

Broomfield Home-owners and Residents Association. Response to the Ritz Parade Opportunity Site Development Brief. February 2016

Broomfield Home-owners and Residents Association (BHORA) shared the Ritz Parade opportunity site development brief with members and asked for comments. Members responded with comments not only pertaining to the present consultation brief but also on the general development of the 2.5mile stretch of the North Circular Road which makes up the North Circular Area Action Plan (NCAAP).

Overall BHORA is dissatisfied with the 2 options presented. We have attended many public meetings, (as far back as 20th February 2007) and have taken part in all the consultation processes, regularly outlining what local people need and want. It appears to bulldoze our 'landmark' building and replace it with more residential units. This document fails to include the amenities needed by an ever growing population.

Italics are direct comments and observations made by members.

1. As a local centre, how can the regeneration of Ritz Parade fulfil NCAAP's vision for a community hub?

The local community have been told that phase 4 of the NCAAP, ie the development of the Ritz Parade, will provide the local community with much needed facilities, a 'community hub'. The existing local community have made it clear on many occasions that it wishes to keep the Ritz Parade in-tact. In 2008 we successfully campaigned to change the TFL road scheme and keep the Ritz Parade. At an area forum, 3rd February 2016, residents yet again showed their support to retain the Ritz Parade. It does not want the whole of the parade demolished (Option B) and it does not want the sections either side of the entrance building (Option A) demolished. By taking away some or all of the art deco building it no longer exists as a 'parade'. We expect the council to listen to local people and respect their wishes.

2. What kind of uses would be most valued by residents, what type of commercial activity would be suitable in this location to meet day to day needs of existing and new residents?

School places. With the addition of 1400+ new build homes, the previous derelict homes brought back into use and so many family homes in the area being turned into multiple occupancy, how many extra school places, both primary and secondary, are LBE planning to provide in this locality? The local primary schools are already over-subscribed with the overspill being educated at Broomfield Secondary School on a temporary basis by Bowes Primary School. LBE must increase school places in the NCAAP vicinity allowing children to walk safely to school rather than being driven to a school some distance away.

BHORA is very disappointed with the recent downgrading of Broomfield Secondary School i.e. the closure of the 6th form. Facilities to educate young people in the area are contracting rather than expanding. LBE need to invest in our local schools, encourage parents to use local schools which in turn helps to create strong local communities.

The local community have suggested:

Supermarket. Some members responded requesting a decent sized quality supermarket whilst others would prefer small independent shops.

Small specialist shops including butcher, baker, newsagent.
Post Office
Bank
Quality cafes
Restaurants
Local pub
Cinema
Lots of trees
Green space
Community space
Youth centre
Health centre
Council run sports centre similar to Edmonton Green leisure centre.

Off the list would be fast food outlets and pound shops.

With the need to encourage people to walk and cycle (for their own health and air quality) it's imperative that quality retail and community facilities are provided locally.

With reference to the public meeting 3rd February 2016, it was noted that the public were not given the opportunity to discuss what a community hub is or to list the amenities they require.

- *Community use would be an excellent addition to Ritz Parade.*
- *Artists and small businesses for example struggle to find affordable studio / office space, and it would be fantastic to see some consideration given to these groups (please see the new Arts Hotel in Wood Green for reference <https://www.thestage.co.uk/news/2015/the-green-rooms-actors-hotel-checks-in-to-wood-green-london/>).*
- *The document makes no attempt to list the current commercial activity in this area and to state how the proposals will enhance this activity rather than threaten or destroy it.*
- *There are some shop keepers who have been in this area many years and like the residents take pride in the maintenance of the area. However some new comers do not always seem to have the same concerns for the area.*
- *Are Enfield aware that this community already has a dentist, an optician, a cafe and many local convenience shops. Again many of these shops have been here for years. Currently there is a shortage of school places in this area of Enfield. This is not addressed in the documents despite the fact that the plan is for 1,400 new homes. Where are the children who live in these homes to go to school?*

3. Given the desire to see the parade regenerated into a vibrant community hub there will be a need to achieve optimum development to encourage investment, therefore are the densities about right?

Developers will always push the boundaries of any framework, a framework which includes so much housing isn't the right starting point. We need an option which provides more retail and less housing.

In September 2009 NHHT were granted £54.4m to regenerate the area. This was to include refurbishment of existing properties and building new homes on empty plots. Over the past 10 years the local community have asked numerous times (at public meetings, letters in the press and through formal consultation) for an improvement in local amenities, to cater not only for their own requirements but for the anticipated 4000 extra people due to join us in the new homes. Each time

LBE have referred to the 4th phase of the NCAAP as the point at which community facilities would be introduced. We have watched the demolition of 2 storey homes be replaced with 5+ storey apartment blocks, mews terraces built on peoples back gardens and unsightly bridge placed at a junction whose steps don't even work!

It now appears community facilities can only be incorporated at the Ritz Parade phase if the Ritz Parade is demolished! LBE regularly refer to 'landmark buildings', 'gateway buildings' and more recently 'a visual reference point'. Demolishing all or part of the parade will remove our 'visual reference point'. We would like to keep this art deco building in-tact. It links to the art deco Bounds Green tube station, Arnos Grove tube station, Bowes Rd library, pool and health centre. It sits well with the arts and craft design of many homes in the area.

LBE have failed to explain the need for each individual site in NCAAP to "stack up financially", we have understood this to be one large project, a comprehensive coordinated development, hence the NCAAP. We do not support additional residential units on the Ritz Parade site defined pg 31 as C, D, E in order to make this one site "stack up financially". Profit will be made on all the other NHHT sites and LBE will collect a large increase in council tax from all the new residents. We want to see some of the NHHT profits and council tax ploughed into the Ritz Parade, helping to make it a viable retail and community facility.

- *Already above the anticipated NCAAP density, I would be concerned that this brief is then taken as the new baseline and the actuality becomes the new baseline "plus 10%". Five floors (or four plus ground as the wording puts it) become six, and so forth.*
- *Seeking caps on density and height(s) seem important aspects for inclusion in any response.*
- *There is reference to a 'vibrant community hub' which is a seductive phrase conjuring up the potential power of regeneration's positive impact. A community is as good as the people who make up that community. Local residents have had concerns about some of the new developments in this area.*
- *The concept of a 'vibrant community hub' supported by neatly drawn pictures of an area with immaculate grass verges is seductive but does not reflect reality.*
- *It would be great to have a vibrant local community thrive on this parade, but due consideration must be given to traffic volume. Living on Powys Lane, this is already a major negative for residents and the plan doesn't address this. Parking is also vitally important, and whilst the plan (Option A) appears to address this, with 2-car households becoming ever more common, I think it would create more overspill onto Powys Lane and other local roads.*
- *Elsewhere the artists' impressions are as always very attractive, but the complete absence of double-parked cars everywhere, especially for **scheme B** where a paltry **34 parking spaces** are being provided across the site for **115 residential units**, is blatantly falsifying the actual situation should this intensive development be built. Where on earth will people park?*
- *For scheme B we are given the deliberately obscure sentence (p53) "Under this scenario it is **assumed** that the new resident's (sic) car parking can be accommodated **at grade**." Assumed? By who? Are the designers not certain? If not what does it depend on? Do you understand the variables? And what does the excitingly technical-yet-obscure term "at grade" mean? What it actually means is that no off-road parking of any kind will be provided, so people will have to park on the access roads. Oh, so that's what it means. Why not say so?*
- *Again on p55 we have "Parking for residential uses will be limited but **should** be provided **at grade along the routes between the individual development parcels**." Should"? Why didn't you write "Will"? Are you not sure? Might it happen or might it not? Are you actually guessing? Then again we have the brilliantly obscurantist phrase "at grade along the routes between the individual development parcels" which actually means fighting for your parking space anywhere you possibly*

can, and probably failing to find a parking space and having to head off up the A406 to park in existing residential roads.

4. Given the site is within a local centre and faces the NCR, are the building heights proposed about right?

The design of the Ritz Parade needs to be kept in-tact, an increase in height is not acceptable. The council should not give planning permission for homes along such a polluted road and by giving planning permission for such tall buildings simply traps the pollution making the situation worse.

- *One wag suggested that bedrooms should not face the A406. May I suggest they should come and live here.*
- *Two-storey high maximum*
- *Local residents have already made it clear they do not want higher buildings.*
- *Remember this is a suburban area not urban area.*
- *With current levels of air pollution and forecast to increase, is this really the right place to increase densities?*
- *February 2013 public meeting. Unanimous opposition to the proposals. High buildings NO NO*
- *I am troubled by the heights of the proposed buildings. I think an edifice like this would fail to add architectural style and uplift the area.*

5. This document outlines the complexity of land assembly and therefore provides a phased approach for both options. Do you agree this is the right approach for the site?

We do not support option A or option B. A phased approach will make little difference to the local community if it simply means more flats.

- *If the infrastructure is not thought about in good time, there will be a huge overflow onto side streets of the North Circular, which will create a huge tension to the existing residents.*

6. The document cannot dictate on design, it can however provide clear principles by which appropriate design will be considered. Have we identified all the relevant design principles?

No, whilst the document refers to “high quality new development” and “high quality design” we are surrounded by new buildings bearing no resemblance to either the 2 storey arts and craft homes along the A406 or the art deco Ritz Parade.

- *I think the failure to utilise the absolute jewel of art deco design in the Ritz cinema building is a great shame. This can be built around, with more utilitarian flats and retail units, leaving the building looking marooned in the centre, but surely the planners and architects could be persuaded to take inspiration from the Ritz building and create something truly different and inspiring for the local community, residents, shoppers and those using this part of the A406.*
- *I think access should be a major theme: My expectation would be that the main community for retail would (should) be that facing, ie the Warwick Road estate. Excellent pedestrian / bike access across the A406 then becomes crucial. To the west towards the school and tube, again good access routes for foot and bike, need to be of quality. Where I would expect to see some thinking would be to the east and north east in providing access to PG centre, via eg Westminster Drive / Broomfield Lane (although I'm not close to the access risk-issues at the southern end of the latter) and / or via the New River. All would hopefully help pull the development - and others on the A406 - into the widest*

possible local set of communities rather than being isolated islands which in turn could breed isolated people and risk a downward spiral of commerce.

- *I'm personally not a great fan of the visual of Stalinist type blocks, less so when they emphasise or create a canyon effect such as on this main road frontage.*
- *Using the 6 story developments close to the bridge may be useful to help develop a height cap. Argued as OK because they sit at the boundary between two Neighbourhood Areas is completely irrelevant when you're living it and not looking at an administrative map. The view into the vale from Southgate has been ruined while from so many other viewpoints the walls are simply ugly, visually dominating and inappropriate for the local scale. I really haven't come across anything so widely talked about out-of-area and so universally disliked.*
- *Landscaping drawings indicated trees would be planted. Is this correct? We do not need a few token bushes.*
- *After the last development in this area we are left with roadside verges and a central area strewn with litter. This does nothing to contribute to the quality of this area. I understand that this is not the responsibility of Enfield but that it comes under the jurisdiction of TfL. There has been a failure to maintain the sites where there was supposed to be landscaping.*
- *I would agree that there needs to be high quality design. I am also pleased to see that Enfield recognise the importance of this area in 'establishing first impressions of the Borough'. The recent developments at Bowes Primary School illustrate just what can be achieved. The school has been transformed into a welcoming building despite its position on the North Circular.*
- *Option B suggests demolition of old cinema, on LBE heritage assets list. One of the few buildings on this list.*
- *Designs shown lack creativity and soul. No link with the local area. Just a few straight lines and boxes.*
- *Problems of Air quality and noise. What measures are being taken to mitigate this in one of the worst polluted areas in London? Creating a high rise corridor of flats will only reduce air quality for the thousands of residents due to move in to the area and those already living here.*
- *I love the artist's impressions but these don't sit well versus the actual A406 photo later in the pack. It would be good to have drawn up a real life impression of the scenarios which don't suggest a small town quiet road and families taking in the scenery for a peaceful stroll alongside the low volume of tootling-along traffic.*
- *Pg 49. Development of an appropriate scale. "new development should respect the existing townscape". Option A and Option B fail to notice that the existing townscape/Ritz parade increases from 2 to 3 to 4 and then decreases accordingly to create the bold art deco design. By building on-top/either side of the central section to either the same or greater height obliterates the art deco design.*

7. Key constraints over land value and viability are identified and this will require a balance between providing new commercial and community space with new residential. Have we got the balance right?

There is no "balance" in Option A or Option B, it appears to be even more residential units. The Ritz Parade must focus on community facilities and not residential units. We have 1400 new residential units in the area, plus derelict homes brought back into use plus family homes converted into multi occupancy. We now need school places, decent shops, a post office, community spaces etc...

- *The area to be developed is not owned by Enfield so once again it would seem that they will have limited power over the development of this 'opportunity site'.*
- *I'd like to see much more detail on proposed community spaces. I don't feel this has been addressed in any depth.*

Other comments

The Ritz Parade.

BHORA would like to thank the Jehovah's Witnesses who have restored and maintained the Ritz Parade.

The Ritz cinema which was taken over by the Jehovah's Witnesses has been beautifully maintained by them. Both the building and the people have made a positive contribution to this area. I am unconvinced that it was necessary to describe the inside of this building in such detail.

Notting Hill Housing Trust ratio.

Concern has been raised regarding the ratio of social housing to private ownership for this proposed building. This does not seem to be addressed. A 'mixed and balanced' range of housing is crucial. It would have been useful to have given specifications.

An important principle is 'mixed' housing as so forcibly demonstrated in other areas of London – when owner occupiers move in (and are in the majority) they are prepared to invest time and effort in maintaining their properties. Owner occupiers will be attracted if the density is right, the buildings are of high quality and the landscaping is attractive.

Extract below from Housing Trust website specifies the mix of housing. It only includes 41 private homes. In my view this does not constitute an appropriate mix. It does not appear to include any private owner occupied homes.

The second phase of the project will provide 546 new homes, scheduled to be completed in 2016 and will comprise:

- *127 Shared Ownership homes*
- *74 affordable rent homes*
- *55 social rent homes*
- *41 private rent homes*

Flooding.

I understand reports have been prepared outside LBE taking account of global warming and dangers of excess water from local streams which join at Wilmer Way. Has a risk assessment and /or any other action been taken?

Confidence in the LBE to manage the scheme.

A professionally-produced document where the production team cannot even spell the word "Foreword" (p3) does not fill me with confidence.

Conclusion

Paeg 25 of the brief says, "this brief should be prepared with the benefit of the active involvement of the local community". BHORA has consulted with members, prepared this document, advertised the area forum to members (hence there being at least 60 people there rather than the handful at a regular forum) and so we hope that the council will actually include, in the final document, the ideas

we have brought forward and that 'active involvement' doesn't simply mean holding a consultation process but ignoring what the local community say.

We would like LBE to produce an Option C which does not bulldoze the Ritz Parade, includes the amenities listed under question 2, outlines the financial investment LBE will put into local community amenities and show a clear commitment to making this area a more pleasant and healthy place to live.