

Argles James

From: Planning Support
Subject: FW: Comment Received from Public Access

Application Reference No. : HGY/2021/2727

Site Address: Cranwood 100 Woodside Avenue London N10 3JA

Comments by: Houlton

From:

14

Dukes Avenue

Muswell Hill

London

N102pt

Submission: Objection

Comments: These plans were published for informal consultation in December 2020 and received over 300 comments, mostly negative. Yet nine months later, the council is proposing an almost identical development with no quarter given to the main concerns raised - that the development is unacceptably high density, too overbearing, too high and contains no parking-even for existing residents - 8 families - whose parking spaces will be lost.

My main objections echo others; - in detail:

1. More thorough transport and parking assessments are needed to assess the impact of this development on surrounding streets. The current assumption appears to be that 40 or so families will not have a single car between them. Woodside Ave and Muswell Hill Road are both prone to congestion-specially during school pick up and drop off times. Where is the council's parking assessment for this scheme? The Highgate Neighbourhood Forum has a parking assessment tailored to the needs of a conservation area. Muswell Hill deserves a similarly stringent approach <https://forhighgate.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Highgate-HNF-model-for-parking-surveys.pdf>

2. The application for planning permission states that there are 6 existing spaces and proposes to reduce this to 4 disabled spots. This is false. As anyone who has visited the site can see, there is a residents' car park which has since the existing terrace (102-116 Woodside Avenue) was built in the 1970s been used by the residents of those houses to park their cars. That means the car park has at least 8 spaces. Since the car park has been used for more than 30 years, with no objection from the council, current residents may well have a right to park there by prescriptive easement. The Labour council is therefore banking on current residents being unaware of those rights, and taking their parking spaces to build two luxury homes for private sale.

The council needs to retain all 8 parking spots on the new site and earmark them for the existing householders. Moreover, there are currently at least a dozen additional car parking spaces adjacent to the Cranwood Care home which are used by parents of St Jamess school at pick up and drop off. There's chaos there now at these times. This will no doubt spill over into Woodside Ave and environs during works and after the development is complete. What are the council's plans for alleviating the congestion this will cause?

3. It is reasonable to assume that the 32 new families paying council rents will include a large number who need a car (for their livelihoods/special needs/age)--not 15-30 mins walk away but close by. Yet the council's plans fails to fully take into account these needs and allocate sufficient parking - disabled or otherwise - for the new flats.

4. As the council notes in its fire assessment, the proposed narrow road between building A and B provides the only access to fire engines and other emergency vehicles in the new development. Currently, this stretch of road is often blocked with cars at busy times. The fire assessment states: Parking and signage

will be provided to the end of the service road at Building C so as to reduce the likelihood of cars being left on the service road. In order to ensure that the Fire and Rescue Service are able to get access down the service road between Building B and Building A, it shall be ensured by management that this road is not blocked by any non-emergency services vehicles at all times. Yet the current signage on the site does nothing at all to prevent errant parking and it is not clear how any management will ensure this road is not blocked. I think it is absolutely vital the council spells out how it envisages keeping this road free at all times. Perhaps automated bollards or a gate? Some solution must be found before building work goes ahead.

5. The fire assessment mentions nothing about how the existing terrace will be affected - yet access to these homes are likely to be affected. With only a narrow access road and no parking, the development presents a clear danger to current residents. In the past few years, ambulances and fire engines have been able to park in the Cranwood care home car park. With that space gone, it may take fire services or ambulance staff precious more minutes to park and attend. The fire assessment needs to take this into account.

6. As a point of accuracy, the application says that the site was empty until 2019. This is false. The care home was occupied by the Global Guardians - a company that the council sublet it to. During this period, there were numerous rat infestations and a fire in the conservatory of the care home. The site is again currently occupied by the Global Guardians.

7. The new plans envision building two three storey houses for private sale in the current residents' car park. These houses will have an extra floor - so will overlook neighbouring gardens. This will erode the privacy of the current occupants of 102-116 Woodside Ave - particularly, 102-108. The currently proposed roof terraces on the 2nd floor of these houses will have line of sight straight into the living rooms and gardens of the existing houses. These would represent an unacceptable deterioration in the privacy of the current residents. Plans for a third storey on these houses need to be scrapped.

8. The bat survey carried out by contractors for the council indicated nests on the car-park facing side of 102. Yet the current proposals will see two large houses built right next door to 102, which will produce horrific amounts of noise and vibration for bats and residents alike. Can the planning team explain how they will mitigate this?

9. Building A, at 6 storeys, is too high. The roof is taller than the adjacent buildings further down Muswell Hill Road, which are themselves unusually tall for the area. The council has estimated reductions of sunlight to the current terrace and neighbouring houses of c 20%. Reducing the height of this building by a storey would go some way to alleviating the valid concerns of local people that the scheme is too overbearing and too dense. Building B could also be reduced by a storey, to three storeys. If the height of Building B is reduced, a screen of trees between the building and St Jamess school might help to alleviate some privacy and safeguarding concerns of parents with children at the school.

10. Building A will exclusively be social housing, while Building B and the two luxury houses (Building C), next to the existing terrace of social housing will be exclusively for private sale. This will stigmatise council tenants old and new. Both buildings A and B should be a mix of social and private housing.

11. The proposals state that more thought will be given to detailing and materials. But the plans should not be given permission to proceed without a rethink of what features, exactly, will be used to ensure this development is thoroughly in character with the surrounding area. At the moment, it is not. So far there has only been tinkering around the edges-small changes that add up to very little. The bay balconies are a big concern. There need to be efforts to reduce the amount of brickwork and replace that with wrought iron. Much more needs to be done to reduce their bulk. The sides could also be iron railings rather than brick. The roof needs to be lighter. They are still far too obtrusive and are the ugliest part of the new development.

12. In general, the building still looks rather Brutalist. eg see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brutalist_architecture#/media/File:Park_Hill_Samarkanda.JPG

Much more should be done to soften the building so it is not so terribly out of character with the neighbourhood.

13. Post-Covid it is nearly impossible to get a GP appointment in the area. Patients with anything other than very routine problems are being referred to A&E. This development will place further stress on local amenities and services.

The council needs to scale back this development; that is the only way to respond to the overwhelming brunt of comments from Muswell Hill residents, including those that will look at these buildings out of their windows every day. There is a lot of work that needs to be done before this development fits in with the area and is ready to serve the local community and its new residents.