



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Susie Saraiva  
LBHF Development Management Services  
Town Hall Extension  
King Street  
London W6 9JU

Dear Susie Saraiva

**Re: Demolition of existing buildings to provide a civic square, new civic offices, 320 residential dwellings, a food store, 5 retail units and a pedestrian footbridge to Furnivall Gardens.**

Application Ref: 2010/03465/FUL.

Listed Building Consent ref: 2010/03466/LBC and  
Conservation Area Consent ref: 2010/03467/CAC.

I am writing to oppose in the strongest terms the above application. In doing so I know I am joining hundreds of my constituents who have written to me as well as to the council, and thousands more who are affected by this development and have made it clear that they think the scheme in its current form would be a disaster for the borough and its residents.

I have read the many, many well-argued submissions opposing the application, in particular the comprehensive objection dated 17 December 2010 from The Hammersmith Mall Residents' Association, one of over 25 local and national associations which have stated their opposition. I do not see in the light of the quality and quantity of opposition how the council can proceed. I cannot think of a development in the 25 years I have represented the borough which has caused such powerful and near universal objection.

1. Planning authorities compromised.

1.1 Because of the way the council has approached this development it is fatally compromised and cannot be seen as an independent planning authority. The sole justification for proceeding, given by administration councillors at the several public meetings which objectors have organised, is that the provision of new municipal offices will save the council money. Those offices will be provided at nil cost by the commercial developer. The council is the joint developer of the site and one of the main beneficiaries. I do not accept the need for new luxury offices on the Nigel Playfair car park site, the costs being alleged to provide these or the absence of any alternative scheme for dealing with the disrepair issues at the existing town hall extension. However, if the council has made this a precondition of the



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

scheme going ahead it cannot then objectively judge the merits of the other parts of the scheme, in particular the high-rise luxury apartments, which will cross-subsidise the new civic centre.

1.2 In such cases it might be possible to defer to the Mayor of London, but it is a matter of public record that the chief executive of co-developer Helical Bar concedes his £20,000 donation to the current Mayor's election fund 'could be seen as an attempt to influence Mr Johnson's policy on tall buildings in outer London' (Financial Times article link below). Please also see the article from Estates Gazette for 10 May 2008 (attached above) which suggests that even at that stage discussions were taking place between the Mayor and the council-developer to reduce the quantum of affordable housing. This article suggests a reduction from 50% to 20%. Since this time the application has reduced affordable housing on the site to zero. Indeed because of the demolition of the Pocklington Trust homes there will be a loss of affordable homes.

<http://blogs.ft.com/westminster/2008/01/a-penny-for-hishtml/>

## 2. Detriment.

2.1 This development is unrivalled in that almost everything it destroys is useful, valued by the community and proportionate to its surroundings and everything it creates is inappropriate, unwanted and out of scale. The one exception to this is the demolition of the town hall extension. This is an ugly building that has never suited its location and has been regretted almost since the time it was built in the early 1970s. However, the cost (and opportunity cost) of demolition and replacing it with a large open public square have not been properly determined and alternatives looked at. How the square will function and whether it is a priority given the proximity of Lyric Square is a matter of opinion, but the decision to leave this large area of previously developed land vacant places impossible cost burdens on the rest of the site. Other options such as replacing or remodelling the extension have not been adequately investigated. Instead, in pursuit of a new municipal folly, the council has found itself endorsing the ruination of one of the most historic and well-loved parts of the borough.

2.2 Loss of cinema. This is one of the last individual, traditional cinemas left in a borough which is now the home of the multiplex. It is popular, well-located and has the potential to be a landmark building and community hub. Almost 5,000 people have signed a petition just in support of retaining the cinema, which is profit-making and helps to support local businesses, particularly the wide range of independent restaurants



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

2.3 Loss of Thomas Pocklington dwellings. These elegant mansion flats provide a type of housing fast diminishing in the borough: a mixture of some properties reserved for visually impaired tenants, some for long-term tenants paying fair or competitive rent. This is a thriving community that will be destroyed with no replacement of affordable housing. Demolition would also damage the future of the Trust for which this provides long-term investment property.

2.4 Destruction of Cromwell Avenue. The combination of the Pocklington dwellings, the Quaker meeting house and the remaining affordable housing properties in this tree-lined cul-de-sac create a haven of quiet despite being so close to the A4 and town centre. Marryat Gardens will become the entry and exit point for vehicles using the development, including delivery vehicles. The road was never intended for this purpose which will badly affect residents' amenities.

2.5 Furnivall Gardens. The loss of up to one third of the open space of these popular riverside gardens opposite the Town Hall speaks for itself. The grassed areas of Furnivall Gardens are very well used for play, exercise, and relaxation especially in the summer months and are often crowded. Residents do not seem to find it a problem to reach them without a footbridge.

2.6 Luxury flats. The construction of 14 and 15 storey blocks of luxury small flats is the most objectionable feature of an objectionable scheme. From the effect on the whole Hammersmith Riverside to the looming presence over neighbouring streets to the utter redundancy of the accommodation in terms of local need is obscene.

2.7 Footbridge. This monstrosity, in addition to the damage it causes to Furnivall Gardens, Nigel Playfair Avenue, the setting of the listed Town Hall and the privacy of residential properties, is a white elephant. No proper investigation of surface level or improved subway access has been undertaken.

### 3. Affordable housing.

The need for sub-market housing is the most pressing issue in Hammersmith & Fulham, a borough with among the highest rent and purchase costs in the UK. Whether it is social rent or shared ownership, family properties or starter homes for first-time buyers, any substantial residential development must include an affordable element. This scheme provides no affordable homes, even to replace those lost. It is not acceptable to say this is a special case. No new homes for social rent have been given effective planning consents since 2006.



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

4. Precedent.

The Hammersmith & Fulham Riverside, in contrast to development in other boroughs such as Wandsworth, has retained its character and scale over the past three decades in spite of the boom in London property prices. The creation of tall buildings along the Riverside will provide the opportunity for other developers to pursue similar schemes. There are already signs of this at Queen's Wharf by Hammersmith Bridge and on the Hammersmith Embankment site recently purchased by St George.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Slaughter', written over a horizontal line.

Andy Slaughter

Labour MP for Hammersmith

New London mayor ● Helical to revise scheme ● Milton in top planning role

# Boris prompts social homes U-turn

Patrick Clift

Helical Bar is planning to reduce the amount of social housing in its £110m redevelopment in Hammersmith, following Boris Johnson's election as London mayor.

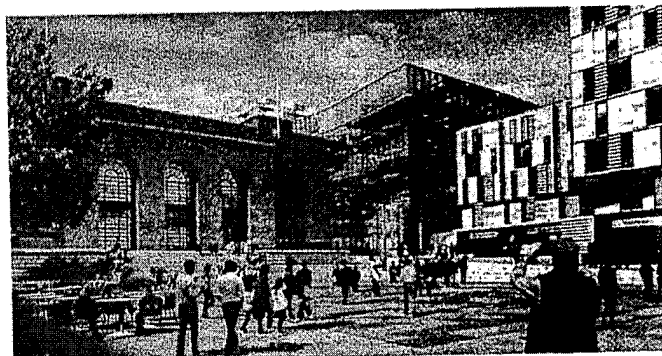
The developer – with housebuilder Grainger – had proposed in November, when it bid for the site, that 50% of the 290 homes built on the 6.5-acre Hammersmith Campus would be affordable. However, sources claimed that this figure was now likely to be reduced to 20%.

Chief executive Mike Slade said: "The new mayor will be more flexible on the quantum of affordable housing in any scheme – Ken Livingstone's rigid 50% target stopped a lot of redevelopment."

However, he said it was too early to comment on the final make-up of the scheme.

Prior to his election, Johnson vowed to scrap Livingstone's policy, and is understood to have met several Conservative council leaders – including Hammersmith & Fulham's Stephen Greenhalgh – to assure them that he would not intervene if they approved schemes that did not meet the target.

His office told *EG*: "The 50% target has failed Londoners. Over the past eight years, the proportion of affordable housing has fallen dramatically. The mayor wants a fresh approach, and will work with the boroughs to deliver 50,000 new affordable homes over the next three years to help more Londoners onto the housing ladder."



Hammersmith Campus: affordable homes quota may fall to as low as 20%

One senior planning source said: "Developers have had conversations with certain local planning authorities. They are revising schemes and dramatically decreasing the level of affordable housing, knowing that they have the support of the borough and that

the mayor will not intervene."

Johnson may be forced to publish a supplementary planning document outlining his policy on affordable housing to avoid conflict with secretary of state Hazel Blears, who can call in developments that do not comply with the London Plan.

## Tall tower critic is new planning adviser

Westminster city council leader, and well-known critic of tall towers, Sir Simon Milton has been appointed to implement the mayor's new planning regime.

New London mayor Boris Johnson appointed Milton as the capital's senior planning adviser on Tuesday.

Milton will relinquish his role at Westminster to take charge of the mayor's policy on affordable housing, the role of tall buildings and the protection of historic views and green spaces in the capital.

As leader of Westminster city council, Milton was an outspoken critic of former mayor Ken Livingstone, accusing him of "meddling" in the



Johnson, left, and Sir Simon Milton

planning system against the wishes of London boroughs. He also led a campaign against the "fetish for tall buildings anywhere" in the capital.

Ian Blacker, head of planning and environment at Cushman & Wakefield, said: "If the new mayor's approach is one of pragmatism, with appropriate levels of affordable housing in appropriate places, that would

be welcomed by the industry."

As *EG* went to press, Johnson announced that he had asked London Development Agency chair Mary Reilly and chief executive Manny Lewis to step down. He has nominated Harvey McGrath, chairman of London business campaign group London First, as interim chair and Peter Rogers, Westminster city council's chief executive, as interim chief executive.

Shaftesbury non-executive director and former editor of *The Sunday Telegraph* Patience Wheatcroft is to head a "forensic audit panel" to investigate the financial management of the LDA and Greater London Authority.

## INDUSTRY VIEWS ON NEW MAYOR

**Liz Peace, chief executive of the British Property Federation:**

"The development industry enjoyed a good working relationship with Ken [Livingstone], which ensured that a great deal of London could be regenerated and improved. It's imperative that Boris [Johnson] and his team recognise the contribution that the property industry has to make, and fully understand the commercial realities of how the industry operates. We look forward to working with the new mayor to ensure this becomes a reality."

**Hugh Seaborn, chairman of the Westminster Property Owners Association:**

"Getting development right in Westminster is vital to London's economic success, and in meeting the forecast population and employment growth for the capital. Developers will look to Boris for guidance on how he will support appropriate new development. We look forward to hearing more of his approach to the planning and development process."

## LEVY'S BLACKFRIARS TOWER CALLED IN

Israeli investor Gill Levy's plans for a 42-storey residential tower and 23-storey office tower at 20 Blackfriars Road, SE1, have been called in by secretary of state Hazel Blears. She will investigate the "appropriateness of a very tall building" in the location as well as the Wilkinson

Eyre-designed scheme's compliance with national, London and borough planning policy. The decision came as the future of tall buildings across London was called into question with the appointment of Sir Simon Milton as London's senior planning adviser (see above).

