

HELEN ZAMMETT'S TALK BEFORE THE 2ND CHEPSTOW INQUIRY

Introduction

My name is Helen Zammett and I live at 9 Gloucester Road, opposite the Chepstow site.

Conservation Status

I believe that the consultants who were appointed by Redbridge, The Conservation Studio, altered their views for 2 reasons:

1. The extra information and evidence provided by the CRA in response to the Conservation Studio's report of July 2008. Both reports and the final draft report of the Character Appraisal can be found on the CRA website.
2. The change in two key planning personnel.

During a visit to our area on 1 July 2008, the former Head of Planning, Marc Dorfman, told the Chair of the Wanstead Society and me that he felt there was no need for our area to receive conservation status. His reason for this was that our area was already well preserved. I pointed to 31 the Avenue, known locally as the Higgins Development, which many, including the Mr Dorfman and the previous Inspector described as "unsuccessful". In order to build this, two attractive bungalows had been demolished - I received no response. Mr Dorfman left Redbridge Council in the autumn of 2008.

The Conservation Officer, James Hetherington did not consider our area as worthy of conservation. Mr Hetherington left Redbridge Council in March 2009.

In response to yesterday's hearing, I would like to say that:

The North East corner of the Wanstead Grove Conservation area is cut out, as this is where a new build begins at a road called Limes Avenue.

Area 7 of the conservation area includes a grade 2 listed building – the Nightingale pub.

Telford's Second Planning Application

This scheme is totally inappropriate for our neighbourhood. Whilst the standard of design falls well below that required of a conservation area, the scheme shows no respect for its surroundings. Local feeling is so strong about this that over 70 residents turned up at the Regulatory Committee meeting at which this application was judged.

Gloucester Road

The proposed semi-detached houses show no empathy at all with the existing houses. We do not have integrated garages or the large rooflines which the Telford houses have. Telford does not even bother to use the semi-circular design of their front window, preferring a more Victorian style. To make matters worse, the very irregular building line of the new houses ruins the symmetry of the building line on the rest of the road.

Nutter Lane

This is the worst part of the scheme. The two blocks of post-modernist flats would be alien to our conservation area. Not only would they ruin the overall appearance of Nutter Lane but they would also be an ugly backdrop to the country style view over the Nutter Playing Fields. If these flat roofed office block style flats were built, they would ruin one of the best parts of our conservation area.

The flats on the corner of Gloucester Road and Leicester Road

The design of these flats does not bear any relation to either the houses on Gloucester Road or the proposed flats on Nutter Lane.

Conclusion

There is no consistency of design at all within the Chepstow site. Telford has no overall concept for the site, resulting in an inharmonious 'mish-mash.'

The Chepstow site is so picturesque, that apart from being so important to our conservation area; the site itself deserves a much better development than this one.

Telford's third planning application

At this stage, Telford consulted with us residents and the results showed. Contrary to Mr Holden's view, by listening to the views of residents, a far more appropriate scheme was arrived at. We now feel that the standard of design and congruity of this scheme meets those required of development in a conservation area.

Gloucester Road

The style of the new semi-detached houses is now sympathetic with our houses, so that they are congruous with the general view of the road. For example, the timbering effect at the top of the houses adjacent to the Chepstow site has been continued in the design of the block of flats at the end of the Road. Telford have kept the building line as close as they can to ours, as they have had to allow for the protection of tree roots.

While it is sad to lose the Norwegian Spruce, the adjacent residents at 10 and 12 Gloucester Road prefer this, as it makes a considerable difference in decreasing the amount of shadow on the back of their houses and their gardens.

Nutter Lane

Fortunately the proposed flats of the third scheme bear no relation to those of the second. Their rural style and the fact that each block of flats could be viewed as one home, has transformed the look of the lane. The first flats to be built in our immediate neighbourhood, 27 and 29 the Avenue, were built with this concept and were accepted by us residents.

Their design has been described as a pastiche but many residents do not feel that. They feel that the style complements that of the Roding Cottages, creating an attractive look along Nutter Lane and across the Nutter Playing Fields

This improvement is no more than the lane deserves, as formerly known as George Lane, it is one of the oldest recorded parts of Redbridge. Their design complements that of the neighbouring Arts and Crafts style of the Roding Cottages, all of which are on the former Roding Farm.

The flats on the corner of Gloucester Road and Leicester Road

Telford's overall concept for the scheme is shown in these flats, which now relate both to the houses on Gloucester Road and the Nutter Lane flats.

Conclusion

I, my neighbours and many residents now feel that this scheme meets the previous Inspector's primary reason for rejection at the first Inquiry when he wrote: *"I consider that the main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the area."*

6 May 2010