

From: James Slater (Cllr)
Sent: 25 August 2022 17:38
To: Planning Planning
Cc: Kate Henry; Alex Bushell; Sylvia McNamara (Cllr)
Subject: Objection to 2022/1603/P

Dear Planning Team,

On behalf of myself and Councillor McNamara as ward councillors for Kentish Town North, please find below our views on planning application 2022/1603/P.

Objection to 2022/1603/P

As the Councillors for Kentish Town North, which includes the site on Highgate Road of this proposed development, we are writing to object to the proposals outlined in 2022/1603/P.

The reasons for our objection are set out below:

Lack of affordable housing

We support housing on this site given the obvious need for housing across Kentish Town and Camden. However, the concern is around housing that is affordable.

These current plans would see the number of affordable assisted living units reduce from 8 to 5, while market units rise from 34 to 42. It is regrettable given the circumstances that no attempt has been made to increase the number of affordable units in this development, and instead it has been reduced from 19% to 11%.

I understand that the Council's adult social care team are content with the reduction of assisted living units due to changes in policy since the original application. That doesn't mean that the developers could not have included more affordable housing within the rest of the scheme, especially in the extra market units that are created on the first floor. The fact remains here that there would be eight extra market units of which none would be affordable.

Dominance of the building and impact on amenity

The developers have argued that this is a minor amendment to the existing plans, but this is not an opinion we share as councillors.

The extra storey of the proposed development, when compared to the 2013 plan, would see significant reductions in daylight distribution for neighbouring properties, especially for Elsfield, a council housing block housing many elderly and vulnerable residents. The 2013 proposals already see changes to light distribution, but in comparison these proposals see huge changes, with some in Elsfield being reduced to as low as 54%, which we judge as unacceptable. There are also detrimental impacts on other residential properties on Highgate Road and the Maple Building.

The proposed building would be very dominant on Highgate Road, even in comparison with the previously consented plan. Efforts were made previously to divide the plan into two

separate buildings with a walk through which many residents appreciated as it would make it more visually appealing. Unfortunately, these plans feature both increased mass and height in an area covered by the Kentish Town Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect the heritage of Kentish Town and we believe that the height and dominance of this proposal does not comply with the spirit of this plan.

We agree with residents and groups who have advocated for the height to be reduced, both to reduce the dominance in the area and to maintain daylight into neighbouring properties.

Lack of engagement with residents and representatives

We have had no communication with the developer despite being elected councillors for nearly 4 months. This appears to be a theme - for example, the Kentish Town Neighbourhood Forum say in their submission that they have had no engagement, and local residents have complained to us about the lack of communication.

This lack of engagement is particularly important given the planning history of the site, where multiple applications have been made over the past decade. Residents have told us that they are exhausted by the continuous applications on this site, so engagement with them is crucial to inform them of the latest plans. We do not believe that has happened here.

As ward councillors, we organised a public session at Kentish Town Library to discuss the plans with Highgate Road residents which was very well-attended. Even following this, no contact has been made by the applicants, which we regret.

Summary

We urge the Planning Committee to reject this plan and for the developers to go back to the drawing board. The existing building has now been demolished and we recognise that while the 2013 plan could in theory be developed, this would now not be suitable given changes in policy for the assisted living units.

We therefore believe that the building mass passed in 2013 should be retained and that the necessary amendments should be made to that property, rather than adding a storey which would have a detrimental effect on our community. We also encourage the developers to increase the level of affordable housing to suit our community's need and communicate more effectively with residents and representatives in the future. We would, of course, welcome discussions with the developers going forward to work on a plan that better fits in with our community.

Councillor James Slater
Councillor Sylvia McNamara

Councillors for Kentish Town North ward
London Borough of Camden