

Camden Residents' Action Group

Incorporated

Camden – Still a Country Town

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Re: Draft Camden Town Farm Master and Management Plan 2016

It is noted that in giving responsibility for the property to Council on behalf of the community, Miss Llewella Davies' preference was that the farm should continue to be used as a working dairy farm. If this was not possible then she favoured agricultural pursuits in the form of a working model farm to enable the community to see such a farm in operation at close hand. Alternatively if neither of these options proved feasible the farm should be used for the grazing of livestock or passive recreation.

It is assumed that the gazetted reclassification of the Camden Town Farm land from a community to an 'operational' asset was entirely in keeping with both the word and the spirit of Miss Davies' bequest. It is assumed that the legality of altering the classification of this land was scrupulously explored in the light of the purpose and intention of Miss Davies' generous gift to the people of Camden. The inclusion of written advice to this effect within the body of the above Plan would be a welcome confirmation and is requested, along with the assurance that this change of status has not introduced any loophole that would permit Council to make a determination to sell all, or part, of the site in the future.

Given the maintenance needs of the Camden Town Farm heritage site (both built environment and landscape) and the desirability of maximising community and visitor use and enjoyment, there is merit in the proposal to appropriately develop some elements of the site and its uses and in the process generate some income with the intention of ensuring 'financial sustainability'. There is, of course, a difference between seeking sustainability and commercial profiteering.

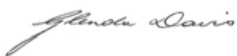
In principle the ideas proposed in the Draft Camden Town Farm Master and Management Plan seem acceptable with the following caveats:

- Written clarification of the constraints to apply to ‘community events’ and ‘private functions and activities’ deemed permissible in Land Use Area E should be included in the document. Finishing times and noise limitations will be particularly relevant to the residents of the proposed development on the old Camden High School site.
- The document should provide for the creation of a dedicated trust account into which all proceeds of commercial activities must be deposited, providing the guarantee that all moneys are employed exclusively in the maintenance and flourishing of the Farm and safeguarding against those funds being accessed for any other purpose.
- The document must provide the binding assurance against the potential sale of any part of the property in the future. The community of Camden must be reassured against suspicions that an offer too good to refuse may, indeed, not be refused!
- The detailed identification of the historic built structures on the site included in the document implies a welcome appreciation of their heritage values and a commitment to their preservation. However, placing the weighty and onerous responsibility of determining whether any proposed work to the Farm can commence without a Development Application (DA) in the hands of one person, the Council’s Heritage Officer, is inappropriate. This is a weighty and onerous responsibility, particularly as in exercising it the community is deprived of the opportunity to comment and contribute, as is ostensibly accorded with the publication of a DA.

Consideration should be given to either creating a committee, inclusive of community representatives as well as relevant Council officers, to assess whether it is appropriate to waver the DA requirement in any instance; or alternatively provide a very much more detailed description at point 4.4.a. of the present document of what constitutes a ‘minor work’, to ensure that the Council’s Heritage Officer is invariably guided to the appropriate decision in this regard.

The above suggested amendments are made with the understanding, we trust shared by Council, that Miss Davies' bequest was motivated by civics not commerce, and that the Camden Town Farm Master and Development Plan must, in every respect, endeavour and be designed to preserve this precious gift to her community, and strenuously safeguard against any potential for its commercial exploitation.

Yours sincerely,



Glenda Davis
President