

HAMPSTEAD POLICE STATION PROPOSALS BY CfTB/ABACUS/KIER

COMMENTS from
HAMPSTEAD COMMUNITY for RESPONSIBLE DEVELOPMENT

ABACUS- IT SIMPLY DOES NOT ADD UP!

DECLARED UNSUITABLE BY ITS OWN TRUST

In Jan 2015 the Chief Executive wrote to parents to say this site was not a viable option -"it would have compromised our mission of providing an excellent learning experience to your children" Since then they have doubled the pupil numbers and produced a scheme so intensified and compromised that it provides an imposing and cramped environment utterly unsuitable for teaching primary aged children.

CfBT TRUST CRITICISED by OFSTED

Ofsted have heavily criticised CfBT trust for low standards, after growing too fast and going for quantity over quality. CfBT, after blaming the government for the circumstances, have simply reverted to this approach.

ABACUS INEXPERIENCE

Abacus currently runs a school for 60 children very well. They have no experience running a highly intensified and cramped school for 420 outside of their catchment area. The sacrifice of their founding objectives of a local 210 pupil school does not bode well.

SUPPLY OF PUPIL PLACES

Hampstead is heavily oversupplied with schools and there is no demonstrable need . There are more than 53 schools in NW3 with circa 12,500 pupils. Camden is running a surplus of primary spaces for 2016/17 and is well on stream for projected growth to 2025.

Abacus wish to provide secular places for Belsize Ward but addressing the broad imbalance of secular places elsewhere cannot be a justification for this sites overdevelopment. Strategic decision making at Camden level needs to address this.

CATCHMENT AREA

The proposed school is outside their own catchment area and is inconvenient and remote from the southern catchment area ,in excess of 20 minutes walking distance uphill. They quote in their 2012 prospectus parents difficulties getting their kids to school in Hampstead!

Roughly 50% of current pupils according to their transport assessment come from outside their catchment area and from as far afield as Cricklewood.

EXCESSIVE COST

It is reckoned the school will cost four times the national average(Kier will not reveal the costs). Compare this to the exemplary scheme brought forward by Camden at Hawley Wharf.

DAMAGES EXISTING LOCAL SCHOOLS

The proposals threaten the funds and viability of adjacent schools taking resources away and causing reduction in teacher numbers. Fleet Road Primary are objecting.

TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Camden's policy presumptions against further schools in Hampstead recognises both the existing traffic burden on the area resulting from the school run, and the lack of realistic control over the traffic implications, irrespective of good intentions.

POLLUTION

The applicants own data shows pollution levels at nearly twice recommended levels and pushing illegal levels. They even propose external lightwell teaching zones fronting onto Rosslyn Hill as they are required to provide linked external space. Apart from the toxic environment these areas are caged over!

GROSS OVERDEVELOPMENT IN A CONSERVATION AREA

The scheme proposes completely unacceptable and overbearing massing and by virtue of its overdevelopment also then resorts to cramped internal planning and facilities.

CAGED ROOFTOP PLAY SPACE

Even Birmingham City council threw out equivalent proposals ! This is completely inappropriate for young kids, and the applicants comparisons to first floor large games decks for senior pupils elsewhere, is completely spurious.

HERITAGE CALAMITY

The proposals require large scale destruction of the heritage asset completely at odds with first principles. Historic England have advised Camden that Listed Building Consent should not be granted with the plans as proposed.

DESIGN

The proposals are fundamentally flawed in almost every respect resulting from a grossly over ambitious brief and constrained build budget. The bland and irrelevant design of the oversized extension, akin to a 1970 office block, has no place in a sensitive conservation area and listed building setting, and does not begin to approach the high design quality policy requires.

NOISE

The rooftop playground will be incessantly in use during the day and will be a constant source of noise spreading to a large and otherwise tranquil area of residential gardens. Four weeks after submission the applicants have deigned to provide a report which will now be scrutinised by our specialists.

AMENITY OF NEIGHBOURS

The proposals have a colossal amenity impact on immediate neighbours and the wider community. Up to 800 pupils parents and staff descending on the location twice daily!

PROGRAM

The developers have no chance of getting this scheme through planning, legal agreements and a major construction process, for occupation in Sept 2017. This is a direct consequence of the lack of early and subsequent meaningful consultation, and an orderly timetable. They should admit this now and stop trying to railroad this scheme through with a false imperative.

CONCLUSION

Abacus, come up with a solution which adds up!
Revert to your principles. Look again at new and previous sites
We will support you. Camden will support you. You will get a better deal.
It should not be necessary for you to sabotage the very environment we want our kids to inherit!

For detailed planning reasoning go to the professional submissions made on behalf of HCRD on the Camden planning website.