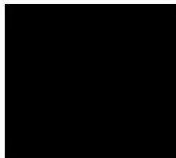


Tania Skelli-Yaoz
West Area Team
Camden Council – Development Management
6th Floor
Camden Town Hall Extension
Argyle Street
London
WC1H 8EQ



By Hand and by Email

7th November 2013

Dear Ms Skelli-Yaoz

Re: Utopia Village, 7 Chalcot Road, London, NW1 8LF
Planning Application 2013/6589/P
By Utopia Properties Limited.

I am writing to object to the above planning application under the GPDO.

I have lived in Primrose Hill for over 20 years.
I am a trustee of the Primrose Hill Community Association and was on the board which set up Primrose Hill Community Library.

I believe that Camden should determine that prior approval is required and that the application for prior approval under the GPDO is refused.

The Application contains technical errors such as the vagueness of the number of dwellings to be made and showing rooflights/skylights where there are none.

Transport: An extra agreement seems to have been made with Camden, relating to car-capping (S.106). However this document has not been included in the application. I argue that without it, there is not sufficient material in the application regarding car ownership and parking.

Part of the building are in fact not B1(a), and therefore since you cannot separate these parts from the other parts, the development of the building should and can not be dealt with under a Class J application.

Again regarding the transport and highways impact of the development, the Transport Report by Robert West is not only insufficient but also misrepresents the facts. The Public Transport Accessibility Level index rating of the site is considered

'poor'. In his report he writes that residents and visitors can "readily access the site by means other than private car" which is a distortion of the PTAL conclusion.

Also, the report uses data from seven surveys not as stated in 'similar sized residential sites (paragraph 5.10). There is no information about three of the sites, and two of the others have less than half the number of flats than of the Utopia proposal.

Also the data used in Appendix A of the Transport Report is insufficiently explained, very old, in a different demographic, transport etc and not clearly applicable to the Utopia site.

So there are no real grounds for Robert West's conclusion that there will be fewer person trips compared to now.

In addition, with relation to the car-capping 'agreement', there is not enough information provided in the application and we also know from the recent development at 58-60 Gloucester Avenue/Sunny Mews NW1, which proceeded with a similar proviso, but it is clear that the agreement is flouted and that there is no enforcement action taken. 'Car Free Developments' exist only on paper – and in reality, there is an increase in cars in the neighbourhood due to the development.

There will be substantial harmful transport and highways impact from the creation of around 53 new homes. In terms both of parking pressures on the surrounding streets, and of the movement of service, delivery vehicles and taxi's to these dwelling. Many of these vehicles will park on the roads outside – no doubt double parking and causing congestion on a well used road and cycle route.

Vehicles exiting the development have no view of approaching pedestrians, pram pushing parents and children running or on scooters.

Like-wise the pedestrians have no view of vehicles about to exit.

Parents push their prams in front of them – their prams being in the exit road before the parents can see if a vehicle is coming.

Children, especially in groups, tend to run or scoot straight across exits as they can't see the danger. The access points are frequently crossed by pedestrians often with young children on their way to Primrose Hill School, or the many other nurseries and play groups in the immediate vicinity – such as Auden Place nursery, Ready Steady Go and drop-in at the Community Centre, St. Mark's Nursery, or Rhyme times for example at the library – or simply to go to the swings in Chalcot Square. Not to mention visits to the cup-cake shop Primrose Bakery on Gloucester Avenue.

Another major concern is the contamination issue.

Although the applicant claims the ground will not be disturbed and therefore no contamination investigation is necessary, that is clearly unlikely to be the case during a major refurbishment and subsequently.

It is frequently seen in this area, that people want to maximize their living space or to create parking as pressure on parking in the area increases – by digging down to create an underground extra room or parking space.

It is evident that there must be considerable risks of damaging effects to workmen and future residents in the buildings from contaminants in the ground from the hazardous – often toxic materials used on the premises in the last 75 years.

The site has formerly included chemical engineering works, pharmaceutical laboratories, a piano and a gramophone factory, medical and electrical instrument making industries.

Harmful pollutants such as paints, solvents, chemicals, plastics, metals – possibly even mustard gas could be present. It is very worrying that there has not been a thorough investigation of risk from contaminants.

It certainly would not seem to be a safe and suitable place for people to live, some with children.

There are too many factors against this development going through under a Class J application.

These historic workplaces should continue to be workplaces.

I also believe that it is undemocratic not to allow residents to oppose developments which will harm their area and livelihoods.

I also strongly oppose the conversion because it will damage the local economy – taking employment opportunities from the area and custom from other businesses making them less viable.

The GPDO will make finding premises for small or start up businesses less affordable and harder to find near where you live. It will have knock on effects for the national economy, it will further congest the roads, and will mean people will have less time with their families and higher stress levels as they will have to travel further and further to their place of work. Part-time work will be less viable.

In our area businesses such as those in Utopia Village where approximately 250 people are working, are valued by the community and contribute to the community for example in donations to the library and community centre both of which depend heavily on donations after losing council funding. Again these local institutions

which support the most needy in the area, will become less viable if these businesses are removed. This along with the loss of business rates, makes it a mistake for Camden to allow the mass conversions from business to residential which the GDPO is creating.

I very much hope that Camden will recognize the current serious threat that these Class J applications are to the local economy and historic character of mixed-use which make it so popular to businesses, residents and visitors.

The council have an obligation to protect people and their neighbourhoods. I ask the council to give an Article 4 direction to Primrose Hill with immediate effect in order to do this.

For the avoidance of doubt, I entirely reserve my rights in relation to the Application.

