

## PRESS RELEASE

### Say 'YES' to revitalising East Croydon

#### By saying a sensible 'NO' to the 55 storey Skyscraper

East Croydon is a bustling location in which to live and work, well served by independent businesses, with unrivalled transport links. Sadly long disused land either side of the train station is limiting the potential of the area and failing local residents' aspirations.

The majority of people, fed up with redevelopment projects stalling, want to see East Croydon become a vibrant, prosperous place. **Revitalising East Croydon Communities** is a new resident led action group formed of such people, to give a voice to needs and concerns about forthcoming redevelopment and influence the future of the place where we live.

**Revitalising East Croydon Communities (RECC)** is for everyone who lives, trades, works, commutes, and wants to enjoy the area and is focused on improving it for the short and longer term.

**RECC** was formed early in June 2011 within 24 hours of a public meeting in opposition to the **Menta** planning application 11/00981/P to build on Cherry Orchard Road. The meeting united **Conservative MP Gavin Barwell, Labour councillors, Liberal Democrat and Green Party representatives** with 100 residents, all speaking for redevelopment and the majority speaking out against **Menta's** plans.

#### Our Immediate Objective

Should the application be approved, a 55 storey (590 ft) skyscraper ('gated community of 400 apartments') will be built adjacent to a neighbourhood of two storey homes. The proposed skyscraper is out of character, would dominate and overshadow family homes, worse yet, cause loss of privacy and daylight. The skyscraper would penalise the same people who actively support bringing the area back to life.

If **Croydon Council** endorses the skyscraper it would increase the likelihood of similar high-rise developments nearby and in residential areas beyond.

In 2008 the Council's planning officers recommended **Menta's** previous application be refused, to overwhelming public support, for reasons of overdevelopment and significant adverse visual impact, and, lack of affordable housing, reasons that have not been addressed by the current plans.

Revitalising East Croydon Communities



View of proposed skyscraper from Oval Road Primary School.

Source: Menta Visual Impact Assessment submitted with planning application.

With the current application decision expected 21<sup>st</sup> July, **RECC** are actively campaigning to ensure that **Croydon Council** take into account that these same reasons for refusal and the volume of opposition still applies. **RECC** is the voice for the silent majority and the 275 and more people who have already formally objected saying '*there are feasible alternatives to the skyscraper*'.

### Reasons to oppose the Skyscraper

Opposition by residents and **RECC** to the **Menta** planning application is not troublemaking by busybodies crying 'Not in my back-yard', as those in favour or the developer's public relations team would have you believe, but is a declaration that a skyscraper of luxury apartments is too high a price to pay for the benefits in the plan.

A skyscraper does not guarantee the sustained investment and renewal needed in the area despite **Menta's** claims, which have yet to be supported by evidence. We ask **Menta** when will this evidence be forthcoming?

There will be one car parking space for every three apartments, which is insufficient. When these spaces are full the skyscraper residents and their visitors will have to use existing spaces in neighbouring streets that are already heavily parked.

There is growing evidence that similar 'gated' developments across the UK have not delivered on their aspirations for regeneration of the areas surrounding them.

Furthermore, the height of the skyscraper directly extends the construction time, disturbance and traffic disruption, which as proposed is expected to last four years.

### What you can do in support

- Spread the word about **RECC** and the details of **Menta's** application
- If you are against the development object to planning application 11/00981/P through **RECC** now or **Croydon Council** by 21<sup>st</sup> July (every resident in your household can object). The Council accept objections via email [planning.control@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:planning.control@croydon.gov.uk) or online at <http://www.croydon.gov.uk/planningandregeneration> or in writing to Planning, Regeneration & Conservation Dept, Croydon Council, Taberner House, Park Lane, Croydon CR0 1JT
- Join **RECC's** door knocking campaign to petition to fellow residents
- Write to **Gavin Barwell MP** or **Mike Fisher**, Leader of Croydon Council

### For More Information

**RECC** encourage all residents, small businesses, and the town's major employers to join together to bring about revitalization of our area and our people.

To be heard, to give your support or to find out more please contact us at [RECCgroup@gmail.com](mailto:RECCgroup@gmail.com)

## Note to Editors

### RECC – who and what we are in more detail

#### Our Aspirations

- East Croydon is once more recognised as offering opportunity for sustained investment and change
- Immediate physical and environmental improvements bring about greater social wellbeing and economic growth
- A diverse mix of new residents and tenants are brought into the area whilst affording interaction with the existing community
- Residents, transport users and visitors to Croydon are encouraged to spend their leisure time and money in the area
- Everyone with a vested interest in East Croydon shares in the benefits

#### Our Immediate Objectives

- To raise awareness of the **Menta** application and the issues, inconvenience and imbalance the development will cause
- To raise awareness of the issues and to encourage, where support is evident, objections to the application be delivered to the Council's planning committee before their decision on 21st July
- To demonstrate to **Croydon Council** that there is overwhelming support for change but not at the cost of the proposed height of the skyscraper
- To work with **Menta** and **Croydon Council** to ensure the investment and sacrifice for a successful redevelopment is right for all interested parties

#### Our Approach

- Engage in discussion with land developers and the **Croydon Council** planning committee in the spirit of a principle based partnership approach
- Collaborate with residents associations, business groups and political representatives in and around East Croydon to ensure the range of views are heard and tabled at the appropriate forums
- Define long term values, priorities and objectives
- Agree a framework for acceptable levels of development, amenities, parking spaces and affordable housing without unnecessary hold ups and bureaucracy
- Shape a plan offering community, commercial and cultural appeal
- Openly share the revisited plans to inspire interest, support and ideas for change

#### What RECC asks for

- To ensure the existing area (derelict buildings) is sensibly and appropriately redeveloped in proportion and consideration to the low level dwellings in the immediate vicinity. A 55 storey residential building is not considered appropriate. London Borough Croydon Unitary Development Plan 3 states '*Development proposals will be permitted provided they: (i) respect the height and proportion of*

*surrounding buildings which play an important role in determining the character of the street'.*

- Size redevelopment proportionately to avoid further strain on local services, in terms of schools, GP and dentist services, and worsening traffic and parking
- Levels of quality of life for existing residents are assured
- Affordable housing supply in the borough is contributed to
- Engagement that is flexible, focused on progress for the majority, and not simply financially led
- Dialogue is steered towards renewal, is neutral to political agendas, is freely shared between all who have an interest in improving the area
- The voice of those, should the development be approved, for whom there will be greatest impact by overshadowing, loss of light and privacy is weighted over those who will benefit from increased business opportunities and who do not reside in the local community.