

WHEELED BIN SURVEY BY RA WARDENS

At the October meeting of the Council of the Residents Association, at which time it seemed that the Borough was adamant in its refusal to carry out a survey of Suburb properties to enable it to assess the suitability of the area for wheeled bins, it was decided that the RA should do its own survey. The aim was to have figures available to back up arguments that it was impractical to implement the system in the Suburb; many houses would have nowhere suitable to place the bins on collection day and the economic advantages would be forfeited by virtue of the high level of assistance that would be needed to cope with many of the difficulties associated with the Suburb environment.

The RA warden system provided the ideal vehicle for mounting a quick and comprehensive survey. With the annual Wardens' party only a few days away, a survey form was quickly designed and printed. At the party this was distributed and the exercise explained; chief wardens distributed the forms to wardens unable to be at the party. The form was used to record the essential physical characteristics of each property, as ascertained visually by each warden for his or her patch, together with an indication whether the residents were in one of the main categories of those likely to need help with the wheeled bins, the elderly or handicapped. In most cases a whole patch could be entered by ticking boxes on one or two of the sheets, each of which had enough space for 24 properties. For the average patch the survey would take the warden about an hour to complete.

The wardens responded magnificently; by the end of the month, only three weeks after

the survey was launched, returns had been sent for analysis covering 60% of the dwellings; a week or two later this was taken to 78%, the final figure. In other words just over 2,800 dwellings had been surveyed, out of a total of nearly 3,600 (the blocks of flats which are not subject to the normal refuse collection arrangements were excluded). Some of the wardens went so far as to interview the residents on their patch, to make sure their answers were correct and to confirm whether the resident was in one of the groups likely to need help with the new bins. A few wardens elicited whether residents were for or against the new scheme, and many wrote additional or explanatory comments on their survey forms.

The survey asked nine questions relating to each property, relating to the topics numbered 1-9 in the table; a final question asked for details of any other problems. The survey was analysed on a road-by-road basis with the help of a computer. In the course of this,

Table: Properties with problems for wheeled bins

Characteristic of property	Number of properties	
1 Elderly or handicapped residents	637	23%
2 Vehicle Driveway	1335	48%
3 Footpath access only	1383	49%
4 Steps on the path	752	27%
5 Steep path/drive	538	19%
6 Shared Access	672	24%
7 Access to rear	2071	74%
8 Suitable bin storage area	2050	73%
9 No space for bin at front gate	1390	50%
10 At least one problem (4, 5 or 9)	1673	60%
11 Problem and elderly	438	16%
Total number of properties	2801	
Sample as % of whole suburb of which:	78%	
South side	67%	
North side	33%	

the number of properties in each road likely to encounter one of the major problems was ascertained (steps to wheel the bin up or down, steep path or drive, or nowhere to put the bin at the edge of the property on collection day without placing it on the public footpath). Within this group of "problem" properties, the number with elderly or handicapped residents was also counted.

The table shows the final results, which speak for themselves. An amazing 60% of the properties seem to present a problem of one kind or another for the residents in manoeuvring the bins. The figure of 23% for elderly (over

65) or handicapped residents is almost certainly an understatement, because not all wardens are personally acquainted with residents on their patch (membership of the RA is about 50% overall); this proportion of elderly is somewhat higher than the national average. This means that the figure of 16% of elderly residents living in a "problem" dwelling is also understated.

This 16% gives an idea of the possible number who might ask the Borough for assistance; it may be compared with the figure of 5% given in the report of the Director of Technical Services justifying the scheme to the Public Works Committee,

as the level below which "assistance can with close monitoring be contained". Although at the public meeting in November the Borough representatives promised that assistance would be given to everyone judged to be in need of it, that 5% figure, said at that meeting not to be a target, does not encourage expectations that the Borough's officers will be other than niggardly in their interpretation of those in need of help; the only appeal will be to the Borough Council Committee which voted in the scheme.

Some of the other figures in the table will come as no surprise to those familiar with the Suburb as a whole. That a quarter of the dwellings have no ready access to the rear is a reflection of the terraced nature of many of the Suburb houses. That a quarter of the dwellings have shared access is probably more revealing of the design philosophy for the dwellings, with an emphasis on neighbourliness. It would not be surprising that half the dwellings have footpath access only, if all had been built before the First World War, but as many as 26% of the Twenties and Thirties dwellings do not have drives. This factor is of course particularly germane to the question of where one leaves a wheeled bin on collection day. If you have a only front path lined with flower beds and hedge, where can the bin go other than on the public footway? And if this

path is also shared, how will the postman and milkman be able to call on collection day?

There is no doubt that the survey adds muscle to the RA and Trust case in opposing the introduction of wheeled bins to the Suburb. It may also be useful as a pointer, using the road-by-road analysis to assist the joint RA/Officer team, that the Chairman of Public Works offered, at the November public meeting, to set up in order "to visit agreed properties to determine whether the use of the wheeled bin/front gate refuse collection system is practical or not", as it was put in the formal offer letter from Max Caller, Director of Technical Services to our Chairman, Eileen Whelan.

The last word must be a very hearty public thank-you to our wardens for carrying out this physical survey so speedily and comprehensively, and at such short notice. It was additional work for people who are already busy and giving their time to the RA, and the willingness with which it was conducted must itself be an indication of the general attitude of Suburb residents to the prospect of the wheeled army in our gardens. However the opinion survey, enclosed with this issue of Suburb News, should give a more informed picture of people's views.

All residents are urged to complete and post the opinion survey forms as soon as possible, whether for, against, or neutral about the bins. PRGT

LAST YEAR DR MERVYN MILLER, THE ROYAL TOWN PLANNING INSTITUTE APPOINTEE ON THE TRUST COUNCIL, GAVE EVIDENCE AT THE HENLEY'S CORNER PUBLIC INQUIRY.

WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO GIVE A SUMMARY OF HIS FINDINGS.

OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

It will be evident from the detailed sectional evidence given above that the Department's case has serious flaws and inconsistencies.

Even on its own terms it fails to meet the objectives set out in the governing documents, and that it does not measure up to the degree of analysis required to be demonstrated through application of the techniques set out in the Department's own *Manual of Environmental Assessment*. The scheme fails to live up to the standards required when visually sensitive areas, such as the setting of important, and indeed, Outstanding Conservation Areas such as the Hampstead Garden Suburb are concerned.

In addition, whilst I as an architect-planner have concentrated upon visual aspects, I believe that the flawed logic and exaggeration of what are proclaimed as the benefits of the scheme, are also inherent in the structure of the cost-benefit analysis and traffic predictions. I wish to take this opportunity of commending, on behalf of the Trust, the independent analysis to be undertaken by Dr John Adams of the University of London, although this is dependent upon the willingness of the Department of Transport to release the base data.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT: IMPLEMENTATION OF EUROPEAN COMMISSION DIRECTIVE

On 26 January 1988 the Department of the Environment circulated information upon the then forthcoming implementation of the E.C. Directive on Environmental Assessment (EEC/85/337) which required implementation by 3 July 1988. The directive applies both to private and public development agencies. Many of the types of schemes included have significant environmental impact, and are controlled under the Town and Country Planning Acts — the Annex A projects. Others are authorised under different procedures — the Annex B projects. These include those authorised under Department of Transport procedures.

Annex B2 deals with Transport projects not generally subject to control under the Planning Acts. Reference is made to the DoT role and responsibility for trunk roads and motorways. Para 2 refers to current DoT practice in conducting environmental assessment of all significant road schemes in accordance with the *Manual of Environmental Assessment*. However in para 3 it is stated that it is proposed to amend the Highways Act 1980 to require the Secretary of State to do and make public an environmental assessment in accordance with the Directive in association with the publication of draft orders in the case of ...

c) the construction of any new road more than 1km in length

if the road passes through a national park or through or within 100m of a site of special scientific interest, a national nature reserve or a conservation area.

It is clear from the above that the E.C. Directive on Environmental Impact Assessment is more rigorous a means of setting out and evaluating the environmental consequences of alternative proposals for highway improvements in a publicly explicit manner. The Draft Circular clearly differentiates between schemes prepared and presented through the new procedures, and those which will still be evaluated through the coarser framework of the current *Manual of Environmental Assessment*. The scheme proposed for the NCR/A1/Regents Park Road clearly falls within the scope of those requiring the new Environmental Impact Assessment.

The Department of Transport has known of the implementation of the Directive, which came into force as of July 3, since January, and not probably before that date, yet it has presented its evidence in accordance with the *Manual of Environmental Assessment*, and has not presented its case, for an area which it knows is environmentally sensitive, anticipating the more detailed and explicit framework of the Directive.

Consequently, the Environmental Aspect as presented is unsatisfactory, judged by the Directive now in force. I therefore request you, Sir, to adjourn the Inquiry pending the Department and its consultant's undertaking a full Environmental Impact Assessment in accordance with the EEC Directive 85/337.

A RADICAL ALTERNATIVE — THE ELIMINATION OF FALLODEN WAY

The NHGS Trust is not alone amongst the groups involved with the environment of the Suburb in stressing the fundamental objection to any scheme which fails to recognise the institutionalised vandalism perpetrated by the upgrading of Fallodden Way.



The New Hampstead Garden Suburb Trust Limited
862 Finchley Road, Hampstead Garden Suburb, London NW11 6AB
Telephone: 01 455 1066 & 458 8085

It is evident to all, and should be readily apparent to the Department of Transport that the length of the A1 Fallodden Way/Market Place/Lyttelton Road/ Aylmer Road has never been satisfactory as a major Trunk Route, and its inclusion in the present scheme would compound the error of 60 years standing. The Trust deplores the fact that a more radical solution, which might have avoided the turn from the NCR into Fallodden Way altogether has not been proposed by the Department as one of the possible options. It has been noted that south of the Thames where the A2 Rochester Way and South Circular Road intersect at Eltham there has not been an expedient upgrading of a route which, as in the case of Fallodden Way, was driven through a pre-existing community, but a diversionary route has been chosen and implemented. The parallel with the environmental conditions in Hampstead Garden Suburb is striking in that the route of Rochester Way was driven through the Well Hall Garden Suburb development laid out as a munitions community in 1915.

The location of the Rochester Way diversion and its junction with the South Circular Road falls within the ambit of the policies for Greater London Roads, set out in detail in Chapter Two of the Department's *Proof of Evidence on Proposals*. It is possible to apply those policies to promote a diversionary route in that instance, the Trust cannot accept that it was impossible to formulate, test and consult over a more radical option in the present case; one which might have brought much needed relief to a community which, like Well Hall, has suffered severance and profound environmental degradation by traffic for upwards of 60 years.

The Trust believes that the lessons of the historical context of the highway network has either been ignored, or dismissed in formulating the proposals for the present NCR A406/A1/Regents Park interchange. I invite you Sir to recognise that the patience of residents and community groups, and the Trust has been strained to breaking point over the indifference shown by the Department of Transport to the environmental and social problems of the Fallodden Way length of the A1. Having created the problem, they have persistently refused to consider any other course of action, save to exacerbate the uncertainty by periodic demands for widening or traffic management measures designed specifically to increase the traffic capacity, when the environmental capacity has been exceeded many times over. And this in a Conservation Area, which another Minister has recognised as 'of Outstanding Architectural or Historic Interest'. In the case of natural justice, Sir, I invite you to adjourn the Inquiry pending a re-examination and presentation by the Department of Transport of alternatives for the junction of the North Circular Road, Regents Park Road and the A1, eliminating the Fallodden Way route in its existing form altogether.