

Jonathan.McClue@camden.gov.uk

Your reference: 2021/3225/P  
Our reference: 172422

7<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Dear Mr McClue,

**RE: 2021/3225/P Site near J. Murphy & Sons Yard/Depot, Hiview House, Highgate Rd, London NW5 1TN, NW5 1TN**  
**Outline planning permission with all matters reserved for the demolition of existing buildings and structures and redevelopment to be carried out in phases (with each phase being an independent act of development) comprising 18 development plots.**

Thank you for consulting the Victorian Society on this application. Having reviewed the proposals we wish to make the following comments.

The Murphy's Yard forms a significant historic industrial site in Kentish Town. Surrounded by Conservation Areas and listed buildings, the site also contains several non-designated heritage assets. These railway sheds and other associated buildings make a positive contribution to the site, and should be treated sensitively, forming the heart of any proposed redevelopment.

The Victorian Society notes the advice given by Historic England on the proposals and we share their concern regarding the height of the tower and the views from Parliament Hill. However, the Society's concerns extend further. While in principle we do not oppose the redevelopment of the site and welcome the retention of the non-designated heritage assets, the proposed treatment of them is concerning. This would see both sheds drastically altered by the proposed additional floors above the existing structures. This would harm their significance by transforming them from individual buildings into what are essentially plinths for new construction. This is especially concerning with Shed 3 where the proposed alterations to the existing structure and the scale of new construction would destroy the building's legibility as a historic railway shed.

The proposals for Shed 2 are equally concerning. Shed 2 is the most intact of those on the site and notably retains its original roof structure, which contributes highly to its significance. The proposed removal of the existing roof covering, opening half the shed to the open air, and creation of raised cycle path would harm this significance. The Design and Access Statement makes clear that the roof structure would have to

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be altered and likely replaced to accommodate the raised cycle track. Furthermore, the proposed removal of a roof covering would require weather proofing of any remaining historic timbers. This harm would be compounded by the proposed additional floors to the western part of the building. This would presumably require the removal of part of the original roof structure as well as other alterations to the existing fabric. Ultimately, the invasiveness of these proposals is unacceptable when they would require the alteration of so much of what is significant about this non-designated heritage asset.

The proposed redevelopment of the site should seek to adapt the sheds in a less harmful way. Features which contribute to significance should be retained and restored, later additions and alterations which harm significance should be removed. Shed 3 must remain discernible as a former 19<sup>th</sup> century railway shed. Shed 2's significant roof structure should be retained in entirety.

The Victorian Society is not opposed to imaginative use of the historic buildings on the site and recognises their potential to form the centre of any development, connecting it to the history of the site and local area. However, considering the climate emergency, the Government's aim of achieving net zero by 2050, and the fact that rail freight produces 6 times lower carbon emissions than road transport, serious thought should be given to safeguarding the sheds for potential future railway use to provide low carbon goods transport to Kentish Town and beyond. Returning the sheds to their original use, if achievable, would be much less harmful.

We also note that historically there was a road across the site linking Kentish Town and Hampstead Heath before the advent of the railway. The proposals should seek to re-establish this link.

The NPPF states that heritage assets are an '*irreplaceable*' asset and that sustaining and enhancing their significance is desirable (para 190). In the case of non-designated heritage assets a balanced judgement should be used when significance would be harmed (para 203). These proposals would result in harm to the significance of non-designated heritage assets. A balanced judgement would reject this proposal and advise that the scale of development is reduced or located elsewhere on the site.

I would be grateful if you could inform me of your decision in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Connor McNeill

**Conservation Adviser**