

CHARTERED SURVEYORS

Clarges House  
6-12 Clarges Street  
London W1J 8HB

Tel: 020 7493 4002  
Fax: 020 7312 7548

www.montagu-evans.co.uk

To: Leicester Rd Inquiry

From: Dr. Chris Miele

Date: 25 May 2010

Subject: **RESPONSE TO WANSTEAD SOCIETY STATEMENT, TABLED AT OPENING DAY OF LEICESTER ROAD PLANNING APPEAL**  
APP REF W5780/A/09/2119252  
APP REF W5780/A/10/2121325

- 1.0 This note comments on the written submission made by the Wanstead Society and tabled at the opening day of the planning inquiry, 5 May, and authored by Roger Estop with input from others representing the Society.
- 2.0 I give cited text in italics and comment after.

Summary Position Comments, page 1 (unpaginated)

- 3.0 The WS accepts the site is a 'development opportunity' of importance to the area.
- 4.0 *'Both schemes under consideration ... look squeezed in' and 'wander out of line on Gloucester Road'*. About a third of the site is taken up with building footprint, and there are significant gaps between buildings, and in particular along Leicester Road and adjoining the locally listed building. In the former case the gap between Blocks A and B is at least c.20 metres plus and between Block C and the locally listed building is at least 11.8 metres. The building footprint in Gloucester Road changes to accommodate retained trees, which are significant townscape features.
- 5.0 The level of site coverage is comparable to that of the surrounding ranges of existing development.
- 6.0 Blocks B and C have *'excessive depth... front to back'* and *'one storey higher'*. The depth of the buildings will be not be visible as viewed from the east, in the context of the locally listed building. On the south elevation of B, there are half-timbered gable features which will break up the scale of the block with characteristic materials. The distance between this flank and the footway is considerable and will reduce its effect further as will the generous space in which it sits (recreation ground to one side and a 21 metre plus gap between it and Block A). The scale of this building element will therefore sit comfortably.
- 7.0 The WS does not object to the depth of the houses in Scheme 3 and I do not think there will be any appreciable difference between the depth of these houses and those in Scheme 2.
- 8.0 The heights of B and C in both schemes are comparable with the height of the locally listed building, which itself has 2-2.5 storeys – Scheme 3 B and C have 2.5 storeys, which is comparable.
- 9.0 In Scheme 2 'the Gloucester Road houses are also excessively deep'. The depth of the blocks will not be widely perceptible from the public highway. There are throughout the CA examples of buildings with roughly comparable footprints – Victorian houses – adjoining more modestly scaled interwar blocks.

*Mentioned by DW in cross as being 16m*

*(2) Scheme 2 = 18m  
" 3 = 14m*

*(73)*

*DW said 13+Bay is in fact 14+Bay*

- 10.0 On an alternative approach suggested, *'of continuous terraces of houses and flats following prevailing building lines'*. This would result in a less open development and we would lose the opportunity to see into the site and across parts of it.

## Scheme 2 Comments, page 2

- 11.0 Para 2, The flat roofs of B and C *conflict with the refined pitched roof of the adjoining cottages*. The contrast in form was done deliberately, in order to add diversity to the area and, specifically, to highlight one of the defining features of the locally listed building. The flat roof form should be assessed as part of the overall design, which includes a recessed, rendered upper floor and the stair-lift feature, which together with other finer detailing break down the mass of the blocks.
- 12.0 Para 3, Blocks B and C are *'too close to one another'* narrowing to 1.4 metres. The gap creates a sense of spaciousness which will contribute to the setting.
- 13.0 Elevation is correctly shown, and the gap at the front is nearer to 5.4 metres, a generous spacing, which will create a sense of openness in many streetscene views. The narrowing of the gap to the rear is the consequence of the approach setting out the blocks to respond to the sinuous line of the road. This will not create a sense of bulk even when seen from the playing field directly in front because of the planting and the detailing of the buildings.
- 14.0 Paras 4 and 5 criticise the projection of the *'stair drum... [and] blank sides'* and then the *'the blank-faced, taller lift tower [which is] jammed up against [it]'*.
- 15.0 The stair drums seen in perspective in oblique views will add a sense of rhythm and movement to the front, just as more traditional features in the area enliven street views. The drums add significant sculptural form to the building, providing picturesque incident and distinctive, attractive features. This formal characteristic has meaning because it marks the entrance to each block and expresses an important internal feature.
- 16.0 The flanks have been broken down by varying the materials.
- 17.0 The relationship of the stair and lift towers is deliberate to create a sculptural form which reflects the aesthetic of the 1930s.
- 18.0 The *'choice of architectural style appears arbitrary'*. There is a similarly designed block elsewhere in the area; the area is partly characterised by interwar development, and interwar suburban development does sometimes feature stylistic diversity. The association of this style of architecture with health and fitness is also appropriate to the setting on a sports ground created in the 1920s.
- 19.0 This contrast adds something positive to an area which is characterised by its diversity. The contrast is not jarring because of the materials used and the way features of the design break up the mass of the building.
- 20.0 The contrast also respects the integrity and distinctive character of the locally notable building, and its special place in the streetscene.
- 21.0 Para 8 on variation from the strict building line. Alignment enables, as noted, retention of two trees. Gloucester Road is characterised by a regular order and rhythm but a variation in types. This slight variation for good planning reasons will not undermine this character, a point which the Inspector made in his decision letter, para 17.
- 22.0 Para 9, *'the space between the buildings at the rear reduces to 17m behind block C. This is too close for reasonable privacy in the homes facing each other'*. The angle between the blocks is oblique so there is no direct overlooking. This is acceptable in the officer's report.
- 23.0 Para 11, on the gardens to the north of Block A, beside one of the houses: This amenity space is accessed by a door off a bedroom which also has an outlook to the north, towards the street. The main living area of this unit is oriented towards Leicester Road and has a window to Gloucester Road.

- 24.0 The other garden area is overlooked by a kitchen window and the flat's living area is oriented to the east, onto a small area of grass which extends round the side of the building.
- 25.0 Thus the amenity area, which introduces added spaciousness into the scheme, serves secondary rooms. The main living areas have open aspects.
- 26.0 Para 14, landscaping having '*no clear maintenance responsibility*'. The landscape would be maintained under a management agreement, thus ensuring its coherence and visual amenity.
- 27.0 Penultimate para, page 2, re lack of integral bin stores and their position next to the footways. The bin stores are well located and will be convenient both to use by residents and refuse collectors. They would be maintained under a site-wide management agreement. Also bin stores are well screened by planting. This aspect of the design is accepted by the planning authority.
- 28.0 Final para, page two, re 'vacant street frontage'. The previous inspector considered that the car park was a good use of the area (para 20), reflecting the proximity of two trees. It also maintains openness at the bottom of The Avenue.
- 29.0 The natural surveillance of the parking will be achieved from Blocks A and B.
- 30.0 Rear gardens to the flats are secure.

### Scheme 3 Comments, page 3

- 31.0 Para 5, re the '*misaligned relationship of Blocks B and C with each other and the adjacent arts and crafts cottages*'. There is no consistent building line in Nutter Lane because of the curving form of the road. The stepped layout mediates between the building line of the locally listed buildings and the corner. The c. 13 metre gap between Block C and no. 57 means that the change in alignment in building line will not be jarring.
- 32.0 Para 6, re the flank walls' visibility in moving view along Nutter Lane. '*As blank walls they are not designed to be seen, but will actually feature more than they need to and will be unsightly*'. The walls are not blank. They have relieving features which will articulate their form and mass. They are simpler in design than the frontages, but then this is typical of traditional architecture and views of flank walls seen on staggered alignment feature in the area.

### Comments on WS Recommendations for Redesign

- 33.0 If the frontages of Blocks B and C are aligned to the frontage Nutter Lane locally listed buildings, I think there would be a very ungainly, triangular space which would conflict with the sinuous line of the road. This is why, whichever approach is adopted, Scheme 2's or Scheme 3's, should respond individually with the corresponding part of the carriageway, and in this way reinforce its alignment.

Chris Miele, Partner, Montagu Evans LLP  
26 May 2010