

## **Site Allocations document: with particular reference to the Rowan's site**

---

### **Preface**

THIS submission objects to the proposed development of a high rise block of flats (assumed 15 storeys) over ground floor retail at the Rowan's Site. I note that this site is within Haringey Borough but is on the boundary with Hackney and Islington Boroughs.

*I call on the three Boroughs to have consistent and properly co-ordinated town planning policies.*

The points raised below are not exhaustive and are inevitably subject to knowledge of further detail.

### **Principal grounds for objection**

THE Rowan's Site proposal does not meet the aspirations of the London Plan with respect to many criteria, most particularly these proposals deliberately, conspicuously and wilfully ignore:-

#### **Policy 7.7 E :**

*The impact of tall buildings proposed in sensitive locations should be given particular consideration. Such areas might include conservation areas, listed buildings and their settings, registered historic parks and gardens, scheduled monuments, battlefields, the edges of the Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land, World Heritage Sites or other areas designated by boroughs as being sensitive or inappropriate for tall buildings.*

This proposed tall building is adjacent to an historic park and as such should be rejected outright by Haringey Council and opposed by Islington and Hackney Boroughs too.

I do not oppose sensible redevelopments of sites with time-expired infrastructure, but submit that greater *commercial* activity on this site is the way forward and not change of use for housing.

Haringey Borough's need for additional housing may be better served by adopting the Hackney Borough strategy of re-developing sites containing terraced or villa-style Victorian properties to better designs and higher densities as has been achieved along Seven Sisters Road to the south of Finsbury Park.

I believe that Haringey Borough Council already accepts that although more residences should be within walking distance of Railway stations, new homes should be not so close to

interchanges as to have their amenity reduced by exposure to railway operations noise and the middle-of-the night engineering maintenance. **Accordingly, I call on Haringey Council to reject the Rowan's Site for Housing use.**

### **Support for tall buildings**

I understand that the policy advocating high rise development at *Finsbury Park Town Centre* derives from the London Planning Advisory Committee findings in a 1998 consultation document report on Strategic Views in London.

I am aware that the area to the north of Finsbury Park Station is being developed with high-rise buildings on the Wells Terrace/ Morris Place/ John Jones city blocks. I have no objection to these developments as being consistent with the LPAC findings.

In particular these buildings do not overshadow Station Place.

Any high rise building on the Rowan's site will obscure early morning sun reducing public amenity at Station Place.

### **Objection to high-rise Housing next to Finsbury Park**

HIGH Rise Tower Block Housing has been attempted next to Finsbury Park in Hackney Borough in the form of Park House (314-322 Seven Sisters Road).

Park House has a retail ground floor (part of a petrol station) with 10 floors of flats above.

Park House is a 1970s high rise block but the height has not informed the re-development of other properties on the south side of Finsbury Park towards Manor House in the years since the LPAC report.

The old mansions that decayed into seedy B&B hotels and hostels have been replaced by modern blocks of mixed housing association/ shared ownership/ leasehold flats.

These blocks are generally one storey higher than those they replaced but are more tightly planned.

This is definitely densification, not least because the blocks use the slope to gain additional basement floors. The blocks are also built over the former car parks/ back gardens (which were generous compared to those for properties on Adolphus Road).

If there was an argument for high rise (for example Park House is 10 floors plus the podium) all along the south side of Finsbury Park *then Hackney Borough has rejected it.*

It is possible to argue that medium rise developments are inherently more sustainable and collectively can offer higher occupation rates than isolated tower blocks.

Indeed the higher density rates of central Paris (as compared to London) are based on this historic urban planning model.

Hackney Borough has in recent years demolished several High Rise Residential towers that overlooked Clissold Park on the Kings Crescent estate 800m to 1000m to the South-West of Finsbury Park. **I call on Hackney Borough to oppose a new High Rise Tower Block overlooking Finsbury Park.**

### **Observations on developments in Haringey Borough**

I NOTICE that in the redevelopment of the retail park at Haringey Green Lanes, the opportunity to put low-, medium- or high-rise residential accommodation over ground floor retail has been resisted by the Council, even though Tower Blocks on the Green Lanes frontage would have overlooked Finsbury Park .

Haringey Borough clearly took the view that the priority for sites adjacent to a Railway station should be *commercial*.

I think the same should apply at the Rowan's site: any redevelopment there should seek to create viable *commercial activity* that can benefit from the footfall at a Transport Interchange.

***Haringey Council have recognised that Housing next to a rail station is not an attractive proposition.***

It should be noted that the Rowan's Site will become noisier and even less attractive for housing with the advent of Thameslink services and the intention to have 24-hour running of the Victoria and Piccadilly Line Tube Services.

***Haringey Council have been consistent in keeping high rise housing at a sensible distance from transport interchanges.***

At Tottenham Hale, the retail park is closest to the Station with the temptation to put housing over ground floor retail, totally resisted. The new high-rise blocks of flats are within walking distance of the Rail and Bus stations but adjacent to Hale Road and so significantly further away from the noise.

***I call on Haringey Borough to reject change of use for the Rowan's Site and to support any redevelopment there that boosts *commercial activity* as befits proximity to a Rail station.***

New flats will of course always be desired but premises where residents can work, shop and enjoy leisure activities are also required under the London Plan.

## Observations on developments in Islington Borough

THE Station Place side of Finsbury Park Station is in Islington Borough and has been the subject of many development ideas.

One of which is City North that contains proposals for a Western Ticket Hall for Finsbury Park Station. I welcome this and ask why the proposals I have seen for the Rowan's Site feature illustrations that *appear to eliminate* the Eastern Bus Station, the Taxi Rank and the Bicycle Park – all regressive propositions that *I call on Islington Borough to reject*.

Any new Housing on the Rowan's Site would be expected to include ten per cent for wheelchair suitable housing. I would expect to see a transport impact assessment for the Rowan's Site and an indication of any Section 106 contributions to the long-overdue introduction of step-free access from street to all the platforms (above and below ground) at Finsbury Park Station.

**Indeed it is my further view that any decisions on the redevelopment of the Rowan's Site should be demonstrated to be totally subordinate and supportive of the long term master-planning/ eventual rebuild of Finsbury Park Station.**

Inevitably this includes the proposition of additional platforms on the eastern side of the station and the restoration of Parkland Walk as a mass transit thoroughfare.

I recognise and regret that such Master-planning does not form part of any indicative list of transport schemes in Table 6.1 of the London Plan, but submit that this is a major oversight.

*I call on all three Boroughs to encourage the GLA/ TfL to bring forward major proposals to make Finsbury Park Station a more generous, efficient and effective transport hub as befits its strategic status as a long established key part of London's infrastructure.*

It will be recalled that in 1997, just before the LPAC report was published, London Transport Planning published for sale *Interchange in London: Patterns of Access and Interchange at Rail Stations Outside Central London*.

In this document, Finsbury Park Station was identified as the busiest (Zone 2) interchange except Mile End and Earl's Court comparable only with Stratford (Zone 3) for passenger interchanges between Network Rail and the Underground. Only Brixton generated more Bus Trips for people requiring to access services at a rail interchange station.

**The strategic significance of Finsbury Park Station has not changed: indeed it has probably become more important in the last 20 years.**

It is well-known that London Underground Ltd. and TfL have commissioned many reports into the possible

redevelopment of Station Place (these reports are commercially sensitive, so not always in the public domain).

*I call on Islington Council to revisit these proposals with a view to supporting continued leisure activities on the Rowan's Site.* If Bowling Alleys and Snooker Halls are no longer viable, then other possibilities may need to be considered.

It is no secret that the local community has long lamented the loss of the Astoria Cinema (that became the *Rainbow*) and would probably most welcome a cinema multiplex or other mass entertainment venue. This prospect should not be without commercial appeal. In a recent edition of the *Evening Standard* (4th March 2014) local MP, David Lammy is quoted as saying that 27 out of 73 London constituencies have no Cinema.

More retail, offices or other workspaces should also be considered.

## Conclusions

THE Rowan's Site proposal contravenes the London Plan and should be rejected.

Haringey Borough should be consistent with its actions at Haringey Green Lanes and Tottenham Hale and reject High Rise Residential this close to a rail-interchange.

Hackney Borough should oppose residential use of this site and promote densification of commercial activities instead.

Islington Borough should oppose any development of this site that frustrates the future redevelopment of Finsbury Park Station and its surroundings for the benefit of all London residents.

2014—iii—10

Clive Carter

[clive.carter@gmail.com](mailto:clive.carter@gmail.com)