

Justin Smith  
AELTC  
Church Road  
Wimbledon  
London  
SW19 5AE

July 8th 2021

Dear Mr Smith

### **THE AELTC WIMBLEDON PARK PROJECT**

This follows our letter of 24 May when we explained our involvement and provided comments on Consultation 2. We have since attended your Zoom consultation meeting number 3, with other Residents' Associations, at which you presented further explanation Boards for discussion and further comment.

### **CONSULTATION PROCESS**

At the Zoom presentation meeting on 16 June (Consultation 3), convened by yourself, we asked you what if anything had changed in the AELTC plans as a result of the feedback from the first two consultations. The response we got was 'nothing had changed' and that you were pursuing the same plans and simply providing more detail.

While we appreciate the opportunity to learn more about the plans, this is not a consultation. Nor is it any meaningful engagement with the bodies representing all of your neighbours. We and they sent you well-considered and fully argued submissions, some with considerable technical detail and advice, which you seem to have ignored. We would strongly urge you to be more responsive.

This appears to give the impression that the masterplan has been adjusted to reflect comments made, but that is not the case. This seems to us simply to be the third in a pre-planned programme of drip-fed data. Our concerns raised on Consultation 2 in our response of 24 May remain.

### **CONSULTATION 3**

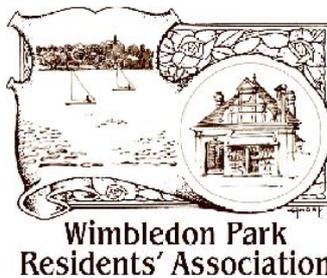
Specifically in relation to some of the detail on the third set of boards we would add:

#### **Public benefits Board 2**

You will have received advice about the extensive requirements and considerable burden of proof to justify any works in this sensitive protected area. Without any further detail and without any engagement with appropriate local bodies such as ourselves, we do not accept that the notes on this page provide anything to overcome these hurdles.

There is no logic to your assertion that the Championships are enhanced by the removal of the earlier qualifying rounds from Roehampton 4 miles away. The notes mention the number of current employees but do not state by how many that will be increased. We conclude that the accumulation of further activity in SW19 will be to the detriment, not benefit, of the public. The "new Park" is simply a gesture unless it is backed by a permanent dedication and transfer to a trust to ensure it remains available to the public: "permissive" means permission can be issued and withdrawn at any time. The walkway is of course fulfilment of a promise the AELTC made in 1993.

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De-silting the lake is a problem Merton *as private landowners* have faced for some time. A gesture towards its cost is of no public benefit.

The landscape suggestions transcend the AELTC's ownership boundary and include a management strategy. Will you please talk to us, the Friends of Wimbledon Park and other close neighbours about it?

We welcome the statement that the AELTC subscribes to achieving net zero carbon objectives for its operations by 2030. You do not need to undertake this project to do it, so this does not provide any benefit to overcome the substantial harm to a site designated as an Historic Registered Park & Garden (Grade II\*) and Metropolitan Open Land (MOL), and within a conservation area.

We struggle to understand how the closure of Church Road which will displace traffic to local residential streets and the redirection of the 493 bus route which provides access to 2 hospitals (St George's and Queen Mary Roehampton will actually 'bring some relief' to local residents.

Finally on this page it is asserted that the planning application will set out the full details of all of the above "as part of the development works to the site". However, the Formal Request for EIA Scoping Opinion of 21 April 2021 states that the ES "will be submitted to accompany the application for outline planning permission". We are pleased to note a change of heart and that all details will be fully supplied in the application. Anything less, in particular any aspect limited to outline only, is not acceptable for such a sensitive site and would leave critical issues for subsequent reserved matters without public scrutiny.

### **Key Responses Board 3**

While this purports to answer the primary concerns, it fails even to mention the Show Court.

The Church Road closure remains a matter of great concern to all local residents not only because of the failure to provide a through route, but also because it will displace considerable traffic to local roads. Also, what does "considerations" for blue light traffic mean: it appears to be less than a promise to maintain transit for it.

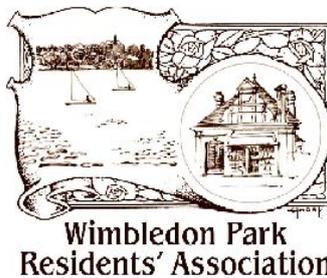
The request for a Master Plan is not simply related to the rest of the park, but to the Lake and the public area which you will dedicate, so it must be part of the application, or else how will it secure the works to Church Road and the lake? Other interest groups are concerned about the park, and in fact your Club uses it too, for parking and the queue. Why are the discussions limited to Merton?

39 courts will provide 16 to replace the Roehampton site and *a further 22* which is described as a *small number*.

### **Project Overview Year-round Board 4 to Places for Nature Board 12**

The oblique projections, coupled with the ambiguous and generalised annotations used, fail to disclose the true impact of the proposals and we would ask for clear and well-defined plans please. There are also many contradictions and inaccuracies: for example, is the southern end

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"no public access" (note 14 Board 4) or is it "reduced access" (note 6 Board 8) or is it

"restricted access" (dedicated zone, Board 12)? For how long are these facilities truly dedicated to "The Championships", which the reader might imagine last 2 weeks but in fact with the qualifying games and including the erection and dismantling of all temporary structures (eg note 2 Board 5) could be several weeks?

The new southern guest entrance is not "on Church Road" (note 2 Board 5), it is not even close to Church Road, but on the public park and leaves a large year-round hardstanding (Board 4). It is also adjacent to the gardens of the houses on Home Park Road. The paths leading to it, apparently randomly laid out, will in fact bring guests in from Home Park Road and ultimately Wimbledon Park underground station. The extra traffic in and around Home Park Road is not explained and is a matter of great concern.

### **Project Overview and Operational Overview, Championships Boards 5 and 6**

We find it impossible to reconcile the statement that "public car parking on site will be significantly reduced" with the proposals outlined in the operational overview of the Championships where additional car parking and taxi ranks are proposed within the public area of Wimbledon Park, and within the proposed Southern New Park for London in the area adjacent to the former Golf Club House.

We fail to understand why The Queue should remain as a facility provided by LB Merton and why AELTC as the instigator of the negotiations with Merton & Wandsworth cannot be a source of information to us in a proper Consultation process.

We understand that the current Championships are taking place under special circumstances, but we have a great concern about the additional vehicular traffic already in Home Park Road.

### **Tennis Courts Board 7**

There seems to be no information about the tennis facilities under control by AELTC located west and north of Somerset Road. We assume that the planning application will be explicit as to all the land in the control of AELTC beyond the application red line.

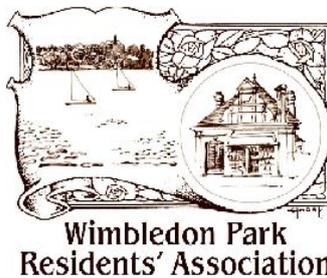
### **A New Park for London Board 8**

The large open areas of grassland (note 1) are in fact entirely used for car parking, displaced by the new courts on Church Road. This will dominate and draw much more traffic through Home Park Road during the Championships. We are concerned about so much summertime use on your ecological proposal.

The extent of the yellow dotted line is vague, particularly compared with the nature priority zone on Board 12: why is it not contiguous with the lake to the northwest, or the Home Park Road properties to the southeast? We have been told that the area to be dedicated is 23 acres, but in view of the discrepancies and uncertainties revealed in this analysis, would ask for

a recalculation. No details are offered about the terms of access as with the existing public park, unless by "similar basis" you mean "the same as"?

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Above all, there is no offer of any long-term security for this public use. We would look for permanent dedication and a suitable basis for continuing management involving local bodies.

### **Tennis in an English Parkland Board 9**

The note to the main drawing "before the tennis season" proposes no temporary nets or canvases surrounding the grass courts. We find it hard to believe that these 38 areas will be left totally clear around the year, open not only to people but also to foxes, badgers, geese and squirrels, and in fact the drawing shows railings around them. Compared with the existing golf course layout, where there are no enclosures to any of the greens or fairways, this is a retrograde intrusion on an open area. We hope that any planning application will be much clearer.

### **Trees Board 10**

The oblique projections belittle the extent of the damage to the existing trees. We hope that a detailed plan will be supplied to enable this to be fully assessed.

### **Wimbledon Park Lake Board 11**

"The Lake is owned and managed by the LBM". Board 11 shows a proposal for the circular lake route with gates to Wimbledon Park, open daily outside The Championships. Who will manage and control this circular route? Who will keep this pedestrian route safe and cleaned for its purpose? Who will foot the bill? Where is the long-term management proposal combined with public use of the park?

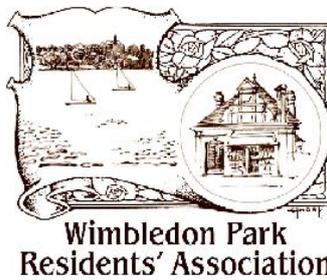
### **Parkland Show Court Board 13 to Key Views (Continued) Board 17**

These are very controversial proposals in a designated Historic Registered Park & Garden (Grade II\*), Metropolitan Open Land and a conservation area: the 8,000 seat, 100 feet high Show Court supported by 38 new open tennis courts and several structures housing Player and Maintenance Hubs are clearly against local and regional policies. We do not accept any of these buildings but in any case for any construction the planning rules expect the highest quality architecture and considerable detail. None of this is shown in these proposals. The limited visual and detailed information fails to show the scale and massing of the Show Court and its impact on the environment on both short and long vistas. In addition, the lack of plans/elevational/sectional information fails to explain the various uses of the building to justify the assertion that this is a building designed to afford year-round activities for the wider community benefit, raising doubts that there may even be commercial uses intended for "public use"?

It is claimed that this would be an "uncomplicated building" informed by the requirements of 8,000 seats; but there is no explanation why 8,000 seats are really needed on the park at all. The computerised generated images (CGI) disclose selective views, some showing a monotonous skyline, others hinting at a curved roofing cover. All relying on the prospect that the green 'living wall' cladding will conceal the huge bulk of the building behind retained mature oak trees.

The information available in respect of the Maintenance and Player Hubs is equally absent on the basis that these are small structures. Our view is that in this setting, all structures are

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equally important, even those that are supposed to be semi-underground. Board 15 does not even identify on plan where the views of the CGI are taken.

The widespread location of the 38 open tennis courts and the failure to show their temporary and permanent enclosures and seating, both during the Qualifying and Championship events and year-round, compounds the shortcomings of the proposal.

There is mention of a masterplan for the AELTC's entire estate but that is available to no-one else for public scrutiny. If the AELTC is willing to separate the design of individual buildings from the masterplan and keen to seek alternative ideas for an iconic product in a different place, we should be happy to engage with it on that basis.

### **Our Process Board 18**

Whereas on page 1 the AELTC gives a "very warm welcome" to the third stage of consultation, at page 18 this publication claims to be "at the end of the consultation process" which suggests the AELTC is not interested in further comments. It is also stated that all material will be available on the Council's website, when you have received many requests to supply a dedicated website for the hundreds of documents in thousands of pages that will be involved.

We are most disappointed that there is no information about the negotiations with other stakeholders in relation to the adjoining Public Wimbledon Park or the centrally located Wimbledon Club (TWC) and stand ready to become involved.

We look forward to a further exchange of views involving all those who wish the best for the continuing international success of the Championships supported by our local communities and societies, all under the protective umbrella of the local, regional, and national planning policies aiming at a sustainable future for all.

Finally, we remain willing to meet and discuss a collaborative approach which might avoid so much of the concern these combative proposals have generated.

Yours sincerely,

cc. Johnny Perkins, AELTC  
Ulrika Hogberg, AELTC  
Wimbledon Park Ward Councillors  
The Wimbledon Society  
The Friends of Wimbledon Park  
The Capability Brown Society

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