

Dear Kristina Smith, as the Case Officer,

Re: Highgate Studios Application - 2023/1804/P

We are writing jointly as both of the councillors for Kentish Town North ward, which incorporates all of the proposed development at Highgate Studios, 53-79 Highgate Road, NW5 1TL, under the planning application 2023/1804/P.

Overall, we support the intention of Highgate Studios in making the development greener and more open, providing potential connections to Murphy's Yard, and improving the provision of office space for the area – including affordable workspace, which is much needed in Kentish Town. We also welcome the discussions we have had with the owners to ask for more cycle storage and are pleased to see this being reflected in the plans, though we continue to encourage the applicants to make this available at low or no cost to local residents given the high demand for safe cycle storage in this area.

We are also pleased that the owners have pared back their original plans and have no longer brought forward proposals to increase the height of several existing blocks, given the impact this would have had on neighbouring residential properties and the heritage of the buildings themselves.

We have no objection to the plans for Plots B, C, D, E, G, H, I, J and for the entrance pavilion at Plot P. However, we would like the applicants to address the concerns made by the Metropolitan Police in their objection and ask the Planning Committee to adopt their reasonable recommendations.

Our main objection is with the building of Plot F, and we are aware that multiple objections have now been submitted from residents of the wider community including the Carrol and Sanderson Close TRA. We share their concerns on the impact of Plot F overlooking gardens on Sanderson Close properties as well as on the noise which could come from the roof terrace. While we understand that the applicants have reduced the glazing ratio and reduced window openings, we still do not believe that these are adequate mitigating measures. Therefore we ask, should the planning committee vote to approve this scheme, for them to consider the addition of two conditions to the planning application:

- To restrict the hours that the roof terrace on Plot F can be in use – to mitigate the impact of noise and public nuisance on neighbouring residential properties.
- To provide frosted or restricted view windows on the side of the building facing Sanderson Close – to mitigate the impact of overlook on neighbouring residential properties.

Consideration should also be given to the cumulative impact of building on Highgate Road - while that is not reason alone to reject the application, we are keen that neighbours' voices are heard in the development of a Construction Management Plan. Options, such as a construction working group between the developers, residents and councillors would be strongly welcomed.

We are also mindful that the existing building on Plot F is currently occupied by Puregym which is a very well-used and popular resource in the community. Many of the comments we have received as councillors have been residents wanting to preserve an affordable gym or sports club in the vicinity. We support these representations and would ask that the planning committee consider that the retention of a gym, or building use in a similar class, be a condition of this application.

Regarding Plot A, we are supportive of building on this car park, which we accept is under-used and should not be maintained as is. However, the size of this block is significantly larger than the Highgate Business Centre next to it - by around two stories. While the argument had been made that it is not substantially taller than the building next door, that is including the height of the chimney, not the height at roof level. This will have a substantial impact on residents of the Maple Building on Highgate Road, both in terms of amenity and overlook.

While we are supportive of the aims of Highgate Studios, we believe that the proposals still need to be refined. Therefore, we would be grateful for the planning committee's consideration of our comments and the recommendations we have suggested.

Cllr James Slater and Cllr Sylvia McNamara
Councillors for Kentish Town North ward
London Borough of Camden