


D Corden & H Foxwell-Corden

14 Egbert Street (upper flat), London, NW1 8LJ



4th September 2013

Dear Ms Skelli-Yaoz,

Utopia Village, 7 Chalcot Road, London NW1 8LH - 2013/15111/P

We understand that the deadline for comments on the above application is 4th September. However, the consultation has coincided with a period when many people are on holiday and it has not been possible to contact you to discuss the proposed development. It would have been useful to be able to do so as the application is based on recent legislation, which is unfamiliar to most members of the public.

We have therefore only been able to prepare some brief comments on the application, but would like the opportunity to provide further comments and will be contacting our local councillor separately about this.

The Loss of Small Business Units

We have a fundamental objection to the loss of small business units. Utopia Village provides accommodation for small and medium sized businesses, including a number of creative industries. Planning policies in both the London Plan and Camden clearly support the provision and protection of premises suitable for these types of businesses (Policy CS8 Camden Core Strategy; Policy 3B.8 of the London Plan).

The aim of the recent changes to the General Permitted Development Order was to bring empty or underused buildings back into use. This clearly does not apply to Utopia Village as it would seem that there is only one unit currently available to let, indicating high levels of demand for these premises. We have not yet discussed the proposals with any of the businesses currently occupying the units in Utopia Village but we would imagine that they would find it very difficult to find equivalent accommodation locally, thus causing considerable disruption to the operation of their businesses.

We would therefore like clarification as to what Camden Council's position is on the loss of such valuable business accommodation and what action the Council could take to protect these businesses. It does not seem that the proposal will generate any affordable housing, Community

Infrastructure Levy payments or any other benefits which might otherwise be considered to outweigh the loss.

Construction Noise and Disruption

The proposed construction work will obviously cause significant noise and disruption to residents both during and after any works taking place, but no information has been provided as how the construction process will be managed (in particular construction traffic) or the likely programme for completing the works. Further information should be provided by the applicant.

Impact on Transport and Highways

The proposal will have significant impacts in terms of traffic generation and in particular increased demand for parking. However, the Transport Statement submitted with the application is deficient in a number of ways:

- The statement that the proposed use would generate fewer vehicle trips per day than the existing use is only supported with reference to comparable premises and developments elsewhere. However, given the low parking provision on site and parking restrictions in the immediate area, it seems likely that the numbers of employees who currently drive to and from work is actually much lower than in other small business units;
- No surveys of the existing businesses has been undertaken – as there are only 27 businesses, it would seem reasonable to require a survey of existing travel patterns to be undertaken to inform the assessment of existing and future vehicular movements;
- Existing and proposed on-site parking numbers are not given; and
- No proper analysis of the likely levels of car ownership and additional demand for on street parking in the area has been provided, despite the fact that this is likely to be significant in an area where it is already difficult for residents to park.

In the first instance, the Council should require the applicant to submit a more comprehensive Transport Assessment which includes a survey of existing car use and a more rigorous assessment of the likely levels of car ownership and the impact this will have on parking demand in the immediate area, where parking is already very limited.

The Council should determine that prior approval is required in relation to transport and traffic impacts and, in our view; prior approval should be refused on these grounds.

Yours sincerely,

Dougal Corden & Harriet Foxwell-Corden