

West Kentish Town Tenants and Residents Association
Flat 53 Durston * Grafton Road * Kentish Town * London NW5 4RH
Website and Contact us details : wkte.wordpress.com,

Via Email

18th February, 2024

Dear Members of Camden Council's Housing Scrutiny Committee

Herewith follows the text on which we will base our deputation's presentation to you on 22nd February, 2024.

Opening Statement

We, wish to present to you the basis for why the designs currently proposed for the regeneration of our estate are not what our residents voted for in 2020.

As a canvass of the estate, conducted door to door between July and September 2023, recorded, 83.96% of residents said **"I still want regeneration, *but not based on this plan* – as per the picture above (based upon Camden's Masterplan proposals). I want Camden to consider other options"**

A slightly higher percentage said "If I had seen this picture above, I would **not** have voted for regeneration."

Unfortunately, since claiming to register this feedback, the WKTE regeneration team have not presented any substantial changes to the plans proposed last year, which is why we are making this presentation to you now.

Historical Background

The facts are as follows:

In 2020 eligible persons living on the West Kentish Town Estate (WKTE) voted for the regeneration of the estate.

This followed a process begun by Camden in 2015 when Camden Council members Pat Callaghan and Fiona McKeith began attending TRA meetings to initially broach the regeneration issue.

Attendees were repeatedly told that the estate was "obsolete" and that Camden had no money for repairs to issues such as damp, leaks and mould.

As confirmed by email, by December 2017 Andrew Dow, the current TRA Secretary (AD), had joined the WKTE "Renewal Steering Group", chaired by Cllr Allison Kelly. The first meeting took place on 19th December, 2017.

By June 2018 AD was one of three residents selected to work towards choosing a firm of Architects with whom residents would work on a Masterplan for the new estate. This process was entitled "Getting Ready for Design". In an email to Camden on 26th June, 2018 at 10.39 AM, AD wrote to Fiona McKeith as follows, following presentations made by three architectural practices wishing to tender for this project :

"Dear Fiona,

I am looking forward to seeing you all later, and will arrive in good time.

West Kentish Town Tenants and Residents Association
Flat 53 Durston * Grafton Road * Kentish Town * London NW5 4RH
Website and Contact us details : wkte.wordpress.com,

I am afraid I do not think that the examples we were given of the two architectural practices' work give a valid basis for comparison.

The first site visit took us to an area with a lot of similarities to the WKTE situation, and showed us a live example, at approximately the half way stage, of a transformation of a large urban area. The second saw us visit a site where the architect had not been charged to redesign the layout of the whole site, but had only with in-filling a relatively small amount of available space.

If Mae Architects have done a comparable masterplanning brief, then it would be helpful to see it, as I do not believe their work and capabilities as masterplanners may be being shown to best advantage here.”

Camden took WKTE residents to view several sites, including the regenerated Wormington Green estate, now known as Portobello Square in west London. PRP Architects had worked on this project.

The comprehensive, phased regeneration of Wormington Green, an aging 1960s estate into [Portobello Square](#), has create a mixed-use, mixed tenure community which allows for the re-housing of all existing tenants on the new development.

The architect, whom I believe have been appointed to work on WKTE was appointed to option appraise the site and develop a preferred masterplan through extensive community consultation. PRP's proposal creates a new London square and doubles the existing density to include 1,000 new homes - with affordable dwellings making up over 50% of the total.

<http://www.golbornelife.co.uk/wormingtongreenmar.html>

Andrew Dow

[REDACTED]

[Download all attachments as a zip file](#)



Picture of ol... .jpg



Portobello E... .jpg

This was material to the selection of the masterplanning architects, as by June, 2018 PRP Architects had been chosen to work with residents on the redesign Masterplan for WKTE. This was the unanimous vote of the 3 person resident selection committee of which AD was one.

As AD wrote to another WKTE resident on 13th May, 2020:

West Kentish Town Tenants and Residents Association
Flat 53 Durston * Grafton Road * Kentish Town * London NW5 4RH
Website and Contact us details : wkte.wordpress.com,



● Andrew Dow

From: [REDACTED]

To: clintflick



Wed, 13 May 2020

Dear Charli,

not sure if you received this before? It shows you as an addressee.

Seriously, I could not believe that the buildings in the picture on the right were council flats, and was waiting for us to be those, but they are, and were designed by the Architects whom we engaged to work with on the conceptual stuff up until PRP.

Wide, boulevard-like avenues between the blocks, flats that let in lots of natural light ..

The picture on the left is of a block on the old estate, very reminiscent of the blocks on the left as you go down Malden Road towards the Fiddlers.

A.

Andrew Dow

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

As quoted in the Architects Journal, on January, 2020, PRP's brief was to deliver conceptual masterplans.

"PRP has been working with the council [since June 2018](#) to draw up early masterplan ideas for how the estate could be redeveloped. [Concept designs](#) reveal a series of mid-rise blocks and new streets." The enclosed diagram supported this

West Kentish Town Tenants and Residents Association
Flat 53 Durston * Grafton Road * Kentish Town * London NW5 4RH
Website and Contact us details : wkte.wordpress.com,

quote.



It should be noted that Mae Architects were not chosen for this project, yet this firm is now working with AHMM, despite never having been selected by residents.

Residents engaged with PRP and Camden exclusively over a protracted period, including specific “consultation” groups set aside for children and families. PRP were the only architects with which residents engaged and their designs and drawings were the only formal, professionally drafted schematics and proposals that residents saw up to the vote on whether or not WKTE should be regenerated.

On Friday, 7th February, 2020, Camden issued its formal Landlord Offer to WKTE residents.

The link to this is here : <https://www.camden.gov.uk/documents/20142/0/Landlord+Offer.pdf/3ad1506b-c675-eba6-b346-f542b47a7f1d?t=1581423416504>

Please note that all illustrative pictures in this document of buildings that Camden has built are of no more than 8 storeys in height, and show open courtyards.

West Kentish Town Tenants and Residents Association
Flat 53 Durston * Grafton Road * Kentish Town * London NW5 4RH
Website and Contact us details : wkte.wordpress.com,

Based on these designs and drawings, and engagement with both PRP and Camden, 63% of all eligible residents voted in favour of regeneration.

It should be borne in mind that Camden included in the formal Landlord Offer document the statement that if residents Vote “No” (against regeneration) “However, given limited resources, no major works are planned for the Estate in the next five year programme between 2019 and 2024.”, which year is now upon us.

In May, 2021, during the second period of national lockdown, it was announced that Camden had appointed AHMM Architects to design the redevelopment of WKTE. No one on WKTE not employed by Camden had been involved in this process.

To date, no explanation has been provided as to why one architect was employed to show residents what their new flat and estate might look like before they voted, yet is no longer involved in the project while still contractually barred from discussing this with third parties.

In March 2023, Camden and AHMM unveiled completely new masterplan drawings for the regeneration. They were - and remain - so substantially and materially different to the designs on which residents voted that we are here speaking to you today on behalf of our residents.

Between July and September 2023, the TRA canvassed residents’ opinions on these plans, the results of which are set out here

Statements	Number of “Yes / Agree”	Number of “No / Disagree”	“Don’t Know / No Opinion Offered / Don’t Want To Comment”	Percentage of Total Responses “Yes / Agree” Out of Total Responses
1) Before the ballot, we were promised buildings no more than 8 storeys high. So, do you agree to the West Kentish Town Estate TRA opposing the high rises on the new “regenerated” estate on your behalf?	160	3	24	87.17%
2) If I had seen this picture above, I would not have voted for regeneration.	160	4	17	87.17%
3) I do not agree that the estate is obsolete.	159	6	22	85.03%
4) I still want regeneration, but not based on this plan – as per the picture above. I want Camden to consider other options	157	9	23	83.96%

This is because these new plans propose : (1) blocks that are 10 storeys in height – based on discussion with PRP, their drawings, and plans and the pictures in the Landlord Offer, residents voted for blocks no more than 8 storeys high.

(2) The PRP designs all show spacious new flats with access to natural light. Seven of the new 10 storey blocks under the AHMM design will have central communal courtyards that will get very little natural light for at least 5 months of the year, as will flats overlooking them.

(3) The PRP designs show external balconies on above ground floor flats. These are now to be integral to the new flat.

West Kentish Town Tenants and Residents Association
Flat 53 Durston * Grafton Road * Kentish Town * London NW5 4RH
Website and Contact us details : wkte.wordpress.com,

- (4) As part of the design engagement process with PRP, we stipulated that we did not want to live in blocks denying direct access to fresh air. The new blocks propose communal areas shared by many more people with no direct access to fresh air and communal ventilation systems. We believe that breathing fresh air as soon as leaving their flats helped protect our residents from Covid.
- (5) Residents were not told they would not be able to move back to their current location on the perimeter of the estate, facing outside, which would be for private buyers only.

For the sake of brevity, this is a summary of our residents' views. We hope this conveys their concerns about the current proposals, which we look forward to discussing with you.

“I still want regeneration, *but not based on this plan* – as per the picture above (based upon Camden’s Masterplan proposals). I want Camden to consider other options” – 83.96% support.

Yours Sincerely,

For and On Behalf of West Kentish Town Estate TRA,

Jill Fraser (Chair)

Andrew Dow (Secretary)

Kieran Proffer (Treasurer)