

It's decision day for Art Deco flats plan

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A FINAL decision on a controversial housing project is due to be made tomorrow (Friday) following a three-year campaign by residents to have the scheme scrapped.

A planning row has raged over the site of the former Edwardian mansion Chepstow House, in Leicester Road, Wanstead.

Developers Telford Homes has applied to build six semi-detached houses and 18 flats there, but local people are appalled and say the scheme will ruin the area's historic character.

The first application was turned down by Redbridge Council, the Planning Inspectorate and after a public inquiry last year, so the developers submitted a second, revised, set of plans.

But campaigners still considered the proposals to be out of keeping with the historic nature of the neighbourhood and involve too many homes.

Last month the Counties Residents' Association (CRA) managed to gain conservation status for the area and members hope that the stricter guidelines this entails will force the council to reject the new application.

CRA chairwoman Helen Zammatt said: "The worst feature was the two blocks of flats facing Nutter Lane, regarded as the worst possible example of modernist build, with incongruous



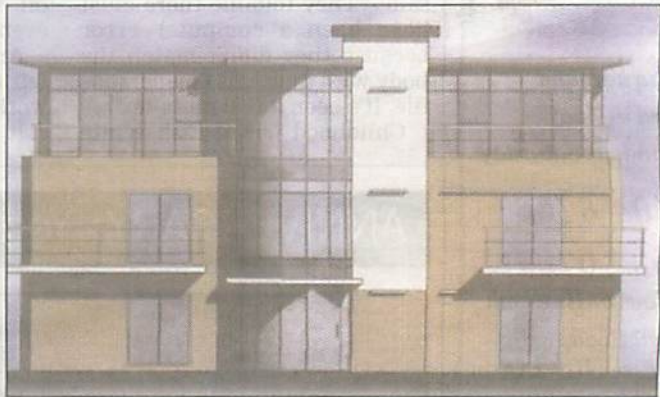
flat roofs so close together you could shake hands between the blocks.

"The semi-detached houses facing Gloucester Road would form a huge unrelenting brick wall. The design is like houses built on Essex estates in the 1970s - totally inappropriate for the Chepstow site.

"The Leicester Road scene would be ruined, with a red brick pitched roofed block of flats at one end of the Chepstow site, a car park in the middle and a buff bricked flat roofed block of flats on the other."

The proposals were considered by the council's conservation advisory panel which said it should not be allowed to proceed.

Telford Homes managing director Mark Parker said it "was a shame" the application had taken so long.



Campaigners stand outside the now-demolished Chepstow House in Wanstead. Above, the Art Deco flats plan (EL9381-2)

He added: "As far as I am aware it is still going with officer's recommendations for approval.

"We have responded to the planning inspector's comments and believe our proposals comply in terms of density, social housing and meets all the criteria."

Telford's proposals for the Chepstow site will be considered by Redbridge Council's regulatory committee tomorrow at 7.15pm.

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