

NSS condemns secret plans to build giant Jesus statue on Primrose Hill

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The National Secular Society has condemned a secret plan for a twenty foot high replica of the Rio de Janeiro statue of Christ the Redeemer near the summit of the iconic London landmark Primrose Hill.

It will be funded by the Brazilian government to celebrate the end of the London 2012 Olympics and mark the moment Rio takes on the Olympic mantle for the 2016 Games.

The statue has yet to be approved by the local authority planning department but the proposal is already dividing local residents.

Friends of Primrose Hill chairman Malcolm Kafetz told the [Camden New Journal](#): "I do not see why it should go there. It does not represent anything of England or Primrose Hill. Primrose Hill is a place for people to go and enjoy the view."

Emails seen by the local paper reveal organisers asking for secrecy so that when the statue is unveiled after this summer's Games there is a "wow" factor – and a big surprise – for people living nearby.

The Primrose Hill Community Association's Maureen Betts said she had been approached and that they were planning to hold a meeting to discuss the plans with the designers before they go to Camden Council's planning committee with the scheme. She added: "I personally would not mind if it was temporary and it depends on what it looks like."

However, Primrose Hill Liberal Democrat councillor Chris Naylor said he wasn't sure a 20ft statue of Christ with his arms outstretched was quite what the area needed.

Terry Sanderson, President of the National Secular Society, said "The Olympic Games is supposed to unite people of all creeds and cultures through sport. Introducing something as blatantly sectarian as this would completely go against the spirit of the games and be a kind of triumphalist statement about Christianity. It is a very bad idea and must be kicked into touch immediately."

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