From: Vadim Toader
Sent: 14 April 2025 21:31
To: Planning
Subject: Objection to planning proposal ref 2025/0484/P

To whom it may concern,

I'm a homeowner on Rosemont Road and would like to object to the planning proposal 2025/0484/P.

Please see comments attached.

Best,

Vadim

Objection to Planning Application 2025/0484/P – Section 73 Application for Homebase/O2 Centre/ Car Park - from Cllr Nancy Jirira and NW6 Liberal Democrats

Lack of Consultation

1. We are writing to object to the Section 73 Application for Phase 1 of the O2 Centre site redevelopment. We are disappointed that the Labour Council gave residents only a month to comment on this substantive planning application and did not agree to requests to extend the deadline for consultation responses. Despite this, we surveyed residents closely affected by the redevelopment of the O2 Centre site in order to make sure their voices are heard, and this objection is informed by their responses to us.

Support for Development on this site

2. In our objections to the original planning application we made it clear that we agree with the principle of development on this site. Unlike the local Conservatives, we did not seek to defend a large, surface-level car park between two tube stations. We know that there is a severe housing shortage in the borough, and we support new housing on this site, as set out in Camden's Local Plan and the Fortune Green and West Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan.

The S73 Application - Concerns about the increased height of the blocks

3. The main concern that residents have expressed to us is the increased height proposed in the S73 Application. These add two storeys to three of the tallest blocks and extra storeys to five other blocks. This takes the tallest block to 17 storeys, with two 16 storey blocks. One resident said

   "The new buildings will be too tall for this area – it's not Zone 1 – which is comprised of multiple nearby conservation areas. 17 and 16 storey buildings are excessively high, will block light, views and contradict the local architecture. People objected to 12 storey buildings so how is it that now even taller towers are being proposed?"

4. We are particularly concerned that the higher blocks will affect the view from the surrounding conservation areas including West End Green and South Hampstead Conservation Areas. Historic England has said, in respect of the S73 Application, that it continues to consider that "The volume and scale of the development means that there is a harmful impact to designated heritage assets through development within their setting."

5. We can see from page 42 of the Design & Access Statement that Labour Councillors who form part of the Strategic Panel (SP) and council officers, including those on the Design Review Panel (DRP) have been pushing the developers to increase the height of the blocks across the north of the site. We believe that this is the wrong approach, and that Labour Councillors are yet again not listening or responding to the views of residents. **We urge the Labour Council to think again.**

6. Local residents have said to us

   "Local residents' concerns are repeatedly being sidelined and the responses provided by the Council and/or the developers are hollow of meaning and do not address the questions raised."

Impact on residents of Rosemont and Lithos Roads

7. While many residents in the local area have concerns about the increased height of the blocks, the S73 proposals have a direct effect on residents in Rosemont and Lithos Roads, whose homes overlook the north side of the site. Appendices 6.7.1- 6.7.30 show the extent of sunlight loss and overshadowing.

8. Page 42 of the Design & Access Statement acknowledges that this was raised as an issue, but dismissed by the Labour Councillors who sit on the Strategic Panel, stating "The SP members felt that the additional height to the north could be accommodated, but

that it should be carefully balanced with the consideration of local impacts to existing homes to the north. They noted that variation in heights helps to mitigate these impacts."

9. Residents from these streets expressed their concern to us, stating:

"Don't build so tall. I won't have sun anymore".

"Very concerned about the height of the construction and attendant impact on my house's right to light".

Concerns about Housing Density & Housing Mix

10. Residents also expressed concern to us about the increase in the number of flats – with Phase 1 now totalling 651. This takes the plans even further away from the Council's own Local Plan and Site Allocations Plan, which indicated that 950 homes would be suitable for the whole site. They raised concerns about congestion, and impact on local infrastructure, for example:

"It is essential that local infrastructure, services and amenities are sufficient to accommodate denser population."

11. Residents continue to be concerned about the impact of the development on West End Lane, and West Hampstead Tube Station. They point out that infrastructure improvements promised in relation to recent developments have not materialised:

"Residents were promised a Square (where M&S is) to partly compensate for the huge development – we got a somewhat small forecourt that does not give West Hampstead the centre it was promised."

"No infrastructure improvements have been made to West End Lane."

12. Residents welcome the prioritisation of West Hampstead Tube Station by TfL for step-free access, but this development will only provide a modest contribution of £10m towards the cost of installing a lift at West Hampstead Tube station. We understand that the cost of one year's design work for the required improvements is over £1m, demonstrating how little is actually being contributed to the costs by the developer.

13. Concerns were also raised about the impact on Finchley Road, including the tube station. It is deeply disappointing that this new development will not address in any way the lack of step-free access at Finchley Road station. Residents said:

"This area and the Finchley Road are massively overcrowded – with all the intercity and airport buses it's difficult to navigate the pavement."

"I'm disappointed there is no lift upgrade for Finchley Road station."

14. On housing mix, the S73 Application does nothing to increase the proportion of affordable housing in the scheme. There are only 8 more flats for social rent. At 36% by floor area the updated application continues to fail Camden's own housing policy that there should be 50% affordable homes in new developments and we continue to oppose it on these grounds. Residents have told us:

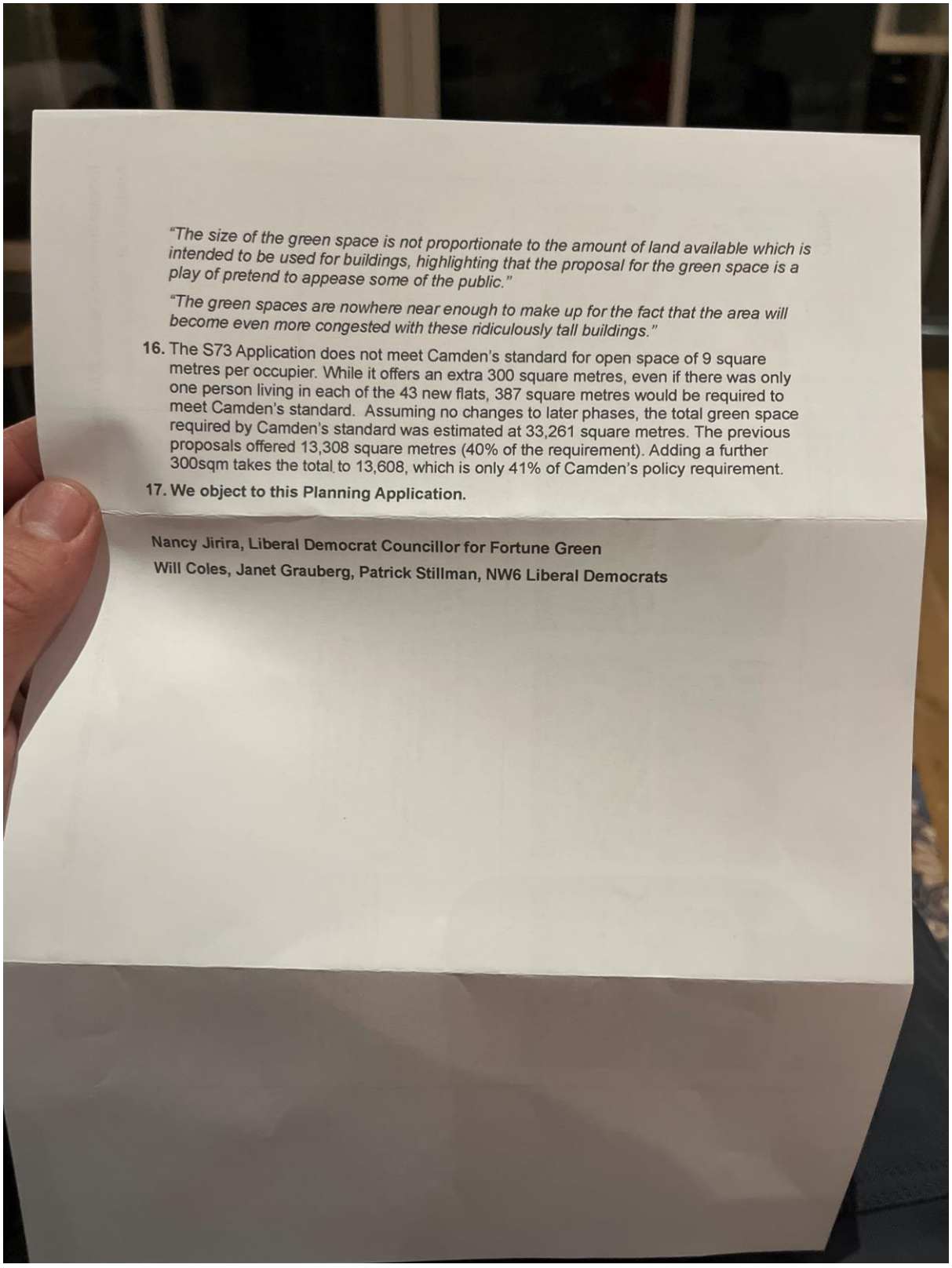
"This is for the developers, not for people in housing need or local people"

"We don't need another development full of overly priced flats that no-one can really afford".

Lack of Green Space

15. The lack of green space in the development overall is one of the issues raised most often by residents. The West Hampstead area is already classed as deficient in open space. Comments on the S73 Application include:

"Not enough green areas"



"The size of the green space is not proportionate to the amount of land available which is intended to be used for buildings, highlighting that the proposal for the green space is a play of pretend to appease some of the public."

"The green spaces are nowhere near enough to make up for the fact that the area will become even more congested with these ridiculously tall buildings."

16. The S73 Application does not meet Camden's standard for open space of 9 square metres per occupier. While it offers an extra 300 square metres, even if there was only one person living in each of the 43 new flats, 387 square metres would be required to meet Camden's standard. Assuming no changes to later phases, the total green space required by Camden's standard was estimated at 33,261 square metres. The previous proposals offered 13,308 square metres (40% of the requirement). Adding a further 300sqm takes the total to 13,608, which is only 41% of Camden's policy requirement.
17. **We object to this Planning Application.**

Nancy Jirira, Liberal Democrat Councillor for Fortune Green

Will Coles, Janet Grauberg, Patrick Stillman, NW6 Liberal Democrats

Vadim-Radu Toader