

Friends Of Wimbledon Park

An objection to planning permission for a WIMBLEDON PARK CAR PARK EXTENSION at Revelstoke Road application number 12/P1181 amended 15/10/2012.

1) Our objection

- a) The new information doesn't change the fact that green space is being taken to make a car park for at least 8 months a year.
- b) Although the proposal recognises that this park is on English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Specific Historic Interest no mention of this is made in the body of the paper. This is recognised in Wimbledon North Conservation Area Assessments by both Merton and Wandsworth. An explanation should have been provided as to why the car parking spaces are so important that green space needs to be taken away. No overriding transport need is demonstrated to overcome these breaches of policy. This is dealt with in detail by Dr Dave Dawson in his objection which is endorsed.
- c) WBC in their objection say 'The proposed car park by reason of its scale, design and location would fail to sustain, conserve or enhance the appearance, character and open setting of Wimbledon Park to the harm of the Grade II* Historic Park and Garden, Wimbledon North Conservation Area and the Metropolitan Open Land. The reduction in open functional space for sport and informal activity would be a loss of amenity for users of the park. The provision of additional car parking could result in increased traffic and congestion on local roads leading to the Revelstoke Road entrance of the park and insufficient evidence and justification has been provided to the contrary. Increased traffic and car use could be harmful to pedestrian and cyclists safety. The proposed development would be contrary to policies PL4, IS3, DMO1, DMO2, DMS2 and DMT1 of the Wandsworth Core Strategy, 2010 and Development Management Policies Document, 2012'.
- d) Martin Sumpton in his objection states that 'there should be a greater degree of prior consultation and co-operation between the local residents and Wandsworth and Merton Councils on such issues as this and in the implementation of a Conservation Management Plan for the future benefit of Wimbledon Park'. We agree.
- e) In many ways it's a privilege to own a Heritage site but with it come constraints and responsibilities and this suggests a way forward. The object of a Conservation Management Plan is included in the FOWP constitution.
- f) Tina Thompson in her objection says that 'in a time of severe financial constraints a huge capital outlay for a car park seems ill thought out. For example we know that the lake is dying. The monies saved by NOT agreeing to a car park could be used to carry out the necessary survey to see how the lake can best be saved'. This sentiment is endorsed.
- g) Nigel Martin in his objection showed that the case for permanent extension hasn't been made and the case for a seasonal extension is unsubstantiated. His objection is endorsed.
- h) Andrew Rumfitt in his objection outlines numerous transport points that need attention. For example: 'There has been no objective study of park users (including origins and destinations) so the report is purely based on conjecture and statistically unrepresentative research' and 'There has been no investigation of the car park users and whether they are actually using the park. Additional parking could just trigger additional commuter usage'. His objection is endorsed.
- i) James Constable also makes pertinent points in his objection particularly highlighting 'Increased parking will create additional traffic flow into and around this entrance and

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will undoubtedly and significantly raise the risk of death or serious injury to a park user, most notably young children. I consider it my duty to highlight this safety issue should the panel decide to proceed with the proposal to expand this car park.’ He also states ‘that I am fully supportive of the multi use of Wimbledon Park by the various users but I am adamantly opposed to provision of the additional car parking to facilitate this.’ These views are also endorsed.

- j) Those pedestrians entering the park via Revelstoke Road have to go through a car park before they are in the park. This is both unpleasant and depressing.
 - k) There are consequences for the residents and pedestrians in Revelstoke Road in that traffic is doubled, no speed controls are proposed and there is an unhealthy mix of vehicles, bikes, pedestrians, pushchairs and dogs in the cul-de-sac.
 - l) Compare this entrance with Wimbledon Park Road where there is a good road which is also a bus route and drivers are automatically slowed by the need to turn right or left. Pedestrians and vehicles are quickly separated. The need to walk an extra 100 metres or so is insignificant but the exercise is beneficial.
 - m) Indeed Wimbledon Fortnight provides substantial income from a large temporary car park accessed from this entrance each year. It’s also the entrance to parking in the stadium and the occasionally used overflow car park along Stadium Lane.
 - n) If extra parking is needed (and this isn’t accepted) then Wimbledon Park Road is better.
 - o) Stirling Maynard (section 4 of Transport Statement) estimates that at peak times over 500 people could be in the park. No frequency of peak times has been provided but it would be uncommon & mostly confined to Saturdays. The estimate isn’t based upon any survey, but on back-of-the-envelope calculations which make many misleading assumptions (e.g. that all facilities are needed simultaneously, that all facilities are full and that no-one visits these other than by car). Wimbledon Fortnight and Fireworks displays show that users still go to the park when the car parks are closed. This indicates that extra parking isn’t required.
 - p) During Wimbledon fortnight there are draconian parking restrictions in the surrounding area. Outside of this period residents have agreed CPZs which operate Monday to Friday with varying times and weekends generally are unrestricted. Home Park Road for example usually has available space. If 52 extra parking spaces were an accurate figure space would be available outside around the park.
- 2) The proposal appears to be in direct contravention of the Council’s own Core Strategy¹, adopted earlier in July 2011. In Particular:
- a) Policy CS 13 page 131 Open space, nature conservation, leisure and culture:
 - i) We will:
 - ii) a. Protect and enhance the borough's public and private open space network including Metropolitan Open Land, parks, and other open spaces;
 - iii) b. Improve access to open space and nature conservation by public transport, cycle, mobility vehicles and on foot;
 - b) Policy CS 19 page 178 Public Transport
 - i) We will support and enhance our public transport network by:
 - ii) c. Prioritising development that demonstrates innovative and intelligent design which promotes public transport travel and/or reduces the need for private vehicle travel
 - c) Parking, Servicing and Delivery page 184 Strategic Objective 7:

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- i) To make Merton a well connected place where walking, cycling and public transport are the modes of choice when planning all journeys.
- 3) One should reflect on the words of Octavia Hill (1883) and what it means for park users
 - a) “We all need space; unless we have it we cannot reach that sense of quiet in which whispers of better things come to us gently...[and we need] places to sit in, places to play in, places to stroll in, and places to spend a day in.”
- 4) Another of FOWP objects is to ‘Seek and maintain a constructive and positive working relationship with park owners’. We have read & considered the new information provided. However on this parking extension we disagree.
- 5) This application should be refused and the land returned to grass.

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Chairman FOWP

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ⁱ *London Borough of Merton, LDF Core Planning Strategy, Adopted July 2011*

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