

## **Planning Application 2023/5339/P**

New application (Jan 10 2024) - Full Planning Permission

Site Address:

**Alexandra Road Estate, Rowley Way, London NW8 0SN**

Proposal:

**Replacement of existing single glazing with double glazing and associated works.**

**Development Type: Residential Minor Alterations.**

Type of comment: OBJECTION

*Replacement of existing single glazing with double glazing and associated works.*

**GLAZING** - This is large works involving very detailed work on 520 dwellings (other documents state 527 dwellings) on all of the timber window frames on this Grade 2\* listed estate. The damage to these frames could be catastrophic once Camden starts work as most contractors work unsupervised. Many original features have been lost, some (an entire kitchen) as recently as January 2024.

This proposed glass is (toughened) glass from China. The shipping alone renders it unsustainable. Camden has not audited the condition of the timber frames. I am concerned that Camden intends to measure up one flat of each layout type and use that as the basis of all measurements for the same flat type. This will not be sufficiently accurate. Plus, none of the frames have been maintained during their lifetime so some will be in very bad condition. Leaseholders won't be able to replace glass (in the future) if it breaks. We pointed this out at the Pilot Flat viewing. The weight of glass in relation to the B3 stable-door frames, on the lower ground flats, is concerning. Leaseholders don't know what they will be charged. Currently Camden says we won't pay for the glass if it fits and if it doesn't then we have to pay for the frames. Does this mean Camden will change the size of the window to fit the glass? This makes no sense. Leaseholders pay for glass if it is broken. Camden is responsible for the frames according to our lease. Therefore Camden is responsible for the costs of the glass and frame "Upgrade" I understand Camden also showed residents European glass, and not the proposed glass, at the pilot flat viewing. The plugs and getters are intrusively ugly and liable to failure.

**Access Document Thermal Improvements to Dwellings** - the reason given for the change in glazing is to address 30% of heat loss escaping through windows. There is nothing in the planning application that demonstrates how this will be achieved. Camden merely claims the new glazing will achieve this but provides no figures. Camden also identifies the need for specialist work in fitting the glass and restoring the frames; this is unlikely to happen. No audit on the condition of the timber frames has been carried out. There's also a problem with the size of some of the windows. The larger balcony windows will be a problem for the specified vacuum glass. There is no mention of thermal coating which would be beneficial. Camden does not intend to install solar power on any part of the estate to offset any costs.

Currently residents in A block have bathroom windows that are so blocked up with Pigeon droppings (on the outside) the windows can no longer be opened for ventilation. This is a health risk. How is Camden proposing to remedy this problem? When Camden overhauls the windows on the back of A Block will this be addressed? How is Camden intending to wash or enable window cleaning on the estate in the future. The rear windows of A, B and C Blocks have never been cleaned to my knowledge. There seems little point in overhauling windows if they are never cleaned again.

**HERITAGE** - There is no solution regarding the problems we will experience when the heating system changes from constant heat during winter months to "on demand" heating. Ventilation isn't even mentioned.

**LAYOUT** - Radiator positions are not shown and the layout involving electrical sockets appears unresolved. Camden tells residents the radiators can go anywhere. This is a false statement. We will also lose the bull nose shadow gap skirting - a beautiful architectural detail. Sadly this is to be replaced by a clumsy

layer of trunking, a thicker skirting board to hide pipe-work and protruding sockets. I can't believe our electric wiring will be hidden by white plastic trunking.

It is also clear that Camden does not know what Heating system will be in place once the boilers fail. It seems Camden wants to wait until the very last minute before anything is decided. This is not really acceptable. Everything should have been discussed, in consultation with the Residents, before any plans were drawn up. The exact plan should be costed for our assessment not an *ad hoc* plan.

**Boilers** - The "Upgrade" makes no sense if it involves using the existing gas boilers. Camden has no idea how long they will last. They are not guaranteed. Replacing the distribution pipework will improve nothing as once it's left to clean and descale itself it will deteriorate in the same way as the existing pipes. If contaminated boilers are attached to brand new pipework no one can possibly expect both to work as per the manuals. The current boilers were installed in 2014 they break down regularly. But Camden insists they have life left in them. What if its 2 years - Leaseholders will have to pay for another round of works. None of us have money to throw away like that. It's totally unreasonable and irresponsible.

If the boilers are kept, then the costs will remain high and once residents are given the "control" that Camden uses to sell this very dubious "Upgrade" we will be in unknown territory. The flats were designed to receive background heating 24/7 over the winter months (October - April but changed to May at some point) Background heating was also changed by Camden at some point during the build, to full heat. If Concrete isn't kept dry - condensation, then damp and mould will follow. Our neighbours on Ainsworth Estate have control of their heating, as do many other estates in Camden; damp is always an issue.

**Costs** - I want to see better evidence of costs - so far £15.5m of which only electrical work £800k is identified. Camden's budget of £14m is therefore already overspent.

**Quality of work** - Better Homes work that was carried out on the estate was described by Residents as appalling. The living conditions whilst work was in progress was described as horrendous. Camden's prediction for these works taking 10 days in our flats is totally unrealistic. Pilot flats took 10 weeks to complete over 6 months, in empty flats. Work will be unsupervised, (as it was during Better Homes), when original kitchens were torn out "by accident". Camden's chosos quotes on cost not quality.

**Fire stopping Surveys** - Various fire-stopping is proposed for all flats. This has never been previously raised or addressed by Camden. At what stage will these works be carried out. It seems short sighted to close up areas that could be used for future works.

Camden has selected certain flats (presumably empty) to be used as reference flats, which will be completed for approval. Who will oversee and decide on the appropriate quality control and who will ensure this is maintained throughout the works?

Pest control has never been carried out on this estate so I doubt that we can expect a pest free estate.

**Trench Heater Product Data sheet** - we were told these are discontinued. What is intended

**Heat Interface Unit SATK32 Data Sheet** - we do not know if this is the HIU that is installed in the pilot flat or the one intended for the Upgrade. Which HIU was tested acoustically? HIUs will also have to be serviced every year as per manufacturers details. I understand Camden has no intention of servicing the HIUs If Leaseholders service their HIUs can the supply still be termed communal?

I have serious concerns regarding the malfunctioning HIUs installed at the HNT estate but since Camden refuses to engage with residents on Alexandra Road Estate to explain the problems clearly, we rely on friends at HNT and The Max Fordham report, both are critical.

**Conclusion** - I do not believe Camden is capable of providing a suitable Heating Upgrade. I think they have lost sight of a truly sustainable and green approach. I have no faith in Camden's ability to carefully plan the "Upgrade:" and it's impossible to imagine how this proposal will be delivered successfully. I dont see how heating system is improved with this proposal or how our heating charges will be reduced. I object to the whole "planned upgrade".