



Andy Slaughter, Labour MP for Hammersmith
Shadow Minister for Justice
House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA
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John McNally
Planning Department
LBHF

8th March 2012

Dear Sir,

Imperial West Planning Application, ref 2011/04016/COMB

I am writing to object to the proposals submitted by Imperial College London for the Woodlands site at 80 Wood Lane in my constituency.

This proposal represents a massive overdevelopment of the site, which is an area that is already heavily developed and is close by other proposed developments with which it should be considered in tandem. The development affects residents in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea as well as Hammersmith and Fulham, and I have been contacted by many individual residents, organised groups of residents and their representatives, as well as local authority councillors for the area. The opposition to the proposals is unanimous.

I am aware that these parties will be submitting their own objections to the proposals: I am fully supportive of these groups and the grounds on which they object. I have three broad areas of concern:

Unsuitability for the area

The height of much of the proposed development is unacceptable: not merely the 35-tower residential block but also the 9-storey academic building, the 13-storey hotel, the 12-storey office and research units, are entirely out of keeping with the area, and will be an oppressive presence in a neighbourhood of traditional two-storey houses in a conservation area. I am further concerned that should this development proceed, it will set a precedent for other high rise developments in an area that is already densely populated.

Housing and infrastructure

The proposed mixture of academic buildings, residential property and commercial property attempts to cram too much into a relatively small space. If there is a need for housing in this area, it is for affordable homes – this proposal does not address that need. The immediate area surrounding the development is already stretched to capacity – the traffic gridlock during the closure of White City station a few years ago was evidence of how little it takes to bring Shepherds Bush's streets to a standstill - since then the Westfield Shopping Centre has increased congestion in the area. The transport assessment document states that *“car parking will be severely restricted“*, and *“The total parking provision will be in the same order of the provision provided (sic!) when the site was occupied”* This is most unlikely to satisfy the aspirations of the likely purchasers of the residential accommodation on the site or the needs of the non-resident users – the resulting pressure on car parking space will be intolerable. The council recently approved an application for a large housing development on the land north of Westfield. Crowding several hundred more living units into the area is ill-advised, to say the least.

Prematurity of the Application

Notwithstanding the demerits of the application considered unilaterally, my most pressing concern is the disregard this scheme shows for the strategic planning needs of the whole White City/Shepherds Bush Area. There are two other major planning applications currently being considered, at Shepherds Bush Market, and on the area North of Westfield. There is a further large application on the Dairy Crest site on Wood Lane to be considered shortly. Yet the revised White City Opportunity Area Planning Framework is still to be published and consulted on. The lack of coordination between these major planning projects is of great concern – it is leading to a patchwork of independently conceived projects which compete for the same space and infrastructure resources, and no strategic overview is in place to ensure the harmonious evolution of one of London's most famous neighbourhoods for the benefit of its inhabitants.

Yours sincerely,

Andy Slaughter