

Families win fight to stop flats plan

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FAMILIES are celebrating after a controversial housing development was rejected at a public inquiry.

Telford Homes had wanted to knock down Chepstow House in Leicester Road, Wanstead, and replace the Edwardian mansion with six semi-detached houses and 18 flats.

The application was turned down by the Planning Inspectorate but then the developers demanded a public inquiry into the matter.

Although the new houses were considered acceptable by the inquiry, the blocks of flats were deemed badly situated and out of keeping with the character of the surrounding historic homes and neighbourhood.

The Counties Estate Residents' Association (CRA) and the Wanstead Society have been fighting a joint campaign against the development.

CRA member Helen Zammett, of nearby Gloucester Road, said the whole committee and local community was delighted by the news.

She added: "We are going to use this news to press for the council to reconsider our application for the local listing of the building and for conservation status for the surrounding area."

"It has always been the flats that we have been against rather than the houses as we realise that times move on and while it is nice to have a large garden, things change and houses may have to be built."

The 1920s house was owned for almost a century by the Lironi family and has one of the largest gardens in Wanstead with 16 protected trees, although the large greenhouse structures have already been removed.

The developer's proposals were originally objected to by Redbridge Council on grounds that they failed



Residents are delighted Chepstow House is not going to be turned into flats

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to meet affordable housing requirements, resulted in excessive density and were out of character with the neighbourhood.

Although the character complaint was upheld, the density factor was dismissed by the Planning Inspector, and the affordable housing quota was dropped after Telford negotiated to pay Redbridge Council £140,000 for low-cost accommodation elsewhere.

However, it is not all good news for campaigners as Telford is still free

to demolish the site without gaining further planning permission.

Their chief executive, Andrew Wiseman, said he was disappointed by the public inquiry's decision.

He told the Guardian: "We will review it and consider our best options."

"Our intention was to produce some lovely homes there but that building is going to be demolished, there's no question about that.

"It's not a conservation area now and I doubt it will be."