scale development should be sought for the main site with a large part of the land retained as open space either in private gardens or, as is typical in Hampstead Garden Suburb, as amenity land.
- The original structure of the existing building on the site has some merit and, an alternative scheme, which retained it, would inevitably set a different scale of development of more modest buildings in a complementary architectural style.
- **The HGS Residents Association recommends that the London Borough of Barnet refuse planning permission for the amended proposal in its present form.**

To be presented to the Council of the HGS Residents Association at its meeting on Tuesday 2 September 2003