



April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2023

## **OBJECTION FROM THE OLD OAK NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM**

### **23/0014/FUMOPDC 5-7 Park Royal Road, W3 6XA (the 'east site') and the Lower Park Trading Estate W3 6XA (the 'west site')**

The Forum wishes to object to this application, on the grounds set out below. Because this application is an egregious example of why the planning processes of OPDC (in our view) have become distorted and compromised by the Corporation's 'delivery role' this representation is detailed and runs to 11 pages. We hope that Planning Committee members will take the time to read it.

There has been extensive correspondence between our Forum and OPDC on these sites at 5-7 Park Royal Road, and on the manner through which these have been introduced as suitable for a high-rise scheme. These exchanges go back to 2021. This material can be seen at this link on the on the OONF website. It covers the way in which these sites were added as last minute 'modifications' to the 2022 OPDC Local Plan.

#### **Grounds for objection**

We have focused mainly on building height and on the history of how the application sites came to be included as 'tall building sites' in the OPDC Local Plan. In our view the initial approach from the landowners/developers/applicants in February 2021 should have been deterred as non-compliant in policy terms in February 2021, rather than being encouraged. The speculative proposals for this site clearly failed to conform with the policy content of either the 2012/13 Ealing Development Plan, the OPDC Submission version of the 19.2 Draft Local Plan, and also 2019 the Corporation's 'new direction' at the 'Western Lands'

Rather than advising the applicants to drop ideas of a high rise mixed use development on these two sites, OPDC planning officers embarked in early 2021 on a process of retrofitting the OPDC Local Plan, via a series of modifications, to create a planning context in which such proposals would prove acceptable. A key element of these modifications ('appropriate building heights') was never the subject of public consultation and remains opaque to the public in the adopted Local Plan.

We see this response by OPDC officers as being driven by the need to improve numbers on housing delivery, to offset the 'losses' at Old Oak North following the 2019 debacle over the Cargiant land.

Alongside this major concern, our other grounds for seeking refusal of this application are summarised below:

1. Basic lack of suitability of these 2 sites for buildings of significant height. The sites are separate from the North Acton Cluster. 15 and 33 storey buildings will always appear as obtrusive and incongruous when located next to the cemetery and within an area of low rise housing and industrial buildings. The proposals are contrary to London Plan Policy D9 and to emerging changes to NPPF paragraph 11.

2. Failings in the processes of post-submission modification and examination of the OPDC Local Plan in relation to policies on tall buildings. Residents in properties on this section of Western Avenue have acquired/rented and lived in homes where the impact of this development (on privacy, overlooking, and ability to use and park their vehicles) will be massive. Importantly, even continuous and diligent scrutiny from 2015 to mid 2021 of LBE and OPDC draft planning policies would have given these residents no warning as to how their lives would be changed were this development to be consented.
3. Failure to conform with the specific content of OPDC Place Policy P4 (l) and (m) on strengthening and informing the local character of Place P4 Park Royal West
4. Failure to conform with the modified supporting text at paragraphs 4.59 of the Local Plan which reads *Based on the residential development capacities proposed for Park Royal West, it is expected that tall buildings here will predominantly be in the range of 20 to 30 storeys. Tall building proposals will be considered against all relevant development plan policies and material considerations.* The proposals are for a 33 storey building on Plot B and a 15 storey building above 48m in height on Plot A (i.e. a second tall building under OPDC's definition).
5. Extreme overdevelopment of Site A with a concentration of up to 988 student bedspaces, in a form and at a location contrary to OPDC Policy H10 a) ii) and v) on Student Accommodation. The OPDC 2021 Development Capacity Update for this site (listed as No. 60) assesses it **as suitable for 60 homes and 200 sq m of employment floorspace.**
6. Harm to the existing green infrastructure and heritage value of North Acton Cemetery and over-reliance on North Acton Playing fields, already cited as the open space to support a series of high density residential developments at North Acton, contrary to OPDC Policy SP8 and EU1(b).
7. The Transport Assessment does not address issues over vehicle access of rear gardens/garages of existing properties on the east side of Western Avenue and changed use of a private road (known as Lower Park) not all of which is in the ownership of the applicants.
8. A forecast PTAL level of 4 for this location in 2031 (as opposed to the current level of 5) and the inherent unsuitability of the site for high density occupation on the edge of an industrial area and at a significant walking distance from any of the amenities (limited as they are) at the North Acton Cluster.
9. An affordable housing offer which does not reflect the land value capture of sites released unexpectedly from SIL and with no costs to a developer in terms of necessary new infrastructure or decontamination of the sites. OPDC should be securing a higher proportion of social housing in these circumstances, to meet the 50% target in Local Plan Policies SP4 and H2.

### **Context of the application in relation to the OPDC Local Plan**

These two sites join a handful of other locations where high-rise/high density proposals emerged at the tail end of the 4 year process of preparing a local plan. Rather than this site being identified early on as being 'suitable' for one or more tall buildings, with consultation undertaken at Regulation 18 and 19 stage, this location was presented in successive iterations of the draft Local Plan as lying in the predominantly industrial 'Place' defined as 'Park Royal West'.

The two sites at 5-7 Park Royal Road were identified in the Regulation 18, 19.1 and 19.2 submission version of the Local Plan as remaining designated as SIL and suitable for low rise industrial use, as exists on the ground at present. This designation continued for a further 3 years beyond submission to the Secretary of State of the Draft Plan in October 2018.

This site context continued further 3 years beyond this date. OPDC identified the site in a 2021 Development Capacity Study Update as having been '*released from SIL through Industrial Land Review Addendum (2021)*'. These supporting documents are not ones that the general public can be expected to have come across or read.

The sites at 5-7 Park Royal Road are not listed as site allocations in Figure 3.1 of the adopted Local Plan. Nor do they feature as development sites on the map of Place P4 Park Royal West at page 66 of the Local Plan (which does show the 'Brewery Cluster'). This is contrary to the requirements of London Plan Policy D9 on Tall Buildings and the express intention of the Secretary of State in issuing his Direction to the Mayor of London in December 2020, that the public should be made aware via the local plan process of where locations are deemed suitable for tall buildings and given information on 'appropriate heights' on maps in local plans.

**There was no mention of a policy on building heights for this 'Place P4' titled Park Royal West' in the OPDC Draft Plan as submitted for Examination. There remains no such mention in the wording of Policy P4 in the Local Plan as adopted.** The wording of the section on 'Heritage and Character' for Policy P4 Park Royal West in the Submission Version **and in the 2022 adopted version** reads *m) Supporting increased building heights where this will deliver industrial intensification and SIL compliant broad industrial type activities.*

At the time of the May to July 2021 consultation on proposed Modifications, anyone studying the 'tracked' text of the Place section on Park Royal West would have read at paragraph 4.59 *There are a number of non SIL sites within Park Royal West, including First Central, Lakeside Drive and surrounding sites, and the Bashley Road Gypsy and Traveller site. Further information on First Central and surrounding sites is set out in the First Central and Lakeside Drive site allocations and Brewery Cluster (Policy P4C1). Provision for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation is addressed in the Housing chapter (Policy H8).* This text makes no reference to these sites at 5-7 Park Royal Road.

Such very limited policy justification as there is for high-density high-rise buildings on the sites at 5-7 Park Royal Road was inserted via last minute modification into the supporting text of the adopted Plan at paragraph 4.59 and via a 'Figure Modification' of Figure 3.15 in Modifications (MINOR/PS/Q1b Figure/PS2/OPDC/3.15).

In the 'Final' Policies Map as adopted by OPDC Board in June 2022, **these sites do not feature in the Combined Policies Map, and no 'layer' map is included showing sites deemed appropriate for tall buildings.** It is hard to see how there can be any reasonable explanation for this given that the map requirements cited in 2021 London Plan Policy D9 Part B are clearly expressed. **Where new local plans have come into force in London since 2021, the public should not be expected to have to trawl through supporting documents and records of an Examination to find out where tall buildings are planned within their immediate surroundings.**

### **Pre-application stages**

These sites do not feature in the 2012/13 Ealing Local Plan as potential development sites. They are not within 'OISI Park Royal Southern Gateway' now commonly known as the 'North Acton Cluster'.

**In initial consultation material published by the applicants misleading information was provided referring to the sites as being within a ‘tall buildings zone’ at North Acton.** This was corrected after being pointed out by OONF and by other local residents, but this correction was made only **after** a presentation by the applicants to the OPDC Community Review Group. Page 32 of the Statement of Community Involvement from Polity acknowledges these errors, while making little of their consequences.

Continuous assertions by applicants of the appropriateness of their proposals, when not resisted or contradicted by the relevant planning authority, unfortunately go a long way in persuading local residents of the inevitability of unwelcome development – whether or not adequately justified by the site context and local plan policies. This why one of many reasons why England’s planning system is not a level playing field, and why the Secretary of State directed the Mayor of London to vary the wording of London Plan Policy D9 on Tall Buildings.

### **Origins of this development**

On 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2021, six years into the life of the OPDC, Sam Hines from planning consultants DP9 emailed Tom Cardis at OPDC under the heading 5-7 Park Royal Road to say *Something new! Could I have 5 mins on the phone on this one please. When suits you? Around today?* DP9 as a major planning consultancy have been involved in several projects in the OPDC area.

There follows a gap of several months between any formal conversations take place between DP9 and OPDC planning officers. It seems evident that OPDC officers wanted to find a way of facilitating a major development on these sites even at the stage of Modifications to a Local Plan. In the months after February, OPDC officers prepared and published new versions of supporting documents to the Draft Plan as submitted in 2018. Two versions of a Tall Buildings Statement and a set of ‘Figure Modifications’ were published in swift succession in March 2021 and May 2021.

The set of maps in ‘Figure Modifications’ introduced into the Examination process in May 2021 was the first moment when the sites at 5-7 Park Royal Road appeared on a map, coloured in pink and hence identified as sites appropriate for tall buildings. This May 2021 version then formed part of the ‘supporting studies’ consultation material in the May to June 2021 final consultation on the Post Submission Modified Draft Local Plan (PSMDLP). As noted above, no reference to these sites was made in the ‘tracked’ text of the main document, including the list of site allocations at Table 3.1.

**Crucially, this May 2021 version is not the same as same document dated March 2021, as sent to the Inspector as Appendix C of OPDC-39 on March 4<sup>th</sup> as a supposedly full set of OPDC’s proposed Major Modifications.**

This March 2021 version of Figure 3.15 was published in the Examination Library (as managed between the Programme Officer acting for the Inspector and OPDC planning officers) with the following wording:

#### **March 2021 update**

*OPDC are proposing to make a series of modifications to the draft Local Plan.*

*The Planning Inspector has confirmed (see ID-35) that a Main Modifications consultation can be carried out, subject to some further minor matters set out in the Schedule of Adjustments (ID-36) being addressed. The Main Modifications consultation will be carried out after the Mayoral Elections in May 2021. Further information will be provided in due course.*

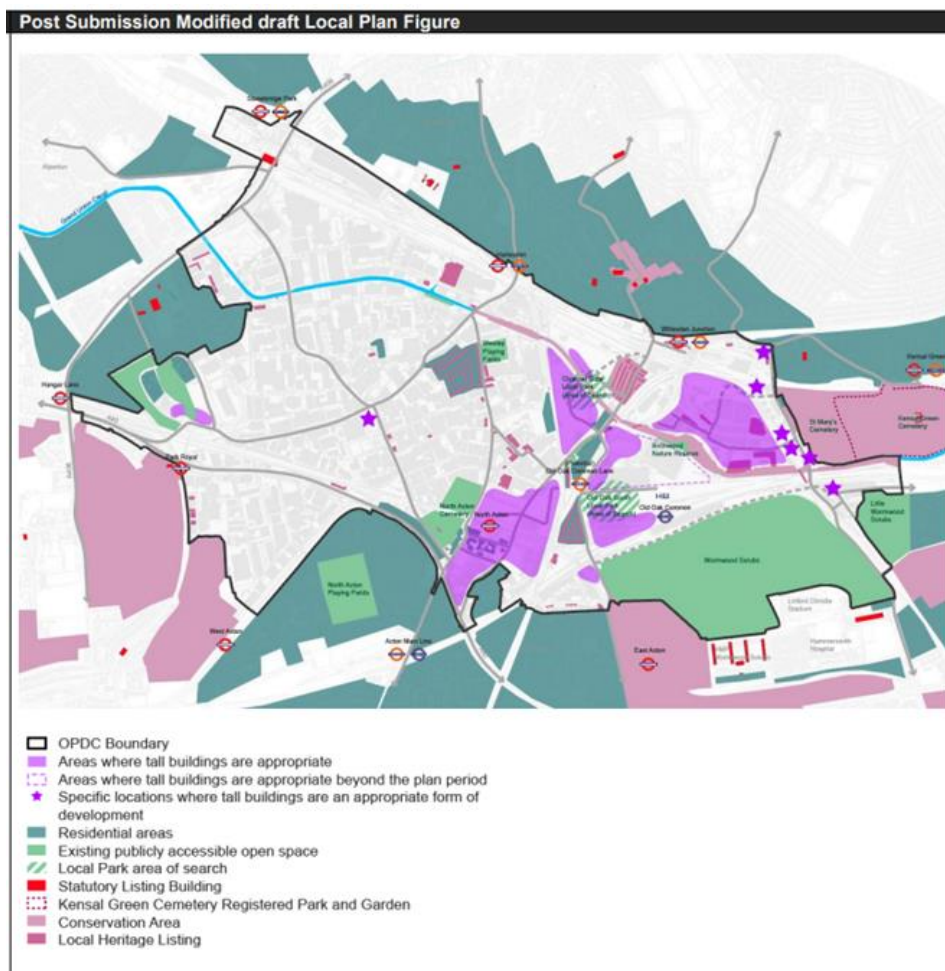


Figure 3.15 above is from the March 2021 'Figure Modifications' as submitted to the Inspector on 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021. The areas shown in pink along with the locations at pink asterisks are identified as being appropriate for tall buildings. The sites at 5-7 Park Royal Road do not feature on this map.

The Local Plan [Examination Library](#) remains published and available on the OPDC website. The Library shows no 'Update' as having been published between March 2021 and July 2021. This latter set of documents, which did include content on the sites at 5-7 Park Royal Road, was published **after the public consultation on the main Modifications had closed on July 5<sup>th</sup>**.

It is not disputed that the May version of Figure 3.15 was one of the series of supporting documents made available on the OPDC 'consultation platform' for the May to July 2021 consultation. But OONF and GUA members, following very closely the position on tall building sites in the modified plan, were by then working from the content of the Examination Library as the definitive source of successive versions of documents on which a total of 464 modifications were eventually made between submission (October 2018) and adoption (June 2022).

The DHLUC Guidance to Programme Officers on Local Plan Examinations states (with our highlighting):

#### ***The Examination Library and Website***

*The PO should ensure that the LPA keeps the examination library and website up to date. The former **must include all documents submitted to the Inspector** such as the plan itself, the evidence base, relevant local and national policy documents and the representations. All documents should*

*have a unique reference number and the library should be easy to navigate. It is helpful to provide direct links to national documents such as the Framework and PPG.*

*As the examination proceeds, it will be necessary to add documents to the library and they in turn must be given a logical title and an appropriate reference number. Examination documents are often prefixed ED, or something similar. The Inspector's MIQs, guidance notes and programmes will need to be added as will any hearing statements, final agendas and new evidence. Formal communications between the Inspector and the LPA and/or other participants will also need to form part of the library, but informal correspondence between the Inspector and PO should not automatically be added. If the PO is unsure about whether a particular document should be placed on the website, the Inspector should be consulted.*

*It is essential that participants are able to access the examination library through the examination website. This usually forms part of the LPA's website, although sometimes it can be difficult to find. Thus the PO should ensure that it can be located quickly and easily and that it is simple to use.*

*Once the examination has commenced, the website will be the principle source of information for those involved. It must therefore be informative and new documents should be posted promptly. The PO should ensure that arrangements are in place to enable the website to be updated quickly as requested by the Inspector. The website should have sufficient capacity to hold a large number of documents and be capable of being updated quickly. A failure to keep the website up to date could result in participants being disadvantaged by a lack of relevant information. It is also a statutory requirement that all relevant information is publicly available.*

**We consider that participants in the Examination including residents on the east side of Western Avenue, and also OONF and the Grand Union Alliance, were disadvantaged** in terms of any opportunity to challenge and question the suitability of the sites at 5-7 Park Royal Road for high-density/high-rise residential development, during the May-July public consultation on the OPDC PSMDLP.

OPDC have advised (email from EW 14 June 2022) that *The July 2021 Update to the Examination Documents webpage replaced a previous May 2021 update. This is evidenced by an email attached which was sent from OPDC to the Inspector on 11 May 2021 which sets out the previous May 2021 update text as proposed changes to the Examination Documents webpage.*

Were it the case that that the July Update was published to 'replace' a May version, this should not have happened. The May Update and its documents should have remained published in the Library. We have not as yet raised this issue with the Inspector's Programme Officer responsible for updating the Library. We have no screenshots of the Library webpage as published between March and July 2021. The DLUHC/Planning Inspectorate Guidance is clear that **all** document submitted to the Inspector must be published in the Library. This is a key resource and public record of an Examination. Timing of publication and availability to be public can be important, as in this case.

It is this sequence of events which has led to public to feel that these sites were smuggled into the Draft Local Plan at a very late stage, as being appropriate for tall buildings. We cannot be certain that the Inspector noticed this event, any more than did OONF and GUA colleagues who were tracking the Examination documents very closely. The Inspector is likely to have been working from the documentation in the Library, and not the material published by that stage on an OPDC consultation platform.

As noted above, the sites at 5-7 Park Royal Road were never added to the schedule of proposed site allocations at Table 3.1 of the Local Plan. They are not included in this Table in the adopted Plan, despite the fact that several other potential sites on which some form of pre-application enquiry has been made are included (e.g. Sites numbered 32, 33, and 34 in Scrubs Lane).

### **Pre-application advice issued by OPDC on proposals for 5-7 Park Royal Road**

The first set of formal pre-application advice on these sites was issued by OPDC on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021. This advice refers to several studies which the applicants had commissioned in June 2021 from Savills, the Stay Club and on Purpose Built Student Accommodation. It seems evident that the applicants had already received sufficient comfort from OPDC officers following the February 2021 phone call from planning consultants D9, to invest in commissioning architectural plans and other reports for sites which would emerge via late Modifications as locations suitable for tall buildings.

We have had access to copies of pre-application advice only since this material was published by OPDC after submission of application 23/0014/FUMOPDC in February 2023. This first set of advice states at paragraph 24 under 'Height and Massing' *PSMDLP Policy D4 'Tall Buildings' sets out that tall buildings will be supported, in principle, where they accord with Policy SP9, the relevant Place Policy and the London Plan. A tall building is defined as those above 15 storeys (or 48 metres). London Plan Policy D9 'Tall buildings' is clear that tall buildings should only be developed in locations that are identified as suitable in Development Plans and should address the associated visual, functional, environmental and cumulative impacts. Figure 3.15 'Sensitive locations and tall building locations' indicates that Site A is located within an area where a tall building could be appropriate.*

This wording relied on the May 2021 set of 'Figure Modifications' which had included a further version of the map at Figure 3.15, along with a May 2021 version of a Tall Buildings Statement, to which these sites had been added. These 'modifications' thereby provided the opening for a speculative development proposal floated with OPDC officers in the February 2021 phone call.

At the time of holding this first formal pre-application meeting and issuing advice, the PSMDLP documentation was not in fact remotely adequate to justify compliance with London Plan D9, for any Tall Buildings at these sites. It was only after the intervention by the Old Oak NF and the St Quintin and Woodlands NF, at an examination hearing held on January 11<sup>th</sup> 2022 that the Inspector required a further set of Major Modifications to define 'appropriate heights' at tall building locations in order to conform with Part B of London Plan D9 (see further below).

Pre-application advice No.2 was issued by OPDC on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2022. By this date, OPDC officers had submitted their late Modifications OPDC-51 in response to the Inspector's instruction, thereby adding wording to the supporting text for Place policy P9.

The applicants at this stage were proposing a 39-storey tower on Site A (East) and a 23-storey tower on Site B (West). This second set of written advice notes at paragraph 19:

*As part of the examination process for the draft Local Plan, OPDC prepared modifications for defining tall building heights for consideration by the Inspector, these are based on the residential development capacities proposed. In areas outside of SIL in Park Royal West, it is expected that tall buildings will predominantly be in the range of 20 to 30 storeys. As discussed in the meeting, we would expect a building on Site A to be no more than 30 storeys. Site B is not identified as a site appropriate for a tall building within the draft Local Plan and we are not convinced by the justification for a tall building on this site.*



This wording raises two questions. From where did the '*residential development capacities*' for Park Royal West emerge?

In the March 2021 updated Development Capacity Study, the sites at 5-7 Park Royal Road appears as no.60 in a '*site assessment*' of 63 sites compiled as part of a '*final evidence base*' for the PSMDLP. The assessment comments *Site released from SIL. New homes and jobs capacity. Homes: 60 Econ. floorspace: 200 Jobs: 10*. The phasing is shown as years 6-10

In the same document at Appendix B, further information is provided in a column assessing '*suitability for development*'. This reads *Suitable The principle for release from SIL for mixed use development for the site has been established in in the ILR Addendum 2021. Discussions with land owner has confirmed suitability for development. Constraints are considered to be able to be addressed through design and operation of development.*

A second question relates to the OPDC statement in the pre-application advice that *Site B is not identified as a site appropriate for a tall building within the draft Local Plan and we are not convinced by the justification for a tall building on this site.*

While we agree with the second part of this comment, the fact is that the map at Figure 3.15 in the May version of the 'Figure Modifications' (OPDC- 40D) shows a pink triangle abutting Western Avenue that appears to include Site B as well as site A (see the enlarged extract below from this version of Figure 3.15.

Application 23/0014/FUMOPDC includes a 15 storey building on Site B. While the updated version of OPDC Tall Building Statement Update defines a tall building as *above 15 residential storeys or being 48 metres above ground level* **we argue that this height remains excessive on a site adjacent to low rise housing and a significant distance from the North Acton Cluster**. Overlooking of gardens, privacy, daylight/sunlight impacts and sense of enclosure are all issue raised by residents adjoining the site.

As the applicant's Planning Statement acknowledges at paragraph 7.72 *The proposed building on Site B is 15-storeys in height but exceeds 48m. This is largely due to greater floor to ceiling heights at lower levels, in order to deliver a high-quality development with a strong street presence. Therefore, both buildings are considered "tall buildings" per London Plan Policy D9 and the OPDC Local Plan.*

Clarity is therefore needed on the designation of Site B in relation to Tall Buildings. Given the proposed height above 48m, is this deemed by OPDC to be a tall building?



*Extract from map of sites 'appropriate for tall buildings' from May 2021 version of OPDC Figure Modifications.*



This second set of pre-application advice states in relation to Site A *Therefore, whilst a tall building is acceptable on Site A, the current proposed height of 44-storeys is considered to be excessive in this location. Though the appropriate building height for this site will need to be tested through a design-led approach, we consider that a building in the order of 25 – 30 storeys would be more appropriate, in common with those permitted on the outer fringes of North Acton at The Perfume Factor.*

By this date, OPDC had submitted to the Inspector proposed Modifications OPDC-51. This set of edits to supporting text of the Draft Local Plan (and not to the main policies) included the following wording for Park Royal West: *Addition after fifth sentence to paragraph 4.67: Outside of SIL, based on the residential development capacities proposed for Park Royal West, it is expected that tall buildings here will predominantly be in the range of 20 to 30 storeys. Tall building proposals will be considered against all relevant development plan policies and material considerations.*

OPDC officers were as a result able to give clearer pre-application advice that *a building of 44-storeys is considered to be excessive in this location.*

The third set of pre-application advice was issued by OPDC on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2022. At this time a 37 storey building was proposed. The response from OPDC officers was to repeat the 20-30 storey range for Park Royal West added as a modification in the adopted local plan. The advice continued *we do not support the height of the building on Site A as currently proposed, especially for a use which would be better suited within a town centre location. The proposed development would result in a highly prominent and bulky building separated from the other existing and consented tall buildings in North Acton town centre, having an overbearing impact on its surroundings and Acton Cemetery.*

The finalised application as submitted proposes a 33 storey building on Site A. The justification for this height is given at paragraph 7.89 of the Planning Statement as follows *It is recognised that Site A marginally exceeds the envisaged 20-30 storey height of tall buildings in Park Royal West, however, it is recognised that this is a guide and is based on residential development capacities rather than design led. It is also the case that because of the shallower floor-to-ceiling heights of PBSA, the building would equate to a 30-storey building if calculated at a standard floor-to-ceiling height of 3.2m.*

The Planning Statement refers to the Master Brewer (Hillingdon) judgment on London Plan D9 and argues that this decision of the courts *has established that technical noncompliance with D9 Part B does not preclude a proposal being supported in consideration of the planning balance, in other words that it is not a “gateway” to consideration of a proposal against Part C or the Development Plan as a whole.*

We do not see the Master Brewer case as being a direct comparison. In relation to this application 23/0014/FUMOPDC we consider a court would pay heed to a context in which:

- The OPDC Local Plan was adopted over a year after the December 2020 Direction from the Secretary of State to the Mayor of London, requiring the inclusion of specific and clear wording in Part B of London Plan Policy D9.
- When modifying its post-submission local plan, OPDC made little effort to ensure conformity with London Plan D9. ‘Suitable locations’ and ‘appropriate heights’ for tall buildings were not adequately identified in maps in the local plan.
- The Inspector required very late major modifications and OPDC provided these in the form of edits and insertions to supporting text. These changes did not alter a series of relevant main policies, nor the ‘boxed text’ in the Place policies.

- As the Inspector concedes at paragraph 167 of his report *The requirement in B(2) for “appropriate tall building heights” to be identified on maps in development Plans is a matter with which the submitted OPDC LP does not comply, and modifications did not anticipate, in common with the majority of other local plans in London.* In reality, OPDC had full opportunity to prepare such maps between the March 2021 adoption of the London Plan and the May 2021 start of public consultation on Modifications. **OPDC chose not to do so.**
- Subsequently, the Inspector chose not to require a further public consultation on these last minute modifications, despite the fact that building heights have been a consistent key concern of local people since the start of preparation of an OPDC Local Plan in 2015.

Hence the unhappiness of local residents that the adopted OPDC Local Plan has been retrofitted and manipulated to meet developer aspirations on a series of sites which are not inherently suitable for high density/high-rise buildings (in terms of PTAL levels, surroundings, and proximity to amenities). The public do not feel that consultation on this continuously contested aspect of local plan preparation was either adequate, or heeded, over a 7 year period.

#### **Additional EIP hearing on Tall Buildings January 2022**

At the EIP hearing on January 11<sup>th</sup> 2022, Planning Inspector Paul Clark accepted written and oral evidence from OONF and the StQW Neighbourhood Forum that the PSMDLP *did not adequately specify locations for tall buildings*, and nor did it *adequately specify appropriate tall building heights*. Conformity with 2021 London Plan Policy D9 on Tall Buildings was therefore not achieved, and the PSMDLP was therefore unsound in this respect.

As noted above, the Inspector’s solution was to require a further set of late modifications from OPDC. These were provided in the form of document ID-51 prepared by OPDC officers and dated 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021 (see annexe to this objection).

These very late modifications were not reported to nor considered by the OPDC Planning Committee prior to being submitted to the Inspector. Nor were they considered by the Planning Committee in subsequent weeks (a scheduled meeting of the committee on 17<sup>th</sup> February was cancelled).

#### **NPPF consultation and the wider context**

The Government consulted earlier this year on proposals for new wording in the NPPF, reflecting belated recognition of public discontent with the workings of the current planning system. The Government’s response to representations on the consultation is awaited. An intended addition to paragraph 11 of the NPPF is as below:

*b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:*  
*(New additional wording in bold) ii. any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole; **such adverse impacts may include situations where meeting need in full would mean building at densities significantly out of character with the existing area;***

Currently, OPDC operates on the basis that it is acceptable to ‘*build at densities significantly out of character with the existing area*’. The Corporation argues that this is to be expected in terms of ‘intensification’ within an Opportunity Area and that the London Plan 25,000 housing target is unalterable.

This has already resulted in what many of the public see as extreme overdevelopment and building heights at North Acton (mainly as result of decisions by LB Ealing on behalf of OPDC) and at Scrubs Lane NW10. Old Oak West is next in line. OONF will continue to argue that the 25,000 housing target should be revisited by the Mayor, in this or in subsequent Mayoral terms of office, and that there is serious risk of a 'new Old Oak' that proves to be unsuccessful and unsustainable.

This is why the Forum continues to try to draw attention to what local people see as an inherent conflict or tension between the delivery role of a MDC and the role of objective planning authority upholding NPPF principles and London Plan policies on 'Good Growth'. Old Oak continues to experience a pattern of planning consents which we believe will be viewed as 'bad growth' in 20 years time.

What we are learning from comparisons with extensions to other major European cities (Vienna, Paris) reinforces this view. These cities have similar needs to plan and deliver large-scale regeneration, with new transport infrastructure. Their municipal leaders are using development and delivery vehicles that involve deep local consultation and which (on the whole ) appear to bring the public along with them.

UK planning reforms need to achieve the same outcome. **Meanwhile we ask that application 23/0014/FUMOPDC is refused on the grounds set out at the start of this objection.**

Old Oak Neighbourhood Forum April 2023

(Copy of OPDF modification OPDC-51 attached and to be added to planning file as an appendix to this objection)