# Observations to New Builds on the Godwin & Crowndale estate

Date: 9 November 2020

As resident on the Camden Godwin & Crowndale estate I think that in general the new builds are not a bad idea to help addressing the housing shortage also in Camden. However, I would request to not approve planning permission in its existing form but to reconsider planning request. The planning request is too one-sided and has not taken into account many observations and concerns already raised. To date there have been two or three very high level and superficial meetings, which have not addressed observations (some of them mentioned below). More in depth consultation is required with residents living on the Godwin & Crowndale estate and surrounding the estate.

My Observations

* From the plans it is not clear how the buildings will fit with the rest of the estate. It is understood that they are prefabs, but do they match the very characteristic brick build of this and adjacent estates to keep unity of the estate also from a visual point
* The prefabs will be built on the ballcourt and the parking lot of the estate. The report mentions that there are other opportunities for children and teens to exercise. None of these are in the real vicinity and can be reached safely unsupervised (children)
* It is not clear why the new houses get private gardens that will take considerable space from the courtyard. In particular, it will destroy the unity of the estate even more since it will create an ‘us and them’ situation. The prefabs already have balconies and potentially roof gardens. Why take more space from the public courtyard?
* Why does the T25 tree have to go? No reason has been provided other than that it would stand in a garden. There dos not seem to be any real justification for it. Also, taking down existing trees and planting them in the remaining courtyard is no solution. Already the existing trees create a problem in summer. As beautiful as they are, they create very much shade. Planting more trees in this small area will make the courtyard even darker. What are alternative plans where to replant trees? What type of trees will be planted? Is there an option to plant more trees on Oakley Square? Nothing of this has been considered or is discussed. It is only mentioned that this will be done in future. In general terms this usually means that requesters for a building permission are not interested in this point and it will not happen. A solution has to be found before the planning committee should approve the permission
* Has the closure of the dead end of Chalton Street been considered for a replacement ballcourt or to assign parking lots to the estate to manage parking? This has not been made clear in the planning request
* For the losing open space new open space should be created. This would be possible, e.g. by removing shed in the courtyard and assign a refurbished ‘Playmakers’ to the TMO with sheds built in that space (these cost should be factored into the build of the houses)
* Exactly how high will the new buildings be? It is not clear from the plans
* How close will they built to the existing structures?
* What measure will be taken to protect the existing structures?
* During the building phase, what impact can be expected for existing residents? E.g. the water supply for blocks on the Godwin side runs exactly in the ground where the prefabs will be built. What impact can be expected for residents supplied this way? Has Thames Water or whoever is responsible been contacted and been consulted? A few years back pressure boosters were installed in the main car park. Will these be sufficient to supply all residents including the new builds without loss of pressure (required also to run hot water through our new boilers)?
* What about the rest of the estate? Talking of the unity of Godwin & Crowndale estate what has been considered to renew the look also of other outside areas, e.g. the slip roads (taking down the walls and beds on Crowndale Road and Oakley Square and re-organise the site to make it more pleasing and create a modern unity with the new builds adjacent to the existing blocks?
* There is no mentioning of re-organising the estate slip road and sheds to allow for parking
* Privacy, there is no mention how the privacy of existing residents has been considered and what is to be done to protect them. The new builds will be built in front gardens of existing flats. It will make these existing flats not only darker (has an assessment been taken of the impact on these flats?) but will particularly impact the privacy of these residents. It does not appear to have been taken into consideration. E.g. should it really be 10 buildings? Perhaps only 9 buildings could address a number of issues raised above. – To my knowledge the prefabs are also a proof of concept. The total number of houses are still important to make the builds commercially viable but should not be the only driving factor
* There have been no specific leaseholder meetings to discuss the impact on leaseholders
* Unless I missed the information there is no assessment of the new builds on leaseholder property (there are about 30% leaseholders on the estate)

For reasons mentioned above I would ask the committee to not approve the plans in is current state. More work needs to be done before the planning committee should give planning permission and observations have been addressed. These new builds should not be done to us but with us.