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Dear Camden Planning,

I learn about changes proposed by Essential Living, the developer of 100 Avenue Road with dismay.

The project is already inappropriate for the area and opposed by many local residents, though Camden decided to make its decision contrary to these.

During the planning process a Planning Inspector and the Secretary of State determined that the consent was dependent on the S106 agreement, on a proportion of affordable housing, and on other material qualities of the proposed development.

Now, for financial reasons, I understand that Essential Living seeks to remove provision of any affordable housing in the scheme and to change the cladding used to a cheaper material.

When the S106 agreement was made we were in a time and landscape when key worker accommodation and the quality of building materials were sensitive and important issues.

We are now in a different landscape, the result of Covid-19, in which the future shape of communities and city life is under serious consideration.

Whereas prior to the pandemic there was grave concern about insufficient suitable housing for key workers, it's clear that such accommodation is now an imperative and without it our borough and city will be materially undermined. It is generally understood more than ever that proper recognition, respect and housing must be afforded to our key workers. Any project which undervalues and reduces the prospect of housing for key workers in the borough will justly receive the condemnation of anyone involved in such a backward looking proposition. No local authority should touch any development with a barge pole which does not provide a good proportion of homes for those who contribute to our community sleeping more easily at night and shame on any planning officer who even contemplates an opportunistic proposal which omits to provide such housing.

Turning to the cladding, is it conceivable that in the post Grenfell era any responsible local authority can look at cladding from a purely economic perspective? Safety, sustainability, longevity and aesthetics are of utmost importance for this highly visible key site, a pinnacle (due to its excessive height as well as location) and adjacent to iconic buildings.

Essential Living should be expected to comply with legal obligations already in place after extensive consultation on the site.

If it wishes to make substantial change to the original proposal this is necessitates the launch of a new application under the Camden Local Plan 2017.

There is likely to be a marked recovery in the London housing market as we emerge from Covid-19. Other local developments are proceeding undeterred, such as the nearby Land Securities O2 development, an example of the confidence developers have in Camden's residential market. If Essential Living has doubts about its profit from the site it can be sold to another developer which considers it a more attractive proposition.

Furthermore, should Camden be held to ransom by this developers demand it will send a highly negative message to local residents about the faith they should have in their representatives. It will also suggest to developers of future sites that Camden is a free for all.

Yours faithfully,

Karina Leapman