

Hackney Environment News

Autumn 2003

Council rejects Latham's site development

Hackney Councillors have turned down Countrywide's massive planning application for the ex-Latham's site by the River Lea , Upper Clapton, despite the planning officers' recommendation that it be approved. The scheme included almost 700 homes as well as commercial units and, most controversially, a stepped eight storey building right on the River. There had been a lot of local opposition to the proposal.

The reasons given by Councillors at the September meeting for rejecting the scheme were: there had been a lack of adequate consultation; the proposal was contrary to one of Hackney's defined employment areas; the plan had insufficient family housing; the likely impact on the River; and that the educational benefits which Countrywide would provide would be inadequate for the number of expected children.

However that is not the end of the story. Hackney failed to make a decision within the statutory time limit on an earlier application, which included a proposal for a 12 storey block beside the River and Countrywide is appealing on the basis of non-determination.

If the Planning Inspector finds that Hackney should have approved it, then we could still have a tall block marring the riverside and looming over the Marshes.