

Sarah Harrison  
73 Chester Road  
London N19 5DH

17<sup>th</sup> December 2016

Regeneration and Planning  
London Borough of Camden  
Town Hall  
Judd Street  
London WC1H 9JE

By Email to David.Fowler@camden.gov.uk

Dear David Fowler

**Planning Application - 2016/6088/P - Highgate Newtown Community Centre Unit A, B, C, D & E  
- 25 Bertram Street London N19 5DQ - Planning Objection**

I wish to object to the Planning Application listed above for the following reasons:

1. I am concerned that the proposed development is far too large for the site. The development, due to its excessive height and bulk, will have a harmful impact on the character and quality of the Conservation Area. It is just too large for this small site.
2. The development would dominate the area in an inappropriate way, looming over Bertram Street, with its small 2 storey houses. It would also be far too close to the neighbouring properties in Brookfield Mansions. Because of its size and height of the proposed development it would result in a loss of privacy for some neighbours because of the proposed windows, balconies and terraces directly overlooking both homes and rear gardens, it would reduce the sunlight and daylight to rear gardens and several homes to an unacceptable level, and create intrusive levels of noise.
3. As a long-standing user of the Community Centre I am also concerned about the poor quality of the buildings that are proposed to replace the current buildings. The proposed replacement hall would be at basement level, with no direct connection to outdoors, while most of Fresh Youth would be below ground with only limited access to outdoor space.
4. The Councillors have repeatedly stressed their commitment to the HINC, arguing that this development is in the interests of HNCC. However the proposed replacement buildings feel like a very poor substitute to the current buildings which have light, air and direct connection to the quiet courtyard space.

Given that Camden has in the recent past refused planning applications for much smaller less intrusive works it would seem entirely wrong to agree to this Planning Application which will severely damage the aesthetics of the neighbourhood. The buildings are built up to the boundary on three sides and within 1m of the public path on the west side. If the scheme was approved it would not only blight this area, provide worst accommodation for the HNCC but would also set a dangerous precedent for developers to exploit on other sites in Camden.

I would therefore urge the Councillors to reject this Planning Application, and to consider other ways forward for this site. I understand that those living around the site are concerned to work with the Council in achieving an appropriate scheme.

Yours faithfully,

Sarah Harrison

Elizabeth Smith  
26 Winscombe Street  
London  
N19 5DG

David Fowler  
Principal Planning Officer  
London Borough of Camden: Planning Service

22 December 2016  
By e-mail and hard copy to follow by mail

Dear Mr Fowler

**Planning Application – 2016/6088/P  
Highgate Newtown Community Centre (HNCC), Bertram Street, London,  
N19 5DQ**

**Planning Objection by Elizabeth Smith 26 Winscombe Street N19 5DG**

I am writing this **objection letter** as a local resident who lives immediately to the east of the HNCC site, as a Project Champion and as a supporter and user of the Highgate Newtown Community Centre. I have attended almost all Project Champion meetings in 2016, I have elicited and fed in views from Winscombe Street residents and have contributed positively to discussion with LBC's appointed architects.

**I fully support the retention of HNCC and FYA activities on the Bertram Street site. HNCC/FYA is a valuable and valued community asset meeting social and community needs – it is the vibrant heart of the local area.** I recognize that given resource cuts that LBC wishes to guarantee a sustainable future for a community facility on the site. I also support the ambition for sustainability and accept that this may include the need for residential development of the site.

But before approving a scheme to demolish and re-build, LBC 'must provide a full explanation of why existing facilities are not fit-for-purpose and the proposed new buildings are required' (LBC's Pre-App Response 28/04/16LBC ). We have not yet seen the full detail of this explanation.

Having examined the design submitted by LBC for the redevelopment of the site **I reluctantly conclude that I cannot support the scheme in its current form.** The flaws in the design and the risk to the successful development of the site are so significant that the application as it stands should **be withdrawn and resubmitted once changes to address all these issues are made.**

There are aspects of the design that are good: these include the new public route through the site linking it to Croftdown Road and the ideas behind having central public space. Unfortunately these positive aspects are heavily outweighed by a significant number of design flaws.

It is particularly troubling is that many of these flaws are in direct contravention of national and London-wide planning policy and Camden's own local planning policy. For full details please refer to the Objection Letter sent to you on behalf of Pentad Housing Society dated 28<sup>th</sup> November.

If approved the scale of development and the infringement of planning policies will create a precedent and potential loophole for other developers. There is a significant risk that developers will take advantage of any precedent in future developments, putting in jeopardy Camden's character and attractiveness as a place to work and live.

### **Objections:**

Overall the scheme is **over-developed and will not achieve its ambition:**

1. The scheme is unnecessarily large as a result of **over development** of the site. It is high, bulky and out of character with its Conservation Area backland setting.
2. The scheme is unnecessarily inefficient in terms of layouts and elevations. This results in a more costly scheme which in turn drives the **over development** of the site.
3. The ambition for the site to deliver an attractive public route connecting Bertram St and Croftdown Road is **thwarted by the design of the central space between the proposed buildings** (see paras 15 – 18 below).

The Community Centre is **inefficiently designed:**

4. While the **lettable floor area** of the Community Centre is larger than the existing, calculations also show that the area of circulation and internal walls **has increased by 48%**. The business model underpinning this design is not evident. However the increase in size results in a) a bigger community centre that needs more flats built to pay for it and b) higher running costs. This puts **additional pressure on the financial sustainability** of the community facilities.
5. **Noise** generated by the community hall, vented by 'wind-catchers' with no acoustic attenuation **will be beyond acceptable levels**. Significantly the Acoustic Report itself does not quantify the potential impact of amplified music.

The proposed blocks suffer from **overdevelopment and:**

6. **Are too bulky** - the layout of Building A (the west two blocks) could be lower if there was only one block. **This was raised in LBC own Pre-App report but not addressed in the final scheme.**
7. **Are far too close** – new flats in Block A and Block B are far too close to each other, 8m instead of 18m as required. Similarly the distance between the existing Mansion block in Croftdown Road and Block A is 8m.
8. **Will overshadow neighbouring gardens** to an unacceptable degree, flouting national standards in respect of daylight and sunlight.
9. **Do not consider the impact of the basements** planned for all buildings. **A Basement Impact Study was requested in LBCs own Pre-App response but is not provided.**

The proposed flats:

10. **Are too dark** – seven of the proposed kitchen/ living rooms fail to achieve the Average Daylight Factor standard.
11. **Are too small** - two ground floor flats have kitchen/ living rooms smaller than the London Housing Design standard (29sqm instead of 31sqm) and have no external space; neither do they have the two living spaces which are required.
12. **Are too stuffy** – a number of the flats are single aspect. Natural ventilation will be compromised potentially resulting in overheating and poor air quality. **This was raised in LBC own Pre-App report but not addressed in the final scheme.**
13. **Have no space for children's play** – as required by PBC's own planning policy, taking into consideration the child yield of the scheme.
14. **Have too little amenity space** – the quality and provision of amenity space is sub-standard. Some only have amenity space off bedrooms and without sunlight. **This was raised in LBC own Pre-App report but not addressed in the final scheme.**

Central Courtyard

15. **The courtyard as a shared-use space for HNCC/FYA users and residents is seriously compromised** as people and vehicles will inevitably come into conflict (regardless of plans to manage access to the courtyard by bollards controlled by access codes). It will not be possible in practice to fulfill the vision for this space as a shared amenity. The Servicing Management Plan's assertion that the proposed development

will result in a negligible increase in the number of servicing trips is not credible. This is because there will be 27 additional households on the site PLUS the drop offs / pick ups from the HNCC/ FYA with no longer any provision for vehicles to turn around (a car is likely to be parked in the one disabled parking bay on site).

16. This situation will very likely to lead to **increased congestion up and down Bertram Street, gridlock into Chester Road** and conflict with the C11 bus and other traffic.
17. The Courtyard **has too many bedrooms facing on to it**. To be a success this courtyard space needs as many living rooms as possible looking out over it.
18. The quality of light in the courtyard is **substandard** due to the bulk and height of the proposed scheme.

The Gospel Mission Hall

19. The proposed roof lights on to Winscombe Street **are contradictory to the Conversation Area guidelines**.

Please consider all these points in your report to the Planning Committee.

Yours sincerely

(Signed)

Elizabeth Smith

**Camden Council Customer feedback and enquiries  
Comments on a current Planning Application - Ref. 20831105**

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**Planning Application Details**

Year 2016  
Number 6088  
Letter P  
Planning application address Highgate Newtown Community Centre

Title Prof.  
Your First Name Susan  
Initial F  
Last Name Himmelweit  
Organisation

Comment Type Object

Postcode NW5 1JH  
Address line 1 30 Bramshill Gardens  
Address line 2  
Address line 3

Postcode NW5 1JH

E-mail

Confirm e-mail

Contact number

Your comments on the planning application

I am not against development of the Highgate Newtown Community Centre Site and have attended many meetings concerning the proposed development.

I was in favour of improving the facilities of the community centre for local residents. If that could successfully be done in such a way that allowed for other development on the site, I was also in favour of creating housing that could improve the chances of Camden's young people finding homes in the borough.

## Camden Council Customer feedback and enquiries Comments on a current Planning Application - Ref. 20831105

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### Planning Application Details

However, I feel that the creation of more and more housing has come to dominate the proposal with the result that the proposed community centre facilities, including those for the Youth Academy, are insufficiently spacious and have poor access to daylight and open space. In my opinion, the first priority should be to redesign the proposal to rectify this. The proposal should be rejected in the meantime.

Secondly, I am distressed that the proposal is to build homes for sale. I understand that it is government policy that has led the council to propose this form of housing development, but I would urge it to rethink whether there are ways to resist the move to favouring home ownership over other tenures, especially in Camden when even affordable property prices are way beyond the reach of Camden's young people.

Thirdly, the aim of maximising profit from this scheme has led to far too many dwellings being constructed onto the site, resulting in a proposal that is too dense and on too large a scale. I would urge the council, even in these difficult times for local authority finances, to not let raising revenue dominate its priorities in making decisions for this site and the community it is meant to serve.

I have been surprised that the many objections raised along these lines at the many consultation events on this development do not seem to have been taken into account.

**If you wish to upload a file containing your comments then use the link below**

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Camden Town Hall  
Judd Street  
London WC1H 9JE

Form reference 20831105

**Camden Council Customer feedback and enquiries  
Comments on a current Planning Application - Ref. 20831134**

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**Planning Application Details**

Year 2016  
Number 6088  
Letter P  
Planning application address Highgate Newtown Community Centre

Title Mr.  
Your First Name Simon  
Initial  
Last Name Mohun  
Organisation  
Comment Type Object

Postcode NW5 1JH  
Address line 1 30 Bramshill Gardens  
Address line 2 LONDON  
Address line 3

Postcode NW5 1JH

E-mail

Confirm e-mail

Contact number

Your comments on the planning application

I support renovating the Highgate Newtown Community Centre Site but not in this form. (I have attended several meetings at HNCC with the architects concerning the proposed development).  
While I am in favour of improving the facilities of HNCC for local residents, and am not opposed to that being done via other development on the site, I am also strongly in favour of creating housing that could improve the chances of Camden's young people finding homes in the borough. But it seems to me that the creation of more housing has come to dominate the proposal, so that the proposed



## Camden Council Customer feedback and enquiries Comments on a current Planning Application - Ref. 20831134

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### Planning Application Details

community centre facilities neither are sufficiently spacious, nor have good access to daylight and open space. The proposal should be redesigned along these lines, and the current proposal should be rejected.

There is another issue. I know that there is a Central Government policy bias to âpersuadeâ Local Government to build homes for sale, but I would urge the Council to resist favouring home ownership over other tenures. In areas like Camden, even âaffordableâ property prices are far beyond the reach of Camdenâs young.

Finally, the aim of maximising profit from this scheme has led to a proposal that embraces far too many dwellings; the proposal is too dense and on too large a scale. I would urge the council, even in these difficult times for local authority finances, to not let raising revenue dominate its priorities in making decisions for this site and the community it is meant to serve.

There have been many objections raised along these lines at the many consultation events about the HNCC development. These seem to me to have been ignored, and they should not be.

**If you wish to upload a file containing your comments then use the link below**

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