

Parnjit Singh

From: Inkerman Area Residents Association <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 06 February 2022 21:16
To: Jonathan McClue; Planning Planning
Subject: Murphy's Yard Planning Application ref: 2021/3225/P

[REDACTED]

Dear Planning Officer

The Inkerman Area Residents Association represents the area directly to the south of this development site. We have a high level of participation from our resident members and this has been accepted by Camden for many years, and our views taken into account on planning matters.

Our members are concerned about general planning issues for the whole of Kentish Town and the impact on our High Street, Kentish Town Road.

Murphy's Yard has clearly been a site that has been ready for development for many years and it is unthinkable that it remains in its present state.

1. It is an opportunity to create an economic stimulus for the area as well as housing.
2. We are well aware of the need for housing in Camden which has a council waiting list of many thousands, causing great distress for those waiting.
3. We are also aware that Camden's budget has been repeatedly cut and that economic growth offers the opportunity for increased income to the borough.
4. We welcome the promised green aspects of the site and in particular the plan to open a walkway and cycleway from Kentish Town Road all the way up beside the railway lines to Hampstead Heath

However, we have very serious reservations about some aspects of the project.

1. The "intensification" of the site threatens massive over-development. In particular the construction of 19 storey tower blocks and bulky 8 storey units close to Kentish Town Road means that the open aspect from outside the station up towards the Heath would be destroyed.

This would be hugely detrimental and most of our members are dismayed at this prospect.

The Kentish Town Neighbourhood Plan was the subject of exhaustive public consultation and formulation and was voted on at a referendum. Its principal planning policy is substantial protection of the view from Kentish Town Road up to the Heath. The Kentish Town Neighbourhood Forum spokesperson has confirmed that this will be largely obstructed. The Forum in its own objection to this planning application has asked for the plan to be revised to allow more of the view to be retained. We ask that this part of the Local Plan should be respected and enforced.

2. We are concerned that the housing proposed does not in fact properly meet the needs of Camden. Camden's policy says that 35% of homes should be affordable but the planning application claims that this amount is not viable, so there is no certainty what, if any, affordable housing there will be.

3. We note that "affordable" does not mean affordable by the majority of people in the borough. 14% of the proposed housing will be let at "intermediate rent" which is considered to be affordable by people with an income of around £60,000 per annum. These are all one bed flats, which is not what is needed for most people on the housing waiting list.

The remaining 21% are described as "social affordable" which can mean anything between 50 and 80% of the very high local market rents, which again is beyond the reach of many people, particularly those most in need of housing.

Crucially the number of family size units with more than two bedrooms is extremely low - in fact just 14 homes will have four bedrooms. This is 1.5% of the proposed development and contrasts with Camden's stated need for 16% of housing stock to be family units.

4. The majority of the housing on the site will be sold on the open market and the developer's viability assessment assumes that a two-bedroom flat in one of the towers will sell for about £1 million.

From experience of other developments, many of these will be sold to absentee owners and possibly to overseas investors.

5. There is considerable concern from our members about the impact on the area of the development. Obviously, any development will have an impact in terms of traffic during the construction phase but the size of this development means that it would be a nine-year program with at times over 100 lorries making two-way journeys every working day. These will be diesel lorries coming out onto the High Street or the busy Gordon House Road.

Camden's own independent Design Review Panel say that "the bulk, height and massing of residential blocks is excessive and will have significant and unacceptable impact on important views from Parliament Hill to the north [of the site]."

The developer has argued that the overdevelopment of the site is as required by Camden and the Greater London Authority. However the 2021 London plan contradicts that and there is no policy requirement for this intense level of development as Kentish Town is classified as "a district town centre with low commercial growth potential."

On balance the IARA opposes the plan in its current form.

Yours sincerely

Debby Hyams
Chair

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