

Peter Clapp RIBA FCSD
12 Jeffrey's Place
London NW1 9PP
telephone 020 7267 2445
mobile 07984 677344
peterclapp@ymail.com

16th August 2020

Ms Kristina Smith
London Borough of Camden
Development Management
London
WC1H 8ND

Dear Kristina Smith

Re: Camden Coalyards (Morrisons) – Application No: 2020/3116/P

The original scheme, (2017/3847/P) brought enormous opposition from local residents and we were appalled when it was given planning approval in July 2017. It represented both monstrous overdevelopment, very poor architectural treatment and completely ignored Camden's own Development Plan for the area.

It seems hardly credible that the developer is now seeking to increase the number of units on the site, which requires raising the height of the majority of the buildings previously approved, reducing the size of the internal courtyards of the residential blocks and removing an additional 15 trees.

The 162 page Design and Access Statement attempts to justify the "Improved Scheme". It saddens me that members of my own profession can possibly put their names to such utter garbage as contained in this document.

Block A1, increased from 14 to 15 storeys and one metre higher
Block A2, increased from 11 to 12 storeys and 1.6 metres higher
The extraordinary inclined columns, providing specially designed pigeon platforms beneath each window. Projecting brick clad horizontal bands, since when did that become the way to use brickwork?

Block B, increased from 7 to 8 storeys and an extra 2.8 metres in height.
The aerial view of this block (Page 38) shows projecting balconies within the courtyard, but there is no indication of these on the plan (Page 34). It has also been decided to introduce exposed rainwater downpipes (Page 43) on an 8 storey building. Obviously another "design improvement"? They surely can't be serious?

Block C, one part increasing from 10 to 11 storeys and 1 metre higher.
one part increasing from 8 to 10 storeys and 4.7 metres higher.
The perspective of this block shows the specially designed pigeon nesting areas, between the introduced "roof" of one balcony and the floor of the one above.

Block E1 gains another 2.4 metres

Block F – the proposed 2 storey addition shown on Page 72, North elevation, is dramatically worse with the apparent 2 storeys on the left hand side.

The developer claims repeatedly that “the increased heights are not significant”.

Just how awful these proposed buildings really are, are best illustrated on Page 73. Is this jumble of materials and elevational treatments really intended?

Finally, and I appreciate that Building Regulations are entirely separate from Planning Approval, but has the Grenfell Fire, with 72 deaths already been forgotten?

Immediately following the tragedy, The RIBA set up an Expert Advisory Group. In October 2017 it made a report to the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety. The main clause regarding residential buildings reads as follows:

“In all new multiple occupancy residential buildings, a requirement for at least 2 staircases offering alternative means of escape, where the top floor is more than 11 metres above ground level”.

All of the blocks in this development have residential units above 11 metres, yet none of the blocks has a secondary staircase. Regardless of the fact that the Building Regulations have not yet been modified, how will these architects justify their designs in a Court of Law, when they contravene the specific guidance of their professional institute?

Usually planning applications are not made unless a planning officer has given general support. I cannot believe that in this case this can be true. The original scheme should never have received planning permission. Please refuse this application, which makes a bad scheme substantially worse.

Furthermore, we cannot continue to build blocks that potentially repeat the horror of Grenfell. This scheme requires a complete re-appraisal.

Yours sincerely

Peter Clapp