

*A National Amenity Society*

Mr Jonathan McClue, Planning Case Officer  
London Borough of Camden Council  
By email: [planning@camden.gov.uk](mailto:planning@camden.gov.uk)

09 February 2022

Dear Mr McClue,

**Site near J. Murphy & Sons Yard/Depot, Hiview House, Highgate Rd, London NW5 1TN.  
Application no. 2021/3225/P.**

Thank you for consulting the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) on the above case.

## Summary

The CBA do not object to the change of use of this site to a mix of residential, industrial and other uses, including the construction of some new buildings. We are pleased to note that the current proposals will retain the locally listed engine sheds which are the main legacy of the site's history.

However, we agree with Historic England's objections to the proposed scale and massing of the site, which would significantly disrupt the protected view corridor from Parliament Hill to City of London. The development would significantly change the character of the surrounding area, which is currently primarily two- to four-storey buildings. This would also have a negative impact on the five conservation areas which are in close proximity to the site, and on the settings of a number of Grade II listed buildings.

In its current form, the CBA **object** to this application due to its disproportionate scale. We recommend that the proposals be **revised** to reduce their impact on the character and appearance of the area and the protected view from Parliament Hill, or that the proposals be **refused**.

## Significance

The site is a former large railway engine depot which was created by the Midlands Railway Company as part of the development of the St Pancras to Bedford line. The creation of this line facilitated the rapid development of Kentish Town from a rural area to part of the Greater London conurbation. The history of the site is therefore central to the history of Kentish Town as a whole. The continuing legibility of the industrial nature of the site and its location beside the railway lines which form its southern and eastern boundaries have historical and evidential value.

Within the site there are primarily industrial buildings, both from the period when the site was used by the Midlands Railway (1867-1963) and more recent industrial uses. There are two locally listed Victorian engine sheds within the site boundary; their plan form, design and the turning circles in the centre of their floors make their historic use clear, despite some later alterations possibly due to bomb damage. These buildings have evidential and historic significance in the legibility of their original function and their surviving material. The characteristic Victorian use of

brick and the consistent vertical arched window openings also give these engine sheds architectural value as an increasingly functional buildings.

Surviving twentieth-century industrial buildings include the early twentieth-century oil processing building, which has undergone considerable alteration and is now surrounded by larger post-war structure.

The site is in direct proximity to a number of Grade II listed buildings. Along the eastern boundary are a cluster of listed buildings along Highgate Road, including the Georgian terraces at 1-7 Highgate Road, 64-66 and 68-70 Highgate Road, and 1-3 Wesleyan Place. The site is also in close proximity to the Victorian Christ Apostolic Church, and the 1930s former Forum Cinema. To the North, the Parliament Hill Lido, built in the late 1930s, currently sits in a largely open area at the south end of Hampstead Heath, a popular recreational green space.

## Comments

The CBA agree with Historic England regarding the impact of the proposed development on the protected view southward from Parliament Hill. The topography of the landscape is such that the area of Hampstead Heath to the north west of the application would feel significantly more enclosed following the development, which would have a negative impact on the amenity of this popular recreational space.

The area surrounding the development is currently primarily domestic buildings in terraces or small-scale housing developments, mostly ranging from two to four storeys. The main exception is a six-storey former factory, the Linton Building, at 39-51 Highgate Road; however, although taller than the surrounding area, it retains its early twentieth-century appearance through its materials and architectural styling. The retention of private gardens and avenues of trees along the main thoroughfare of Highgate Road and its surrounding streets and the nearby open space of the Heath ensure that much of the area retains a semi-surburban feel, with a less dense urban grain than more central areas of London.

The scale and massing of the proposed development would significantly change the character of the area. From low-rising and horizontally massing industrial sites, the change to multiple tall narrow buildings would have a negative impact on the settings of the nearby heritage assets due to the aesthetic impact, the change of the urban grain of the area, and the loss of the legibility of the site as a primarily functional industrial area. The scale of the proposed development would ensure its visibility from a considerable distance, and it would therefore affect the setting of the Batholomew Estate, Dartmouth Park, Inkerman, Kentish Town, Mansfield, and West Kentish Town conservation areas.

The proposal would affect the setting of five nearby conservation areas, due to the visibility of the proposed buildings. It would also affect the setting of the nearby Grade II listed buildings: The Forum Cinema, the Christ Apostolic Church, and a number of Georgian terraced houses along Highgate Road, among others. These buildings currently sit in a relatively dominant position in the streetscape as they face Highgate Road, the main thoroughfare through this area of Kentish Town. The height of the proposed buildings on the application site would overshadow these buildings and be excessively dominant.

We are particularly concerned about the impact of this proposal on the setting of the Grade II listed Lido at the southern end of Hampstead Heath. The Heath is an open green space with well-known views across London; the Lido is an example of the recreational opportunities offered by such open spaces within urban areas. It would be overlooked and its aesthetic and communal value considerably affected by the proposed development.

We consider that this application does not meet the requirements of the following policies:

- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, section 72, which requires that ‘special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance’ of conservation areas.
- NPPF paragraph 197 c), ‘local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.’
- NPPF paragraph 199, ‘When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.’
- NPPF paragraph 200, ‘Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.’
- The London Plan: The Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London (March 2021) Policy HC1 c), ‘Development proposals affecting heritage assets, and their settings, should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to the assets’ significance and appreciation within their surroundings.’
- Camden Local Plan Policy D1 a), ‘The Council will require that development respects local context and character.’
- Camden Local Plan Policy D1 m), ‘The Council will require that development preserves strategic and local views;
- Camden Local Plan Policy D2 g), ‘The Council will resist development outside of a conservation area that causes harm to the character or appearance of that conservation area.’

We commend the applicants for their proposal to retain the two locally listed buildings on site for reuse. We recommend that they revise their proposed design to blend in better with the local area, drawing on the materials and horizontality of the industrial elements on site in order to minimise the impact of this application on the character and appearance of the local area and the setting of nearby designated heritage assets.

## Recommendations

# Council for British Archaeology

The CBA do not object to the conversion of this partly unused space to a mix of domestic, commercial and other uses. We are pleased to see that the applications propose to retain the locally listed Victorian engine sheds on the site.

However, we **object** to the proposed plans as the scale and massing of the proposed development is disproportionate to the local area. It will have a negative impact on the protected view from Parliament Hill and the setting of a number of designated heritage assets in the vicinity.

We recommend that the plans be revised to reduce the height of the proposed development, taking inspiration from the horizontality of the industrial structures on site and the relatively suburban character of the neighbouring streets. If the plans are not revised, we recommend that the application be **refused**.

I trust these comments are useful to you; please keep the CBA informed of any developments with this case.

Kind Regards,

Dr Alison Edwards  
Assistant Listed Buildings Caseworker

The Council for British Archaeology (CBA) is the national amenity society concerned with protection of the archaeological interest in heritage assets. Local planning authorities have a duty to notify the CBA of applications for listed building consent involving partial or total demolition, under the procedures set out in, **Arrangements for handling heritage applications – notification To Historic England and National Amenity Societies and the Secretary of state (England) direction 2021**.