

## **Result of Council Planning meeting regarding school on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2016**

Following extensive work by DHRA and others on planning, transport, Heritage, noise, air pollution, the need for a school and local amenity, several technical reports supporting our objections were submitted to the council. We also covered the press etc to try and promote a balanced view. The council also received ca 280 other letters of objection and under 200 letters of support.

A big thanks to everyone who wrote in and/or donated some money to help pay for all the technical work.

At the Planning meeting of Camden Council on Thursday 28 July, and after about an hour and a half of debate, a unanimous vote was taken by Councillors to refuse permission to Abacus to develop the old police station as a 420-pupil primary school. This decision supported the Council officers' recommendation to deny permission.

The debate was wide-ranging and covered heritage concerns, the bulky nature of the proposed rear development in a Conservation Area, suitability of the site for its proposed purpose, local amenity, the current and projected need for primary school places in the area, traffic implications, noise levels and air quality. It was felt that Abacus had increased the proposed pupil numbers from 210 to 420 with little regard for the site's suitability or indeed for the need for these school places. Parents at the current school want the choice of a secular education but it was pointed out that there are currently over 30 vacancies in nearby secular Camden primary schools alone, already threatening existing schools in the area. Children from even further afield would have to make up the numbers with all manner of implications from traffic to the future of existing, well-regarded schools.

Andrew Neil gave a speech against the proposal on behalf of DHRA, the Heath and Hampstead Society and other NW3 groups. We are indebted to him for his exceptional and rigorous work over the last few months on our behalf alongside other members of the Association.

A huge thank you again to every one of you who gave so generously to achieve this excellent result. We hope that it does not go to Appeal but, if it does, we are well prepared to take the fight to the next stage.

I am afraid however that, depending on what form appeal might be lodged and how we decide to fight it, (i.e. do we want to be fully represented by being a rule 6 party), we may need additional funding but that is for another day.

Abacus we believe have three months (from the date of issue of the Council Minutes) to lodge their appeal and we sincerely hope that they choose to withdraw from such a gross overdevelopment. We shall see.

Thanks again to everybody.

S D Ainger

Chair DHRA