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Chief Planning Officer Jonathan McClue  
Borough of Camden  
2<sup>nd</sup> floor, 5 Pancras Square  
NW1

9<sup>th</sup> February 2022

Dear Sir,

With ref. To PA 2021/3225/P - known as 'Murphys Land'

As an urban historian and very long-term resident of this borough, my views have from time to time been sought by members of your department – and sometimes acted upon. I am currently President of LAMAS and a member of their Historic Buildings and Conservation committee.

I am of course aware of the chorus of local and national disapproval that has greeted the over-ambitious outline plan for the ex-rail yards to the west of Highgate Road. I am sure you do not wish to be told once again how undesirably tall many of the proposed blocks are, how they will destroy valued views, and how ill-assorted such a development would be with all the surrounding areas.

However, you might perhaps like to know something further that is now well beyond the memory of most of Camden council. In the mid-1960s, when it became apparent that, with the demise of steam-trains, much shunting-yard acreage was becoming redundant, a group of concerned local citizens, including architects and engineers, got together to make a study of the vacant land and its possibilities. In particular, they were of the opinion that any future plan should restore the historic access-routes towards Hampstead and Haverstock Hill that were obliterated by the Midland Railway a hundred years before. A copy of their report is in the possession of Camden Local Studies and Archives.

However, far from considering the matter properly, Camden Council allowed chunks of the available land to be occupied piecemeal by public utilities or commercial companies without any overall scheme. And, far from creating new access routes, they actually laid out Regis Road as a dead-end – even resisting suggestions that an existing pedestrian way ought to be maintained via Holmes Road to link Regis Road with west Kentish Town.

I am afraid that the opportunity to create a viable new district for Kentish Town was thus substantially lost. The current attempt to cram far too much development onto what remains of the original railway land, without proper perception of the surrounding districts, shows a comparable lack of awareness. I suggest strongly that the current PA be rejected in toto, and that a more realistic assessment of the land's possibilities and constraints is made.

Sincerely,

Gillian Tindall

