

**BANCROFT
NEWSLETTER**

**SPECIAL EDITION
August 2019**

**PLANNED
DEVELOPMENT ON
MANTUS ROAD**

PLANNED DEVELOPMENT ON MANTUS ROAD

You are probably aware that a local housing association, Tower Hamlets Community Housing (THCH) has plans to develop the land alongside the railway viaduct on the north side of Mantus Road adjacent to our main green space and next to Wickford House & Braintree House. The plans involve building 93 housing units. Of these 62 will be for private sale, 16 for Shared ownership and only 15 for affordable social renting. Bancroft Tenant Management Co-operative is not opposed to developing this land - it could help reduce the anti social behaviour which plagues this area. We are sad the scheme will deliver so few affordable rented units. We are also concerned about the impact of the scheme on our estate and on our play area and on parking. The scheme also raises issues around security, cleaning and caretaking and grounds maintenance. We have voiced concerns about this but our concerns have not been answered.

The plans also depend on the council selling or leasing land to THCH which is currently part of our estate. THCH suggests it needs some of this land on a “temporary” basis but it is not clear what will be returned or when. When the plans were originally discussed, the TMC understood the developer would make a contribution to Bancroft in order to refurbish the play areas and do some landscaping. We also expected to receive some contribution in service charges to cover additional cleaning and grounds costs. We thought we had a commitment to that but it seems to have been taken away.

We understood that access to and from the new development would be from Malcolm Road but it is now obvious there will be access via Ibbott Street, Lang Street and from the rear of Rickman House. Residents here and at Kenton & Hadleigh & Ryder Houses can expect refuse trucks and other service vehicles regularly coming along these currently quiet streets. We will lose over a dozen parking spaces under current proposals and possibly more. And what are we, the residents of Bancroft and the TMC getting back in return? Nothing it seems – or certainly nothing the developers and council are prepared to commit to in writing at this stage. They do say they will look at it later on but once the construction is underway, we will be faced with a fait accomplis.

Two of our CCTV camera poles will be removed for the development. There is no commitment to reinstate or replace these or provide alternative security measures.

FLAWED PLANNING

Under planning laws, there is a duty to consult those affected by a development of this sort. Our view is that the consultation was deeply flawed. Only residents of Kenton, Hadleigh and Ryder House actually received a letter outlining the plans and offering an opportunity to object. The scheme obviously also affects Braintree, Wickford, Colebert & Rickman Houses as well as residents of Ibbott Street, Lang Street & Sceptre House. Why were these residents not properly consulted? The plans were approved by the council along with certain conditions, which included a contribution to the Play area and landscaping. The plans have now been amended (by what is called a Variation) and these commitments have been dropped.

The planning permission would normally only last for 3 years and would then lapse. Permission has been extended on the grounds that preparatory construction work has started. This is nonsense. If you are in a block overlooking the land between Mantus Road and the railway viaduct, or between Wickford and Braintree Houses, you can see that the land is as derelict as it has been for years and no building works have been or are taking place.

There was also a commitment that the developers would remove the temporary portakabin structure that had been used while the mosque on Malcolm Road was being built. They want to use this space for their site offices during building. The portakabins remain derelict and were recently squatted. The TMC has had to pay for security screening to stop it being squatted again.

CONCLUSION

The TMC feels cheated by these amended proposals. We did not agree to the changes but Planning seems to have nodded them through.

What is now being proposed is NOT what was agreed under the original planning permission.

Bancroft residents are going to lose chunks of land and a dozen or more parking places.

Residents are going to find regular through traffic passing their homes on the currently quiet estate roads.

There should be a Local Lettings Agreement giving Bancroft residents priority for allocation of an agreed number of the new units.

Residents of the new development are obviously going to use the estate facilities like the play area and the green space but their landlord (THCH) is making no commitment to fund landscaping, refurbishment of play areas (even though we would share the cost of that with them) or other works.

The new development will obviously increase the workload for our cleaners and caretakers and grounds maintenance staff. The landlord will not commit to making any contribution to that for example via Service Charges.

There has been no commitment to assisting with any safety and security measures following removal of the current CCTV.

There has clearly been a lack of communication with neighbouring residents who will be most affected by the development.

The extension of Planning Permission has been granted based on bogus information about work having started on site.

We, Bancroft TMC and Bancroft Estate residents, call upon LBTH, its Planners, its elected Councillors & other departments, and THCH, to recognize the failings we have outlined above. We urge them to urgently sit down again with the TMC and make clear commitments to ensure we are not disadvantaged by the development, receive a fair contribution from the developer, get the landscaping and other measures we originally sought, and that we do not lose land or parking spaces unless there is some form of compensation for this. We believe this new development will become, more or less, an extension to Bancroft Estate – there will be no barriers, walls or fences between us. We should be fully involved in planning and delivery of services once it is built.

Mantus Road development will be on the agenda in our forthcoming AGM at the end of September. Please come along to the AGM to find out more about the development and put forward your views.

In the meantime, if you have any comments please email us on enquiries@bancrofttmc.org.uk