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**COMMENTS ON SGT MARK JONE'S REPORT  
ST DAVIDS SQUARE, WESTFERRY ROAD, LONDON E14 3WA**

**APPLICATION PA/10/02786**

**SECTION 1 - BACKGROUND**

Planning application PA/10/02786 was deferred by members of the planning committee on 06 April 2011. Subsequent to this, a report dated 06 May 2011 was prepared by Sgt Mark Jones, the Crime Prevention Officer (CPO).

Part One of the report looks at measures to address the concerns of the residents of the St David's Square Estate by way of:

Option 1 which looks at a range of individual measures to reduce / mitigate crime / ASB problems / concerns; and

Option 2 which looks at measures to securely gate the development from public / non-residents / vehicular use.

Part Two of the report considers crime statistics.

A meeting took place on site on 24 June 2011 between planning officers of the Council, Sgt Mark Jones (CPO) and members of the management committee of St David's Square.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a response on behalf of the residents of St Davids Square bearing in mind that the principal areas of crime relate to bicycle theft, anti-social behaviour and to a lesser extent damage to cars.

***Part One - Crime Prevention Measures***

A range of proposals are suggested which are considered hereunder.

Option 1

*Ferry Street Access*

This provides the eastern link to The Thames Walkway as originally approved by LDDC (London Development Docklands Corporation). It is suggested that better signage and the use of raised planters together with a low level anti bike railing across the 'entrance' into the estate would deter most motorbikes / mopeds.

However, this would not deter non residents from walking through the estate and the problem, as recorded in the minutes of the meeting held 24 June, is that when non

residents realise they are unable to rejoin the Thames Walkway, they climb over the 'lookout' railings, a potentially dangerous activity which clearly should not be encouraged. The point is that when planning permission was granted for the Estate, permeability was not an inherent part of the internal design as this predated the current policy which the Council are seeking to enforce.

In conclusion, the measures suggested would only provide a limited amount of relief from the identified problems.

It is agreed that the Council could erect better signage to the Thames Walkway although this raises another issue, that of language. People from different cultures visit this part of London who may not understand the written word. A discreet and sympathetically designed wall and railings as proposed would provide a physical message. And this would not appear out of context given the presence of the existing gated access at the junction with Ferry Street and brick walls either side, leading towards the estate.

#### *Thames Walkway Access*

The second route considered is the pedestrian access from The Thames Walkway situated between Consort and Falcon House. A photograph denoted as figure 3 appears in the report, however we take issue with the fact that it is referred to as '*existing public route from The Thames Walkway into estate*'. It is not a public route, there are no public rights of way reserved and neither was it so designed with this in mind.

The report suggests again that a similar motorcycle/moped restricting railing across this route would restrict access to/from the estate by motorcyclists. This may be so but it would not deter cycle theft, anti-social behaviour or members of the public from entering the estate. It is material to record that the internal access road is circulatory, well used by all manner of traffic and there are no footpaths. Members of the public walking through the estate are at risk. This is the purpose of The Thames Walkway, to provide a more attractive and safe pedestrian route for those walking in an easterly direction. The Thames Walkway continues its route along the perimeter of the Estate. It formed an integral part of the original planning permission and was designed for this purpose.

#### *Westferry Road Access*

The third means of access relates to the main entrance of Westferry Road. The report suggests that introducing rising bollards as a means of access control would prevent unauthorised motor vehicles from accessing the estate; however the report recognises that this security measure would not impede motorcycles, mopeds, cyclists or pedestrians from entering the estate. Rising bollards were introduced into the internal access road adjacent to the concierge's office, however as pointed out in the paper produced by the Residents Association entitled '*attempts to reduce the crime and intrusion incidents*' bollards were installed when the estate was built but have not been used for over eight years because they have proved to be ineffective and unreliable.

## *Bike Cages*

The CPO's report turns to one of the central issues that of cycle theft and notes that these are currently being committed from within the enclosed car park at lower ground floor level under the buildings in the estate. Suggested measures include increasing the speed and timing of opening reduced, to order to stop 'tailgating'. Discussions with the engineer maintaining the gates advised that these are hydraulically operated and cannot be speeded up. Electronic actuated gates would be marginally faster but less robust and the engineer expressed concern that trying to make them faster would be dangerous and his company would not consider doing it.

Other measures include bike cages inside the garage area whilst during the meeting on site held 24 June, it was suggested that the bike cages could be above ground in the gardens or taking the place of visitor parking spaces. It was suggested that the estate should look at providing circa 150 bike spaces.

### i) Within the garage complex

During the site visit on 24 June, it was noted that by the Council that the upright cycle racks which allowed only one wheel to be secured, were not considered to be the safest and most secure cycle racks. This point is acknowledged and this will be drawn to the attention of residents. The Council also queried whether a safe cycle compound could be accommodated within the garage complex, either through the use of surplus space and / or the use of existing car spaces to be released by residents.

Relating to the first part and this was made plain at the on site meeting, there is no surplus space within the garage complex. This was observed and explains the reason for the upright cycle racks, notwithstanding their potential shortcomings.

Regarding the second part, the amount of land take required to provide a safe cycle compound in a block has been calculated at 114m<sup>2</sup> - please refer to the architect's advice in their letter dated 15 July 2011 attached as **document 1**. Assuming the car spaces are compliant with the standard parking measurements, this would mean 10 leaseholders in a coherent block losing their parking space. These spaces were purchased separately when the apartments were purchased and the last batch cost circa £15,000 each. Neither the freeholder nor the managing agent has the legal right to commandeer these spaces and a straw poll undertaken since 24 June, has showed that not one leaseholder is even prepared to consider selling their space. In conclusion, it is not possible to provide a safe cycle compound for 150 cycles within the garage complex.

### ii) Within the landscaped areas

Similar legal issues hold for the commandeering of one of the gardens and helpfully, the amount of land required is shown in plan form attached to the architect's letter dated 15 July 2011. The loss of this amount of soft landscaping gives rise to amenity issues, not only to the residents but must also to the Council, eroding the development concept upon which the estate was established.

### iii) Visitor parking spaces

There are 23 visitor spaces and a log was kept of the occupancy rate for the first week of June, considered to represent a normal week. This is attached as

**document 2.** The attached log demonstrates that the occupancy rate is high. It is clear that the visitor spaces represent an integral part of the estate, essential for its day to day running. In conclusion, it is patently clear that no sound case could be advanced advocating that ten visitor spaces should be lost in order to accommodate cycle cages as this would be prejudicial to the operational requirements of the estate besides having amenity implications.

### *The Water Feature*

This is identified in the CPO's report as a problem area which records that groups regularly congregate around it and cause disturbances, but also innocent members of the public take advantage of the shallow water in warm conditions to paddle.

At the site meeting held 24 June, it was explained that in 2006, the residents association had explored the option of filling in the pool (as part of a package of security measures that have been considered during the course of the past ten years) but was not implemented as the residents were hostile. One of the reasons for this is that the residents who had purchased properties around the water feature had paid a premium to overlook it and were not in favour of landscaping in substitution.

Further, in 2009 gating the pool and garden entrances were considered; however this would require planning permission and divide the estate. Again residents were hostile to the suggestion.

At the on site meeting, the Council queried whether raising the boundary screening to prevent access into the water feature both by residents and passers-by had been considered. The Council's view is that this could be achieved in a sympathetic material such as glazing so as not to appear dominant or invasive in the open courtyard. However, the fact of the matter is that a glass wall would represent another target to climb over or to throw stones at or over. Moreover, such a barrier would impede access to the maintenance staff who must have unobstructed access to clean the pool.

A straw poll of the residents has established that this would not be acceptable as it would go against the design philosophy of the estate. The water feature forms an integral amenity feature for the residents and their enjoyment. The security measures proposed prevent that and are prejudicial.

### *Conclusion*

Several of the security measures proposed by the CPO have been considered in the past 10 years such as rising bollards, gating the water feature, planters in the riverfront entrance and have been either rejected or implemented to some extent. However the overall package represents a piecemeal approach to resolving the issues of crime and antisocial behaviour that have been and are continuing to be experienced. Whether considered in part or as a whole, it is considered that these will only have a limited affect in stopping crime and anti social behaviour. There is also a negative side to the proposals in that these would have a prejudicial effect to the living conditions of the residents as a result of the loss of amenity whether by reason of cycle bays being introduced into the landscaped areas and / or gates / boundary screening being placed around the water feature.

The incidents of crime and antisocial behaviour are exacerbated by the layout of the estate. The four garage entrances are within 25/50 yards of the two Westferry Road accesses (one vehicular / the other pedestrian). The water feature and two landscape gardens are also very close to these entrances, whereas the Concierge Office is located at the Ferry Street entrance much further away and completely out of site of Westferry Road. It is impossible to provide continuous surveillance, even with the existing CCTV coverage that is in place. Without the proposed gated accesses, the concierge staff can only react once a problem has developed, whereas if gates with continuous surveillance are installed, it will enable action to be taken to head off trouble more effectively.

## Option 2

The CPO report recognises that option 2 will also reduce issues of crime and antisocial behaviour but is silent as to the comparative effectiveness of either (option). However, it is of note that reference is made to gates, railings and fences being 2 metres in height. The proposed gates and walls in the application proposal are lower, so as to sympathetically blend with the existing boundary treatments. That said, their presence will still serve as a deterrent against crime as well as access by non residents.

This paper has examined the measures proposed in option 1. By and large they have either already been considered by the residents association such as rising bollards, gating the water feature, placing planters within the riverside entrance or are not possible because of the lack of available space (cycle racks) and the prejudicial effect the measures would have on the living conditions of the residents through loss of amenity.

Option 2 will not stop all of the antisocial behaviour. Neither will the proposed gates in the application proposal. That is recognised. However gating the accesses sympathetically so as not to present a utilitarian appearance, will be far more effective in reducing crime and antisocial behaviour (than the piecemeal measures set out in Option 1). These will prevent non residents from walking through the estate. They will deter the theft of bicycles as access points will be gated. As a result of these measures, there will more of a sense of place and community for the residents. Fundamentally it will make the estate a safer place to live.

## ***Part Two – Crime Statistics***

The crime statistics should be read in context, first against local plan policy and secondly in light of the actions of the concierge staff.

The preamble to local plan policy CP47 states that Tower Hamlets currently has high levels of crime when compared nationally and with the rest of inner London. Crime and fear of crime are major concerns for residents of Tower Hamlets. The reported levels of crime must be viewed in this context.

On a site specific basis, comments have been made to the effect that reported crime and ASB are no greater than average for the area, and lower than the perception of those living and working on site. One reason for this may be the perseverance of the concierge staff. Although they have not been formally trained and although it is most definitely not in their job description, circumstances have forced them to become ever

more adept at anticipating and diffusing trouble before it gets too far out of hand. It is regrettable that they have become so used to dealing with troublemakers, and so disappointed with the response from the police when they do ask for assistance, that in many cases disturbances are no longer reported and often not even recorded internally. It would be ironic if their dedication, and the lack of support from the authorities, were to be used as a reason not to allow perimeter gating, the thing that they (and we) believe would be the best way to improve the safety and security of their workplace and of residents' homes, and it would be an avoidable tragedy if a serious injury should be the result.

## DOCUMENT 1

15.07.2011

Mr. Tim Edens  
29 Canford Close  
Enfield  
Middlesex  
EN2 8QN

Dear Tim,

**Re: Additional Information in support of the Planning Application for the Installation of Vehicle and Pedestrian Security Gates at:**

**Address: St. David's Square (Lockes Wharf), West Ferry Road, London. E14 3WA**

Further to your email dated 01.07.11 followed by our ongoing telephone conversations, as requested please see below our supporting information demonstrating the impact of proposing 150 new cycle shelter units would have to either the existing car parking or existing soft landscaping areas surrounding the above site address.

Our assessment is to establish the approximate land area required to accommodate 150 cycles on site is as follows:

- Size of a typical Cycle shelter unit : 3m(length) x 2m(depth)  
(FalcoLite) Cycle shelter- 1 unit module/bay to accommodate 8 cycles)
- Total number of units/bays required: 19 units ( equates to 152 cycles)
- Total length of cycle parking units: 57m (single line of cycle bays)
- Total footprint area occupied by the bays: 19 x 3m x 2m = 114 sqm

The sizes above have been provided from reference to British Standards and review of a number of manufacturers' product literature and guidance notes.

Furthermore in regards to the feasibility of its locations, we have outlined two locations for the proposed cycle shelters to include 150 covered, secured cycle spaces as required illustrating the detrimental impact to the existing current surroundings.



(FalcoLite cycle shelter product literature)

**FALCOLITE**

The FalcoLite is our most versatile cycle shelter. From housing 8 cycles in a simple 1 bay unit to providing mass cycle parking, the possibilities are endless using the modular nature of the FalcoLite. Available in three distinct variants; single sided, double sided or combi, the FalcoLite is not only a robust and flexible shelter it is also very attractive and highly cost effective. With different roof and side wall options and capable of combining with most cycle racks, the FalcoLite is our most flexible and popular shelter.

hands free for many years creating a very low cost of ownership.

**FALCOLITE SINGLE BAY**

The FalcoLite single bay unit is a great basic shelter. It can be added to, using 'add-on' units to create a continuous line of cycle parking as far as you need. Like all Falco products, as a stand alone, bolt down unit, it is simple to install and under normal use will remain mainte-

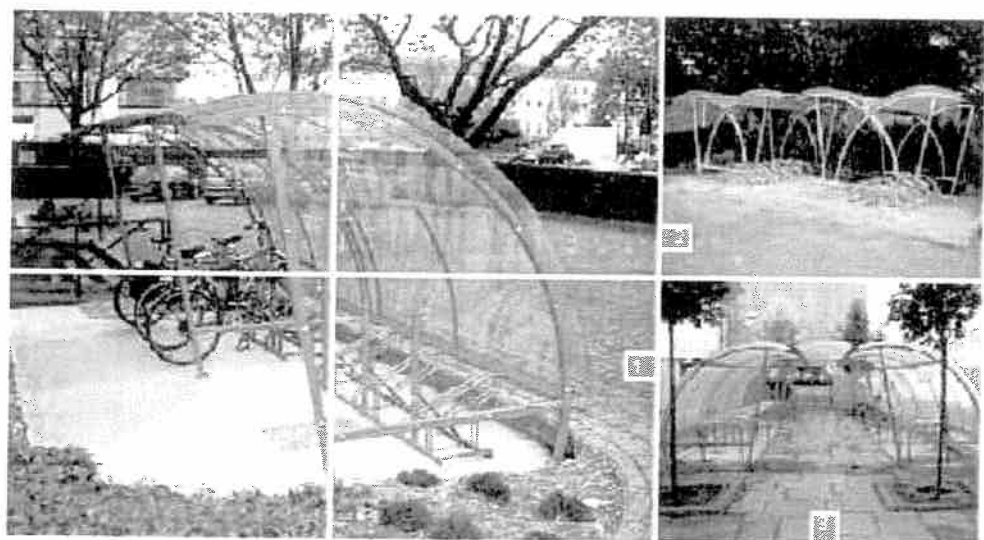
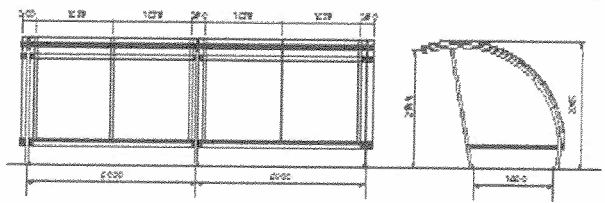
**THE FALCOLITE DOUBLE SIDED**

The FalcoLite Double Sided brings two FalcoLite shelters back to back in an attractive 'Outlying' effect. This creates an 'island' effect enabling cycles to be parked double sided, where access is at a premium. It can also be used in conjunction with a single bay to build up multiple parking systems.

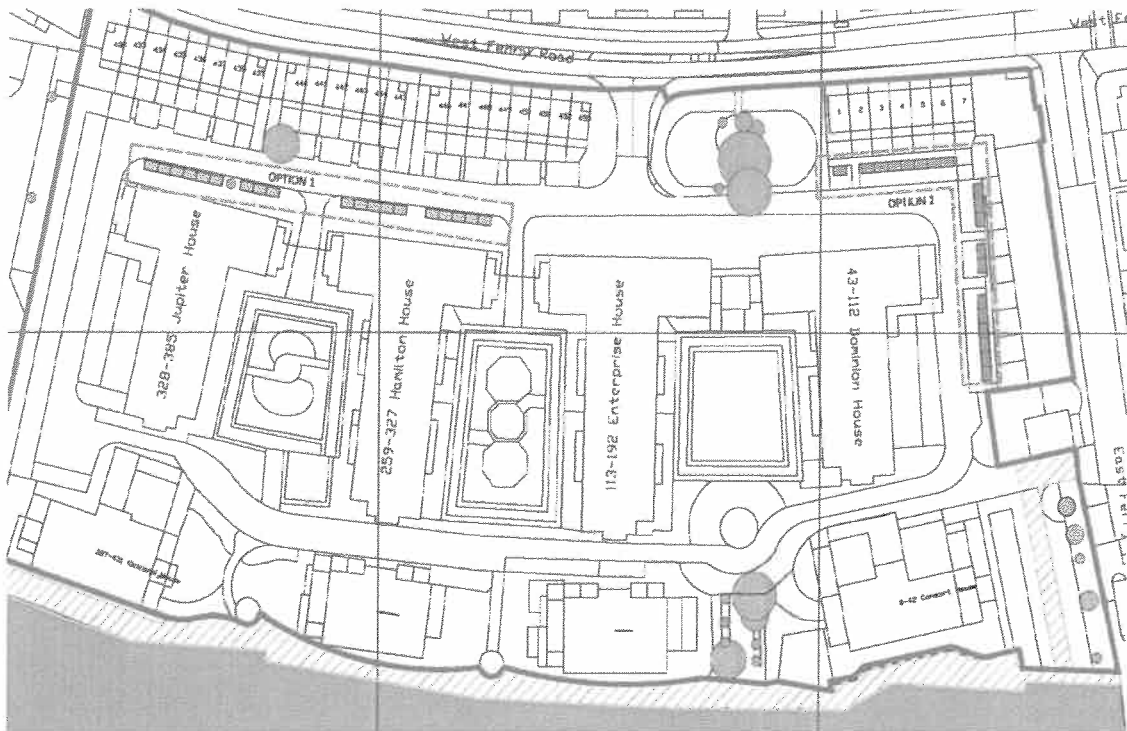
**FALCOLITE COMBI**

By placing two FalcoLites facing each other, a useful combination is to create a cycle compound with cycle parking each side. By providing an optional walkway cover down the middle or panels at each end it is possible to produce a fully enclosed area dedicated to cycle parking.

FalcoLite single sided



See below two scenarios as option 1 and option 2 on the site plan below:



Option 1:

- 19 Cycle units/bays (to replace part of existing soft landscaping)
- Located along Jupiter House and Hamilton House (single line)
- Removal of approximately 114m<sup>2</sup> of existing soft landscaping area.

Option 2:

- 19 Cycle units/bays (to replace existing car parking bays)
- Located along the north-east corner fronting Domimion House (single line)
- Removal of approximately 24 existing car parking bays to accommodate the proposed cycle spaces.

In conclusion we are of the opinion the introduction of providing 150 new cycle shelter facilities would be detrimental to the site due to a significant loss of existing car parking spaces and soft landscaping to the site.

We trust the above provides you some guidance and assistance.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further queries.

Yours Sincerely

Peter Koumis

CC. Applicant

## DOCUMENT 2

### Car Parking at St Davids Square

There are 23 'V' visitor car parking spaces for 475 dwellings at St Davids Square. They were identified by Tariq and myself on a walkabout yesterday. There is another space but it is labelled 'Disabled'. It is poorly sited at the west end of the development, however, and has been ignored for the purposes of this paper.

The figures below detail car parking space activity, where the stay was longer than four hours, during the first week in June.

June 01: 28

June 02: 31

June 03: 28

June 04: 29

June 05: 12 (Sunday)

June 06: 29

June 07: 28

In addition the 'V' spaces also have to be used by the following vehicles in order that the Estates narrow roads remain negotiable. (On the south road, which is very narrow, it is imperative that these vehicles use the spaces in order to avoid blocking the road completely).

A: Short stay cars including those for disabled residents and visitors who often need to park as close as possible to the relevant premise.

B: Short stay deliveries: Post, Parcels, Couriers etc.

C: Medium Stay: Utilities and Repair Companies including plumbers and electricians.

D: Long Stay 1; Removal vans. Because of the high number of rented apartments at St Davids this is a frequent activity. (A smaller property will take up one space for several hours; larger properties and trucks two spaces for a whole day).

E: Long Stay 2; Builders vans. (Sometimes all day for many consecutive days when major renovation is taking place. In addition builders skips also have to be accommodated in the spaces and are sometimes in situ for over a week and longer).

F: Taxis including airport taxi-couriers who are often detailed to help clients with their luggage between their home and the vehicle.