

Parnjit Singh

From: Sarah Wallis <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 20 February 2022 16:25
To: Planning Planning
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: LGTA Objection to Planning Application number 2021/3225/P

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Dear Camden Planning and Highgate Ward Councillors,

On behalf of the Lissenden Gardens Tenants Association (LGTA), representing the residents of Lissenden Gardens, we are writing to request a re-think of the Murphy's Yard redevelopment.

We believe that the redevelopment of Murphy's Yard is a historic opportunity for our community and for Camden with great possibilities for new housing, commercial and green space in our neighbourhood.

Unfortunately, the plans as submitted are disappointing and alarming, and we believe would cause irreparable harm to our community without delivering the benefit the developers initially promised.

Specifically, the height density and massing of the proposal will have damaging effects on every resident of this estate.

This estate and this neighbourhood are areas of outstanding architectural excellence, characterized by low-rise, high density housing stock. Lissenden Gardens itself, even a century on, is an example of the sort of forward-thinking project we would expect to see on such a valuable site as Murphy's yard. This proposal, with little evidence of architectural ambition, would damage the character of the area irrevocably.

The new high-rises will block views to the south and west of this estate and will irrevocably damage the openness of the Heath (available to all Londoners and beloved to all on this estate) as well as the views from Kentish Town towards the Heath itself.

There is wide-spread support on the estate for efforts to bring more affordable housing to the area. But the proposal does not set out a precise percentage of affordable housing, well below the 50% Camden asked for and likely less than 35%.

It does not meet Camden's own assessment of what is needed: 3-4 bed family housing, but rather 85% will be 1-2 bed flats. The fact that the developers have not even planned for building a school on the site would suggest that the approximately 2000+ new residents would be largely transient, without any lasting commitment to bettering the quality of life in the larger community, including this one.

While the developers did organise a community traffic workshop, they were not able to propose a solution to the traffic problems that the development will cause - both the construction phase and in the future when the project is completed. Gordon House Road is already one of the most congested routes in London - a narrow road with narrow pavements, heavy traffic and heavy footfall, especially of schoolchildren. It is an ambulance route to the Royal Free

Hospital – the only one from this estate, as well as Dartmouth Park and the north Kentish Town area. This is an obvious and serious safety issue.

There are many cyclists on the estate who would welcome a new cycle route between Kentish Town and Gospel Oak. However, the proposal would have cyclists exiting onto a dangerous and narrow stretch of Gordon House Road, where there is no cycle lane. Cyclists wanting access to the Heath would need to traverse this estate, as it's the closest legal cycle access from the proposed exit. A high volume of new cycle traffic would be an unacceptable safety risk in this residential area.

Lissenden Gardens is committed to fighting the climate emergency. The proposed design would have a high level of embedded carbon and high energy use inherent in high-rises. The 'Heath Line' is not a genuine green corridor, but a paved walkway with some flowerbeds and trees. Where is the bio-diverse corridor to Heath, literally in terms of the public space and in terms of Camden's own commitments to climate resilience? The developers' proposals of a genuine 'greenway' with new bridges over the railway line have vanished.

We on this estate have been disappointed by the developers 'community engagement'. At no point were we invited by Folgate to any of the sessions – we had to ask to be included. At the one session organised for members of this community, the developers insisted on a meeting platform which was inaccessible to many who wanted to join. At the end of the meeting, we were shocked to learn that the developers did not record or minute the discussion, which rendered our input to nil.

We urge Camden to have the courage to reject the proposal in its current form, and for the developers to rethink entirely their approach to the project, this time with genuine co-design input from the community.

The officers of the LGTA,
Sarah Wallis & Jenny West co-secretaries
LGTA office, Basement 1-8 Clevedon Mansions, Lissenden Gardens, NW5 1QN

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