

land to West of Royal Mail bounded by Phoenix
Mt Pleasant, Gough St & Calthorpe St W.E.I.
Dear Mr McEllistram

I would like to add to my previous comments sent in last week or so. Since then further things have arisen which I would like to mention.

Re. Planning application ref number 2013/3807p including 2013/1423 and 1435.
Comments upon this re application of Mt Pleasant Sorting Office and Gough St, Calthorpe St and Phoenix Pl.

1. Design and layout.

Density on the existing car park site to high per m2, no large public green area other than a small sections or little bike paths(bike crime is huge in this area) to the north in Gough St, which is overlooked by a tall buildings on both side of this road making it a dark space and creates attraction to criminals for easy access to the rear of the Calthorpe St houses. Refer to local rise in crime rate particularly in Gough St/Calthorpe St.

Drilling and laying foundations and basements to new build likely to have detrimental affect on houses along Calthorpe St, which already suffers from foundation movements. Proximity layout is a concern for these matters.

The retail and office designated within the design all fall into the Car park as well as the highest units /m2. The tallest tower is also placed on a junction already causing concerns over children/people being hit by cars travelling down Mt Pleasant into Elm St.

We feel this should be looked at more closely and a more balanced use be made of the whole of the two sites rather than cramming as much as this design can into one site, causing the greatest suffering to residents/workers nearest to this camden side of the development. That being the present car park between Phoenix Pl, Mt Pleasant, Calthorpe St and Gough St of which perimeter actually holds more residents/workers than that of the Farringdon Rd side of the development. This layout/design is completely backward looking. Worse, it places the greatest burden upon those living in the Camden side of this development in particular those along Calthorpe St.

2. External appearance and Material/part of design and layout.

This design and layout does not lend it self to being part of the local community, in fact its very much internalised and cut off from the Georgian and Victorian houses which surrounds up to one third of the perimeter. Looking more like a closed inward community and uninviting to those outside it, both office workers and residential alike. Making its future buyers feel isolated within a community.(or is this the aim of the design?)

Its design at present would suit a new town, rather it looks as though its been squeezed into an historical part of Central London borough of Camden, while the Islington side looks luxurious and very attractive having large private green areas and subterranean plants!

At this stage we have no specifics of finishes/materials being suggested but hope that the windows designs will blend in with the surrounding Victorian buildings and not with the backs of Office buildings along Gough St or the Holiday Inn. That all materials will comply with regs on risk and environmental issues.

Which brings us to the matter of the retail/office unit allocation of m2. Most of the retails within the area are already suffering financially and many have closed or not renewed leases. This area has an abundance of fine restaurants/coffee houses and small shops such as newsagents/ironmongers/ etc.

We have a large Waitrose. The Peoples Supermarket which our illustrious leader Cameron even visited and showed his support for. There are other small independent outlets in Lambs Conduit St, Leather Lane, Exmouth Mk, Roseberry Ave, Clerkenwell, Grays Inn Rd. All of these retails already in existence will suffer more financial burdens if this development includes yet more unwanted/unneeded retail space.

A walk around the site along the main streets/roads and one can see already many office signs for rent/lease which have been empty for many months and in some cases over 2 years(Guilford St). Its our belief this section within the development could well be put to either more housing. How much is earmarked for affordable housing, has this been determined yet is there any much needed single units

of social housing in this application?) or community uses such as a school maybe? Or a centre for the kids? A Medical centre.

Given the PO had originally squatted the prison site in 1885 and built on it without legal permission it goes without reason to wonder if this once public land(or is it still?) should include social single unit housing for the local needs and not kowtow to financial foreign investors.

We residents do not need more of something that already is lying empty or over done. This development may run the risk of looking like a little ghost development, or worse. When all it needs is a little more design of sympathetic thought and consideration and involvement of its surroundings and historical connection to Church and public funds.

We are not Oxford St nor are we Westminster council.(Rathbone Place PO sell off). Money was earmarked to revamp the sorting office! Only for it to be sold off to private investors. Pressure from central government to sell of fast before next election! Sorry financial year.

3 DDA access. Not able to comment as not seen specific detailed drawings. However its assumed that the design will follow the law on this matter. How many units will be built at ground level to comply with this law? What allowances have been made for the visually impaired within the finishing and access routes, What and where are the ramps. Will dark areas, and there are many in this design comply with that law/regs?

4 Loss of daylight sunlight and privacy.

At every point surrounding this development all residents and offices will suffer loss on all three counts. ITN designed by Sir N Foster around gaining/utilising natural light will be greatly diminished and the whole design of ITN will be undermined by this proposal upon the Gough St side. Has ITN been notified?

This is a section for all residents along the Calthorpe St that is most concerning. They will suffer even greater loss of light and be overlooked/shadowed almost completely by the buildings within the north end of the car park site and the tower on the Phoenix Place site. The basements of these houses are already dark, this will leave them even more stygian.

Privacy will also be lost due to the proximity, heights and layout of this design to the backs of those houses in Calthorpe St.

The proximity/heights of the whole development can be re designed by spreading the density across the whole more evenly across the total m2 on both sides. Utilising spaces earmarked on this design for Large private green areas sited on the Sorting office side of the development closest to the present back of the Sorting Office named "the meadow" previously named "oxford st"....

Which then lead to Noise Nuisance.

5 Noise Nuisance./dust/pollutions. Parking and Traffic

All new construction will have a dreadful affect upon any residential/offices near by. Its in the developers risk assessment phase to reduce this where ever possible. We rely upon the planning dept to ensure this task is carried out not by the applicants desk top method or a walk about as shown in the paperwork of this application but one which complies with construction/building law and risk assessment procedures on the matter. Powerful pile drivers do cause structural earth movements; this is the sort of information required beforehand and not after application approval. Its too late then.

The Car Park site of this development is Brownfield and has a history of being used to store arms/rubbish dump and if not mistaken was hit during the 2ww and concreted over. If drilling for basements/foundations are to take place on this site then an in-depth examination/test should be required, not a desk top guess of possible unexploded bombs but about possible lead/mercury and other chemicals that were stored as well as arms within the ball bearing manufactured or stored.

The traffic density will be huge and it appears within this application paperwork no proper evaluation or site plan has been offered. There is no real thought given to how access will be gained for the traffic entrances for both sites. Where is the site plan? Where are the cranes and how many? Etc etc.

So, given the density of the structures and basements being built the amount of noise and pollution will be quite substantial and will cause great discomfort to anyone living or working within meters of the site, particularly in the backs of Calthorpe St due to the proximity upon the rear of those houses.

It's a given that the residential/offices along Calthorpe St, Gough St and Mount Pleasant/Elm St will undoubtedly suffer the greatest. This is why the whole site space/design layout needs to be looked at and the buildings be reduced and a more equally proportioned layout over the whole of the development be sought. Scrutiny of the access to the Gough St side is required as to the effect of heavy goods delivering construction to that side upon both residents/offices. There is concern that the existing pavement at the top of Gough St and Calthorpe St will be removed, this in the past has caused many accidents with kids and traffic generally using this street as a rat run or short cut to avoid the build up in Calthorpe St ahead of the traffic lights. This and any other road control systems must remain as a health and safety issue.

Once the buildings are completed, the area then has to deal with the increase in Parking requirement and pressures upon its drainage system (already a problem). It's not enough that restrictions on parking permits will be introduced to new residents. This will not deter the new home owners from bringing in their cars after parking restriction hours, leading to greater demand on parking which we suffer already. ITN for example use after hours parking, and presently have many cars idling outside during daytime. Deliveries will be affected leading to traffic jams.

There appears to be no real attempt at looking into how the present PO workers cars parked in the site between Phoenix and Gough St car park are going to be placed once work begins. Two days ago I counted more than 100 cars during 9am to 12 noon parked up on that site and in the evening more than 60 and also some of the workers who are actually working on the refurbishment up to 20 cars.

We also will have the extra burden of traffic from the proposal of Wren St Tower block and new school going on at the same time. This means that during construction (phased or otherwise) the small roads of Mount Pleasant, Wren St, Calthorpe St (already a busy St) Pacenham St, Gough St and Phoenix St will see an unbelievable amount of large vehicles trying to gain access into both the PO development and the Camden own development in Wren St. There are presently width constrictions in Wren St, Calthorpe St and Pacenham St. The residents do not want to see any of these removed.

What of the effects upon the residents who live in Pacenham St, Wren St and Calthorpe St, who will be surrounded constantly by large construction vehicles' wanting to gain access into both sites whos construction time schedules clash.

This development residential application is one of the biggest in central London and as such then greater thought is required into its affects, its feasibility, its method of access, its length of build, its design and density, its choices of materials and outlook et al. If not, it may turn into one of the most controversial applications given the present political climate. That media attention has already been taken up by the Guardian and others regarding the sell off, so any controversy over this design will no doubt attract further attention.

A desktop assessment is wholly inadequate as too is the whole of this design and its implications upon the local community. Summed up, COMPLACENT, arrogant, lazy and totally inconsiderate laced with greed.

Once again a golden opportunity presents itself for an amazing design to sit proudly in the future may go begging for the sake of a few pennies. If what was and to some still is public land is given over without a second thought into its design, then shame on us all for allowing this deplorable design to sit as a monument to our failure to act with a conscience to be looked at as an eyesore.

Lastly, as for employment for the locals, how is this to be achieved? I myself have a long background in the construction industry will this site offer me the work. I doubt it those positions have already gone out.

My flat was one of only 4 flats to be light tested while the azimuth angle was in spring time position. I have not heard anything about the results I believe this was carried out by the Architects on this design. Could those results be made known publically? If not could the council carry out its own light test?

Underground Tunnel?

Has anyone taken this into consideration? What will happen to this tunnel and have all safeguards been taken to ensure it does not flood or worse cause any future problems if it collapses? AT no point in any of the application documents has this been referred or mentioned.

