

Barry Lomax  
 Head of Development Planning  
 Guildhall 2  
 High Street  
 Kingston upon Thames, KT1 1EU

Dear Barry

**21/00044/ful Tolworth Tower**

This application site has been a drain on Kingston council and residents' time and energy since 2015. It is appalling that yet again we have to wade through over 3000 pages of information with unhelpful static documents (the reason messy blocks of application text appear in this report). We need an assurance that all development planned for Kingston and in particular Tolworth and Chessington takes account that Crossrail2 has been cancelled. The Mayor of London needs to urgently reassess the housing figures in those areas where Crossrail2 has/is used as a reason for mass development near stations.

Reports now highlight the poor state of the concrete resulting from flooding and water ingress and that with remedial action the Tower could last 50 years! Will the developers publish these facts? Will future leaseholders be stuck with enormous service charges? Might not this be the time to use the Tower for offices until the end of its shelf life or demolish it now? Who will get a mortgage with a 50 year lease, more likely cash buyers who buy to let out?

**Background**

2012	<b>Core Strategy</b> Tolworth District Centre <i>make the most of opportunities to develop family housing with gardens - ensuring that future development .... relates to the existing character (set out in the Borough Character Study) in terms of design, scale, massing, height, density, layout, materials and colour.</i>	<b>600 units for Tolworth District Centre</b>
June 2015	1. TfL presented their draft masterplan for Tolworth, which considers the quantum of development that could be brought forward within a 1km radius of Tolworth railway station in the event that proposed infrastructure improvements and enhancements are realised, namely: <b>Crossrail 2, 1.5</b> The proposed timescale for building out the masterplan is unclear at this stage, <b>but it is unlikely that much of it could be developed until the introduction of Crossrail 2 services, which is currently envisaged to be by 2030 at the earliest.</b>	<b>26 Nov 2020</b> - The government has announced it has stopped developing <b>Crossrail 2.</b>
11/1/2016	CNM version <b>15/16356</b> Resolution to permit. The S106 not completed so <b>NEVER approved</b> and now time expired.	<b>1.40 hectares</b> <b>379 units whole site</b> <b>547 parking spaces</b>
Sep 2017	CNM Mr Samady : <i>"In the absence of funding that would deliver the next phase, we have taken the view that its best to sell the property and let someone else do the delivery phase"</i> CNM paid c£54.3m for Tolworth Tower. It was on sale for c£99million.	£2.2 million offered for offsite affordable housing

Nov 2018	Meadow Partners <b>8/16764</b> <i>Change of use of existing 3rd to 22nd floors from office (Use Class B1) to residential (Use Class C3) to create 240 residential units</i>	0.86 hectares 240 units in the Tower 384 parking spaces
13/5/2019	Meadow Partners Version 2 <b>18/16764</b> <i>"Full planning permission is sought for the change of use of the existing 3rd to 22nd floors of Tolworth Tower from office (Use Class B1) to residential (Use Class C3) to create 261 residential units,</i>	0.86 hectares 261 units in the Tower
9/10/2019	DCC <b>Resolved</b> to <b>PERMIT</b> subject to a reassessment of the conditions and in formatives to be delegated to the Corporate Head of Planning, for approval, in consultation of the Chair of the DCC	Meadow Partners have failed to sign a S106 agreement
2019	Local Plan consultation - Kingston Site Assessment SA132 Tolworth Tower	1.32 hectares 154 homes
26/11/20	The government announced it has stopped <b>Crossrail 2.</b>	
Jan 2021 current	Meadow Partners Version 3 <b>21/00044/FUL</b> <i>Change of use of the existing 3rd to 22nd floors in Tolworth Tower from office (Use Class B1) to residential (Use Class C3), change of use of the existing 2nd floor from office (Use Class B1) to ancillary amenity space, including a residents gymnasium and lounge (Use Class C3), change of use of existing 1st floor Car Park (sui generis) to create a flexible workspace unit (Dual Use Class C3/E), change of use of part of the existing ground floor undercroft from office (Use Class B1) to create freestanding retail kiosks (Use Class E) with associated external facade alterations and internal refurbishment works to Tolworth Tower; The demolition of the existing retail units fronting Tolworth Broadway and the construction of two new buildings (T2 up to 19 storeys and T3 up to 15 storeys) with residential units, ground floor commercial space (Use Class E) and public plaza; and The reconfiguration of the existing multi-storey car park, vehicle parking and servicing, along with the provision of associated cycle parking, refuse storage, amenity floorspace, landscaping and public realm works (existing M&amp;S, Travelodge and RBK Council Car Park are excluded from the proposals).</i>	<b>1.13 Hectares</b> Tower 1 261 units Tower 2 136 units Tower 3 102 units = <b>499 units</b> (plus 78 serviced apartments completed) <b>134 parking spaces</b>

2016 - Whole site 1.40 hectares 379 units - doubt it would have received a resolution to grant had the committee known the applicant did not own the M&S car park which was needed to conform to amenity space requirements. Planning said it was acceptable to use the 2nd floor car park as customers could use the lift even though they were told the lift did not work **Roll forward to 2021 the plan is to remove the lift!**

2019 The Local Plan consultation Kingston Site Assessments had the Tolworth Tower site area 1.32 hectares suitable for 154 homes

2021 Why has the whole site shrunk to **1.13 hectares?**

**How can an additional 120 flats (379 to 599) and 413 less parking spaces (547 to 134) be justified?**

Our objections for consideration are :

- severe lack of parking provision 0.28 car per flat
- cumulative impact of overloaded Highway Network - TfL admit additional development will increase traffic on the Tolworth roundabout. Go Cycle has increased the daily traffic jams, off-site parking has been reduced from implementation of double yellow lines, RBK Highways knows there is a major parking problem for all streets off the Ewell Road and having CPZ will not help those residents and visitors with cars which have to go somewhere
- increased flood risk in the area
- inappropriate appearance and design
- unacceptable noise, dust, fumes from demolition and build
- unacceptable air quality exposure for existing and new residents (exceeds the annual mean NO<sub>2</sub>)
- unacceptable very high density levels
- poor quality accommodation (in the Tower, 69% are single aspect with a significant number north or south facing and against Standard 29. One façade will need sun blinds and solar glass protection during the summer, the other could require artificial light during the day)
- loss of daylight & sunlight for 78 flats of residents in the North Tower, Travelodge customers and all surrounding existing residential properties
- the scale & dominance of 2 plus 2 towers set against 2/3 storey housing in the area will severely affect residential amenity
- severe lack of suitable external private amenity space/inadequate and unsuitable child play space (the GLA report cited no private amenity space on floors 3-21 with play space below guidance and unsuitable)
- the tower is deemed to only have a life of up to 50 years if remedial work is done to the failing concrete
- the wind conditions will be unacceptable for public health
- cumulative impact of approved/planned development in Tolworth such as the 950 Guinness Trust development opposite
- it will cause problems to the Victorian sewerage/water system
- there will be a shortage of school places and doctors with no space for these buildings to be built in the area
- there are not enough 3 bedroom units and against Kingston need
- ZERO affordable housing when the requirement is 50%
- there might be a ww2 bomb underneath
- unworkable waste management system which requires someone to move full bins from one floor to the locked basement then replace with empty bins whilst keeping commercial bins separate from residential bins and all the time bin lorries holding up the traffic
- unacceptable servicing of heavy goods vehicles from a loading bay in front of the "plaza" will severely hold up the traffic towards the Tolworth roundabout

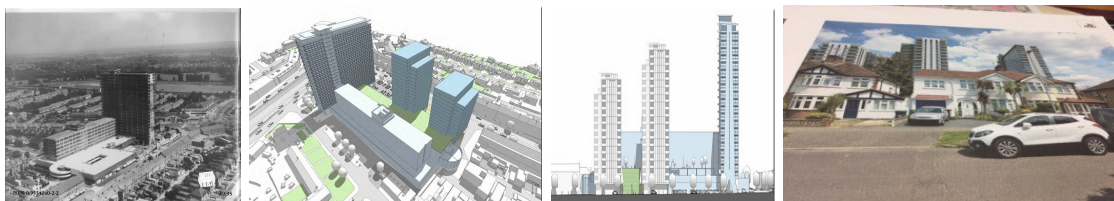
## Design Code

The government is publishing a draft national design code.... these will include such things as street character, building types, facade and requirements that address well being and environment impact. "Beauty will be in the eye of the council"

"We should aspire to pass on our heritage and our unique built environment, not depleted but enhanced. .... some development has acquired a bad name due to shoddy workmanship.... For the first time we are embedding the principle that buildings should be beautiful - the ability for local people to reject what they consider ugly. .... Robert Jenrick Housing Secretary

We should welcome the statement however it only makes us angry because since 2009 virtually every development in our area has ignored whatever policies were in place at the time to do with respecting the character and build type of the area just increasing the density all the time. Kingston published its Core Strategy in 2012 after consulting widely with the public on what they wanted for their historic market town but over the last few years the dreaded "tilted balance" has been used to force councillors into accepting the planning officers recommendation and thus taking no account of the prevailing character. Open the Core Strategy, use FIND type character and see what you get.

Having up to c4000 people in this small suburban neighbourhood fills us with dread. This is not a central metropolitan area. One 60's office block does not mean the rest of suburbia has to suffer with totally inappropriate high rise dense blocks. We do not have the infrastructure for this level of build. The COVID virus has shown that people in dense populations are more likely to die, is that what Kingston wants for us? The applicant asserts that the conversion of the Tower remains the same as the previous one so should be allowed as before. It is not. This time they are offering ZERO affordable housing across the whole site and the flats are build to buy instead of build to rent, no doubt as since COVID, rental markets are suffering. People are rushing to get out of London flats and find houses with gardens and space to work from home. Tolworth Tower is surrounded by low rise, low density housing. 2 plus2 tower blocks is inappropriate development in place of the 2 storey retail building. One block is 15/13 storeys next to a 2 storey buildings.



It is an outrage that developers are allowed to spout such untruths as "already densely populated " "the proposed development would be in keeping with the current nature and scale of the surrounding development and would not be expected to result in significant effects in an already heavily urbanised area".

**Built form Character Area Type: Outer Suburban/Urban (Density 12dph) (PTAL 2 and 3)**

The tower dominates the surrounding area in terms of scale and massing. A curved street pattern and *relatively low densities with semi detached houses and short terraces characterise this area.* To the west of Red Lion Road, the road layout is tighter and based more on a grid layout. Mostly semi detached and terraced housing with some properties dating back to the 1870's. *High density housing is not characteristic of the area—the predominant form is 2-storey houses with front and back gardens*

## 8 November 2018 Strategic Housing & Planning Committee

*Minutes: Members considered a report on the adoption of the Tolworth Area Plan as a statement of Council Policy. Members noted that the Plan had been produced by consultants, We Made That (WMT), and was jointly commissioned by the Council and the Greater London Authority (GLA), including Transport for London (TfL). ..... Members were concerned with various aspects of the plan and requested a number of amendments and clarity on issues such as the height of the Tolworth Tower site. It was agreed to defer the item and arrange a separate internal meeting with officers and Members of the Committee to discuss those points further and reach clarity on any concerns before the item would be heard at Committee in the future. Decision: Resolved that the item be deferred to a future meeting of the committee.*

No further meeting has since taken place. Yet the Planning reports assume the Tolworth Area Plan has been agreed. They use disputed blue key heights maps as justification for tall buildings. As the TAP is still at draft status it is not a material consideration.

### **Amenity/Play Space**

1.8 The inclusion of the ground floor public plaza aims to attract visitors to the retail parade and increase time spent in the area. Its flexibility of use would also have the benefit of improving the cultural and evening offer of the locality to further improve and enrich the locality.

1.6 The redevelopment of the Site presents an opportunity to incorporate open space, places to meet and socialise and facilities to increase dwell times in the centre, thereby addressing some of the deficiencies of the existing centre (as identified in the TAP).

The Police have noted that the plaza is likely to increase anti-social behaviour from customers buying alcohol. During COVID many existing food shops and fast food takeaways on the Broadway have not adhered to social distancing or licensing rules.

More worrying is that in 5.4 Residential Use it shows **“due to height restrictions of 3.6m the heavy goods servicing area will be located in Tolworth Broadway”** in front of this plaza. People sitting in this amenity space will be affected by fumes from lorries. This will mean lorries and buses occupying one lane towards Tolworth roundabout severely holding up traffic. Go Cycle Greenway parking bays had to be removed and replaced with double yellow lines for the very reason of severely holding up traffic.

Some of the planned amenity space/garden will be on the 2nd floor carpark above M&S and this structure is crumbling! They are deep cracks.



*Play and Informal Recreation SPG* The play space provided across the proposed development falls marginally short of this. The nature of the Site means that that much of the potential play space is unsuitable for those age over 5, but this demand can largely be accommodated at local playgrounds which fall within a short walking distance of the site, such as Alexandra Recreation Ground.

Except that since COVID every green space in the Borough is now extremely busy and in particular Alexandra Rec.

5.5 New retail floorspace will continue to be provided and these new units will be of a size that supports modern requirements from retailers. Given the current retail market, the proposals seek flexible retail space to attract a range of future occupiers and ensure the units provided are not left vacant as currently the case in part of the existing shop frontage.

They mention 60% retail vacancies but none would be vacant if this site had not been under threat since 2015. The bar with false "under renovation" signs meant to stop graffiti, soon the busy Costa and Boots made to leave. Even with new retail buildings it does not stop them being empty just observe the new Red Lion site up the road, the large retail unit empty for over 18 months now.

### **Fire Safety**

Stairs in all the towers are located in a central position to all flats, making them easily accessible for future users, encouraging active lifestyles.

Not many people could walk up/down 23 flights of stairs, especially in the event of a fire. Converting a purpose built 1960's concrete office block into flats is fraught with danger. I notified Mr Davis at the time of the Grenfell Tower fire that part of the Tolworth Tower site had already been re-clad in turquoise plastic which turned out to be the same type as used at Grenfell. It is still there. Converting an office block of 23 storeys which use to shut at 5pm to 261 flats being used 24/7 with fridges, freezers, tumble dryers, cookers etc needs to have the highest safety features to protect residents. 2019 "If the internal layout of the proposed residential units does not meet the GLA's standards then the development as proposed should not be allowed".

### **Greening**

The proposed development will build on the work already carried out by Sued X along the Broadway, supporting important sustainability initiatives such as urban greening and biodiversity enhancement, and connecting into the wider tree population and green spaces of Tolworth. Planting, particularly trees, has been carefully coordinated with the structural constraints of the existing deck, but there will be sufficient to green the space, have microclimatic benefits and make a significant improvement to the overall urban greening and biodiversity net gain for the site.

Cigar

ettes and alcohol on the benches and shrubbery. The trees replaced twice due to pollution. The wind is horrendous we doubt much will grow on any deck.



### **Affordable Housing/Provision of 3 bedroom units**

The Application Site sits within the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country in relation to housing which indicates residents in the area are experiencing difficulties in accessing good quality housing.

The proposed development will deliver 499 new residential dwellings, including 195 (39%) family units (2-bedroom and 3-bedroom units).

The proposed unit mix is as follows:

- 304 one-bedroom units;
- 161 two-bedroom units;
- 34 three-bedroom units.

No affordable residential dwellings are proposed.

By providing an increased mix of housing, this allows residents a better choice of obtaining a desired dwelling that best meets their needs and could help reduce overcrowding thus contributing positively

To combine 2 and 3 bedroom as "family units" cannot disguise the woeful provision of only 14% x3 bed units as set against Kingston policy of 30% requirements. This policy was written because there was a shortage. The reason some residents in Kingston may experience difficulties in accessing good quality housing is the very high prices. Which makes it even more unbelievable that this scheme offers NO AFFORDABLE DWELLINGS. When is Kingston going to enforce 50% affordable housing as stated in Kingston policies and the London Plan.

The proposed development will therefore be able to accommodate those with mobility problems and meet the changing needs of current and future occupants through increased provision of a variety of housing types for local residents, including those with mobility issues and older people.

High rise flats would be the last place we as older people would consider living in due to lifts not working and constant noise from too many people living in a small space. Older people with mobility issues want ground floor accommodation with a garden - do not insult us by suggesting these flats are suitable, they are not.

Consequently, the proposed development will encourage active lifestyles for future residents through reducing reliance on car use. For older residents who are potentially less mobile, there are a range of public transport options in the vicinity of the Application Site to enable these groups to access local amenities.

Tolworth station 2 trains an hour, Lidl offices providing coaches for their staff to and from Surbiton station, doubt there will be any space on the buses with all these extra people (499 flats = c1200 950 flats Guinness Trust = c2900)

Cycle parking is provided in accordance with relevant standards, with a total of 866 cycle parking spaces to be provided on-site. 5% of these spaces will be provided for larger cycles with a combination of short-stay and long-stay spaces.

866 cycles along the greenway, if only, the most you might see if 1 or 2. Just because you want to ban cars does not mean people do not have them. Their picture showing cyclists and no cars! The reality, no cycles just cars.



## Structure and drainage

*structural con; part1 part 3 8.1.3Basement Visual inspections of the lower basement level have noted localized flooding and continuous water ingress from an unknown location. Based on the results of cover and carbonation measurements available for (internal concrete only), it is reasonable to expect the concrete cover to provide a further 50 years of protection to the reinforcement with minimal intervention, provided remedial works are carried out as noted within this report and noted defects are adequately addressed.*

The basement has flooded for years and the reports identify that water ingress is affecting the concrete. They say with remedial action it could give the building another 50 years.

There could also be an unexploded WW2 bomb somewhere on the site. Unexploded Ordnance Threat Assessment *has assessed that there is a MEDIUM RISK of contamination from items of unexploded German aerial delivered ordnance across the site*

The refurbishment of the Tolworth Tower would represent a significant reduction in total discharge of 37%.

Blue roofs have been incorporated across the proposed buildings to intercept and store rainwater at source. These then discharge at a restricted rate to the proposed below ground drainage network.

A below ground drainage network is proposed to collect surface water from the building and yardstanding areas and convey it to the public surface water sewer located in the footpath adjacent to Tolworth Broadway. To restrict the discharge rate further, attenuation tanks are provided below ground before a hydro brake is used to restrict the discharge rate from the site to 2 l/s.

Office staff using the Tower 9-5 meant less sewerage than 499 flats which may have 694 toilets in use 24/7. **How is this going to affect the existing water systems?**

## Air Quality/Pollution/Noise

Dwellings will be ventilated via a 'mixed-mode' approach in accordance with the London Plan's three step energy hierarchy. Mechanical Ventilation Heat Recovery (MVHR) will be used during winter months to minimise heat losses and ensure good indoor air quality. It is proposed to utilise an MVHR system with a minimum heat exchange efficiency of 91%.

Natural ventilation, via means of openable windows, will also be utilised where conditions allow for use outside the heating season and for enhanced summer ventilation to prevent the risk of overheating.

The implementation of energy efficiency measures would help the health and wellbeing of future

To stop the spread of the COVID virus and to improve fresh air circulation we have been told to keep windows open even during the winter. MVHR is therefore unsuitable as it will affect residential amenity and possibly shorten a person's



life. This location for flats is not suitable for anyone but especially families or old people due to the poor air quality in the vicinity.

When any demolition starts, the dust will be horrendous, the noise will be horrendous, the traffic will be at a standstill. I do not see how anyone could safely use M&S. The number of lorries, cranes, diggers etc will clog up the Ewell Road and the A3 for years. No amount of mitigation will stop the carnage if you approve this. Cumulative with Guinness Trust 950 over the road not to mention 187 Ewell Road, demolition and build. The lorries going up and down the Ewell Road to the Browns Road development have damaged the surface, so many huge potholes.

We will have years of construction site chaos, static traffic as the roads are frequently dug up for gas, electricity, water and sewerage (who pays for that not the developers) There will be noise, pollution. M&S will not survive during the construction phase yet they are the only retailer of note in the Broadway. The construction phase will involve an increase in workers' vans cluttering up the streets. COVID has meant more people working from home so now would be a good time to reintroduce office accommodation for local people, people who could hire space because their flats are too small or companies utilising local people.

### **Highway Network & Parking Arrangements**

**2011** 'Method of Travel to Work' census data. Who has 0.28 of a car?

Just walk around the area, not a space for cars anywhere as the number of people working from home increases and the car that they used to use to drive to work because of inadequate train provision is now on the road. The car parking provision is abysmal and an insult to existing and future residents. It is easy to state that the people who buy these flats won't have cars (maybe build to rent but now build to buy people will have a car), the cars will be car capped, car shared, whatever, but what happens when they do have cars and want to use them and want to park them somewhere. What about visitor parking? The changes to the Ewell Road for Go Cycle has already made this key road smaller causing jams.

The £30 million TFL promised to Kingston for Go Cycle has come to a halt with all their materials taking up residence on the ancient rose beds on Fishponds Park for the foreseeable future so we know TFL cannot afford any improvements to the A3 .

For some reasons pictures at 4.4 residential amenity (and about 3 other diagrams) show cars exiting from the M&S carpark onto the Broadway, **this cannot be correct?**



**Cumulative Impact.**

Residents of Tolworth and Kingston have much to be worried about because of the consented major applications in the vicinity : Meyer Homes 950, Lidl office block 750 people, the Premier Inn 8 storey hotel, Tolworth Court 120 Homes, 187 Ewell Road 59 etc. The one 60's ugly tower block built as cheap government offices needs updating. They say it will cost too much to get it to today's standards yet propose to put people in tiny flats with no open windows. In reality why should anyone including children who risk getting asthma want to live on one of the most heavily polluted roundabouts in London.

SB1 South of the Borough will continue to be recognised for its outer suburban value and lower density built form, including family housing with gardens, **when?**

Policy DM10 states that development proposals will be required to incorporate principles of good design. These include respecting, maintaining or enhancing the prevailing development typology, including housing types, sizes and occupancy, the prevailing density of the area and scale, layout, height and form, building line build up, set back and front boundary, ensure adequate private and/or communal amenity space, have regard to the amenities of occupants and neighbours, protect the quality, character, scale and skylines of sensitive areas and safeguard strategic and local views. **Why is this ignored?**

Policy DM11 states that the Council will resist any development that detrimentally affects the quality of the environment.

This overdevelopment will be a huge detriment to existing and future residents. Please refuse this application, demolish the Tower and start again for the whole site.

Yours sincerely

Mr and Mrs Walker

8 February 2021