

# Wandsworth Society

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## Fitzhugh consultation July / August 2023

### Consultation process

We were aware that the Fitzhugh Estate was being considered for the Homes for Wandsworth programme, but unaware that proposals had been developed to the stage shown on the exhibition boards. The photomontage on board seven shows what appears to be a fully resolved building on Parcel A. This building is the most significant element of the proposed development, yet it appears to be almost the least significant part of the consultation.

There is no explanation why the estate is considered to be appropriate for development. There seems to be a presumption that, having decided that Parcel A was a potential site, a building the height and massing of the proposed development would be acceptable to the people now being consulted. The only specific questions on the Fitzhugh Estate Survey are on landscaping and the choice of amenities for the new community facility. Bypassing the question of whether the proposed building is acceptable, or more fundamentally whether the estate is appropriate for development renders the consultation meaningless.

### Comments

**We very much support the objective of The Homes for Wandsworth programme to provide new homes for council rent. However, we believe the Fitzhugh Estate is not a suitable location to contribute to the programme.**

Although not nationally listed the Fitzhugh Estate is a heritage asset. It is locally listed, and in its principal features is indistinguishable from the Grade II Alton Estate East. The five 11-storey point blocks are identical to the Grade II buildings of the Alton East Estate and the layout of the buildings and landscaping are largely as described in the separate designation of the Grade II landscaping of the Alton East Estate.

Proposed development relating to a heritage asset is required by the Local Plan policy LP3 Historic Environment to 'sustain, preserve and, wherever possible, enhance the significance, appearance, character, function and setting' of a heritage asset ... . As the Fitzhugh Estate is almost completely unaltered since its original construction any development on the estate would be difficult to justify and would most likely cause harm to it. The estate is an exemplary model of the planning, architectural and housing ethos of the time.

A significant design feature of the estate is the well-spaced setting out of identical point blocks in a mature landscape. We consider the policies of London Plan Policy HC1 “Heritage conservation and growth” and Local Plan policy LP3 “Historic Environment” clearly preclude the introduction of an additional building of the massing and height of the proposed building. Not only because of the heritage value of the estate itself but also its proximity to the Listed Grade II Royal Victoria Patriotic Building (RVPB).

The value of Victorian architecture was much less appreciated when the estate was designed than it is now. Siting the most northerly point block Woodhall House directly between the retained original entrance and the RVPB was a mistake. It should not be used as an excuse to locate another building adjacent to it.

The information on board seven is sufficient to demonstrate that the proposed building on Parcel A will have a considerable adverse effect on the setting of Woodhall House, the RVPB and Wandsworth Common

- the building will intrude in front of the front elevation of the RVPB
- obscure views from Trinity Road and Windmill Road
- have an overbearing effect on the open space in front of the RVPB : the land falls away from the north of the building, effectively increasing its dominance over the open space and its height viewed from the open space

It will also

- adversely effect the amenity of the Woodhall House flats facing west.

Although the proposed development is in part sited on the footprint of an existing building it will result in the loss of a considerable number of trees, including one Category A tree and substantial areas of planting

There is little information available on the building proposed for Parcel F. Even a single-storey building in this location will result in the loss of at least seven Category B trees, adversely affecting the open space between the point blocks, a principal characteristic of the landscape of the estate.

## **Conclusion**

Limited though the information provided is, we believe it is sufficient to demonstrate that the estate should not be further developed, and that should it proceed the building on Parcel A will have significantly adverse effects on neighbouring buildings, Woodhall House, the Royal Victoria Patriotic Building and Wandsworth Common.