



Camden Regeneration and Planning Development Management  
London Borough of Camden  
Town Hall  
Judd Street  
London WC1 8HD

16<sup>th</sup> August 2013

Dear Tania Skelli-Yaoz,

**Planning Application: Utopia Village**

Thank you for your letter advising residents in Chalcot Road, Edis Street, and elsewhere in the neighbourhood of Utopia Village about the planning application for change of use in Utopia village from offices to 57 residential units.

Before going any further it needs to be emphasized that the date of your letter is itself deeply troubling. You send a planning application on the 14<sup>th</sup> August demanding replies within 21 days. As you know this is the time that many people are on holiday: hardly auspicious for a serious consultation process.

In my own opinion the change of use from offices to 57 residential units is an extremely bad idea for the following reasons:

- The proposed work is absolutely vast and will blight the area for years – bringing constant disturbance to families in the surrounding streets, many of which have young children and babies. If the evidence of the rebuilding at the back of the library in Sharpleshall Street (which has been ongoing for two years) is anything to go by the rebuilding in Utopia village would indeed take several years.
- One could only imagine the possible medical consequences – particularly to the very young, the elderly, and those with respiratory conditions – that would result from the building work

and all the dust and debris accompanying it that would be a feature of the neighbourhood - for *years*.

- Conversion to residential use in Utopia village follows similar conversions in Primrose Hill. The change of use of the former film studios in Gloucester Avenue is a case in point.
- Such conversions are undertaken by property developers who are increasingly shaping/re-shaping the whole of the area of Primrose Hill in the name of the very substantial profits to be made by rapidly rising residential property prices.
- But in the process of such development the character of the area is being systematically destroyed.
- One aspect of Primrose Hill that has always been an essential part of its character has been its mixed economic use. The film studios form one example, the artists studios behind Fitzroy Road another. But Utopia Village is possibly the most substantial example of a site for offices and studios that has been peacefully occupying space in between residential houses to the benefit of all. The proposed change of use would remove this mixed character altogether.
- Car parking is already stretched. 57 or more cars seeking parking spaces in the streets around Utopia village would produce unacceptable overload and pressure on the area.
- Furthermore, if it became part of the plan for cars to enter Utopia village then the area around the entrance to the village in Chalcot Road would become a danger area for the many children, with their families, on the way to school in Princess Road.
- Rubbish collection (once per week at present) already stretches households. With 57 additional households the situation would deteriorate considerably in this regard. Further, the entry and exit of rubbish collection lorries to and from Utopia village would also be a source of danger.

I would thus like to register my total opposition to the proposed changes of use.

Yours sincerely, Tom Selwyn