

Sandy Lane residents 'cheated'

Angry residents have accused a major housing developer of misleading them and called for a new planning application for a former gas works to be scrapped.

Hundreds of unhappy householders in Teddington and Hampton Wick are to take on Linden Homes after the house building firm submitted a revised planning application for the site at Sandy Lane, which is known as the Seaboard or Jewson site.

Initial plans to put 198 apartments on the site as well as a crèche, nursing home and office space were turned down by Richmond upon Thames Council, but permission was granted by a planning inspector in 2005.

Linden now want to build an additional 40 homes, 16 of which would fall into the affordable housing category, and neighbours have said they feel cheated

By Chris Wickham

because they only agreed to back the original plans following a verbal undertaking in 2005 by the developer not to expand the project.

Residents have formed the Sandy Lane Site Action Group (SLSAG), set up a website, slsag.org.uk, and taken a petition to seven roads overlooked by the proposed apartments, 98 per cent of those questioned signed the petition, which already has over 500 names.

David Harnden, head of SLSAG, said: "There is a wall of opposition to these plans, people have been betrayed by Linden, whose word clearly counts for nothing when extra profits are at stake.

"People living for miles around would be worse off if this new application went

through. Local services would suffer, there would be extra pressure on school places and the congestion and pollution in the area would only get worse."

When the updated planning application was mooted around two months ago Councillor Tony Arbour, who represents Hampton Wick on Richmond upon Thames Council, said it was already a major overdevelopment and any increase will add insult to injury by putting pressure on an infrastructure which is already overstrained.

And Vincent Cable, MP for Twickenham, said there was a possibility the view from Bushy Park could be affected and pledged to support residents.

The Teddington Society, the Hampton Wick Association and the Friends of Bushy and Home Parks have also come against the plans.

"Everybody is against Linden on this. It's time they started listening to local people," added Mr Harnden. "They say in their blurb 'We conduct our business in a responsible way and minimise the environmental impact', if that was true, they wouldn't be doing this.

"Linden have a misleading message about the new application. People in Teddington and Hampton Wick have a message of their own and it couldn't be clearer: 'Withdraw it'."

Linden Homes said local infrastructure can support the additional development, which would include improvements in energy efficiency and sustainability and a reduction in carbon emissions by 45 per cent.

Paul Cooper, managing director of Linden Homes South East, said the company was excited by the opportunities

the proposal would present.

"The proposed additional homes would partly fund the sustainable technology, allow us to fund an extra 16 affordable homes assisting in addressing local housing needs and provide an additional contribution to education and health services," he added.

A Richmond council spokesman said a public consultation was being carried out and all representations will be taken fully into account.

He said plans for the scheme can be viewed at Teddington Library, on the council website, richmond.gov.uk, or by appointment at the Civic Centre.

Any representations should be made in writing to the case officer, Bryan Staff, Room 212, Civic Centre, 44 York Street, Twickenham, TW1 3BZ, or by emailing b.staff@richmond.gov.uk.