

This is the response to Ealing Council's draft local plan from the Five Roads Forum residents group covering Arden, Broughton, Denmark, Hartington and Hastings roads in West Ealing.

We are concerned that Ealing Council has put out for consultation a draft plan running to over a thousand pages and affecting all aspects of life in Ealing with only a few weeks for residents to comment. Some of that time was pre-Christmas and the Christmas holidays. The concern is that Ealing Council will then use the draft local plan as a blueprint for the future without sufficient consultation on controversial proposals such as building large tower blocks and abolishing Green Belt land.

The draft plan identified at least 115 potential building sites within the borough – with nine sites in the Ealing town centre area (which includes West Ealing) as being as high as 21 storeys (73.5 metres).

This is a huge number of very tall buildings in an area which has never as yet, seen a 21 storey building and is currently a reasonably pleasant suburban area. This is about to change as the council has recently passed several plans for 21 storey buildings in Ealing and the concern is the draft plan will increase this trend making Ealing look and feel like a high-rise, totally urban city.

This directly affects the roads we live in which have two potential building sites in them: EA25 (41 Hastings Road & 44-54 Drayton Green Road) and EA14 (Arden Road car park). Added to that, we are on the edge of a potential cluster of tall buildings including the Manor Road plan which has been given permission for 21 storeys and the Waitrose site where the indicative height in the draft plan is 13 storeys although campaigners fear it will be higher.

This is an area of predominantly two and three storey Victorian and Edwardian houses. Although we are near a Crossrail station and expect some development, Ealing Council seems to have thrown out all its previous planning guidelines.

Ealing Council's Development Sites document, adopted in 2013, has a section on the Hastings Road / Drayton Green Road site, but it says: " The height, scale and massing of new development must reflect the historic character of the surrounding residential areas on Hastings and Drayton Green Road. New development along Hastings Road **must be low rise and not overlook the adjacent two storey terraced residential properties** on this side, to create a harmonious streetscape and respect the current building line.

"A stepped design with increasing height towards Drayton Green Road may be appropriate, in reflection of the increased scale of development at the intersection. Along Drayton Green Road, heights of up to four storeys will generally be appropriate, reflecting the height of Wilton House on the corner opposite."

Under the draft plan, we are looking at a development of between 7 – 13 storeys. However just recently a developer undertook a major consultation of local people for two 21 storey buildings for student rooms on that site. We are still waiting for the application to go to council but the fact that a developer can even consider a building of such a height there gives us no confidence that the council is willing to even keep to the indicative height range of 13 storeys in its draft plan.

Conversely in the draft plan the Arden Road car park has an indicative height range of 9 to 21 storeys. The planning application that has recently been accepted by the council is for 8 storeys. Does that mean that, due to this draft plan, we can expect an updated planning application for a much bigger building – potentially up to 21 storeys, towering over the single storey church next door, the single storey fire station next to that and the two-storey homes behind it?

In conclusion, this draft plan appears to be a cynical exercise by Ealing Council to try and fix the planning system to favour developers. If a site is earmarked for a 21 storey tower block then whatever local people say, developers can point to the local plan and say that the policy has already been agreed . The draft plan does nothing to encourage local people to have confidence that Ealing Council's decisions won't be updated or that the council won't completely change its mind over how it wants Ealing to look and what structures can be built.