

25 Gresse Street Tenants' and Residents' Association Meeting Minutes - 13 July 2011

Attendees:

TRA Committee members: Gary Comenas (GC, Chair), Eddie Bloch (EB, Secretary), Ezra Benson (EZB, Treasurer), Paul Stelb (PS, DMC), Victoria Peppard (VP), George Onenas (GO), Pamela Munro (PM), Angela Cooke (AC)

Other residents: Richard Morgan Hughes, John Hubbard, David McConville

London Borough of Camden: Carmen Jones (CJ), Saleh Kahn (SK)

Derwent London: Joe McCreedy (Central Cross Building Mgr.), Rachel Puzey (RP, Derwent Asset Mgr.)

Oliver Richards (OR, ORMS Architects)

Central Cross development

The conditions of the section '106' agreement have been met, which means the planning application has been approved. Proposed works are currently planned to begin circa April 2012

GC raised the point that the original consultation/planning application did not mention 25 Gresse street in the site address which is why residents did not take more of an interest during the consultation/planning process. It also raises a question of the legality of the application.

Oliver Richards gave an updated presentation of the proposed parts of above development as it affects 25 Gresse Street.

- The current brown marble clad walls leading to what is currently the Fremantle building on Stephen Street and continuing around 25 Gresse Street is proposed to be clad with a metal mesh grill-like surface.

The brown marble clad thick canopy running along the same area above would be boxed in and a light-coloured thin canopy would be constructed beneath it.

- The wall on the left as you exit 25 Gresse St. would be rendered in a light-coloured (white or off-white) concrete surface.
- A new 'more open' style entry door and frame could be installed. No major change is currently planned for the inside of our entrance other than painting and possibly lighting.

A lively discussion ensued, with most of the residents not keen on the proposed new wall cladding for the following reasons:

Appearance: Appears a little dated already/the current marble look is preferred.

Durability: does not appear to be proven in use anywhere - how will it look after sun/rain/urination?

Cleaning/Maintenance: it appears to be a dirt/insect gatherer. Derwent claimed they would undertake this.

A question on possible lightning conductivity and signal interference was allayed by OR, saying that there are lighting conductors on the roof of the buildings and signals are received in metallic workman's huts etc.

The maintenance of the proposed new entrance was also questioned. While giving a lighter and more open feel the larger glass panes are easier to break and more expensive to replace which has been a problem in the past. The (Derwent) project manager (RP) agreed to check the strength of the existing glass, is it toughened? If not, toughened glass needs to be incorporated into any alterations that may

be made to the entry door's frame and glass.

CCTV removal

Carmen Jones from Camden's Housing Patrol service clarified that there is no Data protection issue. But as the letter from Lionel Mead (Camden council technical services) on March 3rd 2011 stated, as far as the council is concerned they 'updated' our CCTV system to a more modern and clearer centrally controlled system and the discontinuing of our TV based CCTV pictures (and the removal of the relevant camera) was a byproduct of this upgrade.

It is possible the system would still work if our old camera is replaced. CJ mentioned that there is a similar residents' system still in operation in a block of flats in Bramber Court.

EZB mentioned that the camera was actually paid for by the residents, so it should not have been removed without permission anyway.

Action: CJ said she would be passing our information on to Lionel Mead and she would report back to the chair before the next committee meeting. GM said he would contact her if he did not hear from her. CJ agreed to investigate what had happened to the dismantled camera.

Plants on balconies:

GC stressed that unsecured flowerpots on balconies were dangerous and should be either removed or made secure with brackets. Saleh Kahn clarified that secured plants (including pots cemented onto the balcony) are not an issue. The council should be notified of any unsecured plants and the resident will be visited by the council to resolve the issue to mutual satisfaction.

GC brought up the issue of one tenant and his plants. The Housing and Safety officer from Camden had ruled that the plants were secure but there was a safety issue about how the tenant watered them. Other tenants at the meeting felt that as it concerned only one tenant, it should be dealt with outside the meeting. JM produced CCTV images of the tenant showing him watering his plants. GC objected to JM showing the pictures and then JM produced another photograph of a different resident's balcony and said he had cameras situated in the area around our property and had photographed tenants in other activities such as their dogs soiling the pavement. GC commented that showing the pictures to a general meeting constituted a violation of the Data Protection Act. JM confirmed that there are 18 Derwent CCTV cameras and three at Fashion Academy monitoring our building and its environs.

Cleaning/caretaking services

The issues of high cost, no SLA and no checks on cleaning/caretaking services was raised with SK. PM has already been communicating with Mary Phee (Estate caretaker) regarding these issues. SK said he will advise Dilip Shah who was the Camden Estate Services Mgr who deals with these issues. **PM agreed to continue to manage this issue on behalf of the committee.**

Olympics

GM wanted residents to be aware that Westminster have given permission for 24 hour delivery times during the period of the Olympics. Camden have yet to decide.

Sorting office site

The development of this site will include pedestrian pathways to Newman Street and not vehicular access as previously thought.

GC has arranged for the developers of this site to attend the next TRA meeting and do a presentation on the development and answer questions about it.

DMC Report:

PS reported on the DMC meeting he attended at short notice on 22nd June. Detailed minutes will be published when received but briefly some of the key points are:

The main purpose of the meeting was the elections for various posts followed by some detailed

reporting on various projects. The overall Chairman, a leaseholder from Gordon Mansions, Peter Wright, was re-elected and did an excellent job in keeping the whole thing on-track.

Camden's budget should be finalised by end June 2011, this will influence everything that will happen in Fiscal Year 2011/2012 and a final overall housing strategy plan is due end September 2011.

There is a DMC budget of c.£34,000 for TRAs to pitch for funds to do projects. Unfortunately we are too late for this Financial Year.

The major reforms being proposed by the current Government will not be addressed by Camden until these are known, probably this autumn/winter.

A major study on the use of caretakers is almost complete (due August), an interim Scope was presented.

Repairs and the management of same were being 'beefed-up' to be more accountable. One action point was an increased use of structural engineers who could be called out at short notice.

TRA Newsletter

PS gave an outline of his proposals for a TRA newsletter. The purpose would be to create a communication medium, deliverable to all, that informs and involves our residents about what is happening to their block and the neighbourhood. It would also contain useful information and contact details such as for council services and the TRA committee.

AOB

SK agreed to raise the TRA's question about vehicle traffic not knowing about Gresse Street being a cul-de-sac with the Highways agency to see if an appropriate sign could be erected.

The issue of where post arriving without a flat number was being deposited was raised. EZB was concerned that it was often deposited into Flat 1. No resolution was reached.

Next meetings planned:

27th July	Committee meeting
17th August	Committee meeting
14th September	TRA meeting