



Please use email, not post, for any reply.

to: [Gianni.franchi@camden.gov.uk](mailto:Gianni.franchi@camden.gov.uk)

Monday 12 March 2007

**Camden Council Executive, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2007**

**Deputation Request**

**Items 16 and 23: Sale of Stanley Buildings to Argent (King's Cross) Ltd**

We are asking you not to sell Stanley Buildings to Argent (King's Cross) Ltd at the present time. The sale would be premature. In addition, there may be problems with the proposed sale.

The Council has discretion to declare properties 'surplus to requirements' and then to sell them but this is not the time to exercise this discretion. As the report notes the matter was considered two years ago and not proceeded with then. It remains premature now. The outline planning consent granted by the Council is the subject of a judicial review. There is also a court order prohibiting the demolition of the buildings until the action is resolved. The judicial review should be determined by the end of this month unless the Council or Argent complicate proceedings with peripheral matters which cause the main hearing to be put back.

If the planning consent is quashed, uses of Stanley buildings will be up for review. The need to realign Pancras Road, said to justify demolition of one block, will be part of that as well as the future potential uses of the buildings.

Even if the judicial review fails, the only certainty the Council has is that Pancras Road would be realigned (the principal condition on the demolition consent); there is no certainty about what other development would follow. This was noted by officers in their report to last November's Development Control Committee. There is no guarantee in any of the permissions or in any of the conditions or section 106 agreements that, following demolition, the regeneration will go ahead (see page 542 (annex 11) of the November Officers' report—the letter from Denton Wilde Sapte to the Committee dated 06.11.06). The reality is that the developer would have an outline planning consent, could decide not to implement it and apply and for an entirely different one later. Nothing in the conditions binds them to building any particular scheme after Stanley has gone.

There are also some problems with the report as the basis for taking a decision. In particular the report does not explain how the land can be securely valued given that the outcome of the judicial review proceedings could either raise or lower its commercial value. We urge members to ask to see the written advice from Tim Corner QC referred to in para 7.6 rather than relying on this indirect summary.

The legal status of the buildings is unclear. The start of paragraph 1.1 states that only part of the buildings (numbers 1-10) were compulsorily acquired by Union Rail but the end of the paragraph refers to the undemolished blocks (numbers 11-20 and 21-30) being returned to the Council under the compulsory purchase agreement. Both statements cannot be correct. If all the land was purchased by Union Rail the comments of the Acting head of Legal Services may be correct. If the remaining blocks were not sold it appears that, as housing land, the receipts would go into the Housing Revenue Account. The report is in two parts and we have only seen item 16. Paragraph 5.3 implies that the confidential part (item 23) contains information other than the actual sale price. We can see no reason why even the sale price should be secret and are concerned that the 'final terms' may include other matters which affect the Council's position in relation to the development.

We ask you not to agree the sale at this time but instead to defer your decision until the future of the site is known and you have further advice.

On behalf of the King's Cross Railway Lands Group

Michael Edwards  
co-chair