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To: Planning Planning
Subject: Planning Application 2021/2954/P

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OBJECTION

At 74m high, the proposed new tower block is taller than the existing Selkirk House and would significantly harm the surrounding Bloomsbury Conservation Area. Its impact will be damaging to historic buildings nearby such as St George's Church, the British Museum and Bedford Square and could set a precedent, if allowed, for more unnecessary and high rise blocks. There is no need for new office development when already much is empty and office work patterns have permanently changed since the pandemic.

In 2019 Camden declared a climate emergency so it should only be supporting development which is environmentally responsible. The potential carbon cost of a new build over retrofitting the existing building is significant and the noise, disruption and pollution for local people over a period of four years would be abysmal when it could be avoided. The air quality in this area already exceeds Air Quality Standards Regulations so to add thousands of unnecessary lorry journeys would be in direct contradiction with Camden's aims of improving the quality of our air and making our streets safe as set out in its Transport Strategy.

Camden is in desperate need of more affordable housing. Not only will this proposed scheme demolish existing flats in Selkirk House, the development proposals allow for only nine social rented properties. The other apartments will do nothing to help solve the housing crisis as they are unaffordable to people on average earnings.

Selkirk House should be retained and retrofitted and the older buildings retained and refurbished to protect the unique quality and architecture of the surrounding Conservation Area.

Sue Cole