

Application for Planning Permission;  
Listed Building Consent for alterations, extension or demolition of a listed building

Site Location: **Alexandra Road Estate**

**Planning Application number 2024/009/L**

*Replacement of the existing estate-wide heating distribution infrastructure including removal redundant pipework; installation of two new sub-plant rooms: installation of cold water storage tank rooms; replacement of existing site hoarding and installation of new replacement infrastructure pipework.*

## **OBJECTIONS:**

**The proposed works would severely disfigure the exterior of the buildings and irreversibly damage the interior of 520 flats. Therefore this application for Listed Building Consent should be unconditionally refused.**

## **Heritage**

The heated walls, which are to be decommissioned, were expertly designed to provide uniform warmth during the winter, that was affordable and hidden. The orientation of the flats meant the summer sun kept the flats dry for the rest of the year. Social housing consideration was a fundamental part of the brief. Architect Neave Brown's design demonstrates enormous architectural vision, expertise and innovation. On completion he delivered a world famous landmark for Camden. The iconic concrete construction combined with Max Fordham's engineering skill overcame the fact that concrete is notoriously prone to condensation, damp and mould. Our estate has remained free of this during its lifetime; unlike most Camden estates,

The minute this "Upgrade" goes ahead and the distribution pipework is attached to the boilers we will be at risk. Camden intends to use the boilers until they fail yet describe the current system as "not fit for purpose" quoting repair costs of £200,000 p.a. No resident believes the boilers will last the predicted 15-20 years given Camden's repair record. Camden also has no control over gas prices. In 2023 and 2024 our heating costs rose by 318% (Camden's estimate) and show no sign of falling. Gas prices are notoriously susceptible to the slightest political upheaval. Camden is also currently under investigation by The Housing Ombudsman, (12/12/23) for its numerous handling issues with **damp, mould, repairs and complaint handling**.

Camden tell us we will have control and be able to turn our heating down or off. Many flats (at ground level or next to external walls and lift shafts) will be colder. The residents in these flats will pay more to heat their homes because there's no insulation planned. Turning off heating will create conditions for damp and mould. We also won't be able to turn the boilers off or on if we hit a warm spot in winter, or a cold snap in the summer. This cannot be described as control. On top of the visual and environmental damage residents' quality of life will be greatly impaired through inflated gas prices whilst the "Upgrade" is connected to the gas boilers (2044).

The boilers are not guaranteed and no contingency plan if, the boilers fail earlier than Camden's prediction. If they fail during the major works we could find ourselves with No boilers, No heated walls, no HIUs but an enormous pile of distribution pipework. Camden's proposal is not only blisteringly un-green; it is also.... **A very questionable "upgrade"**.

## **Camden's Responses with regard to:**

**Listed Building Alterations**

**None of the following has been discussed with residents**

Camden says the works will affect both the interior, and exterior structure and adds that some internal walls, floorings, and ceilings will be stripped out, but give no details. In addition contractors

will be working unsupervised! During Better Homes, unsupervised workers demolished several original kitchens “accidentally”. Contractors will also be trying to make a profit. Two pilot flats took 10 weeks over 6 months in unoccupied flats. Camdens says the “Upgrade” work will take 10 days in a fully occupied flat. How is this possible?

**Planning Consent** - Camden appears to have started already: an original kitchen (83a Rowley Way) has just been stripped out and replaced with a differently configured kitchen.

**Trench Heaters** - The application says the plinths will be used for trench heaters, involving a metal grill the length of the surface. A Capital Works Manager says this is not going ahead.

**Vehicle Parking** - Listed Garages, (22 in all) have been “given over” to large cold water storage. Garages have already been broken into. Where are the Service agreements, dB levels for pump noise, and Health Inspections and Reports. Planning Consent is not yet granted!

**Environmental Impacts** - **Water management and Foul Sewage**

There is no intention to install: a Sustainable Drainage System; re-use grey water; recycle any demolition or construction material: or harvest rainfall. Surface water with all the building contamination will be drained into the main sewer and Foul sewage will be disposed of by “other” or “unknown” methods.

**Biodiversity and Geological Conservation** - The Listed Estate surrounds a Grade 2\* listed Park and communal areas within a Conservation Area, which is open to the public. The whole area will be a building site for years.

**Emissions** - No figures have been provided to demonstrate that NOx, Particulate matter or Green house gas emissions will be within government guidelines or better.

**Green credentials** - Camden does not intend to mitigate fuel costs in any way by installing: an on-site community-owned energy generation; no Heat Pumps; no Solar Energy; no Passive Cooling Units and no green roof or anything else to offset the impact of this proposal. Camden’s Urban Greening Factor is entered as 0.00!

**Summary** - Residents have not been consulted over this Heating “Upgrade”. We have just been told what Camden intends. We have had no opportunity to question their proposal. We have told them we dont want it several times. We still have far too many questions that have never been discussed let alone resolved.

Camden says “We explained the project to everyone” No they have not! There are still very, many residents who have no idea what is planned and many who, because of language barriers, cannot reply. We urge the Planning Committee to halt this proposal immediately. The effort and cost required to ensure these boilers last until 2044 is disproportionate. The proposal will also saddle all residents with totally unreasonable heating costs for 15- 20 years along with two lots of Major Works costs for leaseholders. There is no sense in, or justification for, this proposal.