

Dear Mr McEllistrum,

I am writing to express my concerns about the proposed redevelopment of the Royal Mail Sorting office site at Mount Pleasant and have done this within headings as set out in your recent letter, dated 26th June. To our dismay, I discover that many of my neighbours in Calthorpe Street have not in fact received the same letter, which I have notified your office of today.

Design and layout

Design and Layout are completely inappropriate to existing buildings. Buildings are much too high and matched to non-residential ones neighbouring on the site when instead the standard of lower residential terrace should be taken as the model. Heights of buildings will result in large areas of deep shadow within the development itself. Density of buildings and layout undesirable: increase risk of crime. We feel that buildings should not exceed 9 storeys but in the main, buildings should be averagely 5 storeys high.

External appearance and materials

Overall appearance is too dense in scale and will dwarf buildings of surrounding area. The scale and style will significantly alter the character of the area giving it corporate look, similar to the one in Kings Cross and City of London which would be wholly inappropriate here. Materials used are subject to same concerns about scale and the mass of these, sympathetic or otherwise, is an issue.

Access for disabled people

This is hard to comment on – in terms of how accessible the site is to future residents, presumably this will need to meet a standard. For existing residents, there appears to be a scarcity of public open space but where that does occur it will be important that is easily available to all.

Loss of daylight, sunlight and privacy of neighbours

This is a major concern particularly for those households in nos 26-48 Calthorpe Street whose houses presently overlook both the Camden and Islington parts of the site. Proximity to these houses of high buildings will restrict views and overshadow them. (NB Results from light surveys carried out on 4 properties in this terrace were not made available to tenants, despite their willingness to co-operate in making their homes available to surveyor, who told us firmly that details would only be found in the overall report, if at all).

Traffic and Parking will be put under further strain – traffic levels during the development will intensify as temporary traffic controls are introduced and afterwards with the new community in place, not least because high proportion of the buildings will be given over to commercial and retail use.

Loss of, or an increase in, a particular type of use of land

Loss of a space which has the potential as a rich resource for the whole community which could instead provide opportunities for training, to conserve trades associated with part of London, as a wildlife area, (the Fleet River could flow openly) creating open spaces for all ages to enjoy together, to provide mixed housing whereby young people born and brought up here can remain and support older people, for a community hall and allotments to allow local residents to learn about growing their own food.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Christina Lorimer



Comments Form

Name IAN STALLARDTelephone number
Planning application number 2013/3807/PPlanning application address LAND TO WEST OF ROYAL MAIL SORTING OFFICEI support the application (please state reasons below) I object to the application (please state reasons below)

Your comments

The part of the development closest to my premises, on the corner of Mount Pleasant and Gough Street, is far too tall. If the development was this high it would dwarf all surrounding buildings and block everyone's light.

Dear Mr McEllistrum,

As a long-term resident of Calthorpe Street and member of the local community I have several issues with the proposed development ref. 2013/3807/P.

I have been to most of the public consultation meetings, and am shocked to see that local residents' concerns have not been addressed, despite claims to the contrary in the planning statement and non-technical summary.

My concerns are briefly as follows:

1. Re Waste Management:

Plans are vague regarding increasing need both during development and afterwards for a substantially increased population.

2. Re Socio-Economics:

The summary fails to acknowledge points frequently raised during public consultation regarding social provision; schools, health care, community facilities. It is not clear how the developer will ensure that local people benefit in terms of employment both during and after the development phase.

3. Re Transport and access:

Estimates for road use do not appear to have been logically assessed, and as previously raised the impact of a development on this scale on the locality will be significant, with potential structural danger to existing housing.

4. Noise and vibration:

Listed terraced housing in Calthorpe Street has very shallow foundations, many of the houses are currently supported with ties as they are already tipping street-wards as a result of traffic. Planning documents do not take this into account, and furthermore appear to minimise the impact on the local community in terms of disruptive noise during a development that will take years.

5. Air quality:

The summary acknowledges that air quality will suffer from dust during demolition and building, as well as the increased traffic. However more concerning is the failure to sufficiently assess ground conditions on a brown field site, which could result in toxins being released into the atmosphere.

6. Archaeology:

It is not clear how the significance of archaeological remains has been assessed as moderately important, what these remains might consist of, or what steps could be taken during development to assess and preserve any that may be more important.

7. Ground conditions and contamination:

Apparently soil samples have not been taken on site, thus this assessment is entirely conjectural. Surely this should be properly assessed before it is too late and contamination is released?

8. Water resources and flood risk:

The underground water courses are not mentioned as a potential factor affecting foundations for tall buildings. The requirement for extra sewerage provision is mentioned but not how this will be accomplished without placing further strain on an already strained system.

9. Wind:

The summary fails to explain how wind tunnels created by tall buildings will have a beneficial effect.

10. Daylight, sunlight, overshadowing, solar glare and light pollution:

Assessment of current light conditions has not been thoroughly undertaken, with very few site visits

to support the claim that adverse effects will be largely of minor significance.

11. Townscape, visual and built heritage:

This section verges on dishonesty in its failure to acknowledge the fact that proposed building heights are only in keeping with the Holiday Inn and completely dwarf period terraced housing that surrounds much of the site. There is no assessment of the permanent impact of the development on the surrounding area. Again this was raised in meetings, with a suggestion that the development would fit its surroundings better if building heights scaled up to the centre of the site, to no avail.

I must stress that I am not against the development per se, recognising that a site this size presents a golden opportunity to enhance the locality and provide housing and amenities. However in its current form it makes no provision for desperately needed social housing, and only succeeds in placing extra stress on all local infrastructure with no tangible benefits to the local community. Public consultation has been very poor in terms of actual consideration of public opinion, research shows very little evidence of local knowledge and the overall the profit motive seems to be the main concern. Whilst this is natural for the developer I would expect council planning officials to show a more balanced approach that analyses the longer term costs and benefits of such a large development so that the best can be made of the opportunity. I sincerely hope that you will take these issues into serious consideration.

Regards

Lucy Shimidzu