

All of the responses below were emailed to the Union President, voicing opinions on the proposed North Acton site, and what this could mean for Evelyn Gardens and Garden Hall. Respondents ranged from students, to staff, to alumni. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of Imperial College Union.

With the ambition of being one of the very best institutions out there in the world, Imperial should realise that to do so will not just require attracting already prominent, well-established experts, but also increasingly important to attract the brightest, the best, to inspire, nurture and train them into the next generations of leading scientists, engineers, doctors and professionals. With that in mind, surely one of the major concerns on the top of Imperial's list of priorities is student satisfaction.

What do students really want? We want proximity and affordably-priced accommodations; we want the opportunities to be close to our departments, facilities and societies, to fully enjoy what university life has to offer. We do not want luxurious hotels and would prefer the old, dusty, creaking ceilings of old halls over the former any day, if it means we get proximity at affordable prices. This is especially true for first years, most of which are new to London, or even travelled as far as from the other side of the world. They need a sense of security, a strong community spirit that close, cheap halls can offer, and not to be loaded with the unnecessary complications of travelling hours to just attend a 9am lecture in the morning and not to be deprived of any exciting social events on campus.

Halls in Evelyn Gardens and Garden Hall are two of the most popular choices of accommodations. They are characteristic, unique, and have made thousands of students' time at Imperial memorable. The proximity at affordable prices has made them popular places for students to gather and socialise. Garden Hall has long been the most popular hall of choice for students. While each year you can find vacancies in other halls, Garden always manage to be fully booked. Even for those rare occasions where people had to move out of Garden Hall, the vacancies were immediately filled following just a short period of advertisement on the accommodation website. I was a resident in Garden Hall in my first year and I loved every moment there so much that it encouraged me to apply and become a Hall Senior here.

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We need to do our best to save such halls of residence like Garden Hall. Yes it may cost a lot to maintain and refurbish a hall like Garden, but we are not looking to turn them into five star hotels. Also, if Imperial has the money to invest into Acton, and some other constructions and negotiations elsewhere in the world, why would it not have enough to just keep these halls running – the heart of Imperial's community?

We do not want expensive halls. They say a picture is worth a 1000 words – just compare the atmosphere in the common rooms in Garden Hall and Southside/Eastside for example. While the latter is pretty much deserted and many students with offers in these halls declined them, the former is always filled with laughter and fun throughout the year.

We do not want to live far away from campus. Many of my friends used to live in Orient House, somewhat 40 minutes walk-away from South Kensington campus and it would be a lie to say that they have not considered moving out of halls to find better accommodations. Not to mention the students in Paragon and Xenia this year are having it tougher – facing long journeys daily that some do not even bother coming to lectures anymore. If the Acton plan becomes reality, what would the future students think and face if they are being isolated from everyone else by a 40 minute tube journey in somewhere without the university spirit? Might as well do a long-distance course instead. The workload at Imperial is relatively tough; motivation to achieve can wear thin; the last thing students want is the frustration and complications of living far away from their campus and having to deal with the lack of college community and opportunities.

Who would want to come to Imperial in the future if students are segregated and dissatisfied, especially in their first year when they form their solid impressions of their university? Who would want to return to Imperial or contribute as alumni if they are going to be left academically and socially disappointed?

Imperial has made some shocking mistakes in the past, not to mention the re-structuring of the Life Sciences department that saw the loss of dozens of beloved and excellent academics. Then the fact that some of them were later re-employed away, some by other faculties and departments at Imperial again, just illustrates what a ridiculous decision it was in the first place.

Think Imperial, think hard about your decisions. Do not make another irreversible mistake that will cost the future of a growing community.

I'd like to add my voice to the ones of the many who have already written and spoken against the new accommodation plans of the College. I fully agree with the Union: it would be a full disaster. Financial reasons cannot account for the incredible losses that the university would receive in terms of the number of applications and the student satisfaction.

I sincerely hope that Imperial will listen to our opinion this time too!

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I'm Against Acton because I live in the borough and work in Hammersmith Hospital. This area is not for students as there are no amenities around. There is some residential housing nearby and I am sure they would not want to be bothered by late-night noise. Also all those high-rise buildings in area make it look like a concrete jungle, just when it was beginning to become a bit nicer.

Residents like me need more amenities built for us, and the petrol station that is now there to be left there and not pulled down! Residents have never been consulted about Imperial's plans and that is fundamentally wrong. Imperial has already bought land from the BBC and they can leave us alone in Park Royal, Acton. I had thought that there was not enough money for such purchases but it seems I am wrong. Maybe some of it could be put towards the hospital and keeping basis services instead of always telling staff that we are over-spending and trying to downgrade our pitiful salaries!

Please pass my comments to the persons who came up with this ludicrous idea to build 700 bed halls of residents in Acton and the Councillors too.

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Generations of students have lived in the halls in Evelyn Gardens and Prince's Gardens. Giving them up not only means longer travel times for future students, it means to give up a piece of history. I have lived in Garden Hall (Prince's Gardens) for 3 years and it breaks my heart to see this special place being sold. Students value this old Victorian House enormously and are prepared to put up with the disadvantages of living in such a history-charged building. I have met alumni who graduated as early as 1961 who came back to visit Garden and Weeks Hall. With its exquisite Wooden Lounge, stories about dead old ladies and testaments, hidden doors and corridors, the subterranean Imperial Wine Cellar, a beautiful back yard with a Secret Garden behind (EcoSoc's special love!) and a very special ambience, Garden Hall is more than just a Hall of Residence. There is a reason why the Hall Committee is mainly made up of old G&W members, once you have lived here, you fall in love with the place. It is understandable that an old buildings like House No 10 - 12 in Prince's Gardens require more maintenance and might be costlier to some extent, however, this hall has attracted a great deal of people to Imperial and it was part of my own decision to come to here as an undergraduate. If the College sells places like these, what is the real Imperial identity? Is Imperial College a business or a place with people who care about this integral part of university life? Giving these halls away ( I can especially speak for Garden Hall from my own experience) represents an irreversible loss for the College, for past and future students!!! The historic building of Garden Hall is indeed very special within the accommodation palette that Imperial has to offer and also represents the only hall with a large amount of double and triple rooms. The cheaper rent is what allows many students with restricted financial means to even attend Imperial College. All these practical aspects are just on top of the tradition that this place represents. I wish the people who took this decision would know what they leave behind.

Living in Paragon as an Imperial student is a terrible experience. To attend lectures at 9 AM, we have to get up out of bed at 6:30 in the morning, when friends at halls closer to campus can wake up just as lectures are about to begin and still make it there before us. After a night out with friends, we have to take a bus back, walk for at least ten minutes in the bitter cold and then hope we are lucky enough to have a few hours left to sleep before getting up for university the next day. I couldn't possibly list the number of times people have missed entire days of uni simply because they have not been able to have a complete night's sleep. I would argue that eight hours of sleep is a medical requirement to stay healthy and the fact that I should have to compromise this for the sake of my education I find insupportable.

The commute to and from university - which takes up at least two hours each day - substantially limits the time we have to both do our academic work and to socialise. Arriving at halls at 6 PM, having to prepare and eat dinner and then still do our work is a very big ask, particularly considering how much the commute can tire us out. The Piccadilly line is very packed both on our way to uni in the morning and on the way back in the evening: a spare seat on the tube would be a rare blessing! The fact that we must pay in excess of £90 for a travel card each month and then have to walk, take a bus and take this 30-minute tube just to get to college each day is repugnant (we know friends at other halls who spend less than £30 a week on travel, and have cheaper rent than us too).

Socialising in Paragon is not difficult, it is impossible! The "Hub" - our version of a common room - is a social deadzone, mostly desolate. The amenities available in this room are sub-par. We have to pay 50p for each game of pool we play and turn in our ID cards to reception to borrow the cue sticks. The TV remotes do not work, nor is the TV signal satisfactory. To compare this to any other halls' social space would show a very marked and unjust contrast. There are halls within walking distance of college which have luxurious, state-of-the-art bars, games rooms, TV rooms and so much more!

£155 for such a small room (and it is just a room - there are settees in other halls more comfortable to sleep on than our beds) in the aesthetically displeasing town of Brentford is exorbitant! Even UWL students are paying £20 less than we are for a much better facility: their university is attached to the halls. Paragon is far too high-priced for us Imperial students who had no choice but to accept our accommodation offer - the accommodation office should consider that we all applied to Imperial College London, a university based in South Kensington. We cannot spare enough time in the day to use the central library for work or the Ethos gym to train. To add the cost of any gym local to us to the price of transport and the accommodation fees, we arrive at a total of close to £200 being paid every week.

I must say I am completely dissatisfied with the accommodation provided to me but live here out of necessity. If my friends and I could all move to halls closer to university, we would take this opportunity at the first moment it became available. We would then be able to live in Imperial halls without compromising our health, social life, funds, academic work or emotional wellbeing; I therefore totally disagree with moving a 1/3 of freshers out to similar distances as I feel it would have the same negative effects.

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Benefits of living in South Kensington with regards to the College:

Can easily walk to and from the university - so you don't have to rely on the tubes, which are frequently down for maintenance work

Can get involved in more activities at the Union, as the shorter journey time means students have more free time  
South Kensington has better access to various social activities, such as restaurants and the museums

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Garden is the only hall offering triple room accommodation which is a major benefit for those who wish to attend Imperial College but who may not be able to afford the high living costs associated with London. Cheaper halls in South Kensington means there is less of a social divide; I feel that if these were shut down and moved to Acton then we'd have the people who can afford it living in South Kensington and those who can't living much further out, which is unfair as they would have less of an opportunity to use facilities on the campus and to attend societies. In addition to this, the halls in Acton are hardly providing a cheaper alternative, at around £160 with travel costs at today's prices, as I assume this will go up; many people will be unable to afford this. This is in comparison with the £100 I am paying

now. I really feel this move is unfair.

These are a few views I have in writing, but as I said, the general consensus is that it is a bad idea. I have had a few responses that say that we should have a protest on queens lawn and many people would be up for this from a variety of different halls. They feel that not enough is being done about it and the union need to cause a bigger fuss.

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I just wanted to give my personal opinion on the #againstacton campaign! I am a Subwarden.

Given that Evelyn Gardens has 30 years remaining on its' lease, I do not understand why the College not properly maintained this accommodation so that it can fulfil this lease?! This seems terribly short sighted, and the College, by not investing properly in EG upkeep and neglecting the buildings, has brought on this problem by itself. With proper planning, investment and maintenance, there is no reason why Evelyn Gardens could not have been used as student accommodation for the entirety of its' lease, and we would not be faced with these issues at this time.

I also have issue with the planning permission that has been granted to turn fisher into 'care for the elderly' accommodation. What business does Imperial College London have in providing Elderly Care accommodation? I cannot make any sense of it. The College CAN afford to renovate fisher to provide care for the elderly??, but cannot afford to maintain accommodation for its' own students?! They seem to me to have totally lost sight of their remit, and as with this issue and others (namely the loss of the Holland Club), they bulldoze their ideas forward and really do not care what the College community thinks.

Evelyn Gardens is actually pretty removed and isolated from College as it is, but at least it is 20 minutes' walk away which makes College and Union facilities accessible, a fair compromise for the price. Moving to Acton will create an isolated community, who will no doubt have reduced satisfaction in their first year. Sure, commuting is a part of London life. But in the important step of being a Fresher, the College should support cheap accommodation close to College so that the first transition to London life can be smooth. First years can then spend their time focusing on studying, socialising and building a firm grounding in London, before having to battle with the 30/40/50 minute commute to an isolated part of London without vital College services and facilities.

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I just wanted to take this opportunity to register my concern at the new halls in Acton. I think they're a terrible idea and (as a former Evelyn Gardens resident) I think everything possible should be done to hold these buildings. Students need cheap (I.e. sub £160) accommodation which is close and EG fulfilled these roles.

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Thought I would share my opinions even though they are exactly the same as everyone else's I'm sure. But if more people makes a better opposition then I want to be a part of it.

- 1) So am I right in thinking these halls will already be more expensive plus the extra travel cost of around £15 a week? (Which in my case would increase my weekly spending money (food, travel etc) by 50%.
- 2) In Garden I can quickly go to the library if I need to briefly search for some information. There is hardly time in a revision time table to spend over half an hour each way just to "pop into" the library. It would tempt you to not bother in which case learning/revising will be a lot more difficult. Also some days the timetable only has one lecture so you would have over an hour travelling for a lecture of 1 hour???
- 3) Less motivated to turn up to lectures if instead of being able to wake up at 8 you have to wake up at 6.30 or 7 to allow for the busy rush hour traffic.
- 4) It would definitely be more difficult to be part of societies. At the moment I am in acapella society and they

rehearse 5.30pm - 8pm on a thursday and saturday. on a thursday I would have to waste time which I could be doing work waiting for the rehearsal to start as there would not be enough time to go home. You would also not get home til around 9pm when usually I would be able to get back and start doing work at 8pm.

5) I might as well live at home if journey takes 50 mins in rush hour because from home it only takes an hour and 15 mins which I would obviously have to wake up early etc but I wouldn't be paying outrageous living costs. In my opinion if you are going to pay to live somewhere you don't want to have to have any travel cost. Acton is clearly too far for any reasonably fit person to cycle or walk to save money.

6) I have stayed in Garden this year. The price has been fair and the wardens and seniors have been amazing. It is the perfect starting environment for any fresher. It is easy to be involved in societies. It is easy to go to the library, therefore I do it a lot and work a lot harder than if I couldn't use that facility. No time or money wasting on ridiculous amounts of travelling.

Good effort from all you guys for campaigning so much.

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I would like to join the campaign against opening of halls in North Acton. Being a hall senior and living in Evelyn Gardens, I understand just how vital the halls in Evelyn Gardens are to Imperial students, it offers affordable student accomodation at an ideal location in central london for imperial students. Having lived in Evelyn Gardens for three years now, I would not like to see it close in the near future!

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Being without a Twitter account I hope the campaign goes well and that (for once) someone manages to persuade the college against the new site.

I have a number of problems with the proposed site:

1-The College is either lying, or is very naive in terms of the expected travel time. As a second year student I live in White City, roughly 5 minutes from the station. From the station it takes roughly 45 minutes to get into college. As I am sure you know White City is two stops prior to North Acton. (I estimate an extra ten minutes travel time) This makes nearly an hour long journey twice a day simply to get to college.

The main problem with the journey is that it relies on the circle line, the interchange at Notting Hill Gate can take anywhere from 1 minute to 20 minutes, despite being on the "properly timed" train. This section of the line is already overly congested and often it was necessary to miss the train for safety, the next train would often be worse.

2-For the distance the site will be the price plan is completely unacceptable, as a student who is only entitled to the minimum student loan I was only able to afford the most basic accommodation at Imperial (a Wilson House room at £104/week), at nearly £160/week to live nearly an hour away from college I would have turned away and declined my offer, despite the world leading research and education.

It seems to me that the college is focusing its halls on the wealthy and those students who are able to receive the full grant from both college and the government, whilst pricing out almost everyone else.

3-The estate next to the site is a crime hotspot. This is a complete welfare issue, given that the college advises staff members not to venture into this estate what do they expect of "freshers" who are moving into London for the first time?

I hope the campaign against the college's board goes well, the college needs to realise that student satisfaction is a key part of the university experience.

I am completely against new residence halls opening in Acton. I just put myself in the position of a first year student that should live in Residence Halls in Acton and face the commuting trouble and the uncertainty of being in a new and unfriendly environment, such as London for the first time.

Imperial college is known for being one of the best Science universities in the world. This is clear to see with some of the best facilities on campus and the most innovative research. But that's the key word, research. Who is going to be conducting this research now and in the future? It's the students.

Imperial has one of the lowest student satisfaction rates of any university in the country, so why are they trying to make life even harder for students?

I was lucky enough to live at Beit hall in my first year, I had a great year making lots of friends and joining lots of societies. Some of my first year friends are not so lucky. One of my friends lives in Paragon hall and I recently visited her and I couldn't believe what I was seeing. It took me slightly over an hour to get there from campus which included a 20 minute walk in the dark around some quite rough streets. Now I am a second year male student and I was slightly scared, I wonder what female freshers think.

If you live far out, you do not have the chance to properly participate in societies given they run late, your social life is compromised seeing as you have less time to socialise with course mates and people from other halls as you are an hour away.

The worse part of it is that it is affecting the academic performance of the students. There has been numerous studies done and there is a clear correlation between distance from university and university performance and it's understandable. A student doesn't have to waste 2 hours a day squished on a tube when they can be studying, they can quickly pop into university if they have any errands to do such as see a lecturer or borrow a book from the library. They also don't have the luxury of staying late in the library as the tube closes at 12 (and that means going out on a night out is much harder as well).

This is why a huge amount of students from paragon hall have, or would like to if the option was available, moved out of the hall.

If Imperial wants to remain one of the best research universities on the country and one of the best universities in the country then it needs to focus more on the students. Keep Garden Hall open, reopen Wilson hall and sell paragon hall to the west london university and for the terminate the contract for Acton Hall.

I hope this email is a step towards looking out for the new students of Imperial.

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I do not agree with a decision to close the nearby halls; Bernard Sunley & Southwell, Holbein & Willis Jackson, Garden, and Fisher. It will effect individuals decision to coming to Imperial. First years especially are faced with the daunting task of living away from home in a new City. Opening New halls away from campus will make the experience more stressful and make the transition from the securities of home to University life much more difficult. Commuting will take up student time and money, both of which students living in close approximation have little of even now. Friends living in Paragon have had a much harder time settling in into university life than I and my fellow gardeners have had. One girl not getting back until 12 Pm on some nights, individuals who could opting out of living in Paragon to find their own private halls of residence. Being close to library facilities and the gym just relieves the stress when coming into terms of how the juggle our studies, social lives, hobbies, and household tasks. When choosing universities, one thing I took into consideration is the hall facilities, as lets face it, this is the only option for where many students are going to spend the first years of their university life, which should be remembered as a positive lifetime experience; not one where the student feels on the sidelines of a business trying to minimize costs.

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You said you wanted any longer messages about the Against Acton campaign to be sent to you and so that's why I'm writing you this email. Normally most campaigns pass me by but this is something I feel really strongly about.

I spent two of my happiest years so far at Imperial in Evelyn Gardens (Holbein and Willis Jackson) and I was so shocked to hear that Imperial is thinking of closing the halls. I had such a good time there and I remember applying because I chose all the lowest price options.



Living expenses in London are ridiculously high- I remember thinking that even in Evelyn Gardens (one of the relatively cheaper options) it was high. The Student Finance maintenance loan barely covers rent. During sixth form I had to apply for accommodation for my second choice university place - Sheffield- as well. I remember noting that a single ensuite room in a catered hall in Sheffield costed less than a shared (non-ensuite) room at Imperial where you still have to buy all your food yourself.

I really feel the College should do what it can to offer more accommodation that is less expensive than Evelyn Gardens- so to hear that the College wants to close Evelyn Gardens has really disappointed me. I feel that Imperial College should guarantee a certain number of accommodation spaces at different price brackets each year- for example there will be 600 spaces in the £70-100 rent per week price bracket, 600 spaces in the £100-200 price bracket etc. This would help to reassure students worried about the expense of studying in London and would be a great thing to put in our prospectus. What would the average rent be at Acton and how would this compare to the average rent at Evelyn Gardens? Travel costs would also have to be factored in- adding £20 a week for students who need to commute on the underground each day, whereas in Evelyn Gardens I was lucky enough to be able to walk every day.

I know that Imperial College does a lot of Outreach work, for example their summer schools which encourage young people from under-represented backgrounds to apply for higher education. But when rent is the overwhelming chunk by far out of any student's budget, how can Imperial College be serious about improving access to university when they do not make low cost accommodation provision? With the higher tuition fees, the cost of going to Imperial is now crippling. How is Imperial ever going to attract the brightest students when it is closing down the doors to so many of them?

Living close to College was beneficial in so many ways. In my first year I worked at the Union bar, an excellent, student-friendly, flexible job, and the late finishing hours were not a problem as I could walk back afterwards. I wouldn't have been able to do this had I not lived within walking distance of College.

This year I am living at Xenia (my boyfriend is a subwarden here). The hall couldn't be any better- it was just refurbished last year, the staff are friendly and living near the South Bank is amazing! But we have heard so many complaints about students wishing they were closer to South Kensington and the proof of this is that indeed many have moved out since the beginning, or have tried to but have not found any closer spaces to move to. (I wonder if you can find any data about the number of students who move out of halls far from campus compared to those who live nearby to support your campaign?) I also think halls far from campus can have a negative impact on the hall community. If students have evening extra-curricular activities they tend to stay on campus rather than come back to halls for dinner (which most people did when I was in Evelyn Gardens) making Xenia quite quiet at times.

I am outraged that Imperial College is planning to close some of its more affordable halls and am grateful to the Union for mounting such a strong campaign against this move. Thank you.

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I realise you must have loads to do what with day-to-day running of the union and the whole acton drama on top, but I've decided to bother you anyway as I feel very strongly- as many people do- about the new plans for Imperial's undergrad accommodation. There's a whole variety of reasons for which I think this is not only a bad idea but actually irresponsible action in behalf of the College, but I won't list them here as I'm sure you've thought of them all yourself too.

I am aware that thanks to you the union has opposed these plans during meetings with the college council, and am also aware of the twitter hashtag created for this.

However, I really feel more action needs to be taken: imperial is a large, wealthy university and shouldn't be allowed to reduce the first year experience to this extent.

Because of the size of the halls it would also seem a near-irreversible action- how can it be to late for student body to something about it if this is the first they've heard about it?

If there are union plans for further action please let me know as I feel it is the duty of every student to take part in any form of negotiation or peaceful protest form available.

I would just like to point out how unsuccessful Paragon halls were this year for new students. New students to imperial do not want to be commuting such distances as they try and adapt to college life. Not only that but there is the added cost of transport everyday to empty the pockets of the new students. Living further away, particularly as you are getting used to Uni, will mean the new students will miss out on society events due to the fear of travelling across London late at night. Thus student satisfaction is quickly going to diminish.

I do not think it is wise to consider the halls in North Acton. This will put prospective students off from attending Imperial. I definitely would have been put off Imperial if there was such a commute in the morning in my first year. Especially when you compare to other parts of the county and you see your old school friends living just down the road from their Uni for half the price that it costs you in London.

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I enjoyed reading your email to the undergraduate community regarding the Acton proposal by the college, and as requested, here is a student response to the plans. (Not all of us have/use Twitter, you know!)

As someone who was shoved in to Orient House in my first year (after making it my fifth choice), I can speak from first hand experience that living further away from college puts you at a less advantageous position than your colleagues who live in Beit and Princes Gardens. Orient House was "only" a 40 minute walk away, door to door, but the transport was not direct and involved at least one change.

The rooms were of higher quality than at some other halls, but were far more expensive. and added to the transport costs, was not worth the price. The social spaces were effectively nonexistent, with a lobby pretending to be a common room.

Every morning I'd struggle to wake up early enough to get in on time, whilst other students on my course would talk about waking up at 8:50 and still making lectures. All of my friends at other universities spoke of similar situations, living within sight of campus most of the time. I felt jealous of people in a better position than me, and left out of social groups who could visit each other with a two minute walk daily.

This year, I actually live CLOSER to Imperial than I did last year, having found a flat a 25 minute walk away above a noisy shop on Kensington High Street. Despite the noise, the rent is lower, the facilities just as good, and I don't need to buy a travelcard every month. My social life has been improved by the fact that I can access college easier, and that I have similar travel distances to my other friends.

I understand that in the grand scheme of things these issues don't really matter. This complaint is really something akin to the "first world problems" meme. But it does matter to me, it directly impacted my student experience at Imperial. I felt as though the college had screwed me over, like the college didn't care about me. Closing the halls close to Imperial to open halls in ACTON is pure madness, and is college's worst failing since the disaster in Life Sciences.

I know I have no real power to change this, and no matter what we lowly, pathetic undergraduates think, the Powers That Be in the upper echelons of the college hierarchy won't change their minds, but I need to speak out. Imperial College, please show you care more about your students than your profits. Listen to us, keep halls open, open MORE halls closer to Imperial, ensure there's affordable halls for everyone. I know the money exists, considering the amount the college has proposed flushing away on their silly Beit basement redevelopment. (Which will add about 10 rooms to Beit. Great start...) Please help improve student satisfaction and keep Imperial College accessible to everyone.

Thank you for giving me the chance to speak out against the latest college insanity.



I have just seen the email about moving out from Garden hall, Fisher hall or other hall to Acton. That is absolutely not acceptable!!! I personally, very strongly oppose this and I know that's the same feeling to everyone who lives in those halls.

Quite a few strong reasons. First, Location, it's in the central London, very convenient, near the college, ethos and union. Never a better location!!!

Second, cost, it's very acceptable and fair.

Third, People, Not many people live in each hall, Everyone is close to each other and wardens are soooooooo nice!!!  
Last, once settled well like this, never ever want to move out again!!! Also, when we paid, no one ever said it may be closed!

I live in Garden Hall, My name is Tony, I strongly oppose to close Garden hall, Fisher hall, Evelyn Gardens or any other fantastic halls.

I do hope that helps a bit and not changing the halls.

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I thought I'd voice my opinion in support of the Union's Against Acton campaign. Having some memory of my first year, I can certainly sympathise with anyone who potentially has to live in the scheduled Acton residence. As you well know it is far too distant from campus, this will have serious consequences for student's academic and social lives in a time when forming good habits and involving yourself on campus is critical.

As a resident of Ealing, not too far from North Acton, I can attest that transport into university is often awkward. Unless the cost of accommodation is considerably less than the Princes Gardens halls for example, I believe it is completely unfair for the first years who are placed there whilst their peers can live a comfortable two minutes away.

Of course this is all stuff you already know, I am emailing in case you need evidence in support of the campaign, as a number of my peers feel the same.

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I am very sorry that I do not have time to write a longer email explaining my thoughts but basically as a lower income student I applied for and was given Fisher Halls to live in. This lower price hall was essential to me being able to afford to attend Imperial. Though I was given a higher maintenance grant for being a 'poor' student that still only covered my rent for the year and a little extra. So my parents had to support me by giving me a living allowance which to be honest they can not really afford. I was really happy to have been accepted by one of the top universities in the UK but if the cheaper halls had not been available to me I would have had to turn down the place.

So firstly I feel the university MUST make it a priority to provide cheap accommodation in order to allow students from lower income families to take up places here.

Secondly the fact that the halls were close to university (Evelyn Gardens was just 15 minutes walk) meant that it was much easier to be involved in the social activities at the university. However I feel the more important issue of having halls further from the South Kensington campus is the travel costs that will be incurred because of having to take public transport to and from university. This will add up over the year to a very significant amount.

If all else fails and the new halls are going to be further away from campus I would like the union to stress the importance of lots of safe bike storage so that ALL students can be able to cycle to university as this is cheaper than public transport.

I'm #AgainstActon because there are a variety of reasons that need to be looked into and evaluated appropriately.

Having lived in Ealing all my life and traveled to Acton on numerous occasions I can vouch that it is unsafe. There will be robberies, whether the robberies are face to face or by breaking into the halls, there will be a huge number. This is not the representation of Imperial that us as students want.

For overseas freshers who will undoubtedly have trouble navigating etc will be vulnerable. Especially females, who if coming back to Acton from a night out will be harassed by men. I have seen all of this happen too many times in Acton and do not wish this upon anyone, especially not an educated student of Imperial.

North Acton estate is well known in my area for drugs and weapons (inclusive of firearms). Having undergraduates within the vicinity is extremely dangerous as they will inevitably encounter the estate at one point.

Further to this the commute is a joke, I commute from Ealing Common via the Piccadilly line which is okay however North Acton is not on circle, district or Piccadilly. This means students will definitely miss more lectures than they would have if they were living at Evelyn Gardens. By having a hall so far away from campus you separate them from real Imperial life. It will mean less students using the library facility at times inconvenient for traveling and less students going to Metric as it will take 2/3 night buses home.

I feel very strongly about this and want to help as much as I can.

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I would just like to add that the availability of cheap accommodation is shocking at imperial, halls this far away would only be justified if rent was less than £100 a week.

As an overseas student from a middle-income family, with no bursary from Imperial, I was glad to be allocated to a shared room in Evelyn Gardens. Though it is a 15-20 minute walk to school each way, I am thankful for the reasonable balance of cost and distance.

This "cheap and close" option must remain. Let's not forget those who are less well off than the average. For this group of students, it does not matter if the accommodation is of a high standard, as long as it is reasonably affordable and close to the South Kensington Campus. Potential students considering an education at Imperial College may be deterred due to the high cost of accommodation.

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I'm AgainstActon because I believe that it will discourage students from coming to Imperial altogether. When I was applying for my accommodation in 2010, I applied to all of the Evelyn Garden Halls and Garden Hall in Prince's Gardens. If those choices were not available to me I would have seriously considered going to another university, simply because I wouldn't be able to afford it.

Therefore I believe that future students will be faced with a choice of not going to Imperial at all or taking out private accommodation from first year. This will disadvantage many students socially because they simply won't be able to interact with as many people as they would have if they were in halls. For example, most of my closest friends are people I met in halls and all of my housemates I also met in halls.

Living in Acton, far away from all the college amenities (Union, Ethos etc) in your first year is likely to promote a sense of detachment for the students there. The college community is already quite fragmented so by breaking it up further, it will get even worse.

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I'm especially outraged about Garden, I was there (in a triple, no less) and the money I saved went towards my deposit for the place I'm renting + other social stuff I could partake in. And I'm an internationalie, no less: we

had a LOT of Malaysians who wanted Garden (and got it) because the price was right. Most were in double and triples - College doesn't just need to realize not everyone's loaded, College also needs to realize that a LOT of the internationalies themselves who come here aren't loaded. In effect I'm so lucky to be living in a Bailey house now - bloody 6-month deposit for internationals in other places!

I've been speaking to my household last night (#AgainstActon was pretty popular at dinnertime) and I'd really wish College would be more transparent with the reasons behind their decisions. I believe Fisher's lease is running out a lot quicker, and from what I heard (but want to clarify): apparently College were supposed to return Fisher to the Wellcome Trust in the state it was given in (as per an agreement), which would mean refurbishing it to their specs and would be just as costly as refurbishing it as a student hall - but apparently the nursing home deal came about so that College wouldn't have to bear the refurb cost, if College gave up Fisher before the lease expired. Is this true?

I think College shouldn't have cited the Arts halls as an example; they should look to the other London Unis to see how their halls are dotted around. And transport links - even though UCL's Camden Town hall is almost an hour away from Warren Street/Goodge Street, there is at least a direct bus that cuts travel time down to 20-30 minutes. As you've pointed out, North Acton doesn't have that.

Sad that a lot of decisions seem to be about the money (and even then I fail to see how sound they are.) But the fact they're not being transparent enough about the details, other than saying rubbish like "you need 700+ people in a community" etc etc isn't going to garner support, and isn't going to make us see their point of view.

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I believe the proposal to move halls from Evelyn gardens is a bad idea for many reasons.

Although Evelyn gardens may not be as high quality like eastside and Southside, they are still decent halls and may just need refurbishing. I am currently in bernard sunley and I think that certain things just need upgrading eg the showers.

Also, even though I was annoyed I will be living further from campus, the walk really isn't actually that bad and one gets used to it. Having halls in north acton is ridiculous since they'll have to take the tube everyday and with the increase fares in the tube, this will not be ideal.

Evelyn gardens is also a really good area to live in as you have plenty of shops and restaurants available as well as a cinema all under a 5min walk, including good transport modes as well.

Evelyn gardens is great for people who do not want to spend a lot in the more expensive halls ie eastside etc but still want a decent hall near campus. I think Evelyn gardens should definitely not be closed down.

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I'm against Acton because I live in Evelyn Gardens and I think it has the perfect combination of price, strong community and a beautiful area. They're a bit run down, but they could be worse.

Furthermore I've been travelling to Hammersmith Hospital in Acton, and we've seen Imperial West, I don't know how near W3 would be, but Imperial West is in a horrible part of Acton, and 'the 30 minute journey' is optimistic, it takes a minimum of 45 minutes, most of the time it takes us an hour to get to South Ken.

If I had been offered W3 as a fresher I would genuinely have thought twice about coming to Imperial. It is not wise to put prospective students off, it will only push down student satisfaction, and the calibre of students at Imperial will decrease.

I am writing to support the union's position regarding the changes in halls of residence. Unless the amount people receive from loans has drastically changed in the last year, closing the cheaper halls in Evelyn Gardens and offering no equally priced alternative will be a disaster. With the recession already making day-to-day living difficult on a limited student budget, I feel it is unfair to further penalise students who, for whatever reason, can't ask for support from their family.

As a recent former resident of one of the halls in Evelyn Gardens, I was lucky inasmuch as I was able to get by for my first year purely on my student loan. This was enough for me to live comparatively comfortably- to put food on the table and afford the occasional night out. As soon as I moved out of halls, however, I was forced to take on a part time job in order to survive due to the hike in rent and bills. It's worth noting that my second-year rent was £135pw, significantly less than the proposed fees in the Acton halls.

The first year of university should be a fun experience. The focus should be on bonding with new people, learning basic life skills, and becoming accustomed to a new style of learning. The last thing any first-year student needs is to have to take on a job to make ends meet. Sure, let it happen once they get turfed out into the predatory London property market- that's fair enough. But new students are owed a duty of care, not just by the union, but also by college as a whole. Don't take away the cheap option, or you risk pricing students out of Imperial.

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As a former resident in Southwell (Evelyn Gardens), I wanted to make sure I let you know my opinion on the proposed W3 halls (as requested on the web page for the AgainstActon campaign). I think it's really important that this is campaigned against, and thank you for doing so.

Firstly, I think College needs to accept that even if they consider these to be the "cheap" option for first years, the freshers will still expect value for money. Coming from a financially comfortable family, and a private school background, I was not expecting the accommodation costs at Imperial to be so eye-wateringly high. Even for a single room that was about as small as a single room could possibly be, my accommodation fees for last year were just over £145 a week. Given that my student loan was only £4998 for the year, this meant that I was already going to need a few hundred pounds from my parents to afford my rent, before even thinking about the other expenses involved in going to university. The only thing that made the situation acceptable was the location of Evelyn Gardens. Being able to walk into college within 15 minutes (so therefore at no extra expense) made all the difference when living in a tiny, low-spec room and sharing a kitchen with 26 people and a bathroom with 10, and having to accept hand-outs from my parents.

I wouldn't have been able to justify spending that much to leave in an area like North Acton. When my housemates and I were looking at flats for this year, despite how dirt-cheap Acton is, we just didn't want to live so far away from South Kensington and Charing Cross; so I can't see how I ever would have accepted paying £145/week for a room there as a fresher. If we've managed to find accommodation in Fulham in a lovely, safe neighbourhood that is a 20 minute walk to Charing Cross and one 40-minute bus (therefore cheaper than tube) to SK, close to the whole ICSM community, I don't see why first years should have to live in an area with no links to College that is significantly less exciting than living in South Kensington.

I also think College needs to consider how this will segregate freshers who don't have so much money to spend from those who can afford Princes Gardens. Living in Evelyn Gardens wasn't really so different to living in Eastside or Southside - yes, we did have to get up about 10 minutes earlier, but we could still walk to and from the Union for nights out, still lived in the same amazing part of London, and we didn't really care that the hall was lower-spec. There wasn't much of a divide between "us and them". But if some freshers have to live in Acton, it will stop them going to the Union with freshers who live in Princes Gardens. It will make it more difficult (and more dangerous) for them to get home from nights out in Central London.

In short, I think the W3 proposal is a terrible idea. Imperial is already so expensive to attend, and I think College needs to do more to show that they are considering the needs of students who don't have lots of money to spend on accommodation, rather than just shoving them into a cheap and distant area of London, and still charging them well above market rate for it.

Again, thank you for being so active about this. I hope you're successful.

I'm a hall senior at Willis Jackson Halls right now and I've been here for the past 2 years. I disagree strongly with the college about relocating Evelyn Gardens to Acton. As an international student one of the many plus points about the current locations of halls was that not only could I remain safe in the knowledge that I was in a safe part of town, my parents back home would have little reason for concern in that regard too. I don't think anyone can put a price on what it means for a parent thousands of miles away from their child to be reassured that their charge is safe and sound.

Halls currently are in one of the nicest parts of town and as students come in to live here they are not only exposed to the best London and the country have to offer but a very cosmopolitan part of town as well, not to mention the fact that if I got lost I would still be very near college itself. IC has a sizeable international contingent with students coming from many far off places and there will be many who will not have had previous experience of the UK or any other country for that matter. Therefore to live in Evelyn Gardens is not only an advertisement for the best bits London has to offer but adds to the prestige of being an Imperial student and for that one year of your life having a post code that starts with 'SW7', something that most of us can only aspire towards for a good while after we graduate.

All of this are the points I can mention as an international student, not even going into the fact that the college is pulling the plug on one of the most close knit communities in college. As a student ambassador for both the college and my department I always tell students on open days and admission days who worry about not getting accommodation in any of the princes gardens halls how they needn't worry, how there's a whole little community only a 15 minute walk away from college. The halls here themselves may not be as flash and as modern as the rest but they are cozy, affordable (most importantly) and have a character of their own.

The sad truth is that the college is most likely to go ahead regardless and all I want to say before I end this rather long rant is that during my hall senior week whilst walking in to uni I saw a whole group of about 5-6 asian students wandering down queen's gate road. I went up to them and asked them if they had come in early to have a look at the sights around uni before moving in day and you know what they said? They said that they had been given accommodation in Xenia and so they refused outright and were walking down queen's gate road literally 2 days before moving in day, looking for accommodation on their own!

Surely this must be a damning enough indictment if the 'stockholders' in charge of the college cared about the history of the halls and the students themselves rather than their ledgers.

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I would like to lend my voice to the Against Acton campaign. I believe a halls of residence as far away as Acton would be detrimental to the student experience. A student's first year at university is vital for their integration into university life and living so far away from the union would prevent easy participation in union activities including sports and socialising.

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I wanted to email you to voice my concern and outrage at the proposed closure of the halls of residence at Evelyn Gardens. Closing these halls is a terrible idea that will reduce the amount of social and sporting activities that students will be willing to undertake, due to the greater distance from campus. Also the proposed cost of these new halls is prohibitively high. If I could not have paid approximately £100 a week to live in Fisher Hall I would not have been able to afford to come to Imperial College.

Please do all you can to stop this outrageous plan

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As a fresher, if my halls of residence was going to be in North Acton, I would not be at this university. It's too far to take part in any activity and as a result my social life at university would suffer. It would also be too far to get home from the union and would have made me feel extremely isolated.

My opinion is that I would not have been able to come and study in London if it were not for the affordable halls in Evelyn gardens, and I would not have considered an inner city, non-campus Uni if I had to travel that far to college. I only know one guy, in all of the year groups of the RSM who lives that far out!

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I am writing about the proposed / definite move of undergraduate accommodation to North Acton. I currently live in North Acton and I am a final year student, previously I lived very close to the Imperial West campus in White City and in my first year I lived in Wilson house.

The steady rise in accommodation fees for Imperial students would have severely restricted the average income student, I would not have been willing or able to spend over £150/week on accommodation even as it was the £106/week room at Wilson house was the same cost per term as my entire student maintenance loan. Other universities around the country have rates in the region of £50-£100/week and Imperial rates are far above this.

Imperial does not have any provision for poorer students instead preferring to build overly extravagant student halls (southside/eastside) students do not want or need en-suite shower rooms, tv's in the kitchens or double beds. There is ample provision of this type of accommodation at Imperial, but not enough simple and affordable accommodation. (around £100/week) so the type and price of accommodation proposed is not suitable.

The other problem with this proposal is the location, North Acton is nigh on impossible to get to once the tubes close (something that would severely restrict the movements of first years) as you have to take 2 or 3 night buses from almost any location to get there. For cycling it involves traveling on busy dangerous roads and crossing the shepherds bush roundabout, something first years with limited cycle experience would find daunting. If this hall were to be built, ample secure cycle parking facilities would be necessary. Even though it is only ~ 2 miles further than where I lived previous years the extra distance means that I cannot go home during the day, or go back briefly for food, this means costs are increased during the day if I need to attend an evening event.

The final problem is the price of the proposed accommodation, my current living arrangements 5 minutes walk from the tube station costs £462/month (£102/week) for a large double room in a terraced house sharing with 4 other students, we have a large sitting/dining room, 2 bathrooms and a kitchen with front and back garden. This is substantially cheaper than the proposed hall of residence for the same area, but for better accommodation, the college should look at local house prices before trying to charge students an extortionate amount for their accommodation.

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In line with what pretty much everyone else is saying, the proposed expansion is quite frankly a joke and shows a complete disconnect between whoever is making the decisions and the students who have to live with them.

When most first years move to London, the entire experience is pretty daunting, huge city, new friends, difficult work (yes it's pretty easy at the beginning looking back but at the time it seemed incredibly daunting). It's really a huge help to be within walking distance of college, it's just another thing not to have to think about. London can at times be a dangerous city, not overly dangerous but compared to where most people come from, certain precautions need to be taken and living in South Kensington is a real plus on that front too, as it's a little oasis in the centre of London in which the mistakes of a naive fresher are usually forgiven and don't result in someone being a victim of serious crime within their first week. How many stories have we heard of Freshers getting drunk at the mingle and wandering off and being found passed out on Queens Gate/Princes Gardens? Good like trying that in Acton. (Something that the board of directors might not take into account, but it's a reality that freshers do on occasion drink alcohol)

It also takes away from the quality of the experience, living in a town house hall in South Ken is a huge plus for the Imperial experience. Surely it's something that helps Imperial remain competitive over other universities. Telling Freshers they have to pay for a travel card and commute in by tube/bus every day in their first year is hardly going to make them choose Imperial over Manchester or Leeds.



On affordability, I think that if they were providing affordable accommodation it would at least be a nice alternative to open some halls further away and keep the current ones open. But I read somewhere the rent would be around £150 pw. How is this affordable? Almost everyone I know at Imperial pays less than this and lives much closer than Acton. Surely halls are meant to be cheaper than private accommodation? The cost of halls at Imperial is already a joke, all this talk of “luxury accommodation” ... How is there a demand for this? Students are poor, poorer than ever, affordable living is what’s needed. A basic calculation of what the student loan is shows that £150 is not affordable and people cannot get by on just the student loan (isn’t this basically saying we only want foreign students and the odd wealthy home student?). If they could open halls in Acton for £100 pw (people are still going to need travel cards as well) that might be worth it. People might say I’m being naive, and the costs are simply higher than this. I would counter this, I’ve lived in private accommodation in London now for 5 years and the reality is that for £150 pw, you can easily live in Hammersmith/Fulham, and if you’re lucky you can get by for less (I certainly get by for a lot less and live in a flat which is much “nicer” than the conditions in say Fisher Hall).

In summary the entire idea is so ludicrous it beggars belief. I can’t imagine there is a single alumnus of Evelyn Gardens who thinks this is a good idea and if they go through with this, it shows a complete disregard for what anybody thinks and a complete disconnect between the people making the decisions and the people who will be affected.

# #AgainstActon



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