

Appendix A -The Campion Concerns Monitoring Group

1. The Campion Concerns Monitoring Group (CCMG). The **CCMG** is an informal group of residents which was formed in response to the workshops and exhibition organised on behalf of **Try Homes** by **Green Issues Communications (GIC)** in November 2005. **GIC** was, at that time, acting as the public relations agent of Try Homes.

By the time of the **GIC** workshops it was well known that the site would eventually be developed. It became known for example that both **West Thames College** and the Indian **Gymkhana Club** had expressed an interest.

Nevertheless, most of us went to the **GIC** events with no preconceptions about developments on the site. Most of us had given it little thought before that point. The experience of the **GIC** workshops was to transform this lack of active concern.

Residential doubts about the way the workshops were run were expressed during the workshops themselves. At both workshops residents were invited to draw up their requirements for a future development on a blank sheet. It was suggested that they list their hopes and their fears. At both workshops a resident responded to this invitation by suggesting that the general constraints on the future development should be explained so that residents develop their ideas within a realistic framework as to what could and could not be changed. On both occasions the organisers declined to answer this question and residents were therefore constrained to work out their ideas without the background information that should have informed and directed their efforts.

The requests for background information mentioned above were a spontaneous reaction to the **GIC** presentations. After the second workshop a number of residents who did not know each other before, gathered outside and discussed their dissatisfaction with what had taken place. They rapidly found that they had common grounds for concern and agreed to meet in the following week to discuss the issues in a more systematic way. The **CCMG** was to emerge from that meeting and those that followed.

The first motivation for the meetings was a feeling that **GIC** had tried to manipulate residents into a position where it looked as though they had contributed to a plan for the Campion site that (a) was not of their choosing and (b) existed in all essentials before the workshops were held.

The second motivation was a feeling that the developer's proposals were an attempt to build a development that was inappropriate to the setting of Thornbury Road and to the Spring Grove Conservation Area.

The group wrote a detailed letter to Try Homes expressing various concerns. The response from Tom Nicholson of Try Homes made reference to planning guidelines, the Hounslow UDP and the London Plan. Being unfamiliar with these documents at that stage we obtained them and started a process of familiarisation with planning guidelines.

This process was given a further impetus by a meeting with Paul Draper of the Hounslow Planning Department. Mr Draper explained the officers' role and gave us some useful information. He pointed out that the site of 3.26 hectares included 2.1 hectares of Locally Designated Open space. Mr Draper also helped us to understand that guidelines are just that, guidelines, as opposed to regulations. He made clear the multiple pressures coming from developers, local politicians, UDPs, the London Plan and the Guidelines/Statements from the DCLG (then the OPDM), residents and other interested parties. From this we understood that stating personal, or even collective, preferences would be relatively ineffective. We had to understand the planning process.

The long letter of 4th December 2005 resulted in a protracted correspondence with Try Homes and Green Issues. We felt that at no point was it recognised that any of the issues

we raised had real substance even though later they (Try Homes and GIC) sometimes claimed that changes had been made in response to residential objections. The only sense of the responses was to either ignore our points or to explain to us that they were unfounded either because they were factually wrong, or inconsistent with guidelines.

Whenever a reference was made to planning guidelines we read the documents indicated. In virtually every case we felt that the documents strengthened our arguments and did not bear out the claims made by reference to the guidelines. The correspondence did not lead at any point to an understanding on the basis of which differences could be resolved.

The dozen or so residents who got together for the initial meetings of CCMG knew that for residential views to have a realistic chance of influencing events they would have to be shown to have wide support and also to be based on a high level of information.

We started to produce Newsletters for the local community to inform residents about events in connection with the site. To date 12 newsletters have been produced. The initial circulation to the development catchment area has expanded to 1300 homes. This has produced much positive feedback. Further evidence of residential support comes from:

1. **A petition organised before the first application was submitted.** We wanted a clear message to go to Try Homes about residential views. Correspondence had given us a clear idea about some of the main features of the development that would be proposed. The text of the petition was circulated to residents before calling on them to ask for signatures. We only wanted willing signatures from people who understood and agreed. We collected 473 signatures (from 536 households approached). Only a tiny percentage (less than 5%) declined to sign. Try Homes never responded to the petition despite reminders. The text of this petition is reproduced at the end of this appendix;
2. **Letters written to the local authority.** After the first and second applications were submitted we encouraged residents to write to the local authority to give their reactions in their own words. We issued no pro-formas despite requests to do so. The level of response was exceptionally high (150+ for the first application and 130+) for the second application). Many of these letters are very detailed and show that a large number of residents have a high level of concern about the future of the Campion site;
3. **Contributions to our funds.** We are a voluntary group and have used no sources of finance beyond what local residents give us. We have to pay for the production of newsletters, photocopies, planning materials, and maps. Whenever we have felt the need for more money we have put a request in the newsletter and money has been given to us freely. We have never directed requests for money to any specific individuals. To date we have collected about £2000 and have spent about £1600.

We believe that we have the support of the overwhelming majority of residents in the streets around the Campion House site. We believe that the ward councillors who have their own sources of information and feedback would confirm this. We have found that the number of people offering to help in our work has gradually increased with the passage of time. Concerns that 'campaign fatigue' might set in have proved to be unfounded.

The CCMG is open to all residents. People have selected themselves on the basis of the contributions that they felt they would be able to make. There is a group of about a dozen people to whom all materials are circulated and who attend regular meetings. Beyond that there is another group who want to contribute but do not want all the emails and do not want to attend meetings. People in this group help with such things as delivering newsletters and displaying posters. Finally, there are the residents at large who respond by coming to occasional public meetings, contributing to our funds and writing letters.

We considered formalising the group but saw no particular advantage in doing so. All activity is carried out on a consensual basis and we have found it easy to work in this way.

Text of petition signed by 473 residents prior to the first application

Petition to Try Homes on the Campion House Development

We, the local residents, are concerned over a number of issues in relation to development proposals for the Campion House site, Thornbury Road, Isleworth. In summary:

- 1 *We want a development **THAT IS SENSITIVE** to the **character of the local area** and its **conservation status** i.e. one that will preserve and enhance the Spring Grove conservation area, in particular due consideration to heights, densities and distances from boundaries.*
- 2 *We believe **the land available for built development is 1.17 hectares** and **NOT** the total site area of 3.26 hectares. Planning guidelines recommend 30–80 units/hectare for a site of this nature. This means that the upper limit for this development should be 95 units. The density of the surrounding built development is 33 units/hectare. **The density of the development should respect this historical character of the area by not departing from this significantly.***
- 3 *The **OPEN SPACE** (2.07 hectares) on this site is protected and there should be **NO ENCROACHMENT**. (Campion House is situated in an area noted as having a deficiency of access to local open space, and in line with planning guidelines **at all levels**, there should be no encroachment.)*
- 4 *We do not believe that a genuine consultation has yet taken place. We want a **PROPER** public consultation, in particular on the future use of the open space on the site and public access to it. We also want to be consulted about the proposed buildings in the light of all the relevant facts.*
- 5 ***We want no development to be approved without a prior study of the IMPACT on traffic flow, parking problems, and infrastructure and services** (schools, doctors, public transport etc). This study should take into account all recent and projected developments in the area (e.g. Brunel: 366 units, London Road: 190 underway, 170 approved units)*

Comment. Issues raised in point 5 have been addressed, to some extent at least. We believe that the other items retain their force.