

REPORT on DEVELOPERS CONSULTATION PART 1 HELD ON 25 APRIL 2017

There were 7 present from the developer's team including Guy Duckworth of Dartmouth Capital, the company managing the development for the Singaporean investor, Michael Squire, the name architect, a planning consultant and two people from their community consultants, Soundings.

The first news was that there would be an extra meeting in June where they hope to show us their revised scheme ahead of a further public consultation later in June, possibly 18/19 June. The aim, I understood, was to submit the planning application in July ahead of the summer holidays. We'll see how all that works out.

On the public consultation, they thought the Sports Ground Pavilion used in March was too small so it was suggested that maybe this should be linked to the Mortlake Fair in a Marquee. Surprise was expressed by the Developer that no contact had been made by the Mortlake Fair organisers about using the Sports Field. They are clearly happy to allow the Sports Field to be used for that purpose.

The first presentation was from the Community Consultant who reported that 1,450 people had attended the public consultation, 650 comment forms and 330 emails had been received as a result. He showed a number of slides which showed what the comments were about. Surprisingly to me the school and the playing fields came first, traffic and transport second. I found what could be drawn from the comments- for or against- was unreliable (a point made by others) because the form really assumed YES or NO but often I felt like saying YES BUT, a point made at the meeting.

The main point of the meeting was an overview of the masterplan (we had seen most of that before) including some changes since March but the main focus was the location of the school and playing fields.

Michael Squire opened by saying that the developer had bought on the understanding there was a Primary School requirement, not a Secondary School (double the size). The architect doesn't want a dormitory on the development but wants other activities/uses such as retail, leisure, hotel etc. He also was trying to draw inspiration from the Victorian/Edwardian mansion blocks built along the Thames and showed photos of Old Hurlingham Court (1906ish on the eastern side of the tube line- Fulham side- crossing the Thames at Putney), the mansion block on the north side of Hammersmith Bridge (western side) in support. He then showed designs which were not Edwardian but I understood where he was coming from.

Although the Primary School was shown on the Planning Brief plan as north of the playing fields, he said that in fact that Primary School would have needed 1/3rd of the playing fields for a playground. They had been listening to feedback and were now proposing that the Secondary School would be built at the north of the Playing Fields (moved from the original proposal by the side of Williams Lane and fronting the Lower Richmond Road). The school would be 3 storeys high and would be supported by an all-weather football pitch (not full size) in front. This pitch would be available for use outside school hours by members of the public. It was not clear whether there would be floodlights. I know similar arrangements are contemplated at Queens Primary School, Cumberland Road, Kew as there was a neighbourly furore about that at the Planning Committee Meeting I attended last month.

Between the football pitch and the Lower Richmond Road there would be a Community Park, grass, trees etc. open to everyone. This Community Park would be about 100 metres by 50 at best.

Access to the school would be via a widened Williams Lane (runs along the western extremity of the site) and by a road which will enter roughly where the Sports Club building is at present. The Bus Terminus for the 209 would be in that corner (by Williams Lane) as well.

As a result the Block of flats they had originally proposed to be by the Sports Club would now be 3 storeys high along Williams Road. More loss of playing fields. Peter Eaton (MBG) challenged this and queried whether this block was necessary and should just be dropped. No comment from the developer.

The developer presented all this as out of its hands. The Council wanted the Secondary School, the Free School Funder, EFA, required a 3 storey building for 1,200 pupils (there were challenges from the floor as to whether 800 was a more appropriate figure- they were told to take this up with the Council) plus the all-weather pitch; grass was not acceptable.

The developer said that they appreciated 2 sports pitches were being lost, although they were privately owned and used at all times, but Sport England may still be concerned but he expected/hoped that the all year round usability of the new pitch would satisfy them that there was no real loss.

Unsurprisingly there were complaints about these proposals from house owners backing on to Williams Lane (I don't think any houses actually front Williams Lane) and also from Lower Richmond Road dwellers overlooking the playing fields and from the Towpath Group/West London River Group Representative about loss of green space (not a Towpath Group concern but a valid point nevertheless). No conclusion although generally the relocation of the school was seen as a positive.

On other points that arose although he was clearly unhappy the architect confirmed the 14 storey campanile building at the bottom of Sheen Lane will be 6 storeys high- amazingly in addition to the architect there was one supporter of the 14 storey monstrosity in the audience!

Only the terraced houses running along the north western boundary near the Thames will have private gardens, all other green space (apart from the sports ground during school times) will be public.

The hotel (running along Lower Mortlake Road from Sheen Lane) is shrinking from 126 rooms to 15 and becoming a boutique hotel in the existing building on the roundabout. This reduction seems to have been driven by reducing car parking/traffic movements but the smaller hotel will result in 20 more flats. No comment was offered on number of residential units as a result.

The next meeting will discuss height, scale, etc, the following one traffic/transport. I wanted that brought forward as that is the most important issue but they are either not ready or their transport consultant isn't available. Who knows?