

Derelict house faces demolition in days

REPORT: ANDY KEELEY

andy.keeley@ilfordrecorder.co.uk

AN HISTORIC Edwardian house in Wanstead looks doomed to the bulldozer after permission was given for it to be demolished.

Chepstow House in Leicester Road was dealt its fate last month after a notice was put on a side gate, saying its demolition would commence on Monday, January 21.

A public inquiry later this year to resolve issues over the details of the future development of the site could halt building work, but will not prevent the house being torn down.

Helen Zammett, chairman of the Counties Residents' Association, which is fighting to save the house, said: "I've been told by the Planning Inspectorate in Bristol that if Telford Homes demolishes Chepstow House and loses the public inquiry, it would have to rebuild it brick by brick, which wouldn't be cheap."

The company in charge of developing the site, Telford Homes, plans to build six large semi-detached family houses and 18 three-bedroom flats where Chepstow House stands.

Because the house is not a listed building and Telford owns the land it is on, there would be nothing to stop its demolition.

During a Redbridge Council regulatory committee meeting last month a representative from the firm pointed out that under the London Plan, the Mayor of London's development strategy for the capital, if Telford was to build the homes then 50 per cent would have to be classed as affordable housing, which under the current plans would not be met.

Other issues raised at the committee meeting included parking, public transport and the increased refuse caused by additional residents.

Mark Parker, managing director of Telford Homes, said: "We are looking into other options for the site, but all of them would still involve demolishing Chepstow House.

"We will wait until the statutory period ends at the end of the month before we demolish the house, and we will obviously comply with what is required first."

A 400-signature petition was handed to Telford Homes' chairman David Holland last year, opposing the plans to demolish Chepstow House, but failed.

Mrs Zammett said: "If the house is to be demolished, they would have to be very careful, as 16 of the trees around Chepstow have tree preservation orders."



● **DOOMED:** Chepstow House, top, and left its grounds. Right, Helen Zammett, of Counties Residents' Association

Pictures: Spencer Griffiths