

Objection to HGY/2023/1208 Library 1 Shepherds, Highgate, N6 5QL

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) describes heritage assets, which includes “buildings of local historic value”, as “*an irreplaceable resource* [...] [which] *should be conserved* in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations” (paragraph 189) (my emphasis).

The Highgate Library copse is located within the Highgate Conservation Area, a Designated Heritage Asset.

The following heritage policies are relevant here:

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that

“In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area [...] special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”

The NPPF requests that

“When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, *great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation* [...] This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance” (paragraph 199) (my emphasis).

It states that

“Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification” (paragraph 200)

I strongly object to the proposals for the Highgate Library copse site for the following reasons:

1. Substantial harm to the setting of the Heritage Assets adjoining the site including the statutorily listed properties of Highgate Library, the disused old Highgate Station

overground tunnels, Jackson Lane Arts Centre and the SINC copse, Parkland Walk and Capital Ring.

2. Impact on the amenity of the neighbours through increased noise levels, overlooking, and loss of privacy.
3. Impact on bio diversity by the increase in hard standing and built form
4. Poor quality of the design which does not meet British Cycling's basic requirements for a BMX track and which will not result in any enhancement of the Conservation Area.

The attached report written by Camden Council sets out a proper approach and the minimum standards for the development of a BMX track. It is thoughtless to consider installing a BMX track which will necessarily be attractive to teenagers next to Transport for London's (TfL) Old Highgate Station site. There has been a long history of trespassers on the site and a BMX track on that site would create a serious potential harm arising from young and possibly vulnerable teenagers trespassing on TfL's site. Only in recent days there has been the death of a boy trespassing on a site.

END