

22/07/08

To:- Mayor Boris Johnson

From:- David White Chairman Campden Hill Residents Association
(CHRA)

Holland Park School-Playing Fields

“Read my lips-No sale of Playing Fields”

Thank you for the time you gave me tonight at the Conservative Summer Party at City Hall.

I believe the confusion over the areas of “playing field” loss relates to 2 issues.

1. The first is the inclusion of informal and social habitat areas which will be part of the new private housing scheme. These are by definition are not part of the school site and cannot be counted as part of the future school site. Your advisers have therefore inadvertently attributed almost 4,000 sq m of land (about an acre) to the school which will no longer be part of the school - almost 2,000 sq m of informal and social space and almost 2,000 sq m of habitat. This is not de minimis, it is one acre of open space not available for the school children – **as detailed in the attached schedule.**

2. The second issue is the definition of “Playing Field”

Under Section 77 of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998 (see attached) the definition of Playing Field is: **“Land in the open air”** which is provided for the purposes of physical education or recreation, other than any prescribed description of such land.” Therefore the hard surface play area ie the so called “southern site” which is planned to be sold and which represents approx 25% of the whole site is inextricably playing field land and this cannot be denied. Indeed, this “catch all” definition was set out by the then incoming

Labour government precisely to avoid local education authorities running down playing field land prior to disposal.

This is an approach which you also shared in your very first Mayor's Question Time on 21st May when you expressed concern that:

“A lot of playing fields are being left to go to rack and ruin in the hope that they will be given planning permission to develop on them and I think that we should make sure that these places are used.”