

Proposed Glades restaurant extension on Queens Garden - Joint Report by

The Friends of Bromley Town Parks & Gardens &
Bromley Civic Society - November 2011

The Friends and BCS are deeply concerned at the current pre- application proposals by Capital Shopping Centres. The public have put in considerable effort in participating in the democratic AAP process. There have been successive representations over a period of five years culminating in committee members giving up time, in good faith, for the three week public hearing last year.

It is of concern, therefore, that Capital Shopping Centres, cannot accept that the site M proposals were shown to be unworkable at the AAP public hearing. Indeed CSC now appear to be seeking to unofficially rewrite the AAP to suit themselves by proposing development on landscaped Garden land not even identified in the AAP for development showing considerable contempt for the democratic process and the Inspector's findings.

The Public hearing and Inspector's comments

The original AAP proposals for Site M were for development on the hard standing beside the east elevation of the Glades and on a site on the north side of the Garden. When cross examined at the public hearing regarding how far the development on the hard standing would encroach into the conservation area and urban Open Space Peter Martin, on behalf of the Council informed the Inspector *'no further than the existing ornamental loggias'* (ie approximately 1.5 metres). The hard standing was created for fire engine access in case of an emergency which the AAP proposals failed to take into account until the hearing. This obviously meant that any development would have to be within the Glades itself. Peter also agreed that the proposed cafe site on the North side of the Garden was a *'mistake'* and would be deleted since it breached the AAP stipulation that *no green space would be taken*.

As a consequence the Inspector's findings were :

- 6.65 It seems to me from the examination that a range of options may come up for consideration as either temporary or more permanent solutions to provide café or restaurant uses in connection with Queens Gardens. These could include breaking through the main wall of The Glades to provide a facility within the building itself, with probably some limited outside use, so that customers can take advantage of Queens Gardens. Some of the people using the café would be garden users anyway. Another option would be to provide a similar facility in the future retail extension to The Glades on to The Pavilion site.
- 6.66 In the meantime a café could be provided on the terrace or on part of the hardstanding area shown diagrammatically on page 197. With Belgo already in existence offering a bar and eating facility at the entrance to The Glades, the viability of other than a small scale café in the short term to serve those using Queens Gardens might be in some doubt.

Based on the Inspectors findings we would agree that development on a scale envisaged by the Glades could only take place if sited within the existing building or within a redeveloped Pavilion site opening out on the edge of the public open space rather than upon it. A single cafe which would be sufficient to serve the needs of the garden users could be provided on the terrace or part of the hard standing as the Inspector says and as we have always said in our various representations.

The new proposals have come as a shock because of the following :

Departure from the AAP.

1. The new development site (solid black line) is not that shown on the AAP map (dotted black line) nor one ever submitted to any AAP consultation or discussion with the AAP Inspector.

2. The new development site is on landscaped green space yet AAP Policy OSM states that “New cafes and restaurants will be permitted around the edge of the Garden provided that the development **does not result in the loss of green space**”.



3. **The proposals are not in accord with the Inspector’s findings**

Conflict with Conservation Area policy :

Half the development is within the Conservation Area boundary :

1. The Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and management Plan states: *Siting of New Development -New Buildings in a Conservation Area will normally only be considered:*
 - a. on a site created through demolition of an existing building
 - b. on a currently vacant plot; or
 - c. as an additional building on a plot presently accommodating a building (where appropriate opportunities can be identified)

None of the above apply in this case.

2. *The statutory requirement is for the character or appearance of a conservation area to be preserved or enhanced.* The CA will neither be preserved or enhanced as the landscaped open space would be lost as would its contribution to the open character of the wider Garden and conservation area which will be encroached upon by commercial buildings.
3. *Council policy BE13 is to oppose development which would harm views into or out of a conservation area.* The view out of the Conservation Area across the Glades Terrace (also proposed for development) and the contribution it makes to the open space would be not only harmed but lost altogether. Similarly the view into the CA from the Terrace and the upper walkway of the Pavilion would be lost.

Invest Bromley

Page 17 of the Invest Bromley brochure for Site M (right) shows two charming pictures of the development site and says "*this important open space* (see right and above) will be enhanced by *opening up the Glades Shopping Centre to its side*, etc. etc.

What "*this important open space* (see right and above) " refers to is the development site itself and clearly CSC are not proposing "*opening up the Glades Shopping Centre to its side*" at all.



Background to the Urban Open Space and Conservation Area designations

The Urban Open Space designation of Queens Garden follows the original layout of the Garden and was made before the 1984 draft Borough Plan. It pre-dates the conservation area designation and was made at a time when no conservation area was envisaged. Following discussion with English Heritage, however, the Council made a CA designation in 1987 which included Queens Garden and the back gardens of the houses in Holwood Road which later became the extension of the Garden.

The Glades development and Terrace

The development site for a shopping centre was identified in the 1984 draft Borough Plan. The northern boundary was up to the edge of what was to become the extended Garden and Conservation Area. In selecting the Capital and Counties scheme over the other three contending developers reasons for the choice were summarised in the October 1986 Policy and resources committee minutes including "***Queens Garden was to be attractively extended and enlarged to form an integral part of the new shopping centre.***" This enlargement refers to what was to become the Glades Terrace which was created within the boundary of the development site. It was landscaped together with the Garden & CA extension as a single concept. This open space terrace was and still remains "an integral part of the new shopping centre."

Compensation land for what was lost

From the original Queens Garden footprint the Glades development stole arguably the most important part which was the green link to Market Square where the listed gates were sited. This area is now under concrete and the green link reduced to a tunnel and the Glades concourse. The southern extension to the Garden were added by the Council in compensation for that lost on the North side and we rightly regard this compensation land as part of the original 'gift' to the people of Bromley in 1900 and not to be bargained away for profit.

Similarly the Glades Terrace, the only meagre scrap of public open space provided within the entire development was, and should still be, part of this vital compensation.

Having gained a planning permission on the basis of providing this public space it is particularly concerning that CSC are now seeking to take it away. Its loss would be major betrayal of public confidence by both CSC and the Council.

Context of environmental damage already done to the Queens Garden environment

It is not only the historic green link to Market Square through open space, as old as Bromley itself, which was cruelly destroyed.

Where, on the west side of the Garden the trees were framed against sky, the massive elevation of the Glades robbed the garden of this setting, visually enclosed the space and for a large part of the year plunging a sizeable part of the Garden into deep shade after midday.

The Garden was an integral part of the tranquil Palace Park until construction of Kentish Way destroyed the western lawns and remains of the Palace Carriage Drive and severed the two. Shortly following this the entire north side of the Palace Park was destroyed by the Civic Centre Car Park.

Conclusion

Let us please remember the Civic Pride of earlier Councils and residents which created our cherished Parks and Gardens for public recreation. The current proposals which place commercial development above public health and recreation are unworthy and unacceptable.

Both groups agree with the AAP Inspector that if CSC do not intend "*breaking through the main wall of the Glades to provide a facility within the building itself*" then the only appropriate option is a small cafe for the Garden users with minimal impact on the CA and in line with Urban Open Space, Conservation Area and AAP policy.

Tony Banfield

Chair of the Friends of Bromley Town Parks and Gardens & Bromley Civic Society

See Appendix photos on the following pages:-

Photos illustrating the proposed loss of public open space and damage already done to the Garden by Capital Shopping Centres and Council development : -

Solid Line - the currently proposed development site.

Small dotted line – Conservation area.

Large dotted line – Northern boundary of the original Glades development site and area created for public open space as part of the development.



Maps before and after the Glades showing loss of the historic green link from the Palace lands to Market Square and the impact of Kentish Way on the east side, the encroachment of the Glades on the west side and the compensatory extension on the south side.



Before and after photos showing the loss of the green link to Market Square and original location of the listed gates.



Photos facing west of before and after the Glades development . Note the loss of open aspect of trees against sky, visual enclosure and resultant loss of afternoon sun.



Photo taken mid October 2011 showing the Glades shadow which engulfs the garden from midday onwards



Photos before and during construction of Kentish Way with the loss of the rural aspect of Love Lane and the loss of the remnant of the carriage drive, beside the Garden, to the Bishop's Palace (Civic Centre) and the loss of the historic open aspect from the Garden to the Palace by construction of the Civic Centre Car Park.

