



## THE WEST CHISWICK & GUNNERSBURY SOCIETY

Mr Michael Jordan  
Director of Environment  
London Borough of Hounslow  
Civic Centre, Lampton Road  
Hounslow TW3 4DN

M L Rabouhans  
80 Silver Crescent  
Chiswick  
London W4 5SE  
11 November 2011

### **Land at Chiswick Roundabout, Junction of Gunnersbury Avenue and Great West Road, Brentford, London W4**

Dear Mr Jordan,

I am writing on behalf of the West Chiswick and Gunnersbury Society (WCGS) and this letter constitutes a formal complaint from the Society concerning the decision reached by the Sustainable Development Committee (SDC) on Thursday 27 October 2011 with respect to the proposed development at the above site. The Society's complaint relates to the conduct of the meeting and the decision of "Approval subject to Legal Agreement" reached by the Committee.

#### **Conduct**

The protocol for speakers at SDC meetings states:

"For planning applications, the applicants will only be allowed to speak if there is an objector who wishes to address the Committee. In exceptional circumstances the Chair may agree that an applicant who would significantly add to the information already available will be allowed to speak at the Committee in the absence of an objector."

Before the Papers for the meeting were available I had suggested to the Committee Administrator that a WCGS representative might wish to speak as an objector. I later informed the Committee Administrator that, having read the relevant Planning Officer's Report and in light of the protocol for speakers, WCGS did not seek to address the SDC. No other objector requested to speak. The Society therefore questions on what basis the SDC Chairman permitted two people to speak on behalf of the developer. What were the exceptional circumstances? Did one or more Councillors request that the developer speak?

WCGS wishes to be informed what representations or contacts were made by the developer or his representatives to members of the SDC prior to the

SDC meeting, and whether these have been declared in the Council's record of members' interests.

The Society also questions why “audience participation” was allowed during discussion of this item and why order was not maintained.

### **Decision**

The Society understands that the SDC is the Council's decision-making body with respect to planning matters. We recognize that, while informed and advised by the Council's Planning Officers, members of the SDC are free to come to a different decision than that recommended in the Planning Officer's Report. However, we would expect that any decision taken by the SDC would be consistent with the Council's own planning policies (LDF, BAAP), those of the London Plan 2011 and the relevant National Planning Policy Statements. We would also expect that a Recommendation for Refusal made in accordance with planning policy and based on the negative environmental and social impact of the proposed development would only be rejected by the SDC in exceptional circumstances. In our considered view, the SDC decision to grant approval to the proposed development is contrary to several important planning policies as detailed in the Planning Officer's Report and summarized under the Recommendation for Refusal in section 10.0 of the report. WCGS believes that, in addition to being contrary to the Council's own planning policies, those of the London Plan and national planning statements, the decision conflicts with the Council's ongoing challenge in the High Court concerning the media advertising screens. The Society requests to be informed of the reasons for approval stated by the SDC Committee members and confirmed by the planning and legal departments of the Council. We understand that developments that fail to conform to national, regional (London Plan) and local policies should be refused unless there are material considerations which would require that a scheme which was a deviation from the development plan should be approved. What were those considerations and their interpretation?

The Society believes that, if the development is allowed to be built, it will have a severe negative impact on the quality of life of local residents (in terms of well-being, environment, amenity, local character and sense of place) and on the neighbouring heritage assets and green spaces of Gunnersbury Park and Gunnersbury Cemetery. Moreover siting such an unsustainable, energy-demanding construction in this prominent location will seriously damage the reputation (green credentials) not only of Hounslow and London but of the UK more generally.

With respect to Gunnersbury Park, WCGS is aware and supportive of the current regeneration project being managed jointly by the London Boroughs of Hounslow and Ealing. The Society considers that the SDC decision could undermine this regeneration and jeopardize the bids to be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Were the Regeneration Board and the London Borough of Ealing fully consulted on the proposed development?

With respect to Gunnersbury Cemetery, WCGS is aware that this Metropolitan Green Space, owned by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, is of particular significance to the Polish community of the UK. A notable landmark in the cemetery is a monument dedicated to the Polish victims of the Katyn massacre. Were both the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the Polish community fully consulted on the proposed development?

WCGS recently responded to the Council's consultation on the Core Strategy and expressed support especially for the preferred objectives relating to the promotion of local character, reducing carbon emissions, promoting and improving green spaces and heritage assets and the associated key policy areas. How can the Council's Sustainable Development Committee justify a decision that not only flies in the face of current policy but that would also undermine its emerging vision for the future?

The Society would appreciate acknowledgement of this letter and your urgent attention to our complaint.

Yours sincerely,

Marie Rabouhans, WCGS committee member

Copy:

London Borough of Hounslow: M Harpley, C Gallagher, M Smith, S Baker, S Smail,  
T Welsh, T Ribbits, R Gruet, B Edwards, W Merry  
J Sharma, M Gill, C.Smart

WCGS: T Thorn, Chairman; D Osborne, Secretary