

Wandsworth Society

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Mr A Simpson, Springfield Director
Estates Regeneration Department
Building 14
Springfield Hospital
Glenburnie Road
London SW17 7DJ

Dear Mr Simpson.

Future Plans for Springfield Hospital

We set out below our comments on the new proposals for Springfield outlined at the two public meetings and workshops held in December 2009 and June 2010.

We have also referred to your June 2010 brochure, which gives a helpful summary of the way you and your advisers have responded to the planning refusal and the public reaction to the original proposals. In response:

1) Generally

Our overall view is that, whilst we appreciate that Springfield had to take on board and listen to local comment, this has had a negative effect. As a result, the current proposal has moved away from the hospital's initial feasibility study where a high density development was highlighted as necessary for a new "village" to function successfully. Instead, we have a low density "estate" with no "heart" to function as a local focal point. Thus we are concerned that the original proposal to create a dynamic and lively scheme to integrate the hospital with the local community has been lost.

Despite our concerns at this loss of impact, there are a number of aspects of the scheme which we welcome:

- 1) The increase in the number of family homes;
- 2) The provision of 30% of affordable housing and its proposed mix of size and occupation.
- 3) Reconsideration of the building heights along the north-east boundary.
- 4) The limitation (already begun) of on-site parking and traffic creation.
- 5) The protection of the valuable trees and open spaces.

However, our principle concerns about the new proposals arise from:

- i) the intrusion of the housing into the Metropolitan Open Land to the detriment of the views and open settings to and from the Listed Buildings;
- ii) the lack of access to the site from surrounding roads and neighbourhoods;
- iii) to the loss of retail and employment uses.

2) Metropolitan Open Land

We believe that the groups of family housing projecting into the present Metropolitan Open land are too intrusive and damaging to the open setting of the listed buildings and the splendid vistas, especially the two groups to the south-west of the main buildings. The setting of the listed Elizabeth Newton Building has already been damaged by the recent (2006) hospital building and further damage to the settings of the main listed buildings must be avoided: please refer to the attached sketch plan.

Buildings facing onto the Metropolitan Open Land/new park should have a low profile and conformity in design, eg. a family resemblance not individual, detached houses of differing styles and materials, fenced from the park with the inevitable clutter of front and back gardens on show, creating disharmony.

The buildings proposed overlooking the Metropolitan Open Land/ new park were shown in the last scheme set high on made up ground - does this remain the case? (In the illustration on page 14 of your brochure, the new housing in the trees on the periphery of the open land does appear to be several stories high almost to the height of the trees themselves whilst on the plans the site shown seems to be for pairs of houses?)

Although reconsideration has been given to the proposed building heights in the immediate vicinity of the existing housing and school sites southwest of Beechcroft Road, we think that the reductions made have been excessive. For example:

- i) To the north-east of the hospital boundary existing heights vary from 2 to 4 storeys. Whilst new development could simply reflect neighbouring scale we consider that new 3 storey could sit quite happily by the existing 2 storey scale of College Gardens or, 4 and 5 storeys by the 3 storey plus high roofs in the Malcolm Gavin Close.
- ii) By Glenburnie Road the scale of the new development is now much lower than earlier, but we consider that taller buildings, eg 4 storeys or slightly more, could be

successfully integrated elsewhere on lower areas of the hospital site to reduce impact and create increased density.

Increased heights within the main area of the scheme could reduce the requirement to develop groups of houses within the Metropolitan Open Land.

3) Site Access

In our view it is vital that links between the Beechcroft Road neighbourhoods and between the new high density St George's Hospital housing scheme currently under construction and the existing Aboyne Estate area to the west and the new Springfield housing should be created, without which:

- i) Journeys by foot to public transport will be lengthy in distance and time, for example convenient access to Wandsworth Common station is vital to the East.
- ii) Existing neighbourhoods will be isolated from the new estate and unable to support new "local" shops proposed to service it.
- iii) The new hospital "estate" development will be totally isolated from the nearest neighbours including College Gardens, the other side of the boundary fence!

There is a need to encourage pedestrians and cyclists into Springfield by creating desire lines through and beyond, a) directly to the west to Garratt Lane and buses to Tooting, Wandsworth and locations beyond, b) to the trains at Earlsfield station, and c), for example, safe routes for girls to Burntwood School from the east via Beechcroft and Glenburnie Roads.

Where, in the new park, will the public be directed after walking its length to the south-east corner? There ought to be a path to lead users onwards, not stop at a dead end.

Generally, the current plans show the new development almost wholly bound by its site boundaries with very few breaks, an arrangement little better than the hospital has enjoyed historically, and from which mould we understood it was going to break. Unless better links to and from the outside world are provided, the opportunity to bring the public on to the site is limited, and we believe that the few retail outlets originally proposed to draw in custom from local neighbourhoods will not survive and the heart of Springfield will largely be deserted as a result. The links originally proposed in the feasibility study are vital to the development of a real, bustling, thriving "village".

4) Shops and Offices.

We regret that commercial premises appear to be totally absent and also that there are now few shops proposed. The new development will be a dormitory only, not a vital, attractive, “village”, drawing in people from outside as part of the hospital integration into mainstream life. **This appeared to be one of the primary goals if not the primary goal at the outset 4/5 years ago and which seems to have become lost in the attempts to assuage opposition.**

Such premises, and indeed research establishments too, which were a feature of the feasibility study are now absent. All these premises together were included initially as a means to raise regular income for the hospital to make it self sufficient and self reliant financially for maintenance of the new hospital estate and the extensive landscaped grounds of the new development.

With regard to employment uses, we believe that offices and workshops would be successful provided that the public perception of site accessibility can be raised, particularly with the improved links we advise through the adjoining neighbourhoods, and good transport links.

5) Traffic

Under the previous scheme a misconception was created that public transport links to the area are poor. This misconception continues. There are trains and tubes close to the site particularly with our advised improved links through the neighbourhoods. Also buses, several of which will run into or through the site. In our view, public transport links are very good by any London standard and car usage to reach public transport, which is difficult anyway due to the stringent parking restrictions locally imposed by the Council, becomes unnecessary.

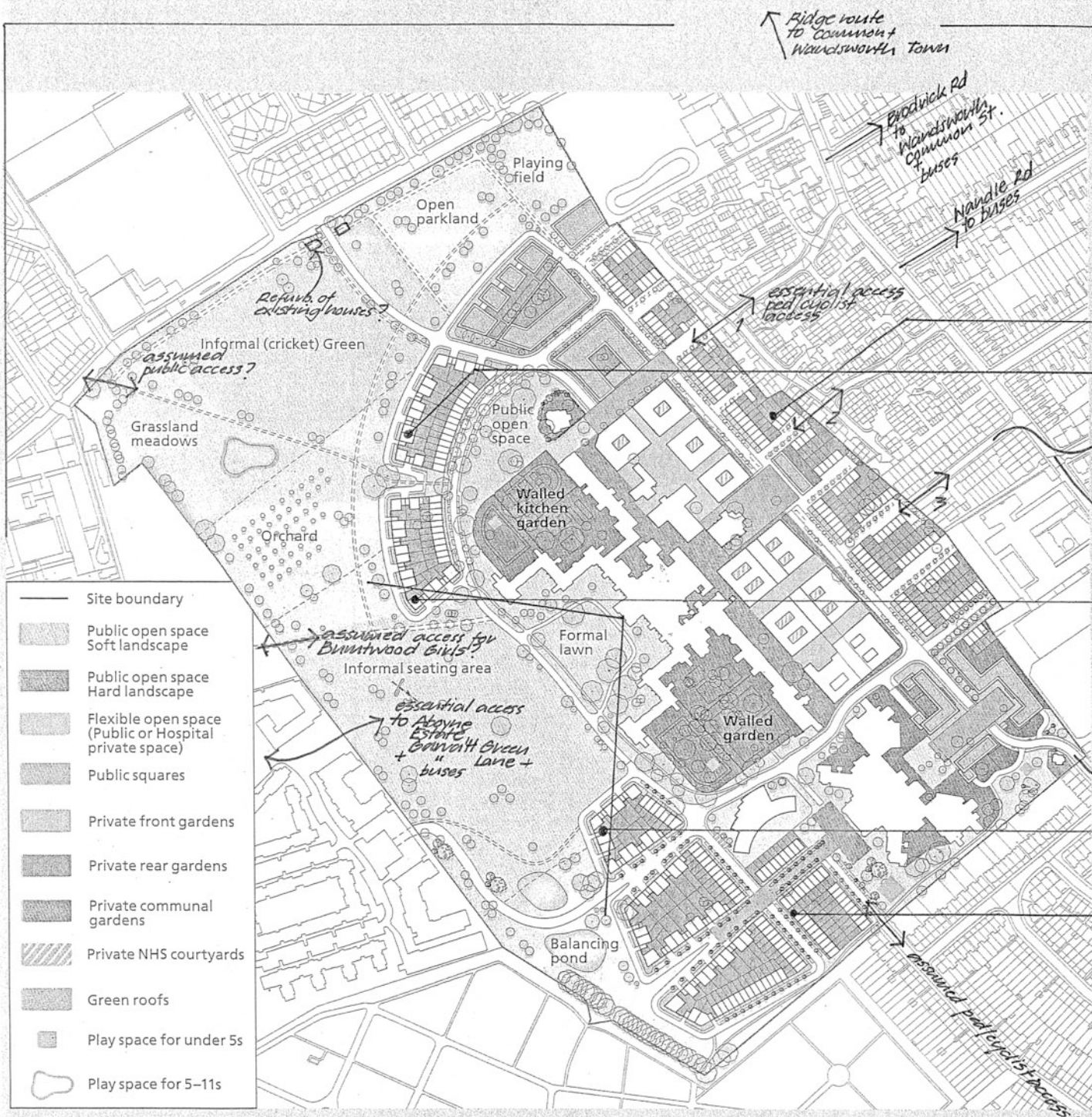
Car usage, from experience at the housing developments either side of the Royal Victoria Patriotic Building and others locally are very low indeed due primarily to severe restrictions on usage. On-site arrangements by Springfield Hospital to discourage car usage by visitors, new housing and hospital/commerce occupiers alike should continue to be pursued.

6) Conclusion

Wandsworth Society is still very committed to the principle of the redevelopment of the Springfield Hospital site to provide the best hospital facilities. We are concerned though that the new proposals lack “heart” and that some guiding principles have been lost from the original concept. We hope however that our comments are constructive and can be taken into account as the revised proposals are taken to the planning application stage.

Yours sincerely,

John Dawson
Wandsworth Society



- Site boundary
- Public open space Soft landscape
- Public open space Hard landscape
- Flexible open space (Public or Hospital private space)
- Public squares
- Private front gardens
- Private rear gardens
- Private communal gardens
- Private NHS courtyards
- Green roofs
- Play space for under 5s
- Play space for 5-11s

Ridge route
to Common +
Wandsworth Town

Brookwick Rd
to Wandsworth
Common +
buses

Nandle Rd
to buses

essential access
red cyclist
access

Refurb. of
existing houses?

assumed
public access?

assumed access for
Burntwood Girls?

essential access
to Abney
Estate
Burntwood Green
Lane +
buses

assumed public cyclist access?

refer to
Wandsworth Society
letter: 20.08.10

N.E. housing could be
raised 1-2 storeys?

low profile + conformity
of design to properties:
too forward encroachment
on M.O.L?

to Tunny Rd

Evenden Rd
to tube + buses

proposed hsq
encroaching on
open setting of
listed building.

Elephantine Rd
to tube + buses

as above note

SW housing could
be raised by 2/3 storeys?