

Geoffrey Roper representing the Kings Cross Development Forum:
Chair, we are an independent community-led forum which aimed to involve residents in the neighbourhoods surrounding the Kings Cross Opportunity Area in the area's ongoing redevelopment. As you can see, I come from a church, but I want to emphasise we are a highly diverse Forum, all race and people of all faiths and of none, a broad range of interests and a great depth of expertise. It has been a serious exercise in consultation right across the communities in all the areas around the Kings Cross Opportunity Area in Camden and in Islington. Over a hundred local groups are affiliated to our Forum. We have had significant and sustained help from planning officers of Camden and Islington Councils (and Camden support staff too) with some presentations from Roger Madelin and others from the applicant. We have been meeting for more than three years and some of the groups represented and the residents have lived for decades with the squalor of Kings Cross, uncertainty over the future of the railway lands, the adverse effects of the works on the British Library, the Channel Tunnel Rail Link and the demolition and reconstruction of parts of St Pancras station.

We do not have a unanimous viewpoint to represent; there are too many aspects and too broad a range of opinions for that. On the whole, those of our participants who have strong reservations are laying them before you tonight. The balance of view in the Forum as a whole (its chair, Satnam Gill and I believe) is broadly in favour of the application as revised and with the proposed Conditions and the Section 106 elements in your Pre-agenda paper.

Our written submission expresses the balance of views in weighted percentages on no fewer than 36 aspects of the revisions submitted in September 2005 by the applicant. All but four of these give over two-thirds support for the revisions.

Many of our member groups have continuing concerns (some listed in the 'Summary' as being shared by London's Mayor¹). They would wish further changes, mainly in the direction of more housing, more

affordable housing, greater assurance on community safety ('eyes on the streets'), measures to make it easier to walk, push a pram or cycle into and through the site from various neighbouring directions, saving particular heritage buildings or heritage aspects, greater energy-saving or green energy, bus routes and other transport aspects. And there is some resistance to the extreme building heights. In that sense the Planning Officer has got it right²: he knows where the opposition is coming from. But the Forum has throughout its deliberations recognized that this is going to be a major mixed-use development which will regenerate not only some industrial heritage structures, bringing them into new uses but will regenerate a depressed corner of Camden which has unique potential. There is a desire for progress, not a wish to block the proposed development even if some would like further modifications. We have lived with delay and disappointment for too long. The window of opportunity created by a fortnight of athletics in the Lea Valley six years from now is an added bonus and we can understand why the Officers Report at 19.4.6³ says 'there is no time to spare'.

¹ "Outstanding issues relate to a) the maximisation of affordable housing provision – policies on affordable housing and strategic target of 50% - and other issues relating to housing mix, space standards, affordability and tenure, b) the need to demonstrate compliance with London Plan energy policies, particularly relating to the provision of renewables, c) in the absence of a listed building consent application for the Great Northern Hotel for the Mayor's consideration, the GLA seeks further assurances that a satisfactory solution for pedestrian movement in the southern hub is not rendered incapable of achievement if the present application proposals were to be permitted, d) outstanding concerns raised by the London Development Agency and the need to adequately capture the employment benefits flowing from this development in the s106 agreement, e) further clarity on the design rules being prepared as part of the outline consent and how further attention to design will follow, f) further details of proposed mitigation measures for biodiversity impacts arising from works to Camley Street Park or agreement of an equivalent east-west route to the satisfaction of all stakeholders, secured through legal agreement, g) the access issues raised in the report, including the overall approach to inclusive design, and the policy requirement for 10% wheelchair accessible housing, h) further work is required on detailed matters relating to noise, air quality impacts and the outstanding issues raised by TFL.

² Planning Officer Bob West had just addressed the Sub-Committee and in concluding his presentation made a point of countering some of the main issues which would be raised by objectors.

³ Officer's Report: Summary and Conclusion drew attention to transport aspects and state that the Proposals are designed to fit in with emerging proposals for Kings Cross station, quickly bringing a new western concourse and forming part of the context for a world-class public realm in front of Kings Cross Station and along Euston Road: "In this context the Department of Transport is managing the delivery of the main transport infrastructure projects in the integrated interchange at King's Cross/St Pancras as referred to in this report. Working

back from the 2012 London Olympics, when the interchange needs to be functioning at full capacity, it has become clear that there is no time to spare. The delivery of the London Underground Northern Ticket Hall needs its start this summer if Network Rail, subject to consents of course, are to be able to build a concourse above it by 2012.”