

Murphy's Yard Development

Members of the Highgate Society are asked to support widespread opposition by local groups and residents to proposals for several residential tower blocks at Gospel Oak, on the large disused Murphy's Builders' Yard on the south side of Gordon House Road, opposite the entrance to Hampstead Heath. Attached are views of how the development will damage views from Parliament Hill and the Lido field.

The application can be seen on www.planningrecords.camden.gov.uk - Application Number 2021/3225/P. Don't be daunted by its 5,000 pages! Simply look for the "Design and Access Statement", which will give all the information needed.

As members of the Hampstead Heath Consultative Committee, the Highgate Society supports the aims of the Heath & Hampstead Society and the City of London to preserve Hampstead Heath and, equally important, to ensure that development near the Heath must not harm its openness, or views from and to it – a principle embedded in local (Hampstead Neighbourhood Plan, Policy NE1 and Dartmouth Park Neighbourhood Plan, Policy ES1), regional (Camden Local Plan Policy A2 and the Mayor's London Plan 2021, Policies G3 and G6), and national (National Planning Policy Framework Section 13) policy.

Major concerns are:

1. The massing and height of the six tower blocks, of between 11 to 19 storeys, will have an overwhelming adverse impact on the openness of the Heath, as shown in the accompanying views.
2. There will be 825 homes (for 2,000+ residents) and 118,000 sq m of industrial and office space. The development will have no significant green public space; an original plan for an ecological corridor from Kentish Town Station to the Heath entrance was abandoned in favour of more building, and the corridor will merely be an access route; residents and workers will thus need to use the Heath. While the Heath is of course for the public, this will impose serious extra pressure on a Heath still recovering from heavy erosion from intensive use during the pandemic. The development includes an element of affordable housing, which should not be discouraged; but there is still no agreement on the amount – the developer does not accept the suggested 35%, which should surely be a minimum. We believe that an imaginative architect could redesign the scheme to (a) provide the accommodation at a much lower scale and (b) provide sufficient amenity green space for the residents.
3. The development will set a terrible and irremovable precedent for high-rise building on the edge of the Heath. Please, therefore, write to Camden Council to make your objections known and urge a redesign. The deadline for objections is Monday 21 February 2022. You can object via the link above, email it to planning@camden.gov.uk, or write to Planning Department, London Borough of Camden, 2nd Floor, 5 Pancras Square, London N1C 4AG, citing the application number.



Existing



Proposed