Northview: appeal

Appeal number APP/V5570/A/13/2195274, originally application no P121620

Northview Residents' Association's response

"Altering and enlarging this interesting 1930s enclave seems unnecessary and certainly undesirable"

Gavin Stamp, 20th Century Society trustee, and Private Eye Piloti columnist



A natural community on a human scale: 14-43 Northview, the "back block", is part of an enclave tucked behind Holloway Road. Below: its grounds contain mature and protected trees. Viewed from Northview's front block, nos 1-12.

Northview is the only 1930s estate of its kind in Islington, possibly London. It has a village-green layout, on a human scale, and clear boundaries giving it a cohesive feel and creating a community corner. Although it is between two main roads, it provides a restful setting, with green areas and mature trees.

Its architecture has received official recognition. Campaigns to protect it have received support from conservation and architectural experts and organisations.

As the London Plan says, many successful neighbourhoods built in the interwar years no longer exist. Northview is such a neighbourhood, and has survived reasonably intact, with original features.

What is proposed – a clumsy zinc and glass storey on the rear, larger block – would ruin it for ever. The proposal contravenes numerous council, London and national policies. Worst still, it will ruin a community and a unique piece of Islington's heritage.



Tufnell Park's 1930s art deco setting: note the stepping down from the Odeon to 1-12 Northview (with white balconies) then to 14-43 on the left. Now picture 14-43 with an overwhelming storey of standing seam zinc and glass on top, with harsh stripes of shadow from the standing seams drawing attention to it

"The small scale of the existing building and courtyard and the character of its architectural detail make it impossible satisfactorily to add an extra storey to it"

James Dunnett, MA (Cantab) Dip Arch RIBA, co-chair, Docomomo-UK, Unesco

Why Northview needs protection

Why we are objecting to this application

Northview Residents' Association is objecting to this for several reasons, including:

- It is unsustainable, as both as a long-term place to live and in environmental terms
- The significance of both Northview and its setting will be seriously harmed (National Planning Policy Framework, s132). The scale of harm will outweigh any benefit (s135).
- It is a clumsy overdevelopment, increasing the size of the block by 38%, and would create an enclosed, gloomy feel, an effect exaggerated by the materials used;
- It is unattractive, overbearing and takes no of its setting. The materials – cheerless swathes of zinc and glass balconies – are unsympathetic, detracting from the visual amenity;
- It will have significant adverse impacts on urban design, the historic environment, community cohesion, safety and security
- It will provide no homes that are affordable, accessible or suitable for families with children or older people, only cramped homes for market rent;
- It will cause irretrievable damage to a 1930s enclave that is the sole survivor of its type in the borough, possibly London, as well as to rare original features;
- The application is of a poor quality: it appears rushed; drawings are misleading; assertions are not supported by evidence; information is contradictory;
- Privacy and light implications for adjacent new build have not been considered, and the light studies are based on faulty empirical data
- The applicant has failed to consult those materially affected;
- The applicant has failed to consider council, London and national policies and legislation.
- Campaigns against this scheme and previous ones have been supported by residents, the local community and heritage and conservation experts.

Given its multiple failings, we request the Planning Inspectorate to reject this appeal and uphold the council's decision to reject it.

Ben Porter, secretary
Sarah Lawrie, assistant secretary
Northview Residents' Association
June 2013

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Background

These latest plans are the fifth in a series that are detrimental to Northview, its residents and the local area.

The previous schemes were rejected following opposition by local residents, conservation groups and experts.

The new design is extremely damaging to the architecture and character of both Northview and its setting between conservation areas and as part of a 1930s cluster of buildings.

It will cause losses of light, openness and visual amenity, and make the village green feel become enclosed and gloomy.

The new flats are not sustainable in environmental terms nor as places to live. They take little account of green issues, will provide no affordable nor accessible homes will be provided, and will breach council and London Plan space standards

Misleading history

The description in the application of previous attempts to build on Northview is misleading. . It refers "architects" when none were employed, and this is the applicants' fifth attempt, as detailed in Document P121620.

Planning by attrition

These repeated, similar applications have been described as an attempt to gain "consent by attrition" by a local resident. Parliament is not in favour of repeat applications, as Robert Neill said in Hansard of 11 June 2012 (full comment in Document P121620).

Appeal letter

The statement by James Holmes dated 21 March says that it appears that the "only key issue […] is whether the design is acceptable", arguing that the new homes are sustainable so should be given consent. It does not add anything evidence to the original document, although it does mention the National Planning Policy Framework.

He appears to be the person who wrote the baffling letter to some residents in March (see Consultation, page 5).

Sustainability is discussed throughout this document.





Proposed and existing: the light open feel and nearly intact deco feel will be overwhelmed should Northview be extended by 38% with ridged zinc and glass

The proposed images use plans provided by the applicants combined with an original image, with zinc colour from a product website selling standing seam zinc to give an accurate view

About this document

This document is an update of Northview Residents' Association's original response to planning application no P121620 (hereafter called Document P121620).

This update takes account of developments in this case and takes preference over Document P121620.

Feasibility

Is it feasible?

The Design and Access statement says the planning committee said the principle of "one additional floor […] is not considered to be harmful to its general appearance or integrity."

The decision letter and the refusal notice following the committee decision, both dated 14 October and sent to the applicants, are silent on matters of "appearance" and "integrity".

Rather than get tangled up in arguments over "principle", we have been given professional advice.

Professional advice

Until now, no one has looked at whether it would be practicable to build an extra storey on top of Northview without giving rise to the reasons for the refusal cited in the refusal notice and decision letter.

We have been fortunate to have been given expert advice by Islington architect James Dunnett MA (Cantab) Dip Arch RIBA, co-chair of modern architecture Unesco body Docomomo-UK, on practicalities of adding an additional storey or mansard roof. He writes:

> "It remains probably an impossible task satisfactorily to extend this small-scale building by a whole extra storey, representing an increase in height of nearly 38%. The 'feel' of the courtyard and the character of the architectural detail make this an impossibility.
>
> "It is perhaps possible to imagine an extra mansard storey that was well set back behind the low existing parapets on both fronts and itself sloped well back so as not significantly to reduce the light reaching the courtyard or the feeling of sky there, but it would appear from the plan and section that such an extra storey would not be viable due to the narrow plan form of the existing building.
>
> "I would therefore conclude that the small scale of the existing building and courtyard and the character of its architectural detail make it impossible satisfactorily to add an extra storey to it, and consent should be refused."

In addition, it is more than likely that there will be practical problems with building on top of Northview, given its structure, services and ground. See Structure (page 18).

Proposal documents

Were this application an academic study, it would not get past peer review. There are numerous breaches of council policy, and the National Planning Policy Framework does not even get a mention in the original application.

There are breaches of UDP Policy D2, which says: "The Council will require all planning applications for new development to include appropriate, clear and accurate drawings and a supporting design statement."

The application appears to have been knocked out quickly, given the paucity of information, typing and grammatical errors, quality and use of images and lack of consideration for local, London and national policy and law. Light studies are based on drawings for a previous application for flats with a different layout and based in inaccurate drawings (see Light and Privacy, page 12).

Many of our points on policy breaches apply to previous applications; these breaches have not been addressed, even though our previous documents have been downloaded from our website several hundred times each. This shows a poor attention to detail.

Preface and Revision summary

These are discussed in their specific areas in this document.

Site context and surroundings

Only four-storey neighbouring buildings are mentioned. Lower-rise ones, such as those on Parkhurst Road, are omitted.

There is a very odd picture taken from Tufnell Park Road, which mainly shows the service road that goes around the back of Tufnell Park Mansions and the flank wall of 1-12 Northview. Moving a few feet would give a more informative image. This shows a lack of attention, knowledge of how to picture buildings, or a slapdash attitude.

The garden described as sunny, when it is predominantly shaded by mature trees, a number of which are protected. It used to be part of a formal Victorian park.

The Design and Access statement says: "The smaller rear block has a particular intimacy derived from its general form and scale" – then sets out plans to destroy this completely.





Right: back block from above, showing angle at apex. The illustration to its left (the only one showing Northview as "existing") makes it look more open and flatter than it is, to give the impression there is room to build.

The photograph shows the yellow brick to the rear, with the red gravelled brick on the front elevations and flank walls

Illustrations

Illustrations act as value drawings, using perspective to make the scheme look light and open. They are misleading:

- the courtyard is illustrated using distorted perspective, as if a wide-angle lens were used, which gives the impression that it is far larger than it is so could take taller surroundings;
- the balconies appear lower than they do in the drawings of the proposed elevations;
- the zinc appears smooth, not ridged; its standing seams will have an extrovert or even aggressive feel, with sharp bands of light and shade drawing attention to it;
- the "proposed" drawing is lighter in colour and with less contrast than the "existing" one, which makes it look less oppressive;
- the north end of the back block, where the end of the proposed storey was lopped off, is conveniently out of sight, behind the front block. Had this been shown, the scheme's outright awkwardness – "over dominant and unbalanced" as council officers put it – would be clear;
- the aerial view in the top-right drawing No 1310 P 005 has a skewed wide-angle lens type perspective. This downplays the bulk of the additional storey; it appears lower than 1-12 Northview, and lower still than Tufnell Park Mansions. This gives a misleading idea of its effect. It also appears that Northview has gained some extra open space and has annexed part of Holbrooke Court for garden space.
- balconies are illustrated as deep, with dark wood floors, looking out over rolling countryside.

Holbrooke Court and its new blocks

Holbrooke Court is described as a 1970s development. Its new blocks – one very close to the proposed floor – are omitted from both the statement and the drawings. This has made us question whether the architects have visited the site or checked Islington's online planning records (not difficult). We have consistently raised the issue of these blocks in this and previous applications going back to 2009.

The "rear view" from Holbrooke Court is taken from its southernmost part, and shows Northview to be partially obscured from view. Other parts of the estate are nearer; most blocks look onto the rear wall of the western "arm" of the rear block, not the rear of the apex.

Consultation

The NPPF emphasises the involvement of local communities on planning decisions, and does not restrict this to major developments.

The NPPF says that "applicants are expected to work closely with those directly affected by their proposals". However, they have failed to provide information – let alone ask our opinion – despite several requests going back to December 2011, when we first saw strangers with clipboards roaming the estate.

The applicant has failed to consult us even on matters that are unlikely to cause controversy, such as the use of a garage for a bike store.

Given the omissions, the housing department was consulted over effects on Holbrooke Court.

Exclusion

The applicants wrote to residents on 19 July, saying they had applied to build a fourth floor with seven flats, and we had 21 days from the date of the letter in which to raise any objections with the council. At the time, the council had not even received an application.

In March this year, some leaseholders received a letter again had applied to build a fourth floor with seven flats, and we had 21 days from the date of the letter in which to raise any objections with the council. Again, this was news to the council.

We can only see this as a deliberate attempt to exclude residents from the consultation process.

Planning policy

National policy

The law on planning changed completely this year, with national law replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework.

It is a shocking omission that the property professionals and architects involved in the original application failed to consider it. The NPPF was not mentioned until the appeal was made.

Other recent council documents, such as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the Nag's Head strategy and health check (Northview is in the Nag's Head area), have also not been considered.

There has been an increase in the emphasis on heritage in local and national planning policy; the NPPF is explicit about the value of local heritage assets. This application will erode the heritage of both the estate and its setting, and require the destruction of intact original features.

NPPF

The proposal does not meet the standards set out in the NPPF (section numbers given first):

- 7. The flats will not meet identified need, and the proposal will reduce the quality of the built environment;
- 7. it will damage the historic environment;
- 7. the plans make token gestures towards environmental protection, and do not take sustainability seriously;
- 17. the design is of a poor quality, being bulky, insensitive and using inappropriate materials,
- 17. it undermines the deco design and community feel of Northview, taking no account of its character;
- 17. the standard of amenity is poor; it will cut residents' light and provide cramped homes that do not meet space standards;
- 17. its affect on the heritage of Northview and its setting will detract from its contribution to quality of life and enjoyment for future generations;
- 64. the design is poor and will cause material harm to the character and quality of the estate and its setting;
- 66. the applicants have failed to work with – let alone involve – those directly affected, despite requests for information;
- 69. the scheme will make Northview feel less safe, undermine quality of life and community cohesion.



Northview is part of nearly intact group of 1930s buildings; the scheme does not complement the "local identity" but break up a setting with considerable group value

NPPF 12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

The NPPF has made heritage a core part of planning policy. It points out that heritage assets, including undesignated ones, are irreplaceable. Many of our concerns relate to Northview as a heritage asset:

- 128. The applicants have failed to describe Northview's significance as the last survivor of its type and its contribution to its setting in a group of a 1930s buildings and neighbouring conservation areas;
- 132. Its justification giving to harming a heritage asset and its setting is inadequate.

The significance of both Northview and its setting will be seriously harmed (NPPF, s132) and the scale of harm will outweigh any benefit (s135), so the scheme should be rejected.

Interestingly, this part of the NPPF refers to assets that are at risk through neglect and decay, which applies to Northview. The lack of maintenance of existing structures has been cited as a "concern" by SAVE Britain's Heritage and was criticised by a leasehold valuation tribunal over two years ago; however, only patch repairs have been done since.

Other parts of the NPPF are mentioned in the relevant sections.



This parapet overlooks a main road: the NPPF recognises that assets can be at risk through neglect and decay;

Core Strategy

There are breaches of the council's Core Strategy and other policies, concerning equalities, safety and feeling safe, sustainability, environmental matters, building character and heritage.

Breach of policy

Against the Core Strategy objectives 1, the proposed development:

- will not encourage a mix of tenure and type of household but will increase the proportion of flats let to flat sharers on short lets – assured shorthold is already the dominant tenure;
- will not help tackle inequality and exclusion – the flats will not be suitable for families, elderly people or those with disabilities, and

flexibility has not even been considered
● will provide a poor-quality environment, making our attractive 1930s enclave ugly
● could cause health problems – the extra homes and their layout will lead to noise nuisance;
● will damage wellbeing by making Northview feel less safe;
● will damage the historic environment – this is reprehensible as Northview is the last survivor of its type in Islington – and does not consider conservation of existing structures.
● contains no measures to reduce its impact on the environment.

Key issues in the Core Strategy include:
● conserving what is best about the borough's built environment;
● ensuring that new development results in a high-quality built environment that feels welcoming and safe;
● lessening our impact on the environment and preparing for climate change;
● housing for the "missing middle" (typified by some of the leaseholders here, with implications for sustainability).

The application will act against Islington's priorities for all these.

The Core Strategy is referred to throughout this document. Paragraph numbers and policies are usually prefixed with CS.

Sustainability

Policy highlights the importance of sustainability in development. This application fails to meet standards and policy on sustainable homes on numerous grounds. See page 15.

Applicant's claims

The Design and Access statement includes a Planning Complience [sic] Matrix.

UDP D3

It says it complies with UDP D3, that open space and light will be satisfactory because the footprint of the "existing building and surrounding amenity spaces are unchanged".

This assumes that only the footprint of a building will affect light and amenity, not height or bulk, nor the increase in the use of the garden areas, common parts and car park.

UDP D4

It claims the extension sits behind the parapet in a sympathetic way, showing a distinction between old and new, and is in line with the height of the surrounding buildings.

Expert opinion says the parapet effect will be smothered, and that zinc and brick will not work together. The scheme will destroy integrated patterns at macro and micro levels. The "stepped" effect, a 1930s feature, will be lost.

The ridged lines inherent in standing seam zinc are aggressive and harsh. This material is better suited to a large distribution warehouse on an industrial estate (picture on page 9).

The whole scheme is anything but sympathetic.

Islington UDP D11; London Plan

UDP D11 says that "in some cases, good modern design, respecting the character of the original building will be acceptable".

The proposed design is not "good" – it will overwhelm our enclave and negate original features; it will not complement it.

The extension is dull and dated; glass balconies are commonplace. The balconies will not emphasise the parapets, but subsume them into a heavy design. The use of zinc and glass is just wrong. It is incompatible with warm brick and cream render. It was probably chosen because it will be cheap and easy to build.

Core Strategy CS8

This section refers to Islington's character – the application refers its role in protecting and enhancing the built and historic environment.

Adding seven unsustainable flats that will wreck a heritage asset and undermine community cohesion will not "enhance the locality".

Core Strategy CS9; London Plan

This section refers to the use of architecture and urban design to improve inclusion and safety, and protecting and enhancing the built and historic environment.
. This application will have the opposite effect.

Specifically, the proposal is not "sympathetic in scale and appearance" nor does it fit the context of the existing facade. It does not complement the "local identity" but break up a setting with considerable group value. CS9 is explicit in that it covers non-designated heritage assets.

We have already described how the scheme will erode the character of Northview and its setting, and suffocate its design. A bulky expanse of grey metal with vertical ridges drawing attention to it will be anything but "reserved".

The above applies to the applicant's comments on the London Plan ss7.1 and 7.4.

The effects on community cohesion and safety are covered elsewhere. See also Sustainability (page 15).

CS12

There are several breaches of this.

CS12 A: the proposed flats are not suitable for families, let alone middle-income ones. A one bedroom flat at Northview has been advertised at £290pw, a two-bedroom flat at £360pw; the average rent for a three-bedroom flat in Holloway at £2,784 pcm. These are not affordable rents for families and there will be no lift, so the flats will be let to flat-sharers. They will also be cramped (see page 15).

Nag's Head is not in an area for intensification nor is it an opportunity area, so does not need extra homes of this type stuffed into it.

Design, character and heritage

High-quality design is essential to ensuring that "your area is an attractive and functional place to live", according to the government's chief planner (DCLG, 2011).

Northview is designed to be home to a community. It has remained a functional and attractive place to live for decades, despite long-term neglect and poor management, as highlighted by the leasehold valuation tribunal.

Distinctive enclave

Most people think of famous Georgian terraces when asked about Islington's heritage. As a result, small, later schemes can be overlooked. While small in scale, Northview is unique and certainly of architectural and historical interest, and deserves to be preserved.

The 1930s architecture in the area tends to be large blocks of flats, houses, rather grand shops (eg Marks & Spencer) or churches – plus the spectacular Odeon opposite.

The buildings have pleasing proportions with a restful rhythm, provided by the tall windows lighting the stairwells and the detailed, curved rendering between windows.

The facade of back block is made from a rare type of red gravelled brick with rendered cream painted bay windows. Its parapets provide a delicately serrated skyline.

The council's conservation officer has recognised Northview's "local architectural and historic significance as an attractive 1930s moderne housing development with art deco style detailing".

Islington's policies support maintaining local distinctiveness (CS10) and highlight the borough's legacy of attractive domestic architecture. The distinctiveness of Northview and its feel as an enclave in its 1930s corner will be irretrievably damaged by the proposed extra storey.

Northview is not well known. Most of it is not on a street front, so it is easily missed. However, there is nothing like it Islington; as yet, we have found nothing like Northview in the whole of London.

Villlage green

Northview is an example of 1930s "village green" architecture, complementing the Holloway Odeon to create a deco corner with considerable group value, with the council's conservation officer confirming it a has "a relationship with the GII listed 1930s cinema".



Above: 14-19 Northview, showing parapet with detailing above the staircases and gently curved bays either side

The proposed floor would irrevocably damage the appearance and the community feel of the present enclave.

It works well as a whole. The London Plan highlights that successful neighbourhoods were created in the inter-war years but adds that many no longer exist.

An important characteristic of Northview is that it opens up as you enter from the street. The increase in height will make the village green space feel poky and hemmed in; the approach will be creepy rather than welcoming.

The design and access statement itself says: "The smaller rear block has a particular intimacy derived from its general form and scale" – yet supports plans drawn up specifically to destroy this.

Official recognition

Northview's architecture received official design recognition last year when we were invited to take part in Open House London.

Its heritage has been recognised by people from modern architecture expert James Dunnett, joint chair of the Unesco modern architecture body Docomomo-UK to the commercial manager at Crittall windows.

Gavin Stamp, a trustee of the 20th Century Society and author of the Piloti column in *Private Eye*, has also written in favour of protecting Northview (see quote on page 1).

Northview's distinctiveness has been recognised by, for example, SAVE Britain's Heritage and CABE. English Heritage sent a support message to our campaign to stop the

previous application. The Islington Archaeology & History Society recently voted unanimously to support residents in their campaign against the proposed scheme.

Context and setting

One objective of Islington's Housing Strategy is safeguarding the heritage of homes and neighbourhoods. The council's policies state that "a high standard of design" includes context as a key issue.

There is an unusual consistency in 1930s architecture at this end of Tufnell Park Road, providing considerable group value. 1-12 Northview has a sharper, more extrovert design than 14-43, providing an effective stepped bridge in design between the latter's lower-rise, gentle domestic architecture and the flamboyant Holloway Odeon. Continuity is provided in architectural detailing.

When phone company O2 used images of the Odeon for an advertising campaign, they kept 1-12 Northview in the background – it wasn't substituted or Photoshopped out.

The estate's various features mean it provides a tangible record of social history.

Northview is not a museum piece – it continues to works very well as a sustainable community, contributing to place-shaping, over 70 years after it was built. Such matters are highlighted in government policy (HE7.4).

Designation

1-12 Northview is designated an area of special character, so the effects on it of any development should be considered. This is omitted in the application.

It is also designated a special policy area, most likely because of its place as part of Nag's Head town centre).

Its effect on the neighbouring Mercers Road/ Tavistock Terrace conservation area has not been considered.

The application fails to mention these, or give the full picture of its location and the sensitivity of the area.

Size, bulk and design

The additional floor has the same footprint as in previous proposals, with the balconies shallower by a miniscule amount as they sit just behind the parapets, rather than on top of them.

The extension will increase the bulk of 14-43 Northview by a substantial 38%, and draw attention to itself, especially with its line of glass along the front and the strident ridges.

The bland, heavy design will emphasise its bulk. It will be horribly out of kilter with the existing flats.



Inappropriate: imagine Northview (left) weighed down with a floor of standing seam zinc (right), material typically used to grab attention on industrial estates but inappropriate on art deco homes.

As the council's conservation officer has advised: "The front elevation of the proposed additional floor has no visual relationship with the brick floors below in terms of materials and fenestration. The set back is not sufficient to avoid any harmful impact on the host building or surrounding area."

In addition, it would destroy the "rule of thirds" often represented in deco buildings, as described by art deco architectural historian Valentin Mandache.

The roof extension will be visible from the gate and from across the road by the Odeon. The conflict in styles between delicate 1930s art deco and strident standing seam zinc will draw attention to it.

The council has said that raising the chimneys to the flank elevations "will result in visual harm to the host building and a particularly unsuccessful townscape".

This is a unique 1930s corner. The extension will therefore be detrimental to the appearance and character of the area (policy D25).

Glass and zinc were the materials proposed in the first application in 2009. The case officer in January 2010 described the 2009 proposal as "ugly" and "awful".

Innovation and an "ugliness" award

The design is neither innovative nor attractive. Two examples of buildings using a lot of glass contrasting with brick below are Woodlands Manor in Belfast and the Orion Building in Birmingham, which were built several years ago.

These were shortlisted by readers of *Building Design* magazine for the Carbuncle Cup. This is "architecture's only prize for sheer, downright ugliness", which is "awarded to the building that shows how bad architecture and bad planning can combine to produce something truly awful".

The proposals appear to be in conflict with Islington's policy CS11 that "it will refuse planning permission for schemes that do not achieve a high standard of design".

Details of Woodlands Manor (below) and the Orion Building (bottom), with glass storeys contrasting brick structures below – both were shortlisted for *Building Design*'s Carbuncle Cup





"The delicacy of the existing architectural detail will be overwhelmed…"
James Dunnett RIBA gives his expert opinion

The present openness and feeling of the sky in the courtyard are critical to it continuing to feel like a green space and not a light well. There can be no doubt that the weight of the extra storey will seriously detract from the feeling of light and air in the quite narrow courtyard.

The impact on the existing central open space needs to be clearly set out. It has to be said that errors [in the daylight and sunlight reports] make one question the care with which the actual technical assessment has been made.



As it stands there is no technical conclusion offered in respect of the single most important issue – the impact on light and sunlight reaching the courtyard/central open space. But the key issue is in fact its "feel".

The delicacy of the existing architectural detail will be overwhelmed by the weight of the new storey, which is emphasised by the proposed projecting eaves detail whose strong horizontal emphasis defeats the serrated skyline presented by the present parapet in the courtyard, with its raised sections above every staircase. The present facade is characterised not by continuous horizontal bands but by rhythms and discontinuities in the skyline and the pattern of bays, staircases and intervening windows. The proposed glass balcony parapets will not marry well with the existing brick parapets and the solution proposed is awkward where the higher parapet is reached next to the stairs. Because the existing parapets are so low, the additional storey appears exceptionally high where, had the parapets been of midrail height, where visible additional height would have been much less.

It also has to be said that it is difficult to detail zinc cladding elegantly, with the result that the whole extra storey is likely to appear cumbersome and even crude – an effect that its otherwise-welcome stopping short at the northern end towards Tufnell Park Road will emphasize. It is unlikely that consent would be granted for an extra storey on a private house with such adverse effects all round.

Left: James Dunnett RIBA at Northview

Standing seam zinc

The Design and Access statement says the structure will be "light in appearance". It does not mention that the proposed roofs and walls will use zinc with standing seams – this is only mentioned in small print on two drawings.

Standing seams are created by crimping sheets of metal together. The resulting ridges create an attention-grabbing, even aggressive effect in contrasting parallel and/or angled stripes.

This visual effect brings standing seam zinc roofs forward rather than make them appear "recessive"– in fact, this feature is sometimes used to draw attention to a structure.

It is a look more fitting to a large distribution warehouse on an industrial estate, where zinc roofs are traditionally used. Such roofs are known to cost less than brick over time.

This harsh patterning, combined with the sheer bulk of the extension, will make Northview look completely overwhelmed.

Parapets and roofline

James Dunnett says:"The proposed glass balcony parapets will not marry well with the existing brick parapets and the solution proposed is awkward where the higher parapet is reached next to the stairs."

Northview takes a "stepped" design,

fashionable in the 1930s, from its whole structure to its details, with rhythms and discontinuities in its design.

The glass balconies will not emphasise the parapet line, as the Design and Access Statement says. The serrated effect, with the raised section above each stairwell, will be subsumed.

The zinc slopes over the top of the stairwells look clumsy and ridiculous; an "inconvenient" space has been filled quickly, with no proper thought given to it.

The box gutters will extend beyond the walls to the rear. This will just look ugly and awkward. Of the rear walls, the conservation officer says: "The proposed angled zinc wall/ roof and its fenestration has no visual relationship with the brick floors below and there is an uncomfortable overhang."

The extension will just look oppressive and stultifying, and a characterful roofline will be replaced with a boring expanse of grey zinc.

Mr Dunnett (left) gives an informed view on how the proposed floor will overwhelm the existing delicate architecture.

Stairwells

The UDP says extensions and alterations should respect the architectural character and detail of the original buildings.

The stairwells boast original deco steel balusters with a papyrus motif – Egyptian designs and repeating motifs were very fashionable in the 1930s – and turned wooden banister rails. All those in back block are lit by full-length original Crittall windows. These balusters and tall windows are intact throughout the estate.

The staircases are to be extended for a further storey. From the drawings, it would appear that the art deco banisters will be irretrievably damaged at least. Nowhere in the application is this act of vandalism mentioned.



Now you see it: deco banister to top floor of back block. This section will be destroyed to fit the new staircases, but this act of cultural and architectural vandalism does not get a mention in the application. These banisters are on all staircases, except for one flight in 1-12 Northview's hallway, shown on page 19

Height and a local example

The back block is designed and works as a whole structure in the context of the entire estate – it is not rows of flats just plonked on top of one another. The proposed storey will jar.

Adding a storey has not been successful at Northview's neighbour, Tufnell Park Mansions (pictured below). It was built by the same people proposing to build on top of Northview.

As CABE points out, only a small proportion of recent schemes have been "good" or "very good".

Policy context

As mentioned above, the heritage of both Northview and its setting will be seriously harmed (NPPF, s132), with the scale of harm outweighing any benefit (s135).



An extra storey was recently added to Tufnell Park Mansions: its heaviness and excessive size has not been alleviated by the use of yellow paint. It was built by the applicants of the Northview plans

Light and privacy

Daylight and privacy

Discredited drawings used

Daylight and sunlight studies, dated April 2011 and done for a previous scheme, are also part of the present application. These are based on drawings that were discredited by the planning committee for being inaccurate and difficult to understand; these drawings are not included in this application.

These drawings, for example,

- show narrow window frames as hefty columns of masonry
- show views that cannot exist
- have major errors concerning the design, size and appearance of windows, which have implications for light;
- fail to consider Northview's nearest neighbour (see below), which is a block of flats.

Given that the light studies are based on drawings with major shortfalls with the empirical data, we argue that they should be withdrawn.

James Dunnett, after reviewing the reports, says that the "errors make one question the care with which the actual technical assessment has been made".

Room use and inconsistency

The ratio for winter sunlight hours in some cases is below 0.8, yet the way this is treated inconsistently. For example, windows to three kitchens are all deemed to pass with a ratio of 0.8 (although one is slightly below 0.8), yet the results for windows to two kitchens, at 0.38 and 0.6, are deemed non applicable. It is not explained why this is.

Misidentified rooms

Twelve windows in 1-12 Northview are given the use class as "Supp Light", although they are to kitchens, bedrooms or bedsitting rooms. For this reason, we would question the labelling of all the windows at Tufnell Park Mansions as Supp Light. These properties are all managed by the appellant.

The claim that the consultants were not able to ascertain the use of the room at window 63, where BRE standards are failed, is strange given that is managed by the appellant.

Effects on other properties

A number of houses in Parkhurst Road would lose light. It looks as if whoever occupies the back addition of 89 Parkhurst Road will lose light from two aspects.

It is likely that the gardens of these houses, which are between the houses and Northview itself, will also lose daylight. This has implications for the sustainability of these houses, from both the environmental point of view and as places to live.

Holbrooke Court

The effects of the proposed storey and the new homes at Holbrooke Court on each other has been omitted. There are implications for both light and privacy for residents of both schemes.

The proposed scheme appears nearer the new Holbrooke Court blocks than the acceptable 18m suggested by council policy or the 20m "rule of thumb" suggested by the government and CABE – so may represent an unacceptable intrusion into residents' privacy.

There no mention in the light and privacy studies of the new build at Holbrooke Court. This omission is extraordinarily.

Encouraging crime

The local police have said the loss of natural light would make the estate more vulnerable to crime.

Comments

Many of our comments are the same as in previous objections.

The BRE minimum values are referred to as "target" values – ie as maxima to be attained rather than minimum acceptable values.

Paragraph 3.1.3 looks like the standard disclaimer you'd get in any professional guide. A recommendation to use guidelines flexibly is not a licence to downgrade what is acceptable; the opposite should apply – flats in built-up areas need all the natural light they can get for reasons of wellbeing.

A limitation of this study (acknowledged) is the variety of glazing installed (some without Building Control permission by the applicants).

We would also argue that a limitation is that studies carried out for a client are significantly more to omit unfavourable data and find in favour of the client than those done independently. This effect has been found in scientific studies reviewing quantitative data (Bourgeois et al, 2010; Bero et al, 2007; Kelly et al, 2006; Fries and Krishnan, 2004).



Low afternoon sun casts shadow on wall in hallway. Note the original art deco banisters with papyrus motif

1930s and light

Architects and builders of the 1930s were very concerned with homes appearing light and airy. The effect of light on the estate in context of its style has not been considered.

Room use and BRE breaches

The Design and Access Statement and the daylight and sunlight studies both say that the breaches of light are minimal. However, they provide no evidence that they are minimal to those occupying the rooms affected, especially given that the use of many rooms has not been identified.

It appears that a whole row of windows at Tufnell Park Mansions will fail the No Sky Line test (33, 36-41, 44-51, 71 and 74). This will increase the "single aspect" feel of the best part of a floor. Council and London Plan policy is generally not in favour of single aspect housing.

The statement that one window falls 1% short of BRE guidelines is unfortunate. This window's light will be reduced from 10% to 7% – it will lose around a third of its light.

Breaches are described as "borderline" and "minor transgressions", with no basis given for this opinion. Expert opinion has long been recognised as being among the least reliable in the hierarchy of evidence.

Loss of light to habitable rooms

The sitting rooms and main bedrooms in the south part of back block get most of their strong daylight from the west in the afternoon and evening. The loss of this light will have implications for wellbeing and energy use, reducing sustainability.

As one resident of a one-bedroom flat says: "We will also lose most of the direct sunlight we get. By 8.30pm the sun is shining directly in to my living room and bedroom. It is fully on my back walls. When I look out of my window I can see the sun going down behind the stairwell of 14/19. It is very pleasant and I do not wish to lose this."

The London Housing Design guide says that all homes must provide for direct sunlight to enter at least one habitable room for part of the day, and that living areas should preferably receive direct sunlight. Rooms in the southern arm of Northview facing roughly north-west rely on evening light for this.

Privacy

People on the new balconies may be able to see into bedroom and living rooms on lower floors, especially those near the apex of 14-43 Northview. People on balconies near the northern end of back block may be able to see into bedrooms of the front block.

While the council says the average oblique distance between windows is about 22 metres, this is an average of a large range, given the shape of the block.



Above: evening light on back block – this is the only direct sunlight living rooms and some bedrooms receive. It will be considerably reduced by the proposed scheme (see page 3)

"There is no technical conclusion offered in respect of the single most important issue"

James Dunnett gives his expert opinion

While the analyses supplied by Right of Light Consulting purport to show that the amount of light reaching no individual window in the existing property will be so badly affected as to fall below the standards set by the BRE, it is notable that no conclusions are offered whether by accident or otherwise – concerning the effect on the central open space, even though section 3.4 of the report sets out the criteria to be adopted in an assessment of it.

In addition, the Executive Summary conclusion para 1.1.4. and the Final conclusion para 4.5.1 refer to the impact on "neighbouring windows" and "neighbouring properties" respectively even though the Report in question is specifically entitled Daylight and Sunlight Study (Effect on Existing Dwellings at Northview) and the effect on neighbouring properties is the subject of a separate study (in which a conclusion regarding effect on neighbouring open space is also offered). The impact on the existing central open space needs to be clearly set out, and it needs to be clarified which windows are being referred to. It has to be said that these errors make one question the care with which the actual technical assessment has been made.

As it stands there is no technical conclusion offered in respect of the single most important issue - the impact on light and sunlight reaching the courtyard/central open space. But the key issue is in fact its "feel".

Layout and quiet enjoyment

Related to privacy is the issue of noise.

While the application refers to sound insulation, it does not refer to the "sound well" effect of the courtyard, which would be increased with an additional storey. Any noise nuisance affects more than immediate neighbours.

In contravention of Islington's council's policy on conversions, the living/dining/kitchen space of most flats is directly above the bedroom of the flats below. This matter is covered in "Sustainability" on page 15.

Safety and security

The Core Strategy, which the council says should be seen alongside the Sustainable Communities Strategy, says at par 1.07 that Islington is "particularly focused on … people's feelings of safety" and wants to "build stronger communities". The proposed development will weaken community cohesion and make people feel less safe.

The Design and Access statement does not consider safety, fear of crime or community cohesion at all, nor the effects of the new scheme on this.

The local police supported our opposition to the last scheme, which is the same size, because of its effects in these matters. They specifically mentioned the loss of natural light would make the area more vulnerable to crime.

There is no mention of criminal activity and antisocial behaviour. There have been problems with street drinkers causing nuisance; we have found human excrement and condoms in the grounds. As a settled community, we have been able to work with the police on this.

Policy and practice

In addition to the Core Strategy, the UDP Env 12 says that enhancing community safety and reducing opportunities for crime will be of the highest priority. The London Plan says it is important for London's ongoing attractiveness that residents feel safe in their homes.

The council has said that new developments should promote safety and security. The London Plan supports "safe, secure and appropriately accessible environments where crime and disorder and fear of crime do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion".

The London Plan also says that measures to improve safety and security should be incorporated at the design stage.

Secure design

Despite the above the application makes no mention of Safer Places, Designing Out Crime or Secured by Design, or that the applicant has taken advice from the police. No mention is made of problems with break-ins or poor security between Northview and the commercial and residential premises around it.

Crime, community safety and nuisance have not been considered, for example, in relation to how increasing the number of people sharing each stairwell increases the potential for noise nuisance.

Resident turnover

Northview has become dominated by flat sharers on assured shortholds, often students who require accommodation only for a set time. We understand that the "family" flats at Tufnell Park Mansions, which is under the same management as Northview, have been let to flat sharers. It is likely this trend will increase.

The proposed flats, likewise, would be let to short term tenants. This would decrease the diversity of occupiers and make Northview increasingly monotenure and increase resident transience, in conflict with council policy.

Northview has always had a few short-term tenants – we are a mixed community. However, adding over 20 more occupants to a 42-flat estate is a significant increase, and a rise in unfamiliar faces can make a place feel less safe.

Islington's figures show turnover is very high in the private rented sector – two thirds of these households have lived in their current home for less than two years.

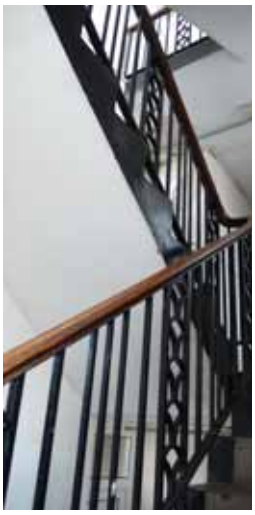
The Nag's Head town centre strategy mentions "[encouraging] a sense of community identity and welfare". This addition will do the opposite and reduce community cohesion.

The *North London Strategic Housing Market Assessment: Local Area Report for the London Borough of Islington* March 2011 highlights the undesirability of building homes for transient populations (see Local Housing, page 19).

People on a short term tenancy are more likely to move on when there are problems than those with a longer-term interest. Increasing this will detract from the natural security in the estate.

Fly-tipping

In addition, there have been problems with furniture being fly-tipped between tenancies. This could increase with yet more short-term tenants moving in, given that they are rarely advised about council collection services.



A well-lit deco staircase during the day

"The impact of the new storey would be significant and would devastate the appearance and nature of the existing buildings and community of residents"
Jeremy Corbyn, MP, Islington North

Sustainability

"Sustainable means ensuring that better lives for ourselves don't mean worse lives for future generations … Sustainable development is about change for the better (United Nations Resolution 42/187, cited in the NPPF).

The Design and Access does not even mention national guidance on sustainability, such as the Code for Sustainable Homes or Islington's SPG on Green Construction. It does not show its Code for Sustainable Homes scores for different areas.

The Core Strategy emphasises "green building", covering the use of energy as well as water. While the application says that sanitary fittings will be water-saving, other matters, such as joining the new build into the existing communal hot water system are not considered (page 16).

Islington's local development scheme at par 3.8 highlights the council's statutory duty "to undertake their planning functions with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development".

Sustainability here is considered in two main contexts: of building homes that will stand the test of time; and in "green" terms.

Homes that stand the test of time

Sound insulation and stacking

The flats are designed in an unsustainable fashion regarding layout and "stacking", which the UDP says is a vital consideration; the stacking of the proposed flats in the previous application was deemed unsatisfactory.

The Core Strategy says that high-density housing requires noise minimisation to be a top priority and that noise from neighbours can cause stress, prevent sleeping, make studying difficult, lead to conflicts and contribute to poor mental and/or physical health (CS 3.3.13).

We have been advised that it will be difficult to link the new flats to existing drains. Some toilets/bathrooms/kitchens are at the front of the flats while waste water and soil pipes are to the rear.

Stacking has implications for noise nuisance and therefore sustainability. For example, a washing machine in a kitchen may disturb people if it above a bedroom.

- Flat A – the living area is over a bedroom. The kitchen is over a bedroom and at the front although the drains are at the back;
- Flat B: The living area and kitchen are over the bedroom. The kitchen is at the front when the drains are at the back;
- Flat C: the living area is over the bedroom. The toilet is at the front although the drains and soil stacks are at the back.
- Flat D: the kitchen is over the bedroom
- Flat E: the bathroom is over the bedroom
- Flat G: the living/kitchen/dining area is over a bedroom; this flat will house four people, which will disturb people below.

This poor stacking will cause noise and disturbance, especially as the flats are likely to be let in multiple occupation.

Tension as a result of noise nuisance could increase tenant turnover, which will in turn affect community cohesion and safety further.

Space standards breached

In addition, the gross internal floor areas for the one-bedroom and three-bedroom flats are below minimum standards stipulated in London Plan.

The London Plan minimum area for a combined living/dining areas is 29 sq m. Flat G has a combined living/dining area and kitchen of 24 sq m.

Flat F has a small, separate kitchen. Given that flat F is for four persons, it is more likely that people will use the living room for dining as well; this is 22.5 sq m.

The following flats have separate kitchens but overall, small areas in total for living/cooking/dining. We have worked them out:

- Flat E: 7.5 + 17 = 24.5 sq m.
- Flat D: 15.6 + 7.5m = 23.3 sq m
- Flat B: 16.4 + 7.2=23.6 sq m
- Flat A: 17.4 + 6.3=23.7 sq m

Floor areas

Proposed areas compared to minimum standards stipulated by the London Housing Design Guide

Size of flat and occupation	Minimum area stipulated	Proposed (sq m)
1 bed, 2 person	50 sq m	49, 51
2 bed, 3 person	61 sq m	64, 57
2 bed, 4 person	70 sq m	72, 68
3 bed, 6 person	86 sq m	87

Note: figures for proposed flats have been rounded; we were not able to check the degree of rounding because dimensions for all rooms are not given on the plans



Council policy, citing the Code for Sustainable Homes, notes that residents, including those with disabilities, find the combination of kitchen and sitting room unpleasant. However, flats G (four person) and C (six person) have combined living/dining/kitchen areas. While areas of individual rooms are given, room widths and common areas are not given.

The Core Strategy recognises that inadequate standards can lead to pressures and recognises the minimum standards "can easily come to be seen as maximum standards" and intends to use them as a "starting point in discussions with developers". This view is reiterated in the London Housing Design Guide.

Policy CS 12 says that, to help achieve a good quality of life the residential space and design standards will be "significantly increased". So, in future, the spaces here will be even further below minimum standards.

Shared space and HMO standards

Flat C, for six people, with no single rooms, and one common rooms for cooking, eating, studying, entertaining, watching TV etc is a recipe for unsustainable living. It may be that, if this flat is let to flat sharers, it will lack sufficient bathroom and cooking facilities to comply with council HMO standards.

Sense of community

The UDP at 3.1.2 points out that discontent over development can stem from it appearing less "friendly" to individuals and the community. An increase in housing for short-term tenants and an increase in turnover (see above), increase noise and more wear and tear on the communal spaces will make Northview look less friendly.

In the Community Safety section, we argue that the development will reduce community cohesion and safety. If nuisance, crime or the fear of crime rise, the whole estate will become less sustainable. Government policy has long recognised that development affects the social fabric of communities and safety.

Accessibility and mixed communities

The Design and Access Statement just states building to Lifetime Homes standards is unfeasible and impractical. It is as if the applicant has put a quick tick in the "no" box. It says there is a "change of level" at the ground floor – this is a shallow step.

Islington has taken a realistic approach to accessible homes, with its "flexible homes" approach set out in paragraph 3.3.22 of the Core Strategy and supplementary documents. Policy CS 12 H requires all new housing to comply with flexible homes standards

Flats on the top floor with no lift are unlikely to attract families or anyone with mobility problems. The census showed that one household in every five in Islington includes someone with a long-term limiting illness.

Short-term tenants of Northview are predominantly young flat sharers. The lack of accessibility will therefore make Northview less of a mixed community (see also page 14).

Green building

The NPPF is explicit about the effects of climate change on new developments, yet the proposals omit some commonplace features to reduce the effect of climate change.

Sustainable water use is more than installing low-flush/dual-flush toilets. The plans do not say, for example, whether power showers, which consume a lot of water, would be installed. There is no mention of collecting/using grey water.

Zinc is not a particularly sustainable choice, given that concerns have been raised over future zinc shortages. Minimisation of construction waste is also absent.

Also omitted is how rises in CO_2 emission because of increased occupancy will be tackled. Council policy has demanded action to reduce CO_2 emissions in residential developments of one unit or more.

The Core Strategy describes looking after the environment and tackling climate change as "key priorities".

District systems and fuel use

The NPPF puts an emphasis on decentralised energy (96 and 97), and both council and London Plan policies support district systems. Northview has a district hot water system, yet the applicants have not even considered extending this to the new flats.

Heating and lighting methods and systems are not discussed.

The sun has a considerable warming effect, so cutting the sunlight has fuel use/cost and environmental implications.

Waste and recycling

While the proposal says that rubbish and recycling facilities will be provided, it does not discuss access to these.

Trees and green spaces

Northview has several mature trees in its grounds, a number of them protected.

It is likely that the gardens between the houses and the back block of Northview will also lose daylight. This has implications for sustainability, from both the environmental point of view and as places to live.

Unauthorised works were carried out to some of them earlier this year, so we would wish to see additional protection and monitoring in the conditions, were this application to be granted consent, especially given the comments in the structural survey.

Parking

Adding another 20 people to an estate of 42 flats will increase car use and demand on car park space – even if residents do not own cars, there will be deliveries etc. There are already problems with unauthorised use of the car park. This will have implications for community cohesion, safety and nuisance, making the estate less sustainable.

Access for people with disabilities is not considered (NPPF, s35).



Unauthorised cutting of protected trees, 2012

Cycle storage

The application proposes using a garages for cycle storage for a "minimum" of 10 cycles. This is an improvement on the previous application, which suggested building a bike store on communal open green space.

The proposed floor is designed to house 24 people. Council policy DM23 puts the standards as one cycle space per person. There is no cycle parking space for visitors, as recommended in the London Plan.

In addition, there are a number of cyclists in the other 42 flats on the estate.

Had the applicants wished to support sustainable transport, they could have consulted with residents over this to encourage cycle use. (For example, some of us wondered if the old pram sheds could be let out for bike storage.) This is disappointing – the cyclists living here could have provided useful input.

Sources

In making our comments, we have drawn on a number of documents and sources, as well as advice from professionals. Some are referenced within the main text.

Islington Council

Town Centres: Review and Healthcheck (2012)
Core Strategy 2011
UDP 2002
Islington Urban Design Guide
Local Housing Needs Assessment 2008
Islington's Local Development Scheme, October 2010
Housing strategy 2009-2014
North London Strategic Housing Market Assessment: Local Area Report for the London Borough of Islington March 2011
Planning – Statement of Community Involvement
Accessible Housing in Islington
Nag's Head Town Centre Strategy
Our Vision for 2020 – Islington's Sustainable Community Strategy
Development Management Policies Direction of Travel Draft, November 2010 (part of local development framework) – while this is a consultation, it gives a useful guide to the standards the council wishes to achieve

Department for Communities and Local Government (and its predecessors)

National Planning Policy Framework
Design and Planning, letter from chief planner Steve Quartermain, May 2011
Better Places to Live
Code for Sustainable Homes
Houses in Multiple Occupation in the Private Rented Sector,
Tree Preservation Orders: a Guide to the Law and Good Practice

London Mayor's office

The London Plan
Housing Design Standards
London Housing Design Guide, Interim

Academic

Davies H, Nutley S (2002) Evidence-based policy and practice: moving from rhetoric to reality. Research Unit for Research Utilisation, University of St Andrews

Structural issues

We were disturbed to note that the applicants have been insistent that Building Control should not be involved until after a decision has been made as part of the application.

This is a surprising comment to see on an design and access statement as most developers would intend to save time and expense by ensuring their plans were feasible and complied from the outset.

We can only surmise that this may be because alterations have been made to the freeholder's flats without Building Control permission.

We believe it would be impractical to build on Northview because:

- the building may not be strong enough – there is a large crack running down the flank wall on the east side of back block
- a leaseholder in the back block was advised by a construction professional that the block would need underpinning to support another storey.
- we have been advised by Islington's building Control department that the foundations are shallow, as would be expected in a 1930s building of this size and design.
- the drains do not have the capacity to cope with the extra use, evident by their frequent blocking;
- the estate has been neglected and allowed to fall into disrepair; this was remarked upon by the leasehold valuation tribunal in February 2011. It is in no condition to be built on.

Underground river

No account was taken of the Hackney Brook in the original application, although it is mentioned in a subsequent structural survey by Conisbee dated 28 September. This says that Northview sits above "the old gathering grounds of the former Hackney Brook, which was to the south east".

However, the Hackney Brook ran from two sources to the north west of Northview, then continues south east below Holloway Road, and there is evidence that there is still underground water in the area:

- a structural report by Colin Toms & Partners in 2009 mentioned the presence of perched water in the area;
- there is evidence of water in the area shown by structure in maps to the 20th century;
- the Hackney Brook was not enclosed by the Victorian sewage system; there is evidence of this in later maps. We understand it caused a road collapse outside Barclays bank around the middle of the 20th century;
- Discussions with a local archaeologist and with an engineer concerned with the redirection of watercourses for the St Pancras Station development have backed up our findings.
- There is a pump below the Holloway Odeon to keep water out of it.

As the council's Core Strategy says, good planning policy needs good evidence. Statements in planning applications, likewise, need to be underpinned with good evidence.

"Sensitive" ground

The council has described the "ground conditions"in this area as"sensitive". In most of the ground in the north of Islington the clay is very close to the surface; this has structural implications. We have been advised that Northview is probably built on fairly shallow concrete raft foundations.

Survey

The Conisbee survey firmly concludes that an extra storey should not cause any "structural issues"to the existing building. However, it includes several caveats, makes assumptions about the type of foundations and recommends that the foundations are subject to checks.











Neglect and disrepair (clockwise from top): broken coping stones to roof; staining from drainpipes; blocked drain; crack on east flank of back block; also, see parapet photo on page 6

Right: window installed without Building Control consent – note different pane arrangements between ground and first floor windows

Local housing

There has been considerable housing development around Northview, particularly student housing. Islington's completion rates remain "exceptionally high, and remain well in excess of the current target" (CS 3.3.39). Islington has gained more from the New Homes Bonus than comparable boroughs in the past two years (DCLG, 2011; 2012). It is the most densely populated unitary authority in England and Wales (Office for National Statistics, 2012).

Holloway Nag's Head is not in an area for intensification, not is it designated an opportunity area.

In addition, the homes are unsustainable (see section on sustainability) and contravene standards in Policy CS 12 and the London Plan.

The Grounds for Appeal statement argues that the new homes are "much needed" and will be sustainable. There are numerous arguments in this document countering this.

Demand for market housing

The proposal does not even consider the strategic market housing assessment (NFFP, s159).

The *North London Strategic Housing Market Assessment: Local Area Report for the London Borough of Islington* states: "It is also noteworthy that provision of additional market housing may have unintended consequences," saying that the supply of housing for rent, rather than ownership, leads to a more transient population, and that many new build flats are owned by investors and let on assured shorthold tenancies (as at Northview).

Balance and the missing middle

Northview leaseholders tend to be middle income households. Many of us are the "missing middle", who the council wishes to attract, having here moved here as first-time buyers and elected to stay (CS 1.1.22; CS 3.3.18). Our diverse community (CS 1.1.11), with a mixture of ages and backgrounds, is a great source of strength to us as a community as we can all bring something to the estate as a whole.

Flats on the fourth floor with no lift are likely to be let to flat sharers, as are the so-called "family" flats at Tufnell Park Mansions.

They will not be suitable for families with children, older people or people with mobility difficulties. Nor will a single affordable home be provided; a one-bedroom flat was recently advertised to rent at £290 per week.

Islington has recently seen a large proportion of smaller flats being built like those proposed here, which do not necessarily meet housing need (CS 3.3.11).



Adding seven small flats that breach space and flexible homes standards will not help meet housing needs in Islington

Flat-sharers have been here for some time (although the leases stipulate that the flats are only let to single households). However, adding over 20 more occupants to a 42-flat estate is a significant increase. Northview has always had a few tenants – we are a mixed community. Making the estate more unbalanced will make it less attractive to longer-term occupiers and eventually turn it into a multi-occupied, monotenure ghetto.

Northview, like much of the area around it, is gradually becoming dominated by assured shorthold tenure and flat sharers – developments of the same tenure and predominance of age groups are both discouraged in the Core Strategy (3.3.19; 3.3.18).

We did not object to the building next door at Holbrooke Court for several reasons, one of which was because it would provide some affordable, permanent homes that really are much needed.

Adding seven flats will make little difference to housing provision in the local area, will address no identified need and will encourage the dominance of short-term tenure, while coming at a great cost to the small community at Northview, and damaging its unique 1930s character.



Hallway in 1-12 Northview, with stair rails echoing banisters

Summary



The proposed floor will be seriously detrimental to Northview, both socially and architecturally.

It is unsustainable in terms of environmental matters as well as in the homes provided.

The heritage significance of both Northview and its setting will be seriously harmed by this scheme (National Planning Policy Framework, s132). The scale of harm will outweigh any benefit (s135).

In line with the National Planning Policy Framework, it should be rejected.

In addition:

- The drawings are misleading, with skewed perspective. National, London and council planning policies are breached.
- The scheme will increase the size of the block by 38% and overwhelm it, an effect exacerbated by the use of standing seam zinc, with its repeated ridges, as the main material.
- None of the seven flats will be affordable. None will be suitable for families, people with disabilities or older people. They will house a predominantly transient population.
- The proposed development is crude and awkward. It takes no account of its immediate surroundings, the buildings below or its wider setting.
- Northview was built as an entity, its design and layout acting physically to provide a natural community. This, along with its restful, welcoming feel – important in a built-up area – would be seriously disrupted.
- The application fails to consider environmental matters as core issues, treating them as an "add-on" for box ticking.
- It would cause irreversible harm to a heritage asset. Northview is a rare and probably unique enclave of 1930s domestic architecture. Council and national policy support maintaining local distinctiveness and recognise the contribution of non-designated assets to their areas, but the proposed changes would irretrievably damage this architectural gem.
- The layout, with kitchen/living/dining areas over bedrooms, will result in noise nuisance. Some flats are cramped and breach space standards.
- It would compromise residents' safety and security.
- Daylight and sunlight will be cut, which has implications for general wellbeing and energy use, making existing homes less sustainable.

"The proposals seem to be not only ugly but also painfully at odds with the unique 1930s property and grounds, and risk overwhelming an otherwise charming community surrounded by local history and heritage buildings"
Lord Waheed Alli

"The whole extra storey is likely to appear cumbersome and even crude. It is unlikely that consent would be granted for an extra storey on a private house with such adverse effects all round"
James Dunnett RIBA