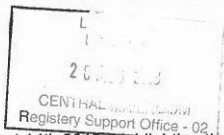


Dear Tania Skelli-Yaoz



Thank you for the letter dated August 14th 2013, highlighting the recent planning application in relation to the proposed re-designation of the existing commercial buildings (Class B1(a)) at Utopia Village, Chalcot Road NW1 into 57 residential units (Class C3) within the Primrose Hill Conservation Area.

Our opening comments would be in relation to the timing of the letter. In light of the month of August being renowned as a period of family holidays, & the fact that we are now mid-August, I fear a large number of residents will not have sufficient time to respond. This fact has not escaped me & I am sure has not escaped the applicant. I would urge you as a matter of fairness to insure a period of extension is provided to insure all neighbouring properties have an opportunity to adequately respond to a very meaningful change to what is a very close knit family orientated neighbourhood.

On review of the somewhat limited application online (when it comes to details of floor plans, changes in relation to height, changes in relation to windows etc.), We wish to **object in the strongest of terms** to such a development. As such, we have outlined a number of key points which we believe should be carefully considered during this review process:

1. Implications due to substantial building work

- **Length of construction time:** The Utopia Village site footprint is significant and the construction of such a vast project would take years. In addition, the existing infrastructure / access would struggle to support such a project.
- **Noise:** The construction noise levels would be unacceptable within the surrounding houses, many of which are just meters away and whom have very young children that nap and play during the day
- **Safety:** Very heavy machinery and construction vehicles would be constantly moving around the narrow streets of Primrose Hill, an area which sees many of the inhabitants traveling to work and school on foot or bicycle. The meaningful increase in construction traffic that this project would entail would pose a danger to pedestrians. Not to mention the enormous levels of dust which will naturally be created by the building work.

2. Implication to the Surrounding Community

- **Local business impact:** much of the lifeblood of the area is due to the successful mix of residential and commercial buildings. This has

created a vibrant culture in the area, providing both local employment and revenue for the surrounding retail outlets, cafes, bars & restaurants, many of whom rely on the lunch time trade of the employees at Utopia Village. In light of a number of other commercial features being closed or redeveloped, the offices within Utopia Village has become a vital life-blood to the area's economic well-being.

- **Parking:** with an additional 57 flats being added to the core of the area, it will have a significant & unbalanced impact to the area, with Chalcot Road, Edis Street & Fitzroy Road being the likely roads to bear the burden. Although not being overly burdened at present, these street most certainly do not offer the additional capacity needed, and this is under the assumption that a healthy amount of parking spaces will be available within the proposed development.

- **Population density:** the surrounding area continues to under-go considerable redevelopment with various additional residential projects being carried out in recent time. A number of projects have recently been completed (Sunny Mews), are either underway (Dumpton Place) or where application has been approved but work has not commenced (44 Gloucester Avenue - 16 apartments & 13 office units). I would urge you to consider the implications of these developments on the area before approving an additional development of this enormous scale.

- **Refuse collection:** the current once a week collection already stretches households. With an additional 57 residential units the situation would likely deteriorate even further, with a increased requirement for waste disposal trucks being required to service the additional demand.

- **Traffic:** with the additional residential housing there will naturally be a substantial increase in the volume of traffic through the Chalcot road surrounding roads (Egbert Street, Fitzroy Road, Edis Street, Gloucester Avenue & Princess Road in particular). Camden Council has already implemented a 20 mph traffic restriction to enhance both a safety measure but also to limit run through traffic through the enclave. All these efforts will be greatly diminished in-line with the increased volume of automobiles that the proposed development would bring.

- **Safety:** the areas around Chalcot Road adjacent to Primrose Hill & Chalcot Square, have established themselves as areas in which young children of the neighbourhood & surrounding areas feel safe and secure. The increased traffic will also have a severe negative impact on this aspect of the area.

- **Noise:** although a vibrant work space during the week, Utopia Village does not generate significant levels of noise, particularly in the evenings or over the weekend when the site is largely empty. It therefore has little impact on the neighbouring 120 residential units when it comes to noise. Should the site be converted to residential use, especially of the high-density type that is being proposed, noise levels will naturally increase, with the neighbouring houses (many of whom are just a metre

or two away), suffering as a consequence.

- **Privacy:** given the extremely close proximity of the site to the adjacent houses, the proposed development would remove any aspect of privacy that is currently afforded at the weekends or post working hours.

### 3. Neighbour already in a state of flux

- **HS2 overhang:** as you are fully aware, the proposed HS2 development has already caused a significant property overhang in the borough of Camden. The proposed route cuts right through Primrose Hill, touching the end of Edis Street and along Gloucester Avenue. In our view, adding an additional significant development will compound this further.

### 4. Monetary Gain vs. Area Benefits

As we have seen through recent years, many property developers have overstretched themselves going into the financial crisis and ultimately were unable to deliver on their initial proposed plans. In many cases across London this has caused large sites to be left vacant for long periods of time, allowing them to becoming rundown, dangerous and even occupied by squatters. As mentioned previously, 44 Gloucester Avenue (The Courtyard) was granted planning permission to change its use. However, post the application being granted the property has been recently sold. This highlights the fact that in many cases developers are driven by monetary gain rather than the proposed impact to the surrounding area. 44 Gloucester Avenue now sits vacant with two more overhangs, 1) whether the permitted application will be carried out or amended with a precedent already established for redevelopment & thus a more ambitious planning application may be submitted before any work is carried out, 2) as it has been sold to another owner, the site does sit vacant, presenting a security risk. We fear if Utopia Village did enter a period of being sold, a huge portion of Primrose Hill could thus sit vacant for a considerable period of time with an unknown end result.

### 5. Personal impact

We have restored our property very much in-line with the area's conservation principles, maintaining the character and features of the house (both internally & externally). With this in mind, the adjoining modern additions that over look my property have disproportionately large windows that look directly into our back yard, kitchen and living room. Any existing privacy would disappear, which would impact our entire family (including three children under the age of 5 years old). Moreover, any changes in the footprint of Utopia Village, in particular in relation to any applications for height increases (under this application

or under further applications) would have a significant impact on the level of natural light coming into our back yard where our children play every day, or into the rest of the house, which would have a significant negative impact on our property.

I hope that our comments will be given serious consideration by the planning office.

