

Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum Public Meeting June 24th at 6.45pm

Calthorpe Project :

Portacabin meeting room (use gate to football pitch off Gray's Inn Road).

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING. These have been circulated electronically and posted on our website: www.mountpleasantforum.org.uk

3. EASTMAN DENTAL HOSPITAL REDEVELOPMENT.

This is the current state of play on this sizeable and important new development in our neighbourhood.

The planning application has been made. You can find the details on the Camden planning website. Ref no 2019/2879/P is the actual planning application, and Ref no 2019/2880/L is the application for Listed Building Consent. The closing date for comments/objections is 28 days – ie by the end of June 2019.

This is a large and prestigious new development, which on the face of it looks impressive, but on examination contains certain problems which will affect our neighbourhood. This is a summary.

The Eastman Dental Hospital site has been bought by University College London (the university). The Eastman Dental services will move out of London, retaining an in-patients wing at Huntley Street. Once the premises are vacated UCL propose to provide a state-of-the art centre for Dementia Research, together with an in-patients service for dementia patients, plus unrelated academic teaching space for maths and statistics.

In order to fulfill these aims UCL plan to demolish most of the existing structure, keeping only the façade of the existing building facing on to Grays Inn Road. They plan to build one large building behind the reconstituted frontage to accommodate the dementia research unit and the out-patients facility. They also plan to run the academic teaching facility down to southern side of the site, next to St Andrew's Gardens, to build a large block at the eastern end of the site, to accommodate more academic teaching facilities.

So, they want to put a lot of facilities on this one site. They also want to make the site pretty with internal courtyards, green planting, new open squares, and coffee-shop facilities. They propose more public access to the open spaces in the new buildings, and public access routes through to Cubitt Street.

The UCL proposals seem attractive – they will be providing a world-centre of excellence in the praise-worthy world of dementia research; the new buildings respect and restore the listed quality of parts of the historic site, and the new buildings will provide more

public access to more green spaces, and a new through-way for pedestrians to reach Cubitt Street and Kings Cross Road.

On examination, though, the picture is not so good. The proposed new buildings are larger and taller than the existing structures. The large new buildings will overshadow and disadvantage both the New Calthorpe Estate (Council dwellings) and the Calthorpe Project (a much-loved local community garden providing services for children, the elderly, after-school teenage activities, and with a thriving football pitch and spearheading local work on horticulture, healthy food and wild-life habitats). We note that both these areas bordering the new buildings on the eastern side are areas which deal with “poor” people – and co-incidentally very little has been done in this building proposal to accommodate their needs. This is an issue.

The Forum has been busy attending pre-planning consultation meetings, and have taken part in consultations with UCL/Calthorpe Project and UCL/New Calthorpe Estate t/r Association. We are of a mind to oppose this planning application. We are writing to all of our wider membership setting out our reservations and asking for your views.

The Forum have made it clear that we plan to object to this planning application.

The planning objections we intend to make are as follows:

- The proposed buildings are **inappropriate** for the site - too large a mass, too high, taking too much breathing space from the existing neighbourhood (planning examples of loss of sunlight, loss of privacy, no buffer-zones etc).
- The proposed buildings **disadvantage** local neighbours (the Calthorpe Project and the New Calthorpe Estate) - expand on lack of light etc. and stance of these two bodies, whom we support.
- The proposed use of the site is too greedy - a dementia reaseach unit, **and** an out-patients unit **and**an unrelated academic teaching space shows **three aims for the one site**.
- The proposed buildings **do not meet Conservation Area rules**. Also parts of the existing buildings have been Listed. English Heritage have objected to these proposals, and we concur with their views.
- The proposal includes **more public access and pedestrian walkways through the site** - whilst an admirable aim it does not take into account low-level criminality and drug-use in the area, **so these proposals need more thought** about supervision and control (night-time closure of gates, introduction of CCTV etc). Locals are concerned.
- The proposals will set up **a dominant mono-culture** in our diverse neighbourhood. (Paragraphs describing adverse effects of too much student life)

We will state that there is **universal support for the dementia project and the out-patients unit** but we feel the large amount of teaching space is one aim too many - **if the teaching admin space were removed from the proposals, the project could be adapted to meet local needs**.

We are aware that UCL are sticking to their proposals; we asked them point-blank for further concessions and they said they had done enough. We understand they are unwilling to spend time and money on redesign; we don't agree with this.

Our stance at the moment is that we will oppose the proposals as they stand.

Our objection will be written out at some length in appropriate planning terms, but the above notes summarise our views to date., we are also awaiting comments from all those on our mailing list, whom we have written to concerning this redevelopment.

However our fall-back position may be that if they will reduce the teaching space component considerably, so the dementia unit or the outpatients unit can spread out laterally, so the overall height/mass of the proposed buildings is reduced, we would welcome this amendment.

What do you think of this? Please give us your opinions.

There are other issues concerning damage to **the Calthorpe Project**, which you may wish to discuss.

4.OTHER FORUM ISSUES

4.1 Further Planning - Panther House and Clerkenwell Fire Station

4.2 Our Website and other Communication changes

4.3 Neighbourhood Plan is resting for the moment - WE'RE TAKING A HOLIDAY

5.A.O.B

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING September 23rd 6.45pm at the Calthorpe Project (now to be known as Calthorpe Community Garden)