



Planning Applications
The Town Hall
Wandsworth High Street
London SW18 2PU
f.a.o. Janet Ferguson

154 Putney High Street
London SW15 1RS

22 July 2019

Dear Sirs

**Planning Application 2019/2516
'Alton Green' redevelopment**

The Putney Society as the amenity society for Roehampton as well as Putney has taken an interest in the developing proposals for the Alton estate from the start. We have commented on earlier versions, looked at the current application in detail, spoken to planning officers and councillors and arranged an open public meeting close to the site to ensure that our comments reflect the views of local residents as well as our members. Our conclusion from this is that we need to OBJECT in the strongest terms to this application for these reasons:

Environmental cost.

The starting premise of 'regeneration' that the existing buildings are unfit is unproven. The existing flats and houses were solidly built to space standards little different from today's. They are less than half the age of most of the borough's housing stock and represent a huge stock of embodied materials and energy as well as an established community. Quite simply they are suffering only from a chronic lack of maintenance by the council and can readily be upgraded without 'throwing the baby out with the bathwater'. 'Slum clearance' has no place in the 21st century. Recent upgrading of identical blocks at Sherfield Gardens and across Alton East shows the way.

Cement production for concrete uses huge amounts of energy and is one of the major causes of global CO2 emissions. Demolishing solid existing buildings and replacing them with new concrete framed blocks will release many hundreds of thousands of tonnes of CO2, creates over 200,000 HGV trips, ten years of dust, pollution and wasted energy on a scale that will not be offset by any energy savings, even before accounting for the wholesale loss of mature trees. This proposal totally ignores the Climate Emergency and will make it impossible for the Council's to meet its newly published ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030 (Brightside 19/07/19 etc.)

cont.

The Putney Society

The amenity society for Putney and Roehampton. Registered Charity No. 263242
www.putneysociety.org.uk

Transport:

Policy at all levels from the NPPF to the local plan directs high density development to locations well served by public transport and local amenities. Policy PL5 recognises this and provides for the borough's housing need without building here.

London Plan Policy 3.7 A says "***Proposals for large residential developments .. are encouraged in areas of high public transport accessibility***". Not here. Roehampton is the only part of the borough without a railway. The density matrix table 3.2 regards all areas more than 800m from an urban centre (i.e. station) as Suburban justifying a density of 150-250 hr/ha. Even the best local PTAL of 3 disguises the fact that travel from Roehampton requires a lengthy, unreliable and already overcrowded bus journey to connect to better transport elsewhere. It is this isolation above all else that accounts for the deprivation levels that this redevelopment won't cure.

This inward looking scheme fails to take account of the impact of the increased density already happening locally at Pocklington Court, Queen Mary's Place and many more. Local residents report that the buses to Putney are already overcrowded by 6am, the 85 arrives already full whilst the 72, before this was peremptorily cancelled, was standing room only from Hammersmith all the way to Roehampton from early until well in to the evening. Any increase in population, let alone another 2000 people, demands hugely more capacity, but no funding or action is offered. A private applicant would be facing a large Section 106 bill here. Until the vague promises to 'work with' TfL become actual buses, Roehampton is full. The SSAD, on which this application ought to be based, says "***Bus service enhancements, especially to link with Barnes station, are considered necessary (by TfL)***"

Poor transport leads to car dependency. Providing less than one car space for five or more adults isn't enough. Closed parking within the buildings (more concrete) fails to provide for visitors, essential visiting tradesmen or deliveries. A visit to Alton will show that this is a place of vans, which won't fit into these car parks. It will also show that the junction of Danebury and Holybourne Avenues isn't big enough for the bus routes converging here, but no change is proposed. Transport simply has not been considered at all.

The SSAD again "***TfL are likely to require a contribution towards the cost of improvements to the junction of Danebury Avenue and Roehampton Lane***".

Social Facilities:

The proposals include a new library, health centre and other facilities, but only to replace the demolition of everything already here. Where is the expansion to cater for the extra population or the flexibility to meet changing needs? As with the wholesale demolition of sound homes, this approach is outdated and grossly wasteful. The phasing plan requires the Co-op and chemist to move twice. Will they bother or just give up?

Layout:

The 'village green', as well as being far smaller and a lot less green than suggested by some of the illustrations, far from being a peaceful central meeting place it is sited right next to the noisiest most polluted part of Roehampton Lane, and under the shadow of the library block for most of the day. What this needs is a barrier block between it and the road.

Modern place making has rediscovered the value of the pedestrian friendly street. Here we are offered access roads in one direction crossed by myriad gaps between buildings filled by long ramps 'linking' up to the high point on Roehampton Lane by building over the open space and tree screen here. What none of this will be is green space big enough to play or linger. The Roehampton SPD, section 5.13 says: ***The London Plan seeks to protect, promote and expand green space (Policy 2.18) and to improve the quality and access to open space (Policy 7.18).*** The result will be remarkably like the Osiers Road area, where ironically Wandsworth Council this month refused a development that did at least have a traffic free heart.

Not in accordance with Policy:

A council spokesman recently told the Architects' Journal that the scheme had been developed in '***full consultation with the local community***' and that '***Local people have played a central role in helping to produce these plans and ensuring the regeneration meets their day-to-day needs.***' Not so. Up to 2014 there were indeed several public consultations, providing lots of feedback, they did not seem to result in any changes to the scheme. The 'Preferred Option' of 2014 was then consolidated (with extra density) in the Roehampton SPD 2015 without further consultation. The current scheme, yet more dense than envisaged by the SPD (and thus not in conformity with policy in a way that would get a refusal elsewhere) was first seen at an exhibition in 2018. Today's version seems to have taken note of none of the feedback from then or any other stage. Boxes have been ticked, no-one has listened. Whose day-to-day need is met by obliging residents to live on a building site for ten years?

23% affordable is not enough and fails to comply with policies IS5e and DMH8. If 33% is not possible on council owned land, how can you expect anyone to provide this?

Conclusion:

The council will gain just 30 affordable dwellings from this exercise at huge cost to ratepayers, long term cost to residents health and wellbeing from 10 years of dust noise and disruption and an unjustifiable cost to the environment from the waste of the materials and energy embodied in the existing buildings and trees.

The early small scale 'decant' blocks will provide the extra 30. Stop there. Spend the savings on transport and insulating the rest. Add more by the same 'hidden homes' process that has been successful elsewhere, but the Council must now recognise that wholesale destruction is neither socially nor economically viable and will be a disaster for the planet and for the Roehampton community.

Yours Sincerely

Andrew Catto

Andrew Catto
Buildings Panel Convenor
For and on behalf of the Putney Society.

copies: Cllr Ravi Govindia
Roehampton Councillors
Justin Greening MP.