
Crystal Palace Park Trust News Release

27th November 2019
For immediate release

CAPEL MANOR COLLEGE CONSULTATION ON DEVELOPMENT OF TWO SITES IN CRYSTAL PALACE PARK

RESPONSE OF CRYSTAL PALACE PARK TRUST

Capel Manor College currently occupies the Jubilee Stand within the National Sports Centre, which it leases from the Greater London Authority. It proposes to develop two sites in Crystal Palace Park: land adjacent to Crystal Palace Museum on Anerley Hill and the existing farm site.

Crystal Palace Park Trust is presently unable to support these proposals for the following reasons.

Crystal Palace Park is designated as Metropolitan Open Land which is protected as open space in the same way as Green Belt, under local, London and national planning policy. The proposed buildings are, by planning definition, inappropriate development.

The Park is also a conservation area, and a Grade 2* listed landscape on Historic England's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England.

The Anerley Hill site currently presents a wooded edge to the Park, for the benefit of park users and those using Anerley Hill. The site is unkempt, but remains a green asset which is capable of improvement as parkland in line with a key objective of Metropolitan Open Land designation in the London Plan. The Capel Manor proposal presents a long brick wall on the Anerley Hill frontage which would be an urbanising influence on the park edge. The site will be bounded on the remaining three sides by fencing. A car park at the entrance is a lost opportunity to improve the pedestrian enhance to the park and the square behind the museum.

The College has not produced studies of the visual impact on the historic landscape. It says that it would do so following grant of outline planning permission. However, outline planning permission would give the College in principle permission for its development, in advance of proper studies of its impacts on the Park. Given the importance of these impacts, the Trust is concerned by this approach. These are not matters of mere detail, but essential considerations which need to be assessed in full to enable the community and the planning authority to understand what is

proposed. The Trust would expect a proposal of this size and scale to be illustrated with views from around the site so that the community has an opportunity to provide its views in the light of accurate information, before the issue of principle is determined.

This is an important part of the Park, being an entrance adjacent to the museum, the sphinxes and the historic terracing. It ought to be improved for the public in general. The construction of a large educational facility, even if some of it is open to the public some of the time, appears directly contrary to protective policies applying to the Park.

The proposal to build on the farm involves a number of buildings of up to three storeys. This is directly contrary to Metropolitan Open Land policy. By reason of their height, mass and density, the Trust considers that the proposal fails to have sufficient regard to the status of the Park as a conservation area. The site is above and very close to the dinosaurs, which are a treasured asset listed as Grade 1. The Trust is concerned about the preservation of this landscape and the setting of listed buildings, but no study of the impact has been produced.

More generally, the future of Crystal Palace Park remains to be resolved:

- There is a proposal for substantial house-building on the Sydenham side of the Park, taking account of a previous permission to do so, in order to raise funds for restoration and help secure the long term future of the wider park. This carefully considered scheme, previously supported by an Inspector following a lengthy public inquiry, represents enabling development: the benefits it would generate for the Park are well-understood and established. However, this is now in doubt because the Greater London Authority has indicated that it requires part of the housing to be affordable, but the Trust understands that if it is then this will fail to raise the requisite funds.
- The future of the National Sports Centre is still in question, with the Greater London Authority some way behind in its planning for the site.
- There is an outstanding proposal to run a tram track through the Park behind the Museum and up to Crystal Palace Parade.
- The future of the Concert Platform also remains in the balance, and so forth.

The Trust is strongly of the view that the Park must be planned holistically. The piecemeal addition of two education sites in the Park is consistent neither with the overall master-planning of the park, carefully considered over a long period, nor with the policies which have been designed over many decades to protect the park from further inappropriate development.

The Trust understands that the College hopes to become involved in the maintenance of the Park in the future. However, it has no contract to do so, and even if it did, this would not justify planning permission for yet further development sites in the Park. Capel Manor College is a private educational college with three sites across London. The Trust has no objection to its continuing to occupy the Jubilee Stand, because this can and does occur without breaching the well-established planning principles for the Park. On the other hand, there is no special imperative for it to occupy Crystal Palace Park in particular, and if it is to do so at all, it should do so in a manner which does not breach the planning framework pertaining to the park.

The sole imperative which should shape all and any works to the Park is the need to preserve it, as an important area of green open space, and as a heritage asset of national importance.

Crystal Palace Park Trust is an independent body, established by the London Borough of Bromley to take over and protect the Park in the future. It will continue to review its approach to these proposals as more information emerges.

Crystal Palace Park Trust Joint Chair, Philip Kolvin QC, said: “We are working in partnership with the London Borough of Bromley to ensure that the Park remains a green, heritage asset for the benefit of future generations. We should not be permitting yet further buildings on the Park unless imperative for the protection and enhancement of the Park. We are supportive of the educational role which the College plays, and have no difficulty with their continuing to occupy the Jubilee Stand but their current proposals to expand into the green fabric of the Park are directly inconsistent with the planning framework for the Park. As such we cannot support them.”

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- Crystal Palace Park Trust is a limited company registered in England and Wales (registered no. 11360503) with a registered office at Bromley Civic Centre, Stockwell Close, Bromley BR1 3UH
- The formation of Crystal Palace Park Trust is part of a wider Regeneration Plan which includes the creation of a sustainable business plan to secure the long-term future of Crystal Palace Park
- The Capel Manor Collage consultation took place on Friday 22 November 2019, 3.00-8.00pm at the Paxton Centre, 52 Anerley Hill, London SE19 2AE and Saturday 23 November 2019, 10.00am-1.00pm at Crystal Palace Park Farm. Tours of the farm and College facilities took place during the Saturday session.
- For more information on the Capel Manor College consultation and to see the material that was shown please see <https://www.capelmanorconsultation.co.uk>
- For more information on Capel Manor College please see <https://www.capel.ac.uk/crystal-palace-park-centre.html>
- For media enquiries, please email contact@crystalpalacepark.org.uk