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Esther Rantzen and Tom Conti join protest to save wildlife haven

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Emily Banks



Tom Conti and Esther Rantzen oppose plans to build an underground car park on a nature site

Television presenter Esther Rantzen and actor Tom Conti joined a protest against plans to turn a Grade II-listed Hampstead wildlife oasis into an underground car park and housing development.

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Lost Hampstead river lends name to Marriott Hotel's revamped function room



As part of a major refurb, the London Marriott Hotel Maida Vale

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Esther Rantzen and Tom Conti with protesters in Kidderpore Gardens

More than 200 people have signed a petition to halt the scheme on the former King's College site in Kidderpore Avenue.

Protesters gathered last Friday at the site which currently houses five Grade II-listed buildings standing in two acres of green space with mature trees and shrubs. The land has been listed by Camden as a site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC).

Developer Mount Anvil has put in an application to Camden Council for 156 residential units plus a two-storey 97-space underground carpark. on the northern part of the former student residence. This will involve felling mature trees from the site which contains a diverse natural habitat which attracts bats, birds and insects.

Ms Rantzen said: "Basically trees are more important than car parks. Trees are endangered and we need to do everything we can to protect and value them. We need to preserve every patch of

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green that still exists in London. This should be kept as a little bower of trees and shrubs.”

She added: “In front of the college building there is a little patch of bluebells and grass which is an absolute joy in Spring. When builders move in I fear they will destroy this.”

Chairman of the Redington Frogna Association Rob Hagemans said: “The proposed destruction of this green oasis is tragic. This corner of Redington Frogna has been a haven of biodiversity for centuries; for example, it’s on one of the last remaining flight paths of protected bats.”

A Mount Anvil spokesperson said: “The biodiversity of the site will be much improved. A new pond will be introduced, a biodiverse green roof will be installed, and more than 25 new trees will be planted on-site as well as additional trees within the Redington and Frogna Conservation Area. The currently dilapidated Grade II listed Summer House will also be restored, to be used as an arts and wildlife education resource for local schools and the community.”

Topic Tags:

Camden Council

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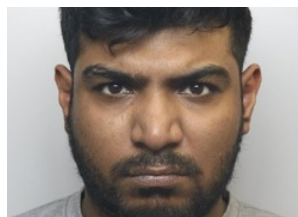
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