

**From:** Lorna Russell (Cllr)

**Sent:** 20 October 2024 12:56

**To:** Planning

**Subject:** Objection to planning application 2024/4134/P at 3-5 Hylda Court

Dear Sir/Madam,

I write to **OBJECT** to planning application 2024/4134/P at 3-5 Hylda Court, St Alban's Road, NW5 1RE – regarding the proposals to extend the roof to erect three dwellings on there and to demolish garage blocks and the caretakers flat to erect a further three townhouse dwellings at the back of the site.

Before I detail my objections, I want to relay my concerns that this application has not been properly communicated to residents living at Hylda Court and in the vicinity. Many had only been aware of the proposals at very late notice, and only one sign on a lamp post has been erected.

### **Design and conservation area**

The proposed development sits within the **Dartmouth Park Conservation Area**, an important protected area in our neighbourhood that is recognised for its special architectural and historic interest. Within the conservation area, Hylda Court is a particular building of note given its beautiful Art Deco features and style.

The design of the proposed roof extension and new floor are not in keeping with the character of the building and indeed would disrupt the visual harmony and architectural coherence of Hylda Court.

I am concerned about the design of the townhouses too, which do not have proper externally facing windows. The design does not meet adequate

guidelines for daylight and sunlight and so I cannot see how this would lead to a good quality of life for any new residents living in them.

Cynically, I am also concerned that they have been designed in a way – with a flat roof with no skylights or solar panels – that it would be very easy to add additional floors at a later date. If the application is approved (against community wishes), I would be more reassured if skylights were built into the design, both to give new residents more natural light and to guard against extra floors being added later on.

Furthermore, the demolition of the garage block and caretaker's flat to make way for the townhouses will result in the loss of views of greenery, which are a significant feature of the conservation area.

### **Impact on current residents of Hylda Court**

The proposal involves building three new flats on the roof of Hylda Court and three townhouses at the back, which would be extremely disruptive to residents already living there.

I am particularly concerned about the impact of the development and construction works to existing residents with respect to:

- **Air quality:** Construction will create significant dust and debris within Hylda Court, where 30 flats are already occupied. This is a risk to existing residents' health and safety – I am aware of at least one resident living in Hylda Court that has a chronic lung condition and I am particularly concerned about the impact of construction on their health.
- **Noise:** Construction will also create noise pollution within the building and disrupt existing residents' lives for a significant period of time. Many residents living there work from home or work irregular shift patterns, and would be particularly impacted by construction works during the day.

- **Loss of light:** I anticipate that scaffolding will need to be erected as part of the construction process, which would obstruct the natural light coming into flats and make their homes feel darker and more closed-in.
- **Privacy:** The new townhouses would be built very close to several of the flats at the back of Hylda Court. These flats are not currently overlooked, but would face a loss of privacy if the new townhouses are built as they would overlook existing properties.
- **Loss of amenities:** The proposal would see the demolition of the garages used by residents currently living at Hylda Court. Some of these garages are used by cars – removing them would exacerbate parking pressures on St Albans Road and surrounding streets. Many of the other garages are used for storage and the proposal would see this amenity unfairly lost to existing residents.

I further have concerns about the structural integrity of the building and its ability to withstand this proposed construction. There are a number of cracks in the building already and several of the properties suffer with mould and damp, which can also be seen in the communal corridors. Existing issues with the building's structure must be addressed before any planning application is approved.

I do also worry about the welfare of residents living at Hylda Court. A number of major works took place in the block from 2017 to around 2022, which meant that residents had to move out of their flats for several months at a time to allow the works to take place. As I understand it, this caused undue stress on those residents and a significant amount of personal belongings were also irreparably damaged during this process. I would be very concerned if they were asked to leave their flats again to enable construction to take place.

It should also be noted that the landlord's obligations to tenants are set out in their tenancy agreement – I cannot see how this proposal is compatible with these obligations given that development is not an 'emergency':

*“3.3 The landlord must not interrupt or interfere with the tenant’s lawful occupation, enjoyment, or use of the property, except in an emergency or through the normal and lawful exercise of the landlord’s rights and obligations under this agreement, provided at least 24 hours’ prior written notice is given.”*

### **Impact on neighbours and wider community**

The proposed development would have a detrimental impact on neighbouring properties and residents too.

Given the close proximity of the townhouses on St Alban’s Road to the rear of Hylda Court – the shortest distance being around 6 metres – I am concerned about the following issues:

- **Loss of light:** The increased height and massing of the roof extension will overshadow neighbouring properties, particularly number 7 St Alban’s Road, reducing natural light and adversely affecting the outlook from affected properties.
- **Privacy:** Similarly, the increased height and massing of the roof extension will also result in direct overlooking into number 7 St Alban’s Road, intruding their right to privacy.
- **Noise and disruption:** Construction of the townhouses will create significant noise and disruption for residents living nearby on St Alban’s Road for a significant period of time. Many residents living there work from home or work irregular shift patterns, and would be particularly impacted by construction works during the day. I am also concerned about the impact that this would have on air quality in the vicinity.
- **Impact on school children:** It must be considered that the site backs onto La Sainte Union Catholic School. I am very worried about the disruption that the development would have on pupils attending this school, both in terms of the polluting effect it would have on the air that they breathe and in terms of the noise disruption to their studies.

- **Impact on local infrastructure:** The loss of garages and car parking spaces will increase parking pressures on nearby roads, like St Alban's Road, exacerbating current issues the area faces with parking and traffic.
- **Impact on local biodiversity:** I am also concerned about the impact that this development would have on local biodiversity. I cannot any justification for the developer to claim that this proposal would benefit biodiversity, given the loss of exiting green spaces and the risk to the mature trees surrounding the site from construction.

Furthermore, the additional dwellings will bring no community benefit to the broader area: they will be luxury dwellings and are not intended to be affordable homes.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this proposed development contravenes local planning policy and would have a significantly adverse impact on residents living both within Hylda Court and in the immediate vicinity. At the same time, it brings no benefit to the community.

There can be no justification for approving this planning application, therefore I urge Camden to reject it.

Kind regards,

Lorna

\* \* \*

Councillor Lorna Jane Russell

Green Party, Highgate