



# **NEWSLETTER**

## **3/94**

**June.1994**

### BECKENHAM PLACE PARK

As many of you will have heard, the Inspector has reported and the Secretary of State has decided.

The result of the Public Inquiry last year is :

- The Tennis Centre proposal has been refused.
- The Golf Driving Range has been refused.
- The additional 9 hole golf course has been refused.
- The major change of use and alterations to the Mansion House including new car parking have been refused.
- The modified (at the Inquiry) external repairs and modest alterations to the Mansion House, have been approved.

The Inspector's report, dated 10th February, to the Secretary of State ran to 112 pages. The first 72 pages summarise the evidence put forward in support of and against the planning applications.

The next 20 pages are the Inspectors Conclusions, in which he deals with the various arguments, identifies the important and less important - in Town Planning terms - and arrives at his conclusions, with reasons.

The final 20 pages list all of the documentation submitted by the various parties.

By comparison the Secretary of State's letter, dated 2nd June, runs to 7 pages. In it the Inspector's conclusions and recommendations are accepted and become "The Decision".

For those who want to know more, the key paragraphs of the Inspector's Report are reproduced overleaf.

Not everyone is likely to agree with his views on the relative weight to be given to some of the arguments put forward. Nevertheless what is important is the overall decision and the reasons for it.

#### TENNIS CENTRE

" Briefly, therefore, my conclusions on the tennis application are these. The loss of land allocated for MOL<sup>\*</sup> would not be great in itself. The consequences of that loss to the residents of South London would not be significant in terms of reduced access but would be highly significant because of the damaging effect the proposals would have on the open character and appearance of Beckenham Place Park and the adjoining MOL. The need for indoor tennis provision and the difficulty in finding alternative sites do not seem to me to outweigh the harm. Nor am I able to conclude that need and the other benefits claimed for the scheme - some simply compensating for losses, some primarily assisting LB Lewisham in its financial or management obligations - together add up to the very special circumstances required to outweigh the presumption against inappropriate development on MOL."

#### THE GOLF APPLICATION

" Accordingly, my conclusions on the golf applications are these. The loss of land allocated for MOL would not be great in itself. The consequences for the residents of Inner or South London would be significant not so much because of the loss of MOL on its own but because of the practical effect of the proposals in reducing public access to substantial areas of the Park. The driving range itself would have a damaging effect on the open character and appearance of the area of the Park to the north-west of the Mansion and would not preserve or enhance the setting of the listed Mansion, despite improvements to the area immediately around the portico facade. I do not consider that the need for a driving range, the general need for more golf courses, the need to generate funds for the repair of the Mansion or the other benefits claimed for the scheme amount, individually or cumulatively, to the very special circumstances needed to outweigh the harmful consequences of the scheme for this part of the Park, which is here not only MOL but it is also the setting for the Mansion and a conservation area in its own right.

\* Metropolitan Open Land

#### THE MANSION APPLICATION

"The existing car parking area and some of the planting around it do no justice to the listed building. The axial drive, circle and fountain would represent a new style of approach compared with the existing meandering drive but would not be inappropriate and would in principle, enhance the setting of the Mansion. The car park however, would undermine the benefits of the scheme because it would replace an important area of open grassland with hard surfacing and parked cars. A feeling of openness might remain but the parkland character that is so essential to the building's setting would be lost."

"It is my view that the Mansion application is inextricably tied to the golf application and my conclusion is that the overall effect of the golf proposals on the historic parkland would be unacceptable. I have found no other material consideration pertaining to this application, or to the golf application, that might indicate a decision contrary to Policy R.34 of the Bromley Borough Plan, brought forward into the emerging UDP as Policy L.17"

#### THE LISTED BUILDING APPLICATION

"There are no objections to the revised plans for the Mansion and nor do I see anything inappropriate in them. To the extent that the listed building itself would be preserved, so too would these proposals preserve the character and appearance of the recently designated conservation area."

"The application itself gives no details whatsoever of the repairs it is intended to include. The supporting statement includes a schedule of essential repairs and costs. However not all of the items are repairs, not all require listed building consent and, perhaps most importantly, not all of them appear to be necessary."

"In my opinion, any consent would be better restricted to the alterations indicated on the revised plans, with repairs left to be dealt with in separate applications as necessary."

#### LINKING OF THE APPLICATIONS

"It is normally the case that applications should be considered separately, on their merits. The golf proposals, however, could not be fully and acceptably implemented unless permission were granted on both the golf and Mansion applications. It is my view

since the 2 applications are inextricably part of the same scheme, that refusal of one should lead automatically to refusal of the other."

#### CUMULATIVE IMPACT

"Both schemes would mean loss of public access in either absolute or practical terms. If both went ahead, public access would effectively be limited to Summerhouse Hill Wood and the open areas on Crab Hill, to the area east of the river, off Old Bromley Road and to various paths, including the Green Chain Walk through the golf course and a riverside path probably restricted to the east bank. Permission for the golf application only would not be so restrictive as it would leave open the possibility of unfettered access over the tennis site. Permission for the tennis application only would in my opinion, have very little effect on the public's ability to roam."

"In traffic terms, approval of both applications would be unlikely to have any noticeable cumulative impact other than on Foxgrove Road and at its junction with Southend Road."

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Those Members who wrote to the DoE will shortly receive a 20 page summary from the DoE London Regional Office.

If however anyone has a mind to read the entire document, we have a spare copy which can be circulated to interested members. If you want to borrow the entire document, please contact: Bill Jamieson, our Planning Officer for Bromley, his telephone number is : 081-460 4985.

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PS I am sorry but the up to date list of Officers and Road Representatives will yet again have to wait until the next Newsletter, but I thought that most members would want to know as much as possible as soon as possible about the Beckenham Place Park result.

Ed.

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