

Canning & Clyde Road Residents Association

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The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
Government Office for London
Planning Division
9th Floor
Riverwalk House
157 – 161 Millbank
London
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4 February 2007

Dear Secretary of State

**THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON
(LAND WEST OF EAST CROYDON STATION, THE GATEWAY SITE)
COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2007
COMPULSORY PURCHASE OF LAND AND NEW RIGHTS IN CROYDON TOWN CENTRE**

I am Chairman of a local residents association based within a ten minute walk of the Gateway site. We wish to formally object to the above order. We have no commercial interest in the land but a huge one in terms of its use and social and economic benefit to our local and the wider Croydon community. All of us who live or work in Croydon are surely stakeholders in what happens to this important land.

As you are aware, the Council wishes this Compulsory Purchase Order to facilitate the development of a 12,500 capacity arena on the site by Arrowcroft.

Pursuant to Section 226 the Council **may not** exercise the power of compulsory purchase unless they can prove that the development, re-development or improvement is likely to contribute to the achievement of any one or more of the following objectives – we maintain that the proposed development fails on every point:

Ø (a) **the promotion or improvement of the economic well-being of the area.** The 2002 contract between the Council and the proposed developer placed an obligation upon Arrowcroft to provide a Viability Assessment Report supported by a five year Business Plan. We learn from the Leader of the Council that these documents were not provided nor were necessary. Why? We therefore assume it is not viable.

The consequences of such a key central Croydon development failing seem not to have been considered since the Council has undertaken no risk assessment.

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Ø (b) **the promotion or improvement of the social well-being of the area.** The Council has not made it clear how the development of the Arena scheme would ensure the social well-being of the area. The public opinion is to the contrary. If anything, there is a danger through under-utilisation that the Arena development would cause a sterile and no go area at this important central Croydon site.

The stressing of the transport system caused by an Arena event would have an adverse effect upon commuters already travelling in crowded conditions; commuters underpin the commercial viability of Croydon.

The Warehouse Theatre currently provides good quality productions that add to the social and cultural well-being of the area. The Arrowcroft scheme would destroy this.

Ø (c) **the promotion or improvement of the environmental well-being of the area.** Croydon's road system cannot cope with the significant increase in volume of cars and coaches associated with large events resulting in pollution; local residential streets are likely to prove far more attractive for parking than town centre car parks with resultant air and noise pollution. We are right on the local feeder roads which already demonstrate high levels of traffic emission pollution.

The plans so far submitted by Arrowcroft for the Arena scheme show a sterile, concrete development. To the public's mind this does not constitute an improvement to the environmental well-being of the area. It will just add to the bleakness of the existing surrounding landscape.

Please also note the following objections:

Ø **In addition we would like to object on the grounds that the Compulsory Purchase Order is completely unnecessary.** The Council already has before it a scheme by the freeholders with planning permission, funding and a schedule to start immediate works. It is a development, including green space and an improved Warehouse Theatre, that is clearly popular with a lot of residents.

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The UDP Inspector found an Arena to be not necessary for the site. In the Planning Report PDU/UDP08/PIM, *Proposed Modifications to Croydon UDP*, 3 April 2006 it states,

'The Inspector agreed with the Mayor's view that a requirement for an arena on this site was not justified and recommended two policies for the site, which: allow for both competing schemes; do not insist on the inclusion of an indoor arena, and; stipulate a minimum of 800 dwellings. The Council has proposed a single policy, rather than two separate policies as recommended by the Inspector. The policy expresses a strong preference for an arena based scheme. However, the policy makes clear that other forms of development will be acceptable, provided a similar ability to regenerate, re-brand and change perceptions of Croydon Metropolitan Centre can be demonstrated. This addresses the Mayor's concern that an arena only policy could lead to the continued sterilisation of this key site.'

The UDP was adopted in May 2006.

Ø **We would also wish that the Secretary of State be mindful of the lack of any proper consultation** that has been undertaken by Croydon Council either before or during its unexplained 'partnership' with the Arena developer. This has been confirmed publicly by the Leader of the Council at a public meeting about Croydon's future development held on 10 January 2007.

What is Croydon Council doing and why?

With best regards

Steve Collins
Chairman
Canning & Clyde Road Residents Association