

A LETTER WRITTEN TO THE LONDON MAYOR BY AN EALING RESIDENT WHO WAS PRESENT AT THE DICKENS YARD PLANNING COMMITTEE ON 5 NOVEMBER

Dear Boris,

Can you help us preserve the unique qualities of Ealing Town Centre?

The heart of our Borough was developed at the time of the creation of main line trains and the Underground. So it is late Victorian, with many large houses now divided into multi occupancy flats. Ealing town centre currently has, in the main, buildings of similar height, predominantly of red brick with white decoration

Last Wednesday, Ealing Council planning committee approved plans for a high density development by St Georges of flats and shops and a town square which will dwarf the surrounding buildings.

The external design of the proposed buildings is not in keeping with the current design of Ealing town centre identified above.

The central shopping avenue will only receive some sunlight during the summer period.

The plan was passed in spite of highly critical reports from both CABE and English Heritage. CABE criticised the council for allowing the developers to drive the planning agenda, ignoring massive local opposition and manipulating the tendering process so that the height and capacity in the original planning brief have been doubled. English Heritage said the development 'cannot be considered in keeping with the character or appearance of the conservation area due to the INCONGRUITY OF SCALE, FORM, MATERIAL AND DETAIL'. Similarly the cogent argument of the Civic Society, the conservation panel and local residents associations were ignored.

The council ignored its own planning guidelines for this conservation area 'to preserve and enhance the character of each conservation area and to resist inappropriate development'.

There is no energy plan worthy of the name.

It is to be built on Council owned land which comes with a covenant that it should be entirely used for social purposes but the only social use we are aware of is a new community hall for the church, replacing the community hall they already have.

The church, designed by Gilbert Scott, will be dwarfed by the new buildings as will the adjoining school and its play area will be overlooked by new buildings.

As you had the pleasure of opening Westfield recently, you will be in good position to appreciate that another shopping centre so close to Westfield cannot compete without developing a different and distinctive approach. There is no study of how Ealing can develop a unique proposition for this scheme

Residents of Ealing are in favour of regeneration, but it must be appropriate and fitting to the character of Ealing.

Many of the residents witnessing the decisions by the planning committee left in a state of disillusion and disbelief at the poor quality of debate and this will serve to undermine local people's belief in the validity of planning committee decisions.

Yours sincerely,