

From: J&E

Chambers

Dear Merton Council,

I live at The Lodge 78 Kingston Road which is the property adjacent to Merton Hall and conveniently ignored in your description of the site!

I have been living here for 17 years and over that time I have seen Merton Hall lose its crucial position as a local community center and fall sadly into disrepair and also disrepute as the council has left it to become a magnet for vagrants and street drinkers who have used it as a public toilet and a place to sleep.

Therefore I was very pleased to hear that the Hall would finally be leased long term to the South Wimbledon Community Association who would then restore the hall to use as a community centre in the borough and manage it in a manner that is sustainable and fit for purpose rather than let it be unsupervised for parties that had become totally disruptive to the local neighbourhood.

So it is with absolute disbelief that after nearly a year of negotiations with the SWCA and then recently with the local residents to guarantee the ongoing preservation of the green space that formed part of the rear garden of the Hall, the Council announce these ridiculous plans to sell the site off to a property developer depriving the borough of a desperately needed community space in return for a quick buck and the promise of council tax to be gained from a developer squeezing as many box dwellings as possible onto the site.

As I can only assume that the proposal to develop Merton Hall into a residential space was made without knowledge of the fact that the SWCA were planning to take the Hall on, I shall not at this time list all the reasons why such a residential development would be in contravention of the borough's CDP.

I shall give Merton Council the benefit of the doubt that this development plan was drawn up in error and ignorance then, rather than deliberate duplicity in offering Merton Hall to the SWCA having them invest their own charitable funds to return the Hall to a condition in which it was fit for purpose while at the same time attempting to flog the over 100 year old community centre for a quick buck.....but then again this is the same Merton Council that was in collusion with the AELT club to flog off school playing fields to developers in this year of the London Olympics !

Therefore I will look forward to a swift confirmation that this particular plan has been dropped from the LDF and I would also like to know why this supposedly public consultation document is in fact anything but a public consultation as none of my neighbours in Boscombe, Kingston or Kirkley Road were made aware of the fact that this proposal ever existed !

Best Regards,