

Chief Executive
Brent Council
Brent Civic Centre
Engineers Way
Wembley
HA9 0FJ
16 April 2016

Dear Chief Executive,

QPARA CONCERN RE: PLANNING SERVICES

Members of the Queen's Park Area Residents' Association (QPARA) are concerned about significant changes in the management and administration of the Planning Dept and how these are impacting upon the standard of service. At a time when planning applications seem to be at an all time high and residents find it difficult to keep up with even the most significant developments, we learn that the Planning Dept has lost key personnel.

Following the departure of the Area Planning Manager, Andy Bates, last year and the recent departure of the Head of Planning, Stephen Weeks, residents have voiced alarm that there does not appear to be anybody managing the department. At our recent monthly meeting (April 12) the following comments were made: Telephone and emails remain unanswered; enquiries about the status of developments and proposals are not consistently available; objections lodged are not appearing on the website and decisions not circulated. Examples in this immediate area are the Corrib Rest development which is a complex case with lawyers involved; Queens Studios where the question of the amount of affordable housing in the approved development is not clear; basement developments throughout the QP Conservation Area; and some more minor proposals such as for the Sunday Market signage and various breaches of the design guide relating to front gardens, walls and satellite dishes.

In short, this is a period where we know that there are always a lot of applications and the pressure on the Planners is intensive but without leadership, even on an interim basis, the situation is in danger of getting worse. More importantly there seems to be no one with an overall view on proposed developments and their impact not just on this area but on the ward as a whole. We worked closely with both Andy and Stephen over many years; they had a feeling for the character of this Conservation Area and were available through the planners to advise and consult. We are keen to establish such a relationship with a new team as soon as possible.

Please can you advise on who is managing the department and if a new Head of Planning has been recruited?

Yours sincerely,



Janis Denselow

QPARA Chair (30 Montrose Ave, Queen's Park, London NW6 6LB)

Cc: Richard Johnson (QPARA Planning Lead), QP Councillors (Denselow, Nerva, Southwood)