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Date: 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020

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### **Document summary and request for Speaking Rights at the relevant Planning Committee**

This document gives the objections of local residents in **Horseley Terrace and Birtley Avenue** to the proposed planning applications 20/00136/FUL and 20/00137/LBC for a mixed-use scheme on land to the north and south of Tynemouth Station, which includes a tower block of residential units and two retail outlets.

We are **west of the railway line**, facing the tower-block which, at its proposed maximum height of 6 –storeys, is equivalent to the height of the **monolithic Knotts Flats** at the southern end.

Many of us are members of the **Tynemouth Action Group** , which includes residents from **Kingswood Court on the east side** of the line. We have had a great deal of sympathy for them, many of whom are retired folk, as they will suffer greatly from loss of light and construction noise, as will the pupils and teachers of Kinder Castle Nursery. However, I should point out that neither the Kinder Castle director or her staff have contributed to this report, and any observations on impact come solely from our residents.

We on the west side were shocked to find from research offered us that the **Canyon effect** is likely to mean that we may **suffer more than the east side from amplified acoustic effect** when the construction is partly-completed, and then from the noise of passing metros.

150 of us voted unanimously (bar one) at last week's Tynemouth Action Group's (TAG) Public Meeting to **oppose the proposal** in its entirety. Whereas we accept that the current site has been too long neglected and is an eyesore, we want a proposal which will not be considered mainly in revenue terms, which will benefit the community, which will not result in parking chaos, and which is more appropriate to the beautiful conservation area of the Victorian station, and Others amongst my neighbours (who did not attend the TAG meeting) accept that the **proposal has been somewhat improved in design terms**, but are still urging a **further scaling- down of height and size and a much more practicable Parking policy.**

**The need for the retail units is widely questioned- see Historic England's recommendations on the 24 Feb, detailed below.**

I have therefore included **recommendations in this report in the event that planning permission is ultimately granted.**

Kingswood Court's objections will doubtless be included in the Tynemouth Action Group's representation .

**Relevant sections of the Local Plan have been referenced where the proposals contravene or fall far short.**

**Finally, I am requesting Speaking Rights at the Planning meeting,** with full awareness that all the objectors need to decide democratically who should represent them, perhaps with two sharing the allocated 5 minutes. I can assure you this will be amicably arranged amongst ourselves.

## **Objections**

### **1. There is no designated need for additional housing in this conservation area**

The council recognises we need 800-900 new homes per year for the foreseeable future in North Tyneside. However , this site has not been allocated for housing, nor is it on a brownfield register. While this does not preclude building housing here, it means the housing need for North Tyneside should be met without factoring in this proposal.

#### **Local Plan 7.85**

**There is no affordable housing provision whatsoever in the application,** despite the Plan recommending 25 percent across the Borough, with an acknowledgement that this will vary from place to place . Zero percentage here will exacerbate the increasing gentrification of Tynemouth, and reinforce the lack of the diversity recommended in the Local Plan.

### **2. Parking and Traffic**

Parking is a huge problem with this application .The massive scale of the bulding and the two retail units make it the greatest concern for residents in nearby and the wider vicinity, who already find it impossible to get a parking space in Tynemouth Road and other permit- free zones.

**Local Plan LAS8 . 23 .** "Through working in partnership with applicants for development, the community, public transport providers and Nexus, the council will seek to improve the accessibility of the coastal area by: ...Maintaining adequate car parking provision that serves the coast with improved access for sustainable transport that would cause no adverse impacts."

**DM6.1 :** new developments are expected to 'demonstrate sufficient car parking that is well integrated into the layout' .

**The reality: 69 homes and 2 retail units are proposed. These will have a 46 - car underground car park plus 62 (or 61, the drawings are inconsistent on this) spaces to the north with additional double-parking here for market traders.**

**This is a ratio of of 0.67 per unit.**

**Local Plan DM7.4** sets out the number of parking spaces needed. According to it, **69 homes should have 75 spaces plus 23 more for visitors: total 98.**

**The developers only allow 46: a shortfall of 52.**

**Furthermore, the developers' Transport Assessment is based on flawed premises.**

a. They argue that the amount of spaces they allocate is sufficient, because census data show that 'on average developments of this nature have less than one vehicle per dwelling'. A simple review of the census figures data does not bear out their argument.

In North Tyneside, the census shows that 75% of the 70, 934 houses had at least one car, and 46% of flats or apartments had at least one car. This differs from the figures quoted by the developers. A more valid comparison would be with the 8 houses in one section of Kingswood Court, (which is to be deprived of light, and of peace. Of the 8 houses sampled, one has 3 vehicles, 5 have 2 and 2 have 1. Most people in the rest of the Court have cars.

**Higher income areas and higher value properties have more vehicles.**

**Moreover, the Local Plan was developed in 2017, years after the census data was published.**

North Tyneside Council (and the inspector who scrutinised the plan) still concluded that 1 space per 2 bedroom home, with additional spaces for more bedrooms and visitors was needed. That is the policy.

b. The application says that **residents would not be permitted to apply for parking permits.**

However, Tynemouth Road and certain other nearby areas are not currently permit-restricted. And **how would that idea be enforced?** The planning permission cannot put restrictions on the council in that way and stop them issuing such permits. (Compare the case a few years back where Kensington Council tried something similar using a section 106 agreement - a side-agreement with the developer- but it was quashed by the courts). Nor would a restrictive covenant of some kind be very practicable. Thus, this is a highly-dubious promise.

c. **Developers say parking and traffic issues would be monitored for 12 months with monies made available to North Tyneside Council to bring forward other solutions if problems arise.**

This might be acceptable if such problems were a low risk. But they are high-risk. Parking pressure is already acute (as recent Council documents have recognised) and this will exacerbate it to an unacceptable degree. It is not sufficient to say the Council will be left to sort out the problems.

**3. The developers' Daylight and Sunlight Assessment is limited to an internal assessment** i.e.

only as to how the sun will affect the homes in the proposed development. There is no assessment of the impact on other properties, despite this being a key objection raised by residents in the meetings, in particular, Kingswood Court. Many of its residents are elderly and very distressed at the threat of losing their enjoyment of sunlight, specifically in the late afternoon. This is a serious loss of Amenity, contravening

**Local Plan S1.2 Spatial Strategy for Health and Well-being**

**“The wellbeing and health of communities will be maintained and improved by:  
... b. Requiring development to contribute to creating an age friendly, healthy and equitable living environment . “**

#### **4. The inappropriate height and scale of the building.**

While it is acknowledged by some that design improvements have been made to the plan, specifically a reduction by one storey and a staggered roofline, residents on both sides of the metro line and on Tynemouth Road feel that **the problems caused by the number of units and associated parking as well as the loss of light to neighbours, reinforce strong arguments for a further reduction of scale: height and number of units.**

#### **Historic England’s report on scale and design of 24th February 2020**

opines that the attempt to accommodate a large- scale and contemporary design within a conservation area is **only partially successful**. ‘The desire to bring down the scale through changes in materials, tone and vertical planes has led to visual confusion and separation’.

**It criticises the two retail units** as further sources of visual confusion which ‘feel out of place and forced’. They recommend **“considering their omission** in favour of quieter treatments. This could be particularly beneficial at the northern end where the retail unit is overshadowed both by the proposal and the station canopy.’ They recommend allowing this space to be landscaped and open ‘to provide a better connection between the buildings.’ **In other words, no retail units.**

#### **5. Further arguments against such a large-scale project .**

##### **a. Noise pollution during and after the construction period.**

**Local Plan S1.2 Preventing negative impacts on residential amenity and wider public safety from noise, ground instability ground and water contamination,**

**Reduction of height and scale would do something towards lessening the appalling prospect of the estimated two years of construction noise.** This will be deeply distressing to the residents, many retired, **on the east side of the tracks**, and to the children and teachers in Kinder Castle Nursery. (NB. This latter is a presumption on our part , as no input has been given to this report, nor do we know if parents of pupils have been consulted ).

**The Canyon effect will impact even more greatly on the west side of the tracks.** We were shocked to find it will mean increased acoustic disturbance and amplification of noise during 2 years of construction work , and then that of the passing metros, both during and beyond the construction period.

**Ref. DEFRA : Noise Action Plan: Railways Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006 Updated 2 July 2019**

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/813664/noise-action-plan-2019-railways.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/813664/noise-action-plan-2019-railways.pdf)

**Environmental noise is can have serious implications for human health, quality of life, economic prosperity and the natural environment.** The World Health Organisation<sup>1</sup> (WHO) recognises environmental noise as one of the top environmental hazards to health and well-being in Europe. It causes sleep disturbance, annoyance and there is growing evidence that long-term exposure to high levels of environmental noise is associated with illnesses like heart attacks and strokes. **We have in Kingswood Court a resident group with a high geriatric component , a nursery group In Kinder Castle, and residents, workers and visitors a of all ages who will be affected.**

**In the event that the proposal goes ahead in a modified form, we ask for**

- a. safeguarding of the mental wellbeing of those residents, and children and staff of Kinder Castle Nursery by good management of the impact of construction : vibration, work hours, vehicle access, waste management, site cabins etc , and that**
- b. an absolute limit on noise is set , and a level of reporting guaranteed.The WHO guidelines typically call for 30dba in bedrooms at night.**
- c. strongscrow piles are used rather than driven piles ( thus reducing noise level)**
- d. the Council consults local residents on the discharge of construction conditions**

**NB. Air pollution during construction.**

Kinder Castle has a statutory requirement to provide early - years children with maximum outdoor time. We do not know if assurances on air-quality have been received,

**C. Sustainability and biodiversity.**

We note at the time of writing that **no Environmental Assessment had been requested.**

**Local Plan 3.41.**

**“North Tyneside will develop and promote approaches to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to, and mitigate the impact of climate change** including flood risk, promoting the renewable energy sector and developments which seek to minimise energy and resource consumption, whilst improving the Borough's resilience to the effects of climate change.”

**Local Plan 8.21 “The council has a statutory obligation to conserve and enhance biodiversity and geo- diversity.’**

**Many of us will regret the loss of mature trees near the site.** A single mature tree can absorb carbon dioxide at a rate of 21.6 KG/year and release enough oxygen back into the atmosphere to support 2 human beings. Research has also shown a 60% reduction in particulates from exhaust fumes in tree lined streets. Noise Reduction – trees form an effective sound absorbing barrier. Biodiversity – the benefits of providing natural habitats for birds, squirrels, and other fauna are incalculable.

**Should the project go ahead, we urge the developers and council ensure that a major biodiverse planting is well- conditioned, and install safeguards for implementation.**

### **Further Sustainability improvements urged:**

**electric car charging points, commitment to not use standard gas boilers, and higher levels of insulation** to reduce energy demand in line with declared Climate Emergency.

A contribution to fund more cars for the **car-sharing scheme Co-wheels**: currently there is only one.

### **Protect and increase I wildlife habitats**

**Bat report 3.0.** "The habitat within the development site is of **moderate value for bats** where the vegetation is present as the site provides potential foraging habitat in an area otherwise largely surrounded by a buildings, although **higher value foraging is present to the west.**"

### **Butterfly report 10** Impact Assessment and recommendations

The surveys concluded that although the habitats may suit the four species focused on from Schedule 41 of the NERC Act (dingy skipper, grayling, small heath and wall), none were recorded on site. **Absence of sightings does not however necessarily mean absence of the species.**

**As both surveys were undertaken towards the end of the optimal survey period a precautionary working approach is recommended.** This aims to preserve areas of suitable habitat for the above species. Through **additional planting** the area can be improved for these species as well as those already recorded from the site.

### **Summary**

We are highly sympathetic to the **financial pressure** on North Tyneside Council caused by stringent budget cuts and required spending. However, we hope that a **desire for commercial benefit** does not outweigh the values expressed so well in the Local Plan (3.41).

We need to protect and enhance the 'Character' of the Station Conservation Area as well its biodiversity. This is stressed in both The Tynemouth Character Statement 2002, adopted for Planning Guidance and TCAMS document also adopted for Planning Guidance 2014.

Tynemouth Station is a beautiful hub of the community, with its colourful weekend markets, and a vibrant visitor attraction. In the 2017 book *Britain's 100 Best Railway Stations* by Simon Jenkins, he describes it "as a winter garden wonderland , a feast of Victorian ironwork. One hundred columns march into the distance beneath rolling canopy of roofs."

Let us enhance it.

A greener proposal than this for the site would be much more welcome aesthetically, would benefit the community , visitors and tourists , and would comply with the Local Plan's admirable emphasis on sustainability and biodiversity to combat the crisis of climate change.