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Planning Applications  
c/o Camden Town Hall  
Judd Street  
London  
WC1H 9JE

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am writing to you regarding the Liddell Road planning applications to support planning application 2014/7649/P (Phase 1) and object to planning application 2014/7651/P (Phase 2). I have set out my reasons for this below.

#### **Phase 1: SUPPORT**

##### **Statutory duty**

Councils have a clear statutory duty to secure "*sufficient primary and secondary schools*". As a result, Camden Council must ensure that there are enough school places available in Camden for all the children and young people that need them.

Yet, there is currently a school place shortage in the North West of Camden, which has led to the existing Kingsgate Primary School currently having three bulge classes. With a continuing and rising demand for school places in this part of the borough, the bulge classes can only be a temporary solution.

It is therefore right and responsible that the Council fulfils its duty to provide 420 more school places in the North West of Camden.

##### **Split site**

The proposed expansion of Kingsgate Primary School would see the school split across two sites. I have tested the journey myself and, outside of rush hour and heading downhill, it took a four year old child 21 minutes to walk between the two sites. Realistically it could take families up to 30 minutes to make this journey. This is far from ideal, and could bring real difficulties for parents that have children at both school buildings.

However, the Government has restricted local authorities' abilities to build new schools, which has left councils very limited in how they provide school places. The expansion of Kingsgate Primary School is the only viable proposal I have seen that would enable the Council to meet its obligation to families, and consequently must be supported.

To make school journeys as safe and as easy as possible, I would advocate that both school sites offer junior and infant classes, with a separate catchment area for each building. This would mean that siblings can be educated in the same building, and that children and parents would only need to travel to one site. It would also carry the benefit of reducing the impact of traffic and noise on surrounding roads, such as Maygrove Road. If the Council does not go down this route, I would urge them to set out how they propose to make it safer and easier for families travel between the two sites.

#### **Catchment area**

As I indicated above, my preference is for there to be two catchment areas, one for each of the school sites, with infant and junior classes offered at both. This would be a fair way of ensuring that all local children are eligible to attend the school, and would minimise disruption to families and residents in the nearby area.

If the Council determines that it wants a single catchment area, then I would favour an admissions point that is halfway between the two sites. This is the fairest way of opening access to the school to local children; if the admissions point is too far south then children living in the new housing development or in the Sidings or Templar House estates may not be eligible to attend, and if it's too far north then children in estates in Kilburn may not be eligible.

There are precedents for both of these types of catchment areas in split sites in the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

I will be setting out my views in further detail in my submission to the Council's consultation on admissions to primary and secondary schools in September 2016.

#### **Phase 2: OBJECT**

##### **Affordable housing**

My primary objection to the Phase 2 development is around the provision of affordable housing on the site. I strongly believe that all new housing developments, and especially Council-led developments, should add to the diversity of their areas through the provision of different types of housing.

My view is in accordance with the NPPF, which mandates local planning authorities to "*create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities*". This requires them to:

*"address the need for all types of housing, including affordable housing and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes)."*

The Council's Core Strategy also states:

*"The Council will therefore apply 50% of the target for additional self-contained homes as a borough-wide target for the proportion of additional homes that should be affordable, which is broadly consistent with the London Plan's strategic target of 50% across London."*

However, the proposals for housing units in Liddell Road fall well short of the Council's 50% affordable housing target; just 4 out of the 106 units will be affordable, and only one of these will be social.

I understand that planning policy makes exceptions to the 50% affordable housing target where developments provide a significant community benefit, in this case the school. Yet, the difference between providing (just under) 4% and 50% affordable housing is vast, and I therefore believe this development goes against the spirit of the Council and NPPF's planning policies.

I do understand that the Council intends to ensure that the sale of 156 West End Lane provides 50% affordable housing, but planning policy dictates that each application must be considered on its own merits. Discussions on the sale are also at a very early stage.

Hence, I contend that the planning application should be refused on the grounds that it will not provide adequate affordable housing.

### **Tower block**

My second objection to the Phase 2 development relates to the tower block. I strongly argue that it is inappropriate to build an 11-storey building on Liddell Road. The site is a residential area, it's outside of the growth area and it is not listed as one of the 13 locations in which the Mayor of London will promote tall buildings.

The tower block, by virtue of its height, mass and scale, would be an overdominant development that would cause harm to the street scene and negatively impact on long views. The skyscraper would tower over Maygrove Road and the Sidings estate, overlooking residents' properties and blocking out some of their sunlight.

The block would be seen right across West Hampstead and Fortune Green, and would negatively impact on views north of the development in Broomsleigh Street, Ravenshaw Street, Dornfell Street, Glastonbury Street and Sumatra Road, just to name a few.

The tower block would also be located directly next to Maygrove Peace Park, and would block out the sunlight of the park for a good portion of the day. I am concerned that the overshadowing of the park would reduce the value and use of this important community asset to local residents.

The long 5-storey housing development would be built right up against Maygrove Road, and would be extremely imposing on those living opposite it on Maygrove Road, likely to result in a feeling of enclosure.

Both of the housing developments would be built on much higher ground than Maygrove Road, and so, from residents' perspectives, they would feel like 12-storey and 6-storey buildings respectively.

I would like to add that neither of the modern housing developments complement the vibrant and attractive Victorian architecture in the area. One other tall building has been granted planning permission in the immediate area – the 12-storey West Hampstead Square development – but this is in the growth area. It is also located further from residential homes and nearer to West End Lane and the train stations, and so will not impact on views in the same way as the proposed tower block on Liddell Road.

As I have set out, the tower block will adversely affect the amenity of the area. I believe that the planning application should also be refused on these grounds.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

I recognise the need for housing and employment developments to be built on the site to fund the school. However, the Council is set to make a significant profit from the development, to the detriment of the local community. These developments will be a feature of the area for many decades and it is important that they have local support and are policy compliant.

Therefore, I recommend that planning application 2014/7649/P (Phase 1) is granted and planning application 2014/7651/P (Phase 2) is refused. If Phase 2 is refused, I would urge the Council to proceed with the building of the school and to come forward with an amended Phase 2 planning application that reinvests a good proportion of the profits back into the development.

The Council estimates that it will make a £3 million profit from the development, but I am very disappointed that the financial viability report was heavily redacted and all of the figures were blacked out; the true profit from the development is still not known. Despite this, I am confident that the Council will make sufficient profit to reinvested funds back into the development to make improvements to the site, such as:

- A significantly higher proportion of affordable (and within this, social) housing on the site
- A lower tower block, which would not have the same impact on residents and the park
- If there is to be a tower block constructed it should be located on the eastern side of the site, where it would not block residents' views or overshadow houses and the park
- The provision of a community facility in the ground floor of the employment building

If the measures outlined above are incorporated into an amended planning application, I would be happy to give my support to the development.

Kind regards,

**Cllr Lorna Russell**