



Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022

## **OBJECTION TO PLANNING APPLICATION HGY/2022/0656 – ASHLEY GARDENS**

Living Under One Sun (LUOS) wishes to object to the above application relating to approval of Details to Condition 26 Part C (Landscape Details) attached to planning permission HGY/2019/2804 and, in particular, in relation to the proposed gate design and the provision of a gate (and railings) on the boundary of the Community Hub, Café, Growing Space and Gardens.

### **1. A decision would be premature**

1.1 Much has changed since the proposals in the original 2017 Ashley Gardens application (HGY/2017/2045) which mentioned the Berol Link possibly being a new east-west route from Down Lane Park to Berol House, and a review should be undertaken of some of the details of this approval as part of the Down Lane Park Improvements consultation and co0-design. Due to these changes, notably the establishment and success of the LUOS Community Hub, Café, Gardens and Growing Space, LUOS is considering making an application for a non-material amendment to the original planning approval.

1.2 Any decision affecting the perimeter of the Ashley Gardens development and boundary with the LUOS Community Hub, Café and Garden in Down Lane Park is premature as no decision have been made on the Down Lane Park improvements. Consultation with residents, community groups and stakeholders, such as LUOS, the Pavilion Nursery, the Friends of Down Lane Park and other park users, is underway but at an early stage. Draft proposals have not even been published, and it will be some months before even a RIBA Stage 2 Concept Design is agreed and finalised.

1.3 Following the Council putting the process of developing proposals on hold in the summer of 2021, the Council have recognised the role and value of community engagement and have accept and set up a Co-Design and Co-production process with the local community and other key stakeholders. Integral to this are:

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- a) the *Down Lane Park Community Design Group*, through which the proposals will develop, and
- b) the *Down Lane Park user and Community Forum*, which will develop and consider essential input from local residents and users of the park, and will feed and present ideas into the Community Design Group.

1.4 This process is now underway and should be respected. Approving this application and the proposed installation of a gate into the Community Hub and Gardens will therefore not only be premature, but also disrespectful to the co-design process established by the Council.

1.5 Consultation and co-design will be taking place in the coming months and the retention or relocation of the Community Hub and gardens will be a key part of discussions about possible improvements to the Park.

1.6 The Council's recent **Haringey Parks Summit** reaffirmed and reinforced the value of community engagement and custodianship – it's vital – **People Need Parks**. In particular, the community needs Down Lane Park and the facilities it has and can have, especially a safe and welcoming community hub, because it is surrounded by massive change and towering developments, plus a new housing scheme coming forward on the former Depot site on the north side of the park. The Council's recent bid, with LUOS as a partner, to the Mayor's Green and Resilient Spaces Fund also reaffirmed the vital role the Community Hub is playing and can play.

1.7 Proposals to install a gate, and perimeter/boundary railings, as indicated in previous and the current drawings, would remove the essential and much valued safe and welcoming space for the community provided by the Community Hub and Gardens. Safe spaces are much needed in Tottenham Hale and this space inside Down Lane Park has proven positive support from the community, from partners and funders, and from the Mayor of London's who visited in February 2019 as an example of best practice, and cited LUOS as a positive case study in a 2021 GLA film. The space is also be a key hub for the Mayor's My Endz/Home Cooked current programme (and backed by the Council) for Tottenham Hale's young people.

1.8 Should the Park Development Plans decide to retain the Community Hub and Gardens in its current location and with its outdoor space, this will be a gate to nowhere, with money and resources wasted.

1.9 The developer's aspirations with positive but also commercial intentions, are to create a destination with the park as a 'back garden', but at what costs to an existing safe, successful and much valued destination. It's more likely that many of the new residents would appreciate and value the community hub and gardens as they are, given that they will have easy access to the park already from existing and other planned additional entrances.

## **2. Contrary to Development Management Policy DM 49**

2.1 Whilst it's acknowledged this application relates to the landscape details of a previously approved application, it's important to note that the effect of not amending the original approval, and approving the part of this that relates to the boundary with LUOS's lease would be to prevent and stop the Community Hub, Café and Gardens operating as the valuable community infrastructure it currently is.

2.2 The Council would then be clearly breaching its 'Development Management Policy DM49 *Managing the Provision and Quality of Community Infrastructure*' which states,

" A. The Council will seek to protect existing social and community facilities unless a replacement facility is provided which meets the needs of the community.

B. Where a development proposal may result in the loss of a facility, evidence will be required to show that:

- a. the facility is no longer required in its current use
- b. the loss would not result in a shortfall in provision of that use and
- c. the existing facility is not viable in its current use and there is no demand for any other suitable community use on the site".

2.2 There is clear evidence that the facility is required in its current use, the loss would result in a shortfall of this use, and the existing facility is proven to be viable.

### **3. There is already very good access to Down Lane Park for Ashley Gardens and other residents**

3.1 There is already extensive access to Down Lane Park, as emphasised in the Council's Park Management Plan, with 8 entrances, 3 of which are on Ashley Road. There is therefore simply no need for any additional access nor the 'Berol Link' as the park is very close.

3.2 It is certainly not in any way an argument, which some may use, to say that certain residents in Ashley Gardens should have access to the park 'as their back garden' or that development funders require this.

3.3 This current application does not now include the gate approved to Down Lane Park in the north west corner of the Ashley Gardens site, which would have assisted access to the park for new residents. LUOS understand the developer does not wish to now proceed with this gate, but this has not been mentioned let alone explained in the application documents to our knowledge. This approved gate should be reinstated as it was in the original approval.

### **4. Contrary to the Council's, as Landlord, covenant**

4.1 LUOS holds a lease for the site and the proposals in this application could jeopardise the right to quiet enjoyment the Council as Landlord is covenanted to provide.

### **5. LUOS provides vital Social Infrastructure & Pathways to Employment as a Community Anchor & Wealth Builder**

5.1 LUOS is a multi-award winning charity which delivers free frontline community-led projects, services and events which are agile to the needs, wants and interests of local residents in Tottenham Hale/Northumberland Pk. The bedrock and heart of sustainable community involvement in Down Lane Park and the surrounding neighbourhood is the LUOS Community Hub, Café and Gardens and Growing Space inside the park, providing an enclosed, safe and welcoming space – a strong, vibrant and inclusive community anchor for individuals, families and community groups, existing and new residents of all ages, genders, faiths, cultures and backgrounds ( but have a particular focus on disadvantaged BAMER residents) to come together and connect, share skills and stories, develop and deliver activities, incubate enterprises, provide volunteering opportunities, work placements, and find pathways to training, qualifications and employment – and fun, friendship and fitness!

5.2 Activities typically focus on: health and wellbeing, digital inclusion, ESOL, poverty, food distribution and growing, beekeeping, holiday schemes, sewing, crafts, eco therapy, multi-sports and cycle training/ repairs

5.3 LUOS organises cultural events, raising awareness, creating networks and collaborations. The Hub is also a Haringey Designated Safe Space for Women and Girls, and pilot safe space for raising awareness, supporting victims of abuse, grooming, gang crime and violence against women & girls, training our frontline staff and volunteers. It is providing platforms for BAMER and Black Lives Matter solutions to Build Back Better our neighbourhood. The Hub is a partner in delivering the Haringey Household Support Fund.

5.4 Through our 'Down Lane Active and Connected ' programme LUOS has tried and successfully tested a range of free activities including multi sports, basketball, football, wheelchair basketball, skateboarding, roller skating, women's yoga women's dance and aerobics, dance, street dance, women's running club, gardening, food growing and biodiversity, event organising, a walk group, cycling club, hula hoops, e-sports evenings and tournaments, arts and crafts, eco arts and art therapy, human library; fuelling empowerment community energy champions and an energy café; and Moving Under One Sun, girls dance and empowerment group. Last summer's intergenerational programme alone involved 612 residents, many previously isolated, from 2 to 72, with more than 70% being from BAME, refugee and migrant communities, and particularly women and girls.

5.5 The most effective way to address barriers facing those less likely to using Down Lane Park is to provide safe and welcoming spaces, with community-led activities and services for all cultures, abilities and backgrounds. This project therefore has the LUOS community hub, cafe, gardens and growing space and its 'Down Lane Active and Connected' services at its heart as a safe and welcoming space.

5.6 To be effective with all genders, abilities and backgrounds, initiatives must be founded on building relationships and trust, and direct community involvement in designing and running activities; most LUOS activities are led and delivered by residents from BAME communities and women. The success of the LUOS Laureus Sport for Good programme, especially the ground breaking and exciting wheelchair basketball, in the park over the summer demonstrated this. Our 16 accessible growing beds enable children, older and/or disabled residents to garden and grow green skills. The LUOS Hub is a Haringey Designated Safe Space for Women and Girls. LUOS has been particularly successful engaging and supporting young people, providing a safe space and activities in the park and the hub which young people lead. Including employing 12 young people (funded by Home Cooked) on

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London Living Wage to plan and help deliver the summer programme. In addition, 52 young people mainly from BAME communities attended an innovative event in August ( see link to video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1rdjPoINkbM> ) organised by LUOS and We Move (Girls Dance and Empowerment project) and sharing skills around Dance, football, basketball and wheelchair basketball. In the autumn, 23 (mainly male) young people attending a day workshop on tackling violence against women and girls. As well as continuing their own activities, young people will be supported to play an active role in the Down Lane Park User forum and have a representative on the Community Design group. With this project LUOS will lead the engagement with young people in partnership with the My Endz Home Cooked programme.

5.7 Now that this approach has been proven to work, and building on the many creative ways the park can be used, this project will enable it to be developed and scaled up to further increase the use of the park by often marginalised communities in particular, and links strengthened with Tottenham Marshes, the Lea Valley and Wetlands green spaces. The Living Under One Sun Community Hub and Gardens, based inside the park, will ensure continued and growing community activity, positive engagement with the project and the future development, use and stewardship of Down Lane Park.

5.8 We also give evidence and testimonies on issues and ways forward to improve service planning and delivery to boroughwide and London based strategic forums, such as the Voluntary and Community Sector Forum, Safeguarding on Gangs & Neighbourhood Policing, Park and Friends of Parks Forum, the CCG's Health and Wellbeing and Mental Health Forum, the Haringey Covid Support Network, Haringey Council and Mutual Aid Groups Forum, Haringey Welcome, and Sustainable Haringey.

5.9 It is especially important at this time to emphasise that LUOS, with our partners are creating training, qualifications and employment and enterprise opportunities for local people. As Council Cabinet members and officers have been advised, since 2018-09 LUOS Community Hub has created an estimated **£2.5 million of community wealth and social value** to the park and to Tottenham Hale. This includes creating an estimated 13.5 FTE jobs per year. All this would be jeopardised by approving a gate into the community hub.

5.10 LUOS has a proven and consistent mandate and support from the local community and our partners to provide these activities and services on this site.

5.11 In recognition of the strategic and valuable role LUOS provides, the Council and has signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work in partnership with us *'To ensure the*

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*continued delivery of this central community hub’ , to ‘inform the approach to future parks building/s within the Down Lane Park Improvement project’ and ‘focus on delivering front line services and providing a permanent community hub based in Down Lane Park and serving the wider Tottenham area’.*

5.12 In 2021 LUOS was highly commended in the London Sustainable City Awards this year, and received a Levelling Up 2021 Champions Award from the House of Commons and our Tottenham MP David Lammy, for 'work underway in local communities to build back better'.

5.13 LUOS has also signed a 5 Year MOU with London Metropolitan University to further measure the impact of our community infrastructure and initiatives, using an action research approach, bringing local people together with the university and its students from Haringey (which as the largest number of any London borough), developing best practice and employment opportunities.

5.14 What the Covid-19 pandemic has proved, for anyone who doubted it, is the urgent need for neighbourhoods to be empowered to respond to their own needs, issues, aspirations and opportunities. The pandemic has made existing inequalities worse, particularly for our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, migrants and refugees. This is therefore an important moment for our communities in Tottenham Hale and for Living Under One Sun (LUOS). From all ages, abilities and backgrounds, we’re bursting with experience, talent, ideas, aspirations and energy.

5.15 Our success is an illustration of the community’s strengths – we continue to be a community-led organisation (95% of trustees, staff, volunteers and stakeholders are locals with valuable lived experience of our neighbourhoods). In 2008 we transformed a derelict site on Tottenham Marshes into a beautiful community allotment. More recently we’ve transformed a disused bowling green and pavilion in Down Lane Park into a vibrant community hub, we have completed 4 successful crowdfunders giving us a strong mandate from our community, the Mayor of London, Haringey Council and partners -and we continue to deliver frontline tailored services to meet community needs.

5.16 We are a ‘can-do’ community organisation and wealth builders committed to making a happier more inclusive, socially just, equal, empowered and greener, lower carbon neighbourhood in Tottenham Hale and Northumberland Park (Haringey, London). *And as part of this.....to secure a sustainable and inclusive Community Learning Hub, Café and Gardens in Down Lane Park, which can continue to serve as a vibrant community space in*

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the heart of Tottenham Hale for individuals, families and community groups, existing and new residents of all ages, genders, faiths, cultures and backgrounds, to come together and connect, share skills and stories, develop and deliver activities, incubate enterprises and find pathways to training, qualifications and employment – and fun, friendship and fitness too!

**A 'community loved place' is at risk of being swapped for a 'developer destination'.** There needs to be a balance between needs of developers and needs of the community and equality of access to essential services and park amenities, and this application should therefore not be approved.

END