

Sorry this got delivered late, but I hear you have not yet had the necessary meetings.

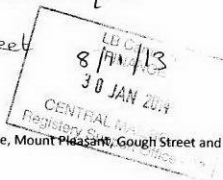
25 Holsworthy Square, Elm Street  
London, WC1X 0BA

To: Richard McEllistrum

Planning Department: Camden Council

Application Number: 2013/3807/P

Site Address: Land west of Royal Mail bounded by Phoenix Place, Mount Pleasant, Gough Street and Calthorpe Street, Camden WC1



Dear Richard McEllistrum,

Along with all residents of Holsworthy Square, I welcome the development of this site, but have many concerns about what is being proposed. These concerns are listed below.

**Tower A3:** Tower A3, at 15-storeys, is a full five storeys higher than nearby Laystall Court: We think it preferable if all the tall buildings were sited closer to the centre of the site, adjacent to the central part of Phoenix Place and possibly over to central section of Gough Street. A central location would not be so close to residential buildings, although adjacent to other existing tall buildings: the Mount Pleasant sorting office, the ITN building, and its neighbour at Gough Street. This would give the corners of the new site, opposite Laystall Court and Holsworthy Square, room to breathe and leave the residents of these building some air and light. Paragraph 4.2.11 of the SPD states that the "siting and design [of taller buildings] should be carefully considered with regard to the nature of the surrounding places and the quality of life for those living and working around them" - clearly is not the case here.

**Local Context:** It seems exceptionally unfair to burden an area of already high-density residential dwellings with more of the same. Of all areas bounding the proposed site, it is beyond question that this corner has the highest residential densities. Mullen Tower, Laystall Court, Holsworthy Square, and Gray's Inn Buildings (along with the upcoming Mount Pleasant Studios) all surround this corner and with little or no access to open space. Section 3.3.6 of the SPD states: it is important that "any future development responds to and integrates with the surrounding neighbourhoods". The response is to place the largest density of people and the largest building of the development next to the neighbourhood that already has the high-densities and more than its fair share of tall buildings! Section 7.21 of the London Plan states "all buildings should help create streets and places that are human in scale so that their proportion and composition enhances, activates and appropriately encloses the public realm". How can a large 15-storey structure in a neighbourhood already dominated by the similarly sized ITN building, but with no existing residential buildings above 10-storeys, be considered "human in scale"? A human will be dwarfed against it.

**Proximity of schools:** Christopher Hatton Primary School, a community school of 250 pupils ranging from three to 11 in age borders the site in the south-west corner. We ask how can such siting of a 15-story building be said to be carefully considered, or said to respond to and integrate with the surrounding neighbourhood, when the architects publicly admitted to being unaware that a nearby school even existed when they drafted their plans? How can such a large structure in such close proximity to an already confined school ever be considered "appropriate"?

The playground entrance of the school where most pupils enter each day is directly opposite the proposed tower. The tower will dwarf the school, dominate the outlook from the gates and playground, and induce a sense of confinement. This is a school already hemmed in by Rosebery Avenue on one side, and three high-density residential buildings on two of its other three sides.

**Precedence:** Churchill House, at 40 Laystall Street (which has most of its frontage on Mount

Pleasant directly opposite the proposed tower A3), was the last building to be built here and was originally proposed as a 10 storey tower. This was reduced to 5 storeys because of the detrimental impact such a structure would have had on the local area. This sets a precedent so no new building situated in proximity of Christopher Hatton Primary School should exceed this height of five-storeys.

Positioned in a hollow: The south-west corner is the lowest-lying portion of the site, the bed of the former course of the Fleet River. There is a real danger that the south-west corner will become dank and gloomy particularly in winter. Already the small area of public space in front of Laystall Court becomes treacherously slippery in winter due to the damp conditions. A tall building may alter the micro climate making this much worse.

Section 4.2.3 of the SPD states that the "councils will seek to improve the quality of the environment and protect the amenity of occupiers and neighbours." Let us hope that this statement will be shown to be true.

No access to public space for the south-west corner The immediate neighbourhood adjacent to the south-west corner of the proposed development has undoubtedly the highest density of residential dwellings when compared to any other neighbouring area. Yet, the proposed monolithic and impermeable structure proposed for this corner provides no access whatsoever to the new open spaces to be created within the development.

Section 4.1.2 states that it is a 'priority' for the council to "Open up the site with both new and improved streets that make better connections between Mount Pleasant and the surrounding neighbourhoods." But the plan has no new streets that connect with Mount Pleasant! Another 'priority' for the council is to "create new high quality and inclusive public spaces for local people both on the site and at its four corners". Where is this new high quality inclusive space to be? The small triangle of open space outside Laystall Court could be expanded and much improved - but as this space will also serve many of the hundreds of new residents in what is proposed to be the densest part of the development with the tallest building, this can hardly be seen as adequate.

What is being proposed is a wall of shops and cafes at ground level. This is not unwelcome, but should be supplemented and broken up by access to new open space within the site. Section 3.3.18 of the SPD talks of the importance that open space has in integrating the Mount Pleasant site into the adjoining neighbourhoods. Whilst a row of shops and cafes may be said to help link the site to the existing neighbourhood, without access to within the site itself, the very same row of shops and cafes, topped by a looming 15-storey tower-block, will form an impenetrable barrier, and fail to achieve the objective of integrating the Mount Pleasant site into this dense neighbourhood. Many have commented that the proposed development is fortress-like, with the buildings along the perimeter, looking inwards, and turning their backs on their surroundings and the existing residents.

It is very clear that there is an overwhelming need for suitable, quality outdoor space for our most vulnerable residents — our children and retired residents — not to mention all the other residents of working age. And yet no new public space at all is proposed near us. And as the consultation process failed us we get the polar opposite: the tallest building of the development. This surely is the greatest missed opportunity of the entire scheme.

Proposal for a new square at the south-west corner: Local people are strongly in favour of creating a new "square" at the corner of this congested south-west corner of the site. By pushing back and lowering the proposed tower, levelling and terracing the ground, a large new square could be formed where it is needed most. Shops and cafes in the ground floor of the proposed building would line one side of the "square", whilst the Apple Tree pub, the adjacent short terrace of

building, Laystall Court, the school entrance, and Churchill House with its bar/restaurant on the ground floor, would form the opposite side. Landscaped, this space could provide high quality play-equipment, benches, and space for cafe goers to eat and drink outside. It could be an outstanding space.

The proposed new street "Calthorpe Lane": Royal Mail has proposed a new street, which starts at a point on Farringdon Road where there is no pedestrian-crossing, very close to the proposed new entrance to Royal Mail's underground goods-yard where an estimated 3,000 postal-vehicle movements will occur each day, and ends in Phoenix Place. This new "street" is not popular locally. However, many think that a non-vehicular route running diagonally across the whole site from the corner opposite the Holiday Inn (where a crossing already exists across Farringdon Road) to the corner by Elm Street (opposite Holsworthy Square, Laystall Court — both large residential buildings — and Christopher Hatton Primary School, and close to the bustling junction of Rosebery Avenue, Grey's Inn Road and Theobalds Road, and many shops and restaurants) would be a more sensible and useful route. It would open up the site and provide the opportunities for large open spaces along its route.

Building dust and pollution: The proposed site is likely to be highly polluted. It is known to have been a laystall (a rubbish heap) prior to being built on, and formed part of the west bank of the Fleet River, which was for decades literally an open sewer. After the site was built on it housed a variety of industry, was bombed in WW11 and has been used as an unsurfaced car-park by Royal Mail for tens of thousands of vehicles over the last 60 years. In short, the site is likely to be highly polluted and may even contain unexploded bombs.

Vehicles: It is estimated that there will be some 3,000 postal-vehicle movements a day from the expanded operations at the Mount Pleasant Sorting Office. We as residents, and with the safety of children in mind, would like an assurance that no postal vehicles will be allowed to use Mount Pleasant, Elm Street, Gough Street, or Laystall Street, and that their routes will only be along major arterial routes.

No historic reference: Phoenix Place was once the Fleet River. The Fleet River defined the area for centuries, and the section of the river around Mount Pleasant was the last to be enclosed in about 1850. The old parish boundaries clearly show the course of the river and its tributaries across the site. But yet there is no mention or reference to the river in the plans. We ask that the Fleet's historic importance, and that the proposed development's location above the Fleet River be acknowledged and referenced in some respect. Perhaps, at a minimum, one of the newly formed public spaces could be named "Fleet Square"?

Information overload: The planning application alone comprises of 24 documents and 2,500 pages. We, along with others in the community, feel we have been given too little time to study the enormous amount of material, and ask for more time to make our comment.

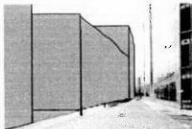
Consultation ignored: At the first public meeting (held in the Holiday Inn) the proposed height of tower A3 (opposite Laystall Court) was so controversial that one of the architects/planners explained publicly that it was "a mistake" (his exact words) and it was in fact not that high. Now the height of the tower had actually been increased! What is the point in having a consultation if it achieves no real change? The community has been lied to.



How the Mount Pleasant Development will look



Gough St - Before



Gough St - After



Mount Pleasant - Before



Mount Pleasant - After

You must return your response to Richard McEllistrum ([Richard.McEllistrum@camden.gov.uk](mailto:Richard.McEllistrum@camden.gov.uk)) by the end of the month or else they won't be logged in time for the Council meeting, and will not count.

We must also send a letter from the official Tenants and Residents Association (TRA) as comments from TRA's are given prominence in the "officer's report".