

BY EMAIL

2 February 2021

Ms. Geraldine Proudler
Chair of Middlesex University Board of Governors
c/o CMS Cameron McKenna Nabarro Olswang LLP
Cannon Place
78 Cannon Street
London EC4N 6AF

Dear Ms. Proudler,

We are writing to you in your role as Chair of the Board of Governors of Middlesex University.

We are a group of Hendon residents, business owners, and school representatives who are concerned about the scale and nature of Barnet Council's proposed development for the Burroughs and Middlesex University.

We are dismayed that there has been no consultation between the University and residents and local businesses. We are therefore writing to invite you and the other governors to a meeting. We would appreciate having the opportunity to put our questions regarding the University's proposed development to you directly.

We have witnessed the extensive expansion of the university in recent years. Middlesex University is to be commended for restoring and opening up the main building, introducing attractive landscaping, general improvements to existing buildings, and erecting attractive new ones. The restoration of the Town Hall and the former Church Farm Museum has saved these important buildings, but they are now no longer accessible to residents and there is no benefit to the local community. Equally, residents lost access to the top floor of Hendon Library, which had been used as a reference library by countless local schoolchildren and others in need of a quiet research or study space. According to the proposed plans, residents will lose access to the entire building. These are not just spaces. They are enduring local landmarks that foster a sense of belonging and community cohesion. To exclude residents from them is to undermine our connection to the local area. That cannot be substituted by moving a much-reduced library to a new building as proposed. And, although current plans to re-develop Ravensfield, Fenella, and Usher Hall are generally welcome, any future building must be balanced against the impact on the local area.

Middlesex University occupies the ancient historic heart of Hendon and is surrounded by many listed buildings. Any development here must be sympathetic and seek to preserve and enhance the overall character and heritage of this area. The plan currently proposed has, regrettably, given residents grave cause for concern in this respect, not least because the developments would exacerbate footfall, reduce residential parking, and place a greater strain on local infrastructure.

We support the University's ambition to increase access to education and note that most students are well behaved and cause few problems. Nevertheless, there has been an inevitable increase in rubbish from litter, cigarette butts, and chewing gum on our streets, and most worryingly, drug activity. We have witnessed the arrival of cannabis farms on residential streets and local schoolchildren being targeted by drug dealers.

The benefits offered by the university to Hendon have not been established. The University notes that most students are in fact commuters, who have no investment in the area. Students who are unable to commute are provided with dorms in Colindale, Cricklewood, and Wembley. We do not, therefore, understand why the University and Barnet Council are seeking to build costly accommodation for up to 800 students on the Burroughs/Church End, especially considering this area is so well-served by

public transport, which students enjoy at a discounted price. We do not understand why, when the Higher Education sector is shrinking, under much financial stress, and subject to the loss of international students for the foreseeable future, the University is seeking to build at such a scale in a conservation area that is already heavily populated. The proposed developments are all the more puzzling given that both the University and Barnet Council are currently in significant deficit. The risk to the University's financial sustainability is explicitly stated in its most recent Financial Report.

Regeneration and expansion require a fine balance between conservation and progress. Several parts of the proposed development would have a disastrous impact on residents' everyday lives. The plans would also strip out essential parking for residents and local businesses, which in turn would make it impossible for families to live here or businesses to thrive. We have already witnessed how heritage may be lost from the inevitable transfer of family homes into multiple occupancy buildings for transient students. Several Grade II listed Georgian properties have already been significantly damaged and the council lacks the funds and/or resources to hold these landlords to account. It seems that the only ones to benefit from these proposals are the building contractors, while residents can look forward to years of increased council taxes to pay for the University's expansion.

The council asserts that regeneration would enhance Hendon. We do not share this opinion and would like to express our reservations to you. Our aim going forward is to establish an excellent working relationship with the University, and with Barnet Council, and above all to protect our community, our businesses, and heritage, so that all many enjoy living, working, and studying in this area.

We look forward to hearing from you.

The Hendon Residents Planning Forum
Hendon.Residents@yahoo.com