

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 February 2022 14:06
To: Planning Planning
Subject: SUBMISSION RE MURPHY'S YARD PLANNING APPLICATION. Camden planning application 2021/3225/P. From Myra Farnworth

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*Dear Camden Planning
I submitted the following Objection to the Camden Planning website -
<https://planningrecords.camden.gov.uk/Northgate/PlanningExplorer/PLComments.aspx?pk=567580>
But I did not receive an email confirming it was received, whereas my husband did.
I am therefore emailing this to Planning.
Please confirm receipt, and that my objection is definitely included with all the others. Thank you,
Myra Farnworth*

Myra Farnworth. SUBMISSION RE MURPHY'S YARD PLANNING APPLICATION. Camden planning application 2021/3225/P.

Myra Farnworth, 38 Oak Village, London NW5 4QL. [REDACTED]

Sent by email to planning@camden.gov.uk. Monday Feb 21, 2022

The Murphy's site is a WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR CAMDEN, a council that prides itself on being forward-looking and "green" and for Murphy's/ Folgate, the owners - to use this large piece of land as a rare asset. Yes, use it to provide large amounts of desperately needed social and affordable housing, along with private housing to fund the project – PLAN FOR A SITE THAT IS A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE REALLY WANT TO LIVE, even a site that is AWARD WINNING!

Specifically, Murphy's Yard is land that could be used to help Camden provide much more of the social and affordable housing it desperately needs, particularly for local families. This land is an opportunity to produce and preserve residential communities which are good places for people to live. In considering the Folgate application it is an opportunity for Camden Council to demonstrate care for its residents, for its built environment and for its eco-environment.

Having considered Folgate's application for the development of Murphy's Yard, application 2021/3225/P, sadly I have come up with the following serious objections to the Murphy's Yard development.

[A] RISK TO LIFE, RISK TO SAFETY, RISK TO HEALTH & WELLBEING, largely resulting from the exceptional narrowness of Gordon House Road pavements and road, and the impossibility of

widening them ready for increased traffic and footfall, resulting from the Murphy's development, both during construction and after completion.

[B] THE DENSITY AND HEIGHT OF THE RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS – up to 19 stories high - and the fact that the planned 825 UNITS WILL PROVIDE LITTLE OF THE SOCIAL OR AFFORDABLE HOUSING THE AREA NEEDS.

[C] The so-called "HEATH LINE" GREEN CORRIDOR appears to be a HARD- PAVED WALKWAY and not a green corridor.

Regards [A] RISK TO LIFE, RISK TO SAFETY, RISK TO HEALTH & WELLBEING, largely resulting from the exceptional narrowness of Gordon House Road pavements and road, and the impossibility of widening them ready for increased traffic and footfall resulting from the Murphy's development, both during construction and after completion.

I emphasise the following:

1. Folgate acknowledges the 825 residential units in the Northern sphere of the estate and the 48,000 sq metres of industrial floor space + 70,000 square metres of office space in the Southern sphere will add footfall and traffic to Gordon House Road. The proposal to route all Phase 4 construction traffic into Murphy's Yard via Gordon House Road is very concerning indeed. [In Phase 4 it is planned that all the residential blocks will be built. They will be located in the northern sphere of the estate, the Gospel Oak end. Phase 4 is projected to be spread over 3 years, from Years 7 to 9 of construction.] The Folgate proposal forecasts peak construction traffic movements to be 90 HGV (two way) vehicles per day and 36 LGV (two way) vehicles per day. It also indicates that further details of construction vehicular routes are still to be determined, and that on a number of roads in the northern vicinity of the site, low bridges will restrict the suitability of some access points to Gospel Oak for construction vehicle. From this we learn that important detail is missing from the planning application. This too is very concerning.
2. Gordon House Road is a narrow road with narrow pavements, heavy traffic and heavy footfall. Neither road nor pavements can be widened; this is an impossibility because of the narrow railway arches through which both road and pavements pass. This road and its pavements are wholly inadequate for the current heavy traffic and footfall; the road is a bottle neck, and only two pedestrians can walk abreast the 1.4 metre wide northern pavement under the arch. Pavement usage includes 100's of school children and families, going to and from Gospel Oak Primary, and Parliament Hill and La Sainte Union secondary schools, along with summer crowds and winter visitors to Hampstead Heath and passengers to and from Gospel Oak Station. The footfall is concentrated on the north side of Gordon House Road because Gospel Oak Station, the Heath, the Lido, Gospel Oak Primary, all the secondary schools and Spectrum House are on the northern side. The narrow pavement is already a perfect scenario for a crush disaster, and hence a massive Health and Safety risk right now. It is already an accident waiting to happen, even without the addition of footfall from the Murphy's Yard development.
3. Another serious safety risk relates to ambulances and fire engines being able to get through the obstructed traffic on Gordon House Road. For those living in Dartmouth Park or north Kentish Town, Gordon House Road is the only ambulance route that connects them in emergency with Royal Free Hospital. Similarly ambulances coming out of Camden Ambulance Station in Cressy Road have to travel along Gordon House Road to reach Dartmouth Park and north Kentish Town. There is an equally concerning problem with fire engines coming out of Kentish Town Fire Station on Highgate Road. Even at the present time traffic obstructions cause a serious risk. NB. Neither ambulances nor fire engines can be rerouted, as the only east-west options are along Prince of Wales Road [about a half mile south], and now equally congested because of a new Camden traffic scheme, or Hampstead

Lane running past Kenwood [about three quarters of a mile north]. Add any construction vehicles into the present perilous situation, and the risk to life must increase significantly, a matter which should be of utmost concern to Camden Council. Folgate's application should be rejected by Camden Council on this point alone.

4. There is also the question of how the C11 bus, already often obstructed by Gordon House Road's congested traffic, will keep moving with the addition of heavy construction traffic and delivery vehicles.
5. Folgate plan to add a new ingress/ egress from Murphy's Yard onto Gordon House Road between the railway bridges. Visibility splays and sight lines from this new road onto Gordon House Road are questionable, in part because of the eastern railway bridge. Hence vehicles would have considerable difficulty exiting the Yard, with the potential for further congestion, and worse still real risk to life as construction and ordinary traffic exits without being able to properly assess approaching traffic. There is no evidence from the plans that the proposed new vehicle exit to the Gordon House Road has been passed as safe. If it is not approved, the vehicle exit will have to be rerouted, and this would impact on the positioning of some of the blocks, which are very close to Gordon House Road and the western site boundary parallel with the Overground rail track.
6. As far back as 2019 the "Kentish Town Planning Framework. Future Transport Context. Transport for London City Planning. Issued to Camden 12.7.2019" identified unequivocally that Gordon House Road is very congested. Two quotes are worth noting [Page 32, Highways section]: "From Figure 15 it is clear that there is currently high delay at the junction between Gordon House road and Highgate Road at the North East corner of the development." and "There is a high delay on Gordon House Road, Highgate Road, Kentish Town Road and Prince of Wales Road, this delay is amongst the highest in London." Camden Council from the outset of discussions with Folgate were duty bound to indicate that on no account must Murphy's Yard development result in further traffic along Gordon House Road or Highgate Road.
7. It should be noted the Gordon House Road traffic congestion has been significantly exacerbated by Camden Council's new traffic scheme, preventing through traffic from Gordon House/ Mansfield Roads via Oak Village/ Grafton Road to Prince of Wales Road.
8. Late in the day, Murphy's understood that Gordon House Road congestion and obstruction poses a considerable problem to local people. Folgate have been at pains to find solutions. But the reality is there are few solutions. Gordon House Road is a traffic-logged road that is also a heavily-used pedestrian thoroughfare, and both road and pavements funnel through narrow, old Victorian railway arches.
9. As regards the new residents of Murphy's Yard, there are also risks to life, health and safety. It is potentially unsafe for there to be only one vehicle access to the Northern residential blocks. If there was a major emergency in Murphy's Yard in the Northern Triangle, and if Gordon House Road was at that time blocked by traffic, ambulances may not be able to get through in time, with a potential risk to life. The main entrance to the Southern part of the site at Sanderson Close appears not to connect with any northern route, so ambulances might not be able to reach emergencies in the northern part of the estate.
10. For elderly or disabled people, life on the Murphy's estate could be difficult if servicing bays are some distance from their homes, which we believe may be the case as the parameter plans do not specify exactly where the servicing bays are. Again, Folgate's plan is light on detail.
11. As regards the pathway through the Estate, there appears to be no cycle path. This could produce further safety issue, particularly for pedestrians. This is unacceptable.

CONCLUSION - the limited pedestrian and traffic capacity of Gordon House Road could pose a major potential hazard to life, safety, health and wellbeing for the residents of Gospel Oak, Dartmouth Park and north Kentish Town if more pedestrian and vehicle traffic is added as a result of the Murphy's Yard development. ON THESE GROUNDS ALONE, THIS APPLICATION MUST BE REJECTED BY CAMDEN COUNCIL, AS ANY RESPONSIBLE COUNCIL WOULD DO..

Regards [B] THE DENSITY AND HEIGHT OF THE RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS – up to 19 stories high - and the fact that the planned 825 UNITS WILL PROVIDE LITTLE OF THE SOCIAL OR AFFORDABLE HOUSING AREA NEEDS. I emphasise the following:

1. Of utmost importance is the fact that this development will not provide much of the social or affordable housing Camden desperately needs. Camden originally specified 50% affordable housing ± a mix of 1, 2, 3, 4 bedroom homes to match community needs. However, Folgate offers maximum 35% affordable with 88% of the 825 homes being 1-bed and 2-bed flats. The homes will not be suitable for families; again this runs counter to Camden's own original specification. ON THESE GROUNDS ALONE, THIS PLANNING APPLICATION MUST BE REJECTED.
2. All this raises the important question of whether people will actually want to live in Murphy's Yard at all?. And it's clear even now that most of these 2 bedroom units will be bought up as buy to let investments, many of which may not be that affordable or attractive to subsequent tenants. People don't want to live in tall blocks now that it is well documented they are unsafe and not conducive to happy, healthy living. This might lead to large numbers of units standing empty, and eventually Murphy's selling off the land to another investor. Murphy's Yard as planned could prove to be a white elephant, which does not yield the financial returns either Camden or Folgate require. And meanwhile Camden would be left with a decaying estate, on which people don't wish to live. This is not an impossible scenario.
3. Camden should take seriously the need to find ways for public sector workers in health, social care, education and leisure to be able to afford to live locally to the communities that they serve, and for tradespeople such as builders, electricians, plumbers, carpenters and gardeners to be able to live and locate their business premises close to the users of the services they provide. But who of any of these groups of people could afford 2 bedroom flats for in the region of £1M, which is the figure developers estimate 2-bed flats in one of the towers would market for at today's prices?
4. Too many buildings are planned to be squeezed into a tiny triangle of land; indeed it is hard to see how they will all fit. This is at the expense of quality of life. The only way this can be achieved is by building the residential towers so close against each other that dark shadows are cast from one to another. Also by abutting blocks close to and overlooking the railway. None of this is likely to make for comfortable living especially when the resulting windshear is factored in. Is this a benefit to Camden? Absolutely not. Another reason for Camden Council to reject this Folgate application.
5. And, new residents may be disappointed to find that to reach public transport or open space, they will have to join the overcrowded pavements and heavily congested traffic of Gordon House Road. Another inconvenience may be that parking for deliveries, taxis and trader vehicles is planned for some distance from the residential blocks.
6. Camden needs to be reminded of their over-arching responsibility, both to existing residents of surrounding neighbourhoods and the future residents of the Murphy's Yard site, to produce and preserve residential communities which are good places for people to live. The net benefits, in terms of quality of life, need to be greater than the disbenefits. This is not the case with this Folgate application.

7. The Folgate offer has drifted so far from the original Camden specification (in terms of type and style/appropriateness of housing offer and guaranteed percentage of affordable housing) and the associated disbenefits to the surrounding community are so great (overshadowing, loss of views and ecological damage, sheer ugliness, detriment to the character of the residential neighbourhoods , overcrowding and traffic blockages) that the disbenefits far outweigh any benefits. The benefit is to the developer, not to the local community.
8. The local community is outraged, and hardly surprising.
9. The tall towers will also seriously alter the protected view from Parliament Hill FOR EVER AFTER.
10. I am also very concerned indeed that outline planning permission should DEFINITELY not be given to the developer at this point, because Camden would be relying on over-vague information on the part of the developer.
11. Murphy's Yard was a great opportunity for selecting the very best of low-rise housing designs, of which there are wonderful Camden examples, even just round the corner in Cressfield Close and Woodyard Close. The tall towers are COMPLETELY out of keeping with the area. Camden and Folgate could do well to glance at the Lissenden Gardens precinct; this is an example of good housing provision crammed into a tiny space. Yes, it's a thing of its time, but it's a damn sight better than the Folgate "carbuncle", and could produce some learning for Folgate and Camden.

CONCLUSION – CAMDEN MUST REJECT this FOLGATE PLANNING APPLICATION. The Murphy's site is a WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY FOR CAMDEN, a council that prides itself on being forward-looking and "green" and for Murphy's/ Folgate, the owners - to use this large piece of land as a rare asset. Yes, use it to provide large amounts of desperately needed social and affordable housing, along with private housing to fund the project – PLAN FOR A SITE THAT IS A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE REALLY WANT TO LIVE, A SITE THAT IS AWARD WINNING!

Regards [C] the so-called "HEATH LINE" GREEN CORRIDOR appears on scrutiny to be a HARD- PAVED WALKWAY and not a green corridor, according to the development plan, and therefore would not introduce a "green" corridor from Kentish Town to the Heath. Moreover, four Camden SINC's [Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation] will therefore not be joined up by green infrastructure as the developer claims, but will be damaged by building massing and overshadowing from the tall overcrowding blocks. Biodiversity will not be introduced by the plan as it stands; on the contrary the existing barren Murphy's site arguably provides more opportunity for wildlife than the completed Murphy's Yard. Folgate, please don't dupe us.

I STRONGLY object to planning application number: 2021/3225/P for all the above reasons. IT OFFERS ABSOLUTELY NO BENEFITS WHATSOEVER TO THE RESIDENTS OF GOSPEL OAK, DARTMOUTH PARK OR NORTH KENTISH TOWN. The exception appeared to be a pedestrian through-way from Gospel Oak/ Hampstead Heath to Kentish Town and vice versa, except that at present that pathway seems not to be divided into pedestrian walkway and cycle path, and hence that too is likely to be a disbenefit with a potential for causing harm.

THIS APPLICATION SHOULD BE TURNED DOWN. I urge Camden, as a responsible Council, to have the courage to reject this application and ask the developer to go back to the drawing board. If Camden cares about its residents and its built environment and its eco-environment, it must turn down the application, in spite of the carrot of £38M CIL money.

The Folgate plan as it stands is a terrible and unworkable proposal for Camden Council and the people of Camden. It will cause untold harm to Camden's existing communities, and probably won't bring much joy to the new residents of Murphy's Yard either. It may well finish up a white elephant, and a huge embarrassment to Camden Council. IT MUST BE REJECTED.

I would like to think that next time Folgate produces a planning application, we as the surrounding communities find it worthy of our support.