

# ST HELENS RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

95 HIGHLEVER ROAD

LONDON W106PW

email [sthelensassn@aol.com](mailto:sthelensassn@aol.com)

[www.sthelensresidents.org.uk](http://www.sthelensresidents.org.uk)

0207 460 1743



Lisa Cheung  
RBKC Planning Department  
Town Hall  
Hornton Street,  
London W8

October 7<sup>th</sup> 2013

Dear Ms Shearing,

## **49 Bassett Road PP/13/04763**

This association wishes to **object** to the above application.

The St Helens Residents Association covers the St Quintin Estate south of St Marks Road and St Helens Gardens, and we have 280 members. While No. 49 Bassett Road lies just outside our area of activity, many of our members are affected by the proposal from Alpha Plus Schools, especially in relation to traffic.

The Association submitted an objection to the previous application, in November 2012. Because of the level of controversy over this revised application, we have gone to the length of asking all our members whether they support the application, oppose it, or hold no view.

The outcome of this exercise was as follows:

Supporting the application	12
Opposing the application	41
No view either way	13

As you will see those opposing the application outweigh those supporting by a large margin.

Some time ago, we wrote to the Alpha Plus Group suggesting that they should look at alternative locations for the re-siting of Chepstow House School, given the known problems that will arise at 49 Bassett Road. Specifically we suggested Latimer Road as a location where although D class uses are not permitted under present RBKC policies, there could well be some movement on this as a result of a more flexible approach developed through the St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Plan.

As an alternative and nearby location, Latimer Road would have none of the problems of pick-up and delivery of pupils that will arise in Bassett Road and St Marks Road. Nor would there be the same issues of potential noise nuisance. Office space in Latimer Road has been lying underused and vacant for several years. Alpha Plus Group were not willing to contemplate this alternative location. The correspondence is enclosed by way of background.

The Association's objections to the application are largely the same as those expressed previously in 2012. A great deal of technical information has since been gathered by the group calling itself the Neighbours of Bassett Road. The Association has reviewed this material along with the detailed documents submitted with the application.

### **Change of use**

We previously raised the issue of the argument over the established lawful use of the building, and how the council would apply its sequential policy tests in Core Strategy Policy CK1. We still do not see how the test under CK1(c)ii, requiring demonstration of significant benefits to the borough or greater benefits where there is a change of use, is being met by the applicant.

Forms of residential establishment would conform more closely to Core Strategy Housing Policy CH1(b). Policy CH2(e) resists the loss of residential hostels, which as we understand has been the most recent use of 49 Bassett Road.

### **Potential noise nuisance**

Councillors deciding this application will have access to very detailed advice from consultants, making the case for the applicants and for the objectors. We are not in a position to enlarge on such advice other than to say that commonsense suggests that a school of 240 pupils with very limited outdoor space will cause very significant loss of amenity to immediate neighbours. The noise will disrupt the lives of those who work from home or who have moved into a residential conservation area in order to find peace and quiet.

### **Traffic congestion and road safety issues**

For our members, this is the issue that has been most often cited in responses to us, and which many people have asked us to emphasise in making comments to the council.

While the proposed traffic management plan has varied slightly from the 2012 application, the basic issues remain the same. Significant number of pupils will arrive and be collected by car. The proposed 'walking bus' arrangement, from Chesterton Road, will be extremely hard for the school to enforce. All our experience with the existing schools at Oxford Gardens and Bassett Road is that however hard schools try, the London parent in a hurry will continue to double park and pull in and out of any parking spaces without due care. The junction outside 49 Bassett Road is particularly vulnerable to dangerous driving and poor parking, with a series of resultant accidents. The fact that buses already have problems navigating St Marks Road will add to levels of traffic chaos.

For all the above reasons, we continue to believe that the proposals of the Alpha Plus Group for 49 Bassett Road are over-ambitious in terms of the size and pupil numbers proposed. They will have a significantly adverse impact on the lives of those living close to the property, and are inappropriate to a residential conservation area. **We ask that the committee refuse the application.**

Yours sincerely,

Henry Peterson,  
Chair St Helens Residents Association

Annexe: exchange of emails with Alpha Plus Group on Latimer Road as an alternative location for Chepstow House School.

Henry Peterson  
Chair, St Helens RA  
0207 460 1743  
[sthelensasn@aol.com](mailto:sthelensasn@aol.com)

-----Original Message-----

From: 49BassettRoad <[49BassettRoad@londoncommunications.co.uk](mailto:49BassettRoad@londoncommunications.co.uk)>

To: 'sthelensasn@aol.com' <[sthelensasn@aol.com](mailto:sthelensasn@aol.com)>

CC: alison.flight <[alison.flight@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:alison.flight@rbkc.gov.uk)>

Sent: Thu, 18 Jul 2013 9:29

Subject: RE: 49 Bassett Road - please pass on to Richard Jones

Dear Mr Peterson

Thank you for your email and I'm sorry you were unable to attend the public exhibition. I have attached the boards we had on display which detail our revised plans for the relocation of Chepstow House School to 49 Bassett Road. They can also be found on our website [www.alphaplusgroup.co.uk](http://www.alphaplusgroup.co.uk)

We know, based on our experience, that the size of the site is appropriate for the type of school and number of students we are proposing and meets space standards. Alpha Plus Group owns and operates eleven independent schools and nurseries in London and has experience in managing schools of a variety of sizes. One in particular, Wetherby School, works extremely well and is on a similarly sized site with 252 pupils but has no outside space.

The internal space is also like for like with Wetherby Prep and Pembridge Hall, another Alpha Plus school, and so we know we can deliver a high quality offering of education within the space at Bassett Road.

We appreciate the information you have provided on Latimer Road, however we confidently believe that Bassett Road is the best site and location to move Chepstow House School to.

Before selecting any site we rigorously evaluate a number of key factors to ensure we will be able to provide a first-class school in line with our 'gold standard' which is based on guiding principles that encourage outstanding leadership, high expectations for pupils and staff, working in partnership with parents, focus on high quality teaching and learning and a commitment to self-review and improvement.

There were specific criteria considered when determining whether 49 Bassett Road would be appropriate. This included ensuring the site would be large enough to allow us to expand Chepstow House School to Year 6, given the unprecedented demand for our school places. In order to achieve this expansion we looked extensively within the borough for a vacant/period building of around 8,500 sq ft with self-contained outside space. The building at 49 Bassett Road has also been vacant for many years.

We operate a number of our schools from these types of period buildings and are therefore adept at not only making them fit for purpose but also maintaining them to the highest standards, as detailed in all of our inspection reports. We have our own designated team of specialists who work exclusively on our buildings to ensure that they represent our 'gold standard'.

The site is also just a mile from Chepstow House and within the same borough so it would remain easily accessible for students currently at the school and siblings in our other schools in the area. It is also located centrally for the W10, W11, W12, W8 and W2 postcodes which form part of the target catchment area and is close to the relocated Rolfe's Nursery School in Oxford Gardens, which is also part of the Alpha Plus Group.

I hope that this information goes some way to reassure you that we have thoroughly assessed whether this is the best site and location for the school. We believe it delivers the criteria detailed above and we know that we can transform the site into an excellent educational establishment in Kensington & Chelsea.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Jones  
**Property Director, Alpha Plus Group**

**From:** [sthelensasn@aol.com](mailto:sthelensasn@aol.com) [<mailto:sthelensasn@aol.com>]  
**Sent:** 12 July 2013 14:09  
**To:** 49BassettRoad  
**Cc:** [alison.flight@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:alison.flight@rbkc.gov.uk)  
**Subject:** Re: 49 Bassett Road - please pass on to Richard Jones

Dear Mr Jones,

I received your email below but was unable to get to the exhibition (the Saturday time did indeed clash with setting up for the St Helens Festival, as you foresaw in your email).

I have seen a copy of the 1:100 Landscape Masterplan which shows details of the new external layout, and some photos of examples of proposed elements within it. I assume this was the main new information on show at the exhibition.

The drawings and images cannot hide the fact that the external spaces at 49 Bassett Road are far too small to provide realistic play areas for a school of up to 245 pupils. The building itself is similarly cramped for a school of this size.

We wonder how extensively the Alpha Plus Group has searched the surrounding area for premises and a location that would be more suitable? It is of course very hard to identify potential premises in an inner London borough with very high land values such as RBKC. But have you considered the Latimer Road area, to the west of Bassett Road and close to the borough boundary with LBHF?

At present, Latimer Road forms part of the Latimer Road/Freston Road Employment Area, and loss of business floorspace has hitherto been strongly resisted by the council. But this context is likely to change. The council is now in the early stages of a review of its employment and enterprise policies, and in its submission to CLG on permitted change of use acknowledged that Latimer Road is one of very few parts of the borough where business units have been lying vacant for several years. This association has had some discussions with the council on the scope for a wider mix of uses in this part of the current Employment Zone (which has always been mixed employment and residential).

Latimer Road also falls within the area recently designated by the council for the St Quintin and Woodlands Neighbourhood Plan. More details can be found [here](#) on the council website, and at [www.stqw.org](http://www.stqw.org)

This association has initiated the neighbourhood forum and plan, and the forum's new management committee will be picking up on the work done to date. This includes discussions with the council on the future of Latimer Road, and on the scope for more flexible application of land use policies in the future.

At present, you might consider Latimer Road an unsuitable location. But looked at more strategically, in the longer term, the southern end of the road has several potential advantages as a location for a 245 pupil school:

- Imperial College are now developing a 22 acre site, immediately across the railway line from Latimer Road, for their new Imperial West campus. This will ultimately be a major global academic centre in West London.
- As part of the S106 agreement in place with LBHF, Imperial are committed to providing an east/west pedestrian and cycle route under the railway line, linking the Imperial West site to the southern end of Latimer Road. This will significantly reduce walking and cycling times from Wood Lane and from the Central Line station at White City.
- Drop off, collection and short-term parking in Latimer Road would cause none of the disruption to traffic and bus routes, and the disturbance to neighbouring residents, that will arise if Chepstow House moves to Bassett Road.
- The southern end of Latimer Road lies very close to the Westway Sports Centre, offering the range of pitches and sports facilities that a school needs, within easy walking distance.

- There are a variety of existing office buildings which might prove suitable for conversion, along with freehold industrial units which might offer scope for wholesale redevelopment.

If the Alpha Plus Group has any interest in this location as a potential alternative to Bassett Road, I would be happy to meet to discuss the likely scope and timetable for preparation and adoption of the neighbourhood plan for the area. This is in its very early stages at present.

Regards,

Henry Peterson  
Chair, St Helens Residents Association  
0207 460 1743