



Ref: 2015/6455/P

Dear Ms Josleen Chug

I am contacting you to lodge an official opposition to the proposed development of 156 West End Lane, London, NW6 1SD.

I query the impartiality of Camden Council's ability to decide this matter on fair grounds given that the land is owned by the Council, and the developer is The Council's chosen developer.

West Hampstead as you are aware is an area characterised by Victorian and Edwardian (mostly) red-brick individual and terraced housing, with some mansion blocks. The area is home to a number of designated heritage assets. This of course is an important factor to bear in mind when considering the style and nature of any proposed developments.

I refer you to paragraphs 126 and 141 of the National Planning Policy Framework which must apply to all proposed developments. Paragraph 126 for example states:

"Local planning authorities should set out in their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. In doing so, they should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance. In developing this strategy, local planning authorities should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place".

Having considered the policy in full I am of the view that no proper account has been taken of the policy and feel this is partly to do with the way in which the proposed plans have been hastily put together.

I would also draw your attention to the "Camden Development Policies 2010-2025, Local Development Framework" document, which "contributes to delivering the Core Strategy by providing detailed policies that [Camden Council] will use when determining applications for planning permission", specifically item 25.9 which refers to the existing "largely dense urban nature of Camden":

“Due to the largely dense urban nature of Camden, the character or appearance of our conservation areas can also be affected by development which is outside of conservation areas, but visible from within them. This includes high or bulky buildings, which can have an impact on areas some distance away, as well as adjacent premises. The Council will therefore not permit development in locations outside conservation areas that it considers would cause harm to the character, appearance or setting of such an area.”

Having also examined the information and design proposals made available by the preferred supplier, I also submit the following further objections to the proposed development:

1. The “West Hampstead: Shaping the Future” plan for West Hampstead issued by Camden Council expressly sets out that the area is “well loved for its village feel” and that the Council commits to “enhancing the distinctive village character” and to provide “support for local business”. The proposed project is in breach of these commitments. The proposed development is completely out of keeping with the character of the surrounding residential buildings. It completely disregards the environment around it and the character of other buildings. The houses in Lymington Road – for example – are three storeys high, the development in its existing form will tower over these properties blighting their light, use and enjoyment of their properties. The plans proposed by A2 Dominion proposes buildings of up to 8 floors which will be more than double the height of all nearby homes. This is in complete violation of Camden’s policies.
2. The plans are not in keeping with the existing character of the properties in the West End Green Conservation Area.
3. The height of the proposed development will overlook other buildings and significantly impact on residents’ right to light and privacy, the impact will be particularly severe over Lymington Road where residents will be overlooked when in their gardens and main living areas of their property. A2 Dominion have stated that the majority of the windows that will be looking out onto the development are “minor” dwelling rooms. This is categorically incorrect. Due to the way the flats have been proportioned, the majority of windows are all main livings areas and bedrooms
4. The majority of the ground floor and basements flats will almost certainly go below the minimum BRE acceptable levels with regard to light.
5. The proposed development includes a proposed private road for which it is envisaged residents of the proposed development will use as an access road. It is proposed the access is situated immediately behind the garden walls of the Lymington Road properties. The obvious consequence of this will be a substantial increase in dust, pollution, noise and damage to the general conservation area. The impact on the Lymington Road residents will be substantial but generally this increase in pollution will also have an impact on the wider population.
6. West Hampstead has benefited from an influx of young families, the population of children has steadily grown in recent times. The proposed development and its impact on the environment will be have a detrimental effect on the well-being of those in near and surrounding areas.
7. The proposed road between the Lymington properties and the proposed development is an obvious security risk. It will allow easier access to the gardens and properties of Lymington Road.
8. The proposed buildings themselves will have a considerably negative impact on the conservation area which the planned development adjoins.
9. The development proposes to house between 600 – 800 residents. There is simply insufficient infrastructure to support this number of additional residents into West Hampstead; there is already one development due to complete later this year, West Hampstead Square – the impact from this development is yet to be seen alongside other developments in Blackburn Road, Iverson Road, and Liddell Road. West end Lane is grid lock with cars and lorries every day and the pavements are at maximum capacity. With the increase in population from West Hampstead Square and the proposed 156 development the infrastructure cannot carry this safely.
10. We respectfully submit insufficient consideration has been given to the environmental impact of so many developments in such a short space of time.

11. There is already insufficient parking capacity in the surrounding areas. This has been further reduced as and when JW3 host events. The burden on parking may in turn assist applicants wishing to convert front gardens into drives, thereby completing spoiling the entire area.

12. The development will result in a substantial increase in footfall in what are already overcrowded surrounding roads.

13. The footfall on the underground, trains and buses – without yet taking additional traffic from West Hampstead Square into account – is already at close to maximum level. Roads and pavements can't be widened so the risk of people spilling out onto the roads is hugely increased.

14. Another new development will shunt public transport levels on the tubes and trains to dangerously high levels, thereby putting public safety at risk.

15. The narrow pavements over the bridge between this proposed development and two stations is already heaving with pedestrians in the mornings and evenings.

16. We support the use of space for developmental purposes, but any proposed development must be viable and properly benefit the community. What exactly does West Hampstead need? Its needs a Health Centre as it is extremely challenging to get to see Doctors within a reasonable timeframe, there is no community centre, no facilities for children. The current lack of primary and secondary school places, along with the impact on GP services, of which there are fewer in the area, has not been properly examined or considered by this plan.

17. Travis Perkins is a long-standing business and significant local employer on the existing site and welcomes any opportunity to negotiate a redevelopment of the adjacent former council offices for housing. This would be in line with Camden's own planning policies CS8 and DP13.

18. The development plan appears to have dismantled two walls, one along Potteries Path and one currently at the end of Travis Perkins' yard which form the walls of the football pitch, currently the only recreational space available for young people in the area. No development plan should threaten or encroach upon this valuable public space.

19. The proposed blocks will overshadow and deprive of light the green space and children's playground at the Lymington Road Estate, which is closest to the 156 West End Lane site, as well as to the homes and gardens on Lymington Road Estate.

20. The extensive nature of the proposed over-development has the potential to inflict upon the long-established surrounding properties, many of which are in the West End Green Conservation Area, serious structural issues such as subsidence.

21. The Travis Perkins business operating at 156 West End Lane is closed from 12pm on Saturdays, meaning that residents in the adjoining properties and roads benefit from quiet and peaceful homes and gardens in the evenings, at weekends and on Public Holidays.

22. The proposed project is located on the immediate border of a conservation area. A conservation area is defined in Section 69 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as an area of "special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance" and that the project is irreconcilable with the Council's duty to ensure such preservation.

23. The plans are also in direct contravention of the policies outlined in the Neighbourhood Development Plan for this area.

24. The proposed plans are opposed in their entirety by the combined forces of Save West Hampstead, Lymington Road Residents' Association, Crediton Hill Residents' Association, West Hampstead Gardens' & Residents' Association, and the West End Green Conservation Area Advisory Committee.

I would like to reiterate my absolute opposition to the proposal and expect all of my above points to be considered, addressed and responded to appropriately.

Yours faithfully

Peter Ashdown