

# Friends Of Wimbledon Park

**An objection to planning permission for a WIMBLEDON PARK CAR PARK EXTENSION at Revelstoke Road application number 12/P1181 dated 13/5/12.**

**1) It is apposite to start by remembering that this year is the centenary of the death of Octavia Hill, one of the founders of the National Trust.**

“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.”

Octavia Hill 1883.

- a) Wimbledon Park is Listed Grade II \* registered by English Heritage and also in a Conservation area. It is a place that needs to be cherished and the views maintained and improved. These values benefit all the residents around the park and for those that visit from further away we want them to feel invigorated by the experience and to take away memories of the park’s design and grandeur.
  - b) However the sight of poorly planned buildings such as the Water Activities Centre, poorly maintained buildings such as the Bowling Pavilion, a muddy mess due to the temporary car park and the lack of grass renewal at the Wimbledon Park Road entrance present a picture of decline.
  - c) It may be the park’s three owners and one long term leaseholder have allowed a loss of pride and direction to develop. Apart from this application one only has to look across the lake during winter to see an unsightly sports air dome which must have escaped proper scrutiny by park users and Merton Borough planning officers.
- 2) **The Application includes ‘Planning Design and Access Statement’ which says** (our response in italics):
- a) “The proposal is to create an additional seasonal parking facility that will be open from April to September to facilitate the additional car parking requirements for the parking during the summer season”.
    - i) *However, this detracts greatly from the value of the park.*
    - ii) *Our understanding is that Merton Borough estimate the costs of this to be about £70,000.00 but offer no evidence of need for extra car parking space*
    - iii) *This period runs from spring through to autumn, from April to September much longer than just summer parking.*
    - iv) *It’s noted that the terms seasonal, temporary and overflow are used in connection with this application.*
  - b) “A temporary car park has been formed to accommodate the growing number of park activities and events during the spring and summer periods”.
    - i) *This year the temporary car park opened in time for Easter period and the car parks were virtually empty on all of these days.*
    - ii) *The tennis courts, water activities and athletics stadium are unchanged over the years as is the area of grass and woodland. What has changed?*

Founder members

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Wimbledon House Residents Association**

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- iii) *This may be a reference to activities on the grass area such Wimbledon AFC kids football tuition. If so these are not everyday occurrences.*
- iv) *Participants should be encouraged to use public transport and walk. There are three local bus routes; 156 to the East and 39 and 493 to the West. Both Southfields and Wimbledon park underground stations are within easy walking distance. In fact either the 39 or 493 could be taken from Southfields Station to the bus stop just outside Wimbledon Park Road entrance.*
- c) **“The park does have another car park off Wimbledon Park Road and requires **excessive drive for park users** accessing from the east and south of the park”.**
  - i) *The journey from Revelstoke Road to Wimbledon Park Road car park requires the driver to continue North down Merton Road, turn left into Replingham Road then left at the traffic lights at Wimbledon Park Road and the Wimbledon Park car park is quickly found on the left. A simple journey for a vehicle taking a few minutes! So describing this as an excessive drive is bizarre.*
  - ii) *Also no mention is made of those that come from the North and West. Why not?*
  - iii) *Wimbledon Park Road car park is better suited for an increase in parking; is on two bus routes and is largely screened from view.*
  - iv) *It is unusual to have a free car park in an area of chronic parking shortage. It seems likely that parking fees will be brought in at some point in the future*
  - v) *A car park can be defined as a place where cars regularly park. There are at least eight of these places within the park. These are shown in Table 1 and are labelled according to the area of park they are located. There is photographic evidence to support this if needed. These smaller ones aren't mentioned in the application nor is the Stadium Lane overflow car park. On its own Wimbledon Park Road car park is the biggest.*

vi) *Table 1*

<b><i>Identity of car park</i></b>	<b><i>No of vehicles seen</i></b>
<i>Café car park</i>	<i>At least 2 vehicles</i>
<i>Bowling Pavilion East car park</i>	<i>At least 5 vehicles</i>
<i>Bowling Pavilion North car park</i>	<i>At least 2 vehicles</i>
<i>Stadium car park</i>	<i>At least 6 vehicles including disabled bays</i>
<i>Stadium Lane overflow car park</i>	<i>At least 20 vehicles</i>
<i>Wimbledon Park Road car park</i>	<i>Unquantified but well into double figures</i>
<i>Revelstoke Road Permanent car park</i>	<i>About 35 spaces including disabled bays when the seasonal car park is closed.</i>
<i>Revelstoke Road seasonal car park</i>	<i>About 35 spaces.</i>

- d) **“The park has provision for thousands of visitors and insufficient parking spaces to provide for visitors to the site”.**
  - i) *It's implied that the thousands of visitors to the park should go to Revelstoke Road car park rather than Wimbledon Park Road car park.*
  - ii) *It's not explained what methodology was used to count the thousands but it's clearly not a daily or weekly event.*

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- iii) *Often the number of vehicles in the seasonal car park appears to be greater than the number of people in the park suggesting that non park users are making use of a free car park! Based on this and similar observations, many have commented that extra parking space isn't required*
  - e) “The nearby residential roads are controlled parking zones and there are no other suitable public car parking facilities nearby servicing this side of the park”.
    - i) *This isn't just a problem at Revelstoke Road, car parking zones surround the park. It is an area of chronic parking problems. They were brought in largely due to commuters using a free street parking space causing problems for local residents*
    - ii) *The increase in parking at Revelstoke Road car park causes an increase in traffic in Revelstoke Road and surrounding streets. This includes coaches.*
    - iii) *Traffic calming measures are proposed inside the park such as a roundabout and a pedestrian crossing. However, no impact assessment has been made for the effect on residents, pedestrians, cyclists and other vehicles outside. There have been numerous complaints from those living in the area.*
    - iv) *Revelstoke Road is a cul-de-sac in a quiet residential area and residents have experienced an increase in traffic nuisance over the last few years from the extra traffic allowed into this car park.*
    - v) *At the junction with Merton Road there is a sign 'Unsuitable route for heavy goods vehicles'. This should also apply to coaches.*
  - f) “The proposal to install additional parking facilities for visitors will increase the number of parking spaces available to the site and thus reducing the need to park within surrounding residential areas”.
    - i) *Probably welcome to those wanting to avoid the CPZ restrictions such as commuters, workers, resident's visitors but not a sensible argument supporting replacement of green space by a car park extension.*
  - g) “The existing parking facilities at Wimbledon Park are insufficient for the use and size of the Park and as such need to be extended in order to provide accessible parking and best serve the use of the Park and its visitors”.
    - i) *First and foremost this is Heritage land and this should be the guide to any developments.*
    - ii) *It is the grass, the trees and the lake together which provides views that bring respite from the endless traffic and turmoil outside the park.*
- 3) We say:**
- a) One should reflect on the words of Octavia Hill and what it means for park users
  - b) This application should be refused and the land returned to grass.
  - c) Conservation area money needs to be spent wisely and amongst the opportunity costs is the suggestion to improve the Bowling Pavilion.
  - d) Any extra traffic and visitors should be encouraged to use the Wimbledon Park Road entrance.

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The photo, taken from the avenue of trees, shows what the area should be like year round but with grass growing. A feeling of running free!

Nick Steiner  
Chairman FOWP

Dr N R Steiner  
116 Clonmore Street  
Southfields  
London  
SW18 5HB

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