

Proposed Works on Tooting Bec Common COM/3263104

Statement of Case: Louise Albrecht - Objection

1. I have lived on the Hyde Farm since 1987, and on Pentney Road for the last 30 years. My children and I have used and loved the common, and particularly Triangle Field (including the greatly missed One o'clock Club) for all of this time. I strongly object to this planned development.
2. The Council have been trying to commercially lease out the Triangle for many years. This development involves fencing in common land and unfairly restricting the space available to the public for recreation, unless they are prepared to pay for what is at the moment entirely free. The Council and the developers refuse to acknowledge the negative impact this development will have on all common users, and everyone who uses this hard ground. This is a loss of amenity, it will absolutely 'unfairly restrict the space available to the public for recreation in the open air or in any open space'. The Council cannot justify this. The importance of accessibility to the Triangle Field has been highlighted throughout the pandemic, particularly as people have appreciated the open spaces and peace and quiet of the common, and this will continue long into the future.
3. The redgra pitch has been unfenced for decades, and even when it was briefly fenced-in I have seen no evidence that the gates were ever locked. In the WBC Proof of Evidence document (6.14) Simon Cooper Grundy seems to think the pitch was built in the 1960s, and from the start was enclosed within a high fence, with the floodlights that remain today. It's a shame Wandsworth don't have a proper record of when the fencing went up, for how long, and if planning was ever granted (would it be in the Commons Register?). The attached 1978 photo shows no fencing, or floodlights, or goal posts. The pitch was just an extension of the old playground, used for all sorts of activities, just as it is today. It seems most likely the fence and floodlights were put up when the Youth Club was built in 1985, but only lasted a few years before being dismantled in the late 1980s/early 1990s. In the life of the common the fence was barely there. The redgra pitch however remains a very important part of the common. In the winter it's the only area of dry land, the rest of the common becomes a muddy bog for a lot of the time. If TFC fenced in the only dry area where would everyone go unless they were prepared to pay for access? And an expensive enclosed artificial grass pitch is no place to learn to ride a bike. Hundreds of children have learnt to do this on the redgra over the years.
4. The existing floodlights are only on for a maximum of a couple of hours a week, through the winter months. The council approved new floodlighting to be on every evening from September – May, so up to around 40 hours a week! Nowhere has the Council or the developer acknowledged that there will be this huge increase of light pollution.
5. Triangle Field is a unique area of South London. It is not bordered by roads, so it is very quiet, and after dusk it is very dark. People use this part of the

common for quiet enjoyment. If the development goes ahead this daytime tranquillity and evening darkness will be lost forever. Floodlights and the noise of hundreds of footballers all evenings and weekends would ruin it for future generations.

6. Wandsworth Council are guardians of Tooting Common, but they are not acting in the public's best interests. This development will harm the ecology and wildlife, result in noise pollution, light pollution, traffic pollution, and over-intensification of use. All of this, and enclosure of a piece of the common that is currently free and open for anyone to access will detrimentally affect our neighbourhood and should not be allowed.
7. The tender process for developing Triangle was started around 2013, with the tender being granted to TFC in 2016, and there has been negligible consultation since then. Attitudes to open space have changed a lot since 2013, it's a great shame that common users were not shown consideration and listened to during the recent planning process. The 1000 plus objections were mainly dismissed by the Chair of the PAC (who chose not to declare his conflict of interest as a director of Enable), and those objections are no longer visible on the Council website. The online petition of over 7000 objections was dismissed because it wasn't properly submitted. The council has shown that it has no consideration for the local people who will suffer from this development. There was no consultation between TFC and local people.
8. Traffic impact has been dismissed by both the Council and TFC, but local residents know that if the development goes ahead it will cause huge problems for local residents. CPZ designations in the surrounding Lambeth streets are inadequate to cope with hundreds of extra cars every day up to at least 10pm at night. Why should the local CPZ be changed so Wandsworth can wash their hands of the Triangle, and a private company can move in for huge profits? The Green Plan is wholly inadequate, it offers no solution to the huge increase in car use that will arise from the development, apart from a rack for 12 bikes, when over 500 new visitors a day are expected.
9. Wandsworth Council have finally agreed to re-surface the athletics track at Tooting Bec, and are spending over £300k re-furbishing the common playground on the other side of Bedford Hill. The Council should re-surface the redgra pitch that they have chosen to neglect for so many years, and put in public toilets at Triangle, rather than allowing a disruptive and divisive development to close off free and open public access to common land, setting a dangerous precedent that it will continue to take advantage of for commercial gain. This is a common, not a park, and should not be enclosed.

**Louise Albrecht
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This photo is taken from a film on YouTube, called Tooting: On Common Ground, part 5, made in 1978 and clearly shows the hard ground, with no fencing or floodlights.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9SICN86pxQA&t=458s>