

Walthamstow Greyhound Stadium flats plan approved

A plan to build 294 homes and a leisure complex at Walthamstow Stadium in east London has been approved by Waltham Forest Council.

It paves the way for the owner of the Grade II listed greyhound racing track, housing association London and Quadrant (L&Q), to develop the site.

Local MPs - Conservative Iain Duncan Smith and Labour's Stella Creasy - had urged for the plan to be rejected.

The scheme will need to be approved by Mayor of London Boris Johnson.

The famous landmark hosted racing for 75 years, with the last race held in 2008.

Following the decision, Ms Creasy said she was "saddened" and added: "Walthamstow deserves better than the L&Q plans".

'Critical flaw'

She and Mr Duncan Smith said the scheme provided no social rented properties and only 24 of the flats would be affordable.

In a statement, they said: "Given that there are 21,000 people on our housing waiting list this omission is a critical flaw in L&Q's plans."

They added that they would be lobbying Mr Johnson.

Campaign group, Save Our Stow, has vowed to continue fighting the plan.

The group supports businessman and greyhound enthusiast Bob Morton's proposal to reinstate greyhound racing.

English Heritage has said the stadium is "the best surviving and most architecturally interesting vintage greyhound stadium in the country, with bold Art Deco influences in the stepped and streamlined detailing."

L&Q's plans involve demolition and removing the roof.

During a consultation 433 representations were received by Waltham Forest Council, with 412 objecting to the proposal and 18 supporting it.

As well as objections over the loss of the historic structure, there have been concerns from residents about the height of the proposed buildings and the impact of increased traffic.

Waltham Forest Council said it was inappropriate for it to comment.

Mike Johnson, land director at L&Q said it was an "important milestone".

He added: "Our proposals offer a mix of 50 houses and 244 apartments providing high quality and much needed homes for people on a range of incomes."

L&Q said it had carried out its own research and found that of the local people they have spoken to 58% said they liked the plans, 60% liked the design of the new homes and 57% supported proposals for a children's nursery included in the scheme.

A spokesman said the plan included 301 new homes, allotments and new public spaces. It will involve investment of £50m and create up to 250 new jobs.