

# **London Borough of Enfield**

## **Trent Park Working Group Report to Council**



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Following the taking into receivership of the site of the former Middlesex University Trent Park Mansion and grounds, the Council agreed to set up a working group to consider how best to secure long term public use, and maintenance of, the listed mansion and grounds.

The issue was discussed at the Council meeting held on 25 March 2015 following the receipt of a 3,700 signature petition asking for the site to be granted the status of an asset of community value, and a motion requesting the same, as well as an amendment to the planning rules to grant permanent public access across the grounds, active encouragement of a long term public use for the listed mansion and grounds and a re-evaluation of the management and strategic vision of the Trent Country Park as a whole.

The working group was entirely separate from the process and determination of any planning applications for the site.

## 2. MEMBERSHIP

### Councillors

Councillors: Bambos Charalambous (Chair), Daniel Anderson, Jason Charalambous, Joanne Laban (until May 2016), Terry Neville, Anne Marie Pearce (from May 2016) and Alan Sitkin,

### Officers

The following officers provided support to the working group: John Austin (Assistant Director Governance Projects until June 2016), Joanne Woodward, (Team Leader – Planning Policy - until December 2015), Andy Higham (Head of Development Management), Doug Ashworth (Development Manager (Property – Asset Management), Ian Davis (Director of Regeneration & Environment) Keith Crocombe (Assistant Director Strategic Property Services) and Penelope Williams (Committee Administrator).

## 3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Council set up the working group agreeing the following:

“To establish a working group with equal representation from both political parties to consider how best to secure the long term public use and maintenance of the listed mansions and grounds”.

## 4. MEETINGS AND VISITS

The Working Group held eight meetings on the following dates: 27 May 2015, 22 July 2015, 13 October 2015, 15 December 2015, 22 February 2016, 10 May 2016, 7 July 2016, 23 August 2016, visited the mansion house site with the receivers, JLL, and

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also met the receivers in their London offices.

## **5. THE WORK PROGRAMME**

The overall work of the group was to monitor development options for the site, monitor the nature and progression of the development proposals once Berkeley Homes had been appointed and ensure effective consultation with local residents and groups.

The main items considered are listed below:

Before the site was sold, the working group and officers worked closely with the receivers JLL to ensure that a suitable purchaser could be found.

A joint planning brief was agreed between the Council and the receivers; this was used by the receivers JLL when considering expressions of interest in the site.

There had been 5 interested parties, all of whom appeared sensitive to the views being expressed by the Council and the community including retention of public access and protecting the heritage of the site.

The working group also received regular updates on the progress of the work to repair damage to the terrace and other urgent works to maintain the historic fabric of the building.

Berkeley Homes were the successful bidders. They had purchased the house and grounds in order to create a housing led development but also acknowledging the desire to open up the site to the public.

Senior representatives from the company attended their first meeting in October 2015. At this and each subsequent meeting they reported on progress in respect of the following:

- a) The masterplan to identify developable areas taking account of key constraints and the need to enhance the setting of the mansion house ensuring that new development did not interrupt key views and park areas.
- b) The retention of heritage aspects and proposals for the future use of the mansion house including options for public access, the walled garden, stables buildings, the dower house/Vice Chancellors house, the wisteria walk, the lime tree avenue, the orangery and the outdoor swimming pool.
- c) The overall landscape Strategy with plans for improving the views through to the country park, opening up features such as the lake in front of the terrace, removing some and planting more trees.
- d) Proposals for Public Access to maximise access to the grounds and the area of the development involving a new network of footpaths and cycle routes through the area linking in to the rest of the Country Park as well as providing access to historic parts of the mansion house; namely, the ground floor and basement,

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particularly the rooms containing Rex Whistler murals and those used in the intelligence operation conducted from the house in World War Two.

- e) The approach to parking and traffic generation particularly around the Snakes Lane junction with Bramley Road , a shuttle bus connection to Oakwood Underground Station, and the level and location of parking to safeguard the open setting of the site.
- f) The approach to consultation and engagement with local residents, local groups and other stakeholders. This has included establishing a Community Council, creating a website, producing on line newsletters and holding public consultation events in several different venues giving local residents the opportunity to put forward their views on the proposals for the site. Berkeley Homes have also worked closely with local organisations as well as attending meetings of the Conservation Advisory Group and the Green Belt Forum. In addition, there has been extensive dialogue with Historic England.

Representatives from the following specialists involved in the project also attended some meetings, Natasha Brown (Giles Quarm Architects), John Murdoch (Murdock Wickham Landscape Architects), Robbie Kerr (Adam Architecture), Ian Rhind (Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners, Planning Consultants), Jamie Connors (WSP Transport Consultant).

Working Group members questioned the representatives from Berkeley Homes, guiding the debate and feeding in to the development of the proposals, representing their residents in providing a Council view on the proposals.

## **6. FUTURE PLANS**

The proposals were now complete and Berkeley Homes are due to submit their planning application to the Council in mid September. If Planning Permission is approved, work on site will start next year.

## **7. RECOMMENDATION**

Council is asked to note the work carried out by the Working Group.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

As Chair, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Piers Glandford, Lucy Bird, Glen Jones and Patrick Joyce from Berkeley Homes, for the time they have taken to provide information to the working group as well as my fellow working group members for their contributions.

On behalf of the Trent Park Working Group, I would also like to thank the officers of the Council who have supported the work of this Group.

Councillor Bambos Charalambous (Chair)