



Joint Residents' Associations Closing Statement

for the

Public Planning Inquiry in relation to

**Croydon Council planning application 16/02994/P
(Appeal ref APP/L5240/V/17/3174139)**

03 December 2019 – 06 December 2019

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The following statement is prepared by the joint residents' associations who are opposed to the Croydon Council planning application 16/02994/P, known as "Mosaic Place".

Our joint statement is prepared by the Rule 6 party who represent:

- Coulsdon West Residents' Association (CWRA)
- East Coulsdon Residents' Association (ECRA)
- Hartley and District Residents' Association (HADRA)
- Kenley and District Residents' Association (KENDRA)
- Old Coulsdon Residents' Association (OCRA)
- Riddlesdown Residents' Association (RRA), and
- Sanderstead Residents' Association (SRA)

We would like to point out that many of our residents live within the Purley Postcode district of CR8.

Our joint statement is as follows:

1. Introductory Remarks

- 1.1. We, the joint Residents' Associations surrounding the proposed development at Mosaic Place have been grateful for the opportunity over the past week to present our case to the inspector and again wish to summarise why we and many of our members formally object to the proposed development.
- 1.2. We are a group of lay-people who represent up to 15,000 members and our case has been built largely on the objections we have received from the majority of those, living in the whole Purley area (CR8).
- 1.3. Before doing so, we do wish to make it clear that all of the aforementioned Residents' Associations support the work that the Purley Baptist Church does for our local Purley community and we have no problem in principle with the expansion of their proposed church and associated facilities.
- 1.4. Indeed, we would place greater significant weight on the work carried out by Purley Baptist Church than expressed by the Secretary of State's letter of 3 December 2018 where he affords it only "*moderate weight*."
- 1.5. We share many similar aspirations - in the provision of affordable housing, the regeneration of Purley town centre and increasing the facilities available to the local community.
- 1.6. For the record, we would like it noted that the Rule 6 party relied upon the correct computer generated imagery (CGI) throughout the various stages of this application and we have published them accordingly on our websites and social media.

- 1.7. We wish to see these two sites redeveloped, as part of one of these sites has been an eye sore and a detriment to Purley for over 35 years now.
- 1.8. However, where we differ is on the point that we do not believe an oversized and a tall building development at this location in the centre of Purley is appropriate and contend that the proposed development will generate a number of problems for our area, due largely to its inappropriate scale.
- 1.9. We support a development on the proposed site and none of the Residents' Associations lodged any formal objections with Croydon Council to the previous planning application submitted for that purpose in 2006 and determined in 2011.

2. Landmark Building

- 2.1. We do not in principle object to a landmark building on the site, however there is no stipulation that a landmark building must be 17 storeys in height. Indeed, this point was contested by many Residents' Associations when the amended Croydon Plan for the Purley District Centre (PDC) was proposed.

3. Proposed building height

- 3.1. London Plan policy 7.7 deals specifically with tall buildings and states that "*Tall and large buildings should not have an unacceptably harmful impact on their surroundings*". We contend that this proposed development *does* impact on the surroundings, due largely to the resultant reduction in air quality and the extra pressure which will be put on local services and facilities, such as schools and the already overstretched local GPs and dentists.
- 3.2. Croydon Local Plan - DM42.1(b) states that development should "*Complement the existing predominant building heights of 3 to 8 storeys, with a potential for a new landmark of up to a maximum of 16 storeys;*" Just because there is **potential** for a tall building, does not necessarily give express permission for one and we have argued that a building height of up to 8 storeys would be more acceptable to the Rule 6 party. The local plan makes no mention of developments exceeding 16 storeys, which this one does.
- 3.3. SP4.6 of the Croydon Local Plan states that "*applications for tall buildings will be required to respect and enhance local character and heritage assets;*" We contend that the proposed development does little to enhance the local character of Purley.
- 3.4. Croydon Local Plan DM15 states that developments should "*ensure tall or large buildings respect and enhance local character, and do not harm the*

setting of heritage assets". We contend that the tower does neither and therefore contravenes the council's own plans.

- 3.5. It is our contention that the sheer height of the proposed development is excessive and wholly out of place. Whilst the Purley District Centre may have been earmarked for a tall building, we have argued that this specific location is not suitable and other more suitable locations could potentially be a better solution. Such locations may in the future include the current "Tesco" site along Brighton Road, which also forms part of the Purley District Centre.
- 3.6. We support the Secretary of State's view in his report of 3 December 2018 where he expressed his "*serious concerns about the height of the tower in this location*"
- 3.7. We believe the height of this building at just under 60 metres from ground level on Brighton Road frontage should have been mentioned in the Design and Access Statement, in the Planning Officer's report, and also in the Planning Inspector's report. It hasn't been and is buried within just one or two drawings from many hundreds of other drawings submitted.

4. Overshadowing

- 4.1. We still believe the issue of overshadowing to part of the Purley District Centre from the tower *will* occur and the effect was not fully appreciated at this Inquiry. We believe that overshadowing *will* occur to neighbouring properties, especially Tudor Court and the surrounding Purley District Centre, in part of Russell Hill Road and Brighton Road.

5. Adherence to Revised Building Regulations

- 5.1. In December 2018, the government published amended Building Regulations restricting the external use of combustible materials above 18m. (The Building (Amendment) Regulations, SI 2018/1230). We would suggest that the trees intended to be placed outside the 15th floor penthouses, are of a combustible nature, and fall foul of these amended regulations and therefore render this particular aspect as impermissible from a planning perspective.

6. Heritage

- 6.1. Paragraph 127 (c) of the National Policy Framework states that Planning Policies and decisions should ensure that developments "*are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting*". We contest that because of the proposed height, the tower does not conform to this.
- 6.2. Paragraph 131 of the National Policy Framework states that "*In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or*

innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.” We contend that this proposed development, due to its height, does not fit in with the overall form and layout of Purley District Centre.

- 6.3. We are still concerned that the proposed 17 storey block will have a detrimental effect on 960 Brighton Road ("Pizza Express"). The council's Heritage Officer, Mr Lacovara, has both in the previous inquiry and the current inquiry agreed with us that this development will present a degree of harm to Brighton Road, especially number 960.
- 6.4. Indeed, we agree with the Secretary of State's findings that there would be a *“clear negative impact on the former bank at 960 Brighton Road and the Brighton Road Local Heritage Area (LHA)”*.
- 6.5. We do not believe at 17 storeys high that these proposals seek to form a positive relationship with the Purley District Centre, principally the Victorian shopping parades in Brighton Road and Russell Hill Road.
- 6.6. This is due to the bulk and massing of the buildings proposed and will mean that they will dominate the townscape and skyline, which is exacerbated by the lack of any architectural rhythm or shared detailing.
- 6.7. The contrast between the proposed development and the existing urban grain is jarring rather than striking, reflecting the lack of any positive relationship between the proposal and the Purley District Centre.
- 6.8. In addition, we believe that for tall buildings to function best and sit within an urban environment, they require public open space at ground level with good connectivity to and with the surrounding uses, both of which this proposal fails to provide given the tight, restricted nature of both sites. There is a danger that, due to the lack of space surrounding the proposed development it will appear very dominating and overbearing to pedestrians standing in its near proximity.
- 6.9. With the heritage of Brighton Road, the campanile (side tower) does nothing to enhance the main tower and will have a detrimental impact to the surrounding area. Indeed, in the previous Inspector's report, the DSE advised in section 15.9 that *“the tower could be slimmed down as well as removing the attached campanile element”*.

7. Regeneration of Purley town centre

- 7.1. We strongly support the regeneration of the island and south sites.

8. Transportation

- 8.1. Being local residents who use the junction on Russell Hill Road (A23) on a regular basis, we do not believe that the council or TfL have made the correct decision in relation to the vehicle exit point from the proposed development. It is only 5 vehicle lengths to the signalled junction of Brighton Road and Russell Hill Road and TfL has also raised adverse comments in relation to this on their initial site visit.
- 8.2. Poor siting of these entrances will exacerbate traffic congestion on Purley Way travelling south from Croydon and Foxley Lane, thereby also increasing pollution levels.
- 8.3. We are still of the view that when a major event finishes, up to 80% of vehicles could attempt to leave at the same time, adding to congestion and pollution in the area.
- 8.4. The proposed exit is in the narrowest part of Russell Hill Road almost opposite the junction to Russell Hill Place, the exit to a council car park.
- 8.5. We fear that if development takes place on this site, there will be increased traffic flow to major vehicle arteries during the construction stage. This will include construction traffic with deliveries. We would also question where the site workers are intending to park.
- 8.6. It has been agreed by all parties that the A22/A23/A235 and the Purley gyratory are one of the busiest and complex traffic areas in the borough of Croydon.
- 8.7. It is clear that, due to the requirement of traffic to change lanes crossing the path of other traffic in Russell Hill Road, the majority of recorded accidents are in this part of the gyratory. Although most of these are low speed collisions with minor injuries, they can cause considerable delays to traffic flows.
- 8.8. In support of reduced parking at the proposed facility car ownership has been limited, however there has apparently been no studies carried out in relation to the level of deliveries from services such as Amazon, UberEats and other online shopping providers. Whilst there may be a "Tesco" store in the close proximity, no doubt residents of the proposed development may choose to shop online at other major food retailers and we questions where these delivery vehicles will park.
- 8.9. Ms Balboa in her presentation to this Inquiry initially stated that leaseholders of the flats will not be permitted to own a vehicle and park on site. To our knowledge, there is no UK law that states a leaseholder cannot own a vehicle, or be a registered keeper of a vehicle. We believe

that leaseholders, if they own a vehicle and can't park on site, will then park on streets like Plough Lane, or Woodcote Valley Road, where there is no yellow line restrictions, or Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ). They could also park in Whytecliffe Road South where there are free parking bays in a 1 hour restricted CPZ (1pm to 2pm). These streets are only a few minutes walking distance away from the two sites. If the two Purley CPZ's are extended by the Council because of this development we believe leaseholders will then park further away from the Purley District Centre in unrestricted streets. By parking elsewhere, this will then create parking stress for residents living in those streets.

9. Air Quality

- 9.1. Purley gyratory already has poor air quality and is above WHO guidelines and parts of the Brighton Road also exceed EU air quality levels. We are still of the view that the exit onto Russell Hill Road will decrease the local air quality due to the need for vehicles to exit the site onto that road. Such vehicles will have to queue to enter the traffic flow and possibly change lanes whilst at the same time causing existing traffic in Russell Hill Road to tail back due to the closeness of this site exit to the traffic signals.
- 9.2. Air Quality has risen up the agenda of both politicians and the public. As a consequence, the London Mayor has brought forward the proposed Ultra Low emission Zone by two years, while Croydon are in the process of introducing emission-based parking charges for Controlled Parking Zones.
- 9.3. In the Air Quality Action Plan 2017 to 2022 published in 2019, Croydon identifies Purley Cross as one of five "Focus Areas" with the worst air quality in Croydon.
- 9.4. We accept that our traffic surveys carried out over the last 2 months, 3 times at each location, are snap shots. However, these are very likely to be replicated on any other day.
- 9.5. Although neither the junctions on the A23 at Stoats Nest Road and Grovelands Road replicate *exactly* the proposed entry/exit on Russell Hill Road, they are sufficiently similar, both having uncontrolled entry and exit from the A23, to enable a comparison of the time that it takes to exit an uncontrolled junction on the A23.
- 9.6. The Grovelands Road junction onto the A23 is about 200 metres to the north of the signalled junction of Old Lodge Lane. The Stoats Nest Road junction onto the A23 is 500 metres to the south of the signalled Old Lodge Lane junction. It is also an uncontrolled junction and vehicles have to cross one lane of southbound traffic via a "keep clear" box and try and join the continuous flow of traffic northbound. They are largely dependent on the generosity of drivers to allow them in to the flow.

- 9.7. These surveys show that traffic entering the A23 after a signalled junction, as opposed to before one, take approximately half the time to join the traffic flow, due to the natural breaks in the traffic that occur when the signals are red.
- 9.8. We are still of the view that an entry/exit on Banstead Road as proposed at an earlier stage would reduce the exit time from the site by at least a half, thus reducing both traffic congestion and improving air quality.
- 9.9. The council Air Quality representative, Mr Simmonds, previously agreed with us that the proposed development will take place within an area where harmful levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) already exceeds EU legal limits and that the proposed development will only increase these levels. Nitrogen Dioxide is considered a pollutant that is harmful to human health and we should not be placing high density housing within such an area.
- 9.10. Studies by both Dudley and Lambeth Councils conclude that stationary vehicles create twice as much pollution as moving vehicles. As 40 (and possibly up to 50) vehicles could be leaving the site after a major event at the same time, this will increase the level of pollution at the exit and in Russell Hill Road at these times and for a considerable period of time until all the vehicles have departed. We understand there could potentially be up to three events per day on the Church's premises.
- 9.11. We welcome that Croydon Council has instigated Idling Patrols to deal with this problem. However, we note that this consists of only 3 Pollution Control Officers across the entire borough and is only likely to result in a visit to the site if complaints have been received.
- 9.12. The Idling Patrol will have no jurisdiction for vehicles queuing in traffic, only those on the public highway. The vehicles with idling engines still waiting to exit the proposed site will be subject to onsite marshalling.

10. Pedestrian routes

- 10.1. We are of the view that when vehicles exit onto Russell Hill Road following an event, this will interfere with pedestrian flow and affect air quality for pedestrians. Russell Hill Road has a high pedestrian flow due to the prominence of shops, restaurants, and a pub.

11. Landscaping

- 11.1. We believe that a penthouse resident, having paid substantial amounts for their new property, will be presented with obstructed views due to the placement of rooftop trees. We maintain that there is no way to stop residents from performing acts of "guerrilla gardening" in order to improve their line of sight, or in high winds there exists the possibility of falling branches.

- 11.2. The Local Planning Authority state in their report "London Plan Policy 7.7" that "*tall buildings should not have an unacceptable harmful impact on their surroundings and should not adversely affect micro climate or wind turbulence.*" The RAs are of the view that significant wind tunnels will be created in surrounding streets and in particular on Banstead Road and Brighton Road, below the proposed tall buildings. We believe this will be particularly bad in gale force winds, in whichever direction the wind is blowing. This could cause considerable inconvenience and danger for pedestrians and high sided HGVs.

12. "Section 106" (Community Infrastructure Levy CIL)

- 12.1 We find it disappointing that none of the Section 106 monies is proposed to be spent on areas within the centre of Purley. Our residents have now had many developments undertaken within the area and as yet there is no strong indication from the Council that monies from the Council's central CIL fund has been spent on the local infrastructure in Purley. Purley's residents have received very little improvement in GP and other local services to cater for the increasing population.
- 12.2 We welcome Councillor Paul Scott's commitment to spend up to 15% of the CIL money locally.

13. Conclusion

- 13.1. Our residents are not natural revolutionaries, so the continued strong negative reaction to this application from the wider community is noteworthy, if not surprising.
- 13.2. For the reasons outlined within this statement, we find it baffling that the previous inspector concluded that "*No concerns other than affordable housing and air quality merit any significant weight*".
- 13.3. On balance, whilst acknowledging many good parts of the application, the joint seven Residents' Associations are still opposed to this development.
- 13.4. Finally, we would like to formally acknowledge the hospitality that has been afforded to us over the past week by the Purley Baptist Church, the Minister, and his staff.
- 13.5. We would also like to thank the Planning Inspector for his fairness in adjudicating this inquiry.

END