

# The Friends of Gunnersbury Park & Museum

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FAO Shane Baker  
Hounslow Council Planning Department  
Hounslow House  
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Dear Mr Baker

## The Development of Hudson Square

The Friends of Gunnersbury Park and Museum are committed to ensuring that developments around Gunnersbury Park do not damage the enjoyment which visitors are entitled to expect from their experience of the park. Two features of the Hudson Square proposals will have a significant impact upon visitors' experience. This letter outlines our objections.

Firstly, we made the case against the Chiswick Curve proposals that buildings which are higher than the tree line enforce a feeling of confinement and restriction on visitors, when many people visit to enjoy quite the opposite - freedom, light, movement, nature and fresh air. The proposed Hudson Square structures are significantly higher than the tree line and by their massing and cumulative impact will emphasise the feeling of confinement.

Secondly, the enhancement and preservation of the historic views featured very strongly in the recent restoration of the Park, financially supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The Hudson Square proposals will undoubtedly damage one of the main views – namely looking down from the Terrace across the lawns, the Horseshoe Pond and the Orangery.

We take very strong exception to the "verified view" prepared by the applicants in such a way as to diminish this impact. Their photograph is taken from the **BOTTOM** of the slope below the terrace, from a tripod on the lawn. The view should have been taken from the **TOP** of the terrace at human eye height, which is where Historic England has described the view. Of course, it would then have been a very different and much less favourable image.

(Across the lawns p 68 Townscape, Heritage and Visual Impact Statement, Vol 2)

The more accurate historic view – for which the 17<sup>th</sup> century mansion was built on the same terrace as today's mansions – was from the balcony at first floor height. This view can now be recovered for the public from the first floor windows of the Museum. Hudson Square would actually be even more visible and intrusive at this level.

The applicant's photograph, with the outline of Hudson Square roofs inked in green on the belt of deciduous trees at the bottom of the park, in full leaf, cannot be allowed to stand. We expect the



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planning authority to request more valid images be made, to enable the Councillors to make their best possible decision.

It is disingenuous for the applicants to try to diminish the impact of their proposal on Gunnersbury Park in one part of their application, since they freely acknowledge that impact in other parts. For example, "Gunnersbury Park Connections. Strong, direct physical and visual connections to nearby Gunnersbury Park provides amenity right next door to The Fourth Mile." (p158 D&A statement). This strong visual connection works both ways. It is most evident in the verified view taken from Gunnersbury cemetery – if that it is how it looks in the cemetery, then that is how it will look from the lower part of the park. If residents of Hudson Square can see the Park below them, those in the Park can see Hudson Square above them.

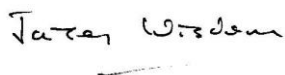
(From Gunnersbury Cemetery p.72 Townscape, Heritage and Visual Impact Statement, Vol 2)

Hudson Square is one of many developments which include Gunnersbury Park as a “benefit” for a purchaser. The unconsidered element is that many thousands of apartments are being built in the area for which the Park is not just a benefit – it will be essential. The one and even the two bedroom apartments are often really small, and not good places to bring up children. It will hard for families to trade up, as the second-hand market for their small apartments will be saturated for many years, so we can reasonably predict many families having to go on living in their small flats with young children for longer than they expected. These families are going to need the Park for sunlight, fresh air, play, running around etc. Compared to the existing housing around the Park, this is going to be a whole new user group. Its only bespoke facility in the Park is the children’s playground.

The Hudson Square application includes these words: "The mode of play for 12+ years can cause conflict with younger children and therefore children of 12+ years are expected to use the play and recreation facilities in the nearby Gunnersbury Park." (p302 D&A statement ). What might these be? We can be sure that anything provided by the Gunnersbury Park CIC through their Leisure Operator will be charged for.

If you permit this application, as this development so needs the Park, both for young children and 12+, we would strongly recommend that any of the Community Infrastructure Levy from this development is hypothecated directly to the Park.

Yours sincerely



James Wisdom, Chairman

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