

EALING CIVIC SOCIETY

SUMMARY OF PROOF OF EVIDENCE

1. In our evidence, we deal principally with built environment issues and the relationship of the proposed development with its existing context, including nearby buildings and open spaces in particular Haven Green. Our approach fits into the overall theme developed by Save Ealing's Centre but concentrates in urban design and heritage issues. We will touch upon conservation area matters but leave the main thrust of conservation issues to evidence from the conservation panels. We show that the proposed development would be out of keeping with the existing predominantly low-rise character of Ealing and would change its nature for ever. We concentrate upon the harm that the development would cause in relation to the following matters: height (tall buildings), bulk, massing, materials, local context of the development, views, impact on Haven Green, public realm and the Green Corridor.

2. We consider the LPA has ignored its existing **tall buildings** criteria, failed to update them on the lines proposed by EH/CABE and has not carried out a sufficiently comprehensive character appraisal for the area to permit a proper assessment of the impact of tall buildings upon it. In the absence of an updated tall buildings policy the LPA has failed to consider which locations should be identified for such buildings and it does not fully understand the consequences of the impact of buildings of such great bulk and constructed of materials so out of keeping with the Town Centre Conservation area and adjoining Haven Green Conservation Area.

3. The proposed development fails to respect the **local context** found in Ealing Town Centre. The density, massing, layout and design would be more appropriate to an inner-city area than to a sensitive location of conservation areas and their principal buildings. The LPA seems to have been driven by the prospect of what it sees as a regeneration opportunity. In so doing, the LPA ignores the criteria set out in PPS1, PPG15, and the London Plan and its own UDP. This would also set an undesirable precedent for the development of other town centre sites.

4. The proposed development would impact **views** in an unacceptable way as follows:

- on Haven Green to such an extent that it would reduce the Public Open Space to the appearance of a backyard;
- on higher ground to the north from Mount Park Rd, where at present street views are terminated by green trees, they would be dominated by a mass of high buildings; and a historic residential area protected by conservation area status would become an appendage to a high density city scheme that would cause pressures for loss of more conservation area;
- to the west it would be so visible along the Uxbridge Rd that our traditional high points would be obscured;
- to the east along the Mall to Ealing Common, traditional landmarks such as the spire of the Polish Church would not stand out against the background of the building mass;
- to the south residential areas and the Heritage Land of Walpole Park would be affected.

5. Haven Green is a small local park where fine trees could be damaged by the proposal. The shadows of the high buildings would reduce the sunny area available to the public yet more people would want to use it. Views across the Green would be cut off by high buildings and the draughts from these buildings would make sitting out and play less pleasant. Children would lack places to play out of doors in the proposed development which would create a need for more space. A suburban village green space would effectively be treated as a back garden to a large housing development.

6. As for the **Public Realm** the sloping site and the total floor space needed to fund the railway bridging, basement parking and servicing would create too many environmental problems for the precinct and squares. Steps, ramps, the need for lifts at ground level, poor micro-climate and overbearing buildings would spoil the precinct.

7. It would not be possible due to the rafting over of the railway for the **Green Corridor's** island refuge function to be enhanced in the proposed development. An

additional value of this Green Corridor is in providing a green extension to Haven Green which would improve if left to mature. Maintaining this island function has to be proved possible at this stage and not left until after any permission is granted.

8. Finally, **details of design, external finish and materials** of such an important development affecting six conservation areas should be part of the application and not left to conditions.

9. **In conclusion**, redevelopment of the Arcadia site would be the most significant development in Ealing town centre since that of Ealing Broadway Centre in the 1970s. The Society was successful in its formative years in opposing a concrete leviathan which would have disfigured Ealing town centre for ever. The current Centre is more in keeping and of similar bulk and scale to the present town centre and has largely stood the test of time well. In many ways the Arcadia scheme replays the earlier scenario and we again do not wish the character of the centre of Ealing to be destroyed by an overbearing tower and other tall buildings out of keeping in scale and design and materials with their surroundings.

10. We accept that some redevelopment has to take place but this needs to be done in such a way as to enhance the town centre and not detract from nearby important buildings nor the public amenity provided by Haven Green common land. Above all, it needs to protect and enhance the conservation area in which it is situated and neighbouring affected conservation areas. It needs to be low rise and sympathetic to the surrounding areas in which it is situated.

11. In our evidence, we have concentrated on the harm that would be caused from the height, bulk and mass of the tall buildings, views and poor connectivity between Haven Green and the town centre and the effect on the public realm through shadowing and microclimate effects. In our view the current development would be out of keeping and out of scale and would significantly harm the conservation areas in which it is situated

and nearby. **We therefore respectfully request the Inspector to recommend to the Secretary of State that consent for the development should not be granted.**

RG

2/06/09