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**Re: Murphy's Yard Site, Highgate Road NW5.  
Strategic Panel on Emerging Planning Proposals held on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2019.**

**Members present:**

- Cllr Danny Beales, Cabinet Member for Investing in Communities (Chair)
- Cllr Georgia Gould, Leader of the Council
- Cllr Adam Harrison, Cabinet Member for Improving Camden's Environment
- Roger Freeman, Heritage Champion
- Cllr Heather Johnson, Chair Planning Committee

Dear David Morris

Thank you for presenting at the Strategic Panel, I hope you found it as useful as we did. This letter contains a summary of the views of the Panel. These are informal views and are not binding on the Council.

This is a critical site for the Council and any development would be transformative for Kentish Town. Murphy's are seen as a long standing and reputable business in Camden and their retention in the Borough is seen as a key benefit of the proposals. The Council is currently preparing a Framework for the area to govern the development of a vibrant new neighbourhood with an exciting mix of employment, residential and community uses alongside new parks and open spaces. Murphy's Yard is seen as an exceptional opportunity that could generate significant regeneration and growth benefits and deliver Camden 2025 and Local Plan priorities. Murphy's have been developing ideas for some time and have worked with the Council to feed in to the planning framework and this is acknowledged, as is the early engagement that has started with the community. The London Plan requires a plan-led approach for larger developments and specifically developments within Locally Significant Industrial Sites (LSIS). It also requires for this to take place with the engagement of local communities and stakeholders. Therefore, the Framework and meaningful consultation are imperative and development would not be considered without these.

Many of the key principles presented by the applicant, including maintaining views to Hampstead Heath, creating a new neighbourhood, providing a mixture of uses and a Heath Line linking a series of open spaces and uses, are admirable and supported in principle.

Any development proposal must deliver tangible benefits which make a real difference to local people's quality of life, in particular access to good jobs and genuinely affordable homes, whilst delivering a sustainable design which responds positively to its context, is resilient to climate change and creates a high quality new neighbourhood. It also needs to feel and be designed as an inclusive and integrated part of Kentish Town and Gospel Oak. We want an economy that works for everyone and there is significant potential to maximise social value here. The construction of the scheme and post-construction development is going to create significant employment benefits and opportunities for local business. We would require you to advertise all construction vacancies and work placement opportunities exclusively with the King's Cross Construction Skills Centre, promote employment opportunities through local jobs brokerage services (e.g. KX Recruit or equivalent) and maximise opportunities for local businesses both throughout the construction and for the finished development. We would also expect a significant amount of affordable workspace and for you to sign up to the Camden STEAM pledge. The Council's employment skills team would be happy to work closely with you on these aspects of your proposal.

Making routes, connections and a permeable development that is accessible to all is an important objective. Public spaces and routes will need to be secured early, with the Heath Line – including a cantilevered bridge from Kentish Town – a mandatory inclusion to any development from the outset. The provision of the Heath Line is potentially the strongest connective element of the scheme, with there being strong support by the Council and in the community. Feasibility work on the cantilevered bridge is essential and should begin now. Other connections and infrastructure, including Carkers Lane and links over/under the railway, will need to be provided for and future proofed. Connectivity with Gospel Oak is paramount as this neighbourhood is currently segregated from Kentish Town. The proposed Heath Line entrance from Greenwood Place (adjacent to the O2 Forum) is seen as poor. New routes will need to have some activation to ensure that they can be used at night, and the site needs a draw in the middle to pull people in. The proposals for almost exclusive industrial/employment uses on the ground plane may not be the best approach to creating a space people will want to walk through all the time. Dead frontages would be a concern and the route is not particularly direct. Inserting some activation frontages along this route could be beneficial.

The industrial zoning of the site is acknowledged and the principle to retain, enhance and intensify industrial capacity supported. We will need to work closely with the GLA to address their challenging draft industrial land policy and explain the special circumstances that exist here to justify a less rigid application of it in the interests of delivering good growth. These circumstances include the historic and existing use of the site, poor road access, the capacity of the local road network, the character of the surrounding area, its proximity to rail and tube connections and feedback from the local community. For these reasons we support your focus on lighter industrial uses. However we do feel there is potential to increase the amount of industrial floorspace to help get closer to the GLA target for example by stacking some of the industrial uses. A good example in this regard is the proposed Generator Building on the Northfield's site in Brent. Subject to an appropriate industrial provision being provided, the Council expects to see housing maximised in the development with a minimum target of 750 homes. Our priority is for 50% affordable housing to be provided and within this a significant proportion of London Affordable Rent, including crucially homes for families. Other secondary uses are a priority, which contribute to a rich social infrastructure such as music, leisure (including spaces and activities for young people), community and cultural. The Wellness Neighbourhood sounds good in principle but this will need to deliver genuine health and well being benefits given the poor health outcomes in some of the surrounding communities. There is a potential to link this with the existing Kentish Town City Farm. A

food and beverage offer is proposed in the centre of the site to draw people in. It will be important that this does not compete with Highgate Road, Kentish Town Road and the local retail offer. Other employment uses in addition to industry are also supported, but the Council is not seeking large-scale generic offices in this location and new uses need to compliment and form part of the wider eco-system and target priority growth sectors including digital and technology, creative industries, cultural uses and life sciences including a significant amount of affordable workspace. Opportunities for SMEs which form part of the character of this area would be supported. Any development should be truly mixed-use with residential sought throughout the site. A general mix on the ground floor needs to be considered, not just industry and employment.

The delivery and servicing management strategy will be fundamental for this site to reduce the amount of vehicles and to prevent conflicts with pedestrians and cyclists. The site is not considered suitable for heavily trafficked uses. In particular access to the housing, in terms of deliveries and drop-off, will need to be sensitively designed. There are limited routes through the site and a network of streets or finer grain may be more appropriate. At the moment there are potential issues with how cyclists move through the site (the cycle lane is not direct) and the segregation of cyclists and pedestrians. Due to site levels there will be an issue with level access, particularly for those with mobility issues. Lift access and a multi-layered approach could be sought to ensure access across the site for all users. There is potential for servicing vehicles to conflict with pedestrians and cyclists.

It is noted that there is limited capacity on the Northern Line (Kentish Town Underground Station) and the North London Line (Gospel Oak Overground Station). The development should not rely on these existing modes of transport and consider a mixture of uses to encourage living and working nearby as well as walking and cycling. Step free access at Thameslink is something the Council and community are striving for and any development should seek to contribute towards this aspiration.

Murphy's Yard lies within two Neighbourhood Forum areas – Kentish Town and Dartmouth Park. These forums have prepared Neighbourhood Plans and are keen for change on this site. It is important that the applicant works with them to achieve a desirable development that genuinely benefits the surrounding community. The delivery of a cantilevered bridge link is important locally and any proposals impacting on the protected view from Kentish Town to Hampstead Heath will need to be approached sympathetically. It may be possible to have flexibility within the Kentish Town Neighbourhood Plan viewing corridor, subject to members of the community being brought along with the proposals, if other benefits can be gained from the scheme including the early establishment of a high quality and accessible Heath Line. The sequence of viewing points proposed should genuinely aim to result in views to the Heath. An early Development Management Forum is strongly encouraged.

The proposal to retain, restore and work with the locally listed warehouses is seen as a positive approach. Murphy's Yard will need to create an area rich and varied in character of its own, which utilises on-site and surrounding local and historic context and architecture.

A comprehensive approach to redevelopment in the area, including linking with the Regis Road Site, is mandatory. Any development should enable, link with, and ensure that it does not prejudice development nearby (particularly Regis Road).

The Council has recently declared a climate change emergency and set up a citizens assembly on this issue. Any development on this site should support the creation of a sustainable neighbourhood that is exemplary in terms of zero carbon emissions and its adaptability and resilience to climate change.

The land use mix and proportion of uses is critical to the Council achieving its strategic aim. We recognise that viability is going to influence the mix and layout of uses and the benefits the development delivers. Therefore viability information needs to be available at the earliest stage possible so it can be forensically and independently assessed. No viability justification will be considered without full disclosure of information and subsequent interrogation. The proposals that were presented included switch blocks with hotel and office space and residential. The Council would not support a large scale hotel use or a significant proportion of generic office accommodation in this location.

I hope you find these comments useful and I look forward to working with you to deliver a truly mixed use sustainable neighbourhood. Thank you once again for your time.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan McClue  
Principal Planner  
Planning Solutions Team