

Monday, May 29th 2017

Mr SADIQ KHAN, Mayor of London

Members of the Greater London Assembly

We here undersigned implore the Mayor and members of the GLA to support us in our opposition to the development at Minavil House, Alperton HAO 4PZ which was granted approval by Brent Council's Planning Committee at the meeting of Wednesday May 24th.

In Brent Council's Alperton Masterplan - a supplementary planning document - a commitment was made to regenerate the area with "buildings up to 17 storeys in height". Every major planning document published by RIBA, Brent, the GLA and other planning bodies makes reference to context and scale being fundamental to good design. Hence, the approval of this scheme at 26 storeys in height is not only a gross dereliction of the vision presented to residents of Alperton but a fundamental departure from the principles of architecture to which designs are meant to adhere.

Although many objections were received (exponentially more than the responses in favour), the various concerns regarding the excessive height of the development were dismissed as "there are other tall buildings in the area". This is no response at all, as it takes no consideration for the huge increase in height of this development over the original 11 storey building approved (and shown in the mock up of Alperton marketed in the Masterplan), the fact that it is twice as tall as the building it faces within the 243 Ealing Road development across the road, or the fact that it is 9 storeys above the maximum height stated in the area's development plan. The loss of sky and light is significant for residents nearby, with a number of windows in Venice House opposite suffering losses greater than the maximum allowable in planning guidelines. There is also grounds to believe that the overhang of balconies in Venice House was not considered in the impact assessment, furthering the number of residents affected above and beyond acceptable levels.

We are very much in favour of the development of the site and the area as a whole. Already underway on the other side of 243 Ealing Road's site at 255 Ealing Road is a fine example of a development which takes a great deal of care in terms of scale, ranging from 3 to 9 storeys in height, matching the general height of its surroundings. Such schemes are very welcome, and the approved 2011 plan for a building up to 11 storeys on the Minavil House site was very positive. This gargantuan expansion of the scheme, however, above and beyond the height advertised in Brent's own plan, is a direct contradiction of what residents bought into and displays complete disregard for the concerns of locals. Despite making representations at the committee meeting, these concerns regarding height, light and sky were largely disregarded and left unanswered in the proceedings. It would appear the council in its eagerness to fulfil its commitment in terms of new units built will discuss nothing that might compromise this scheme, even the breaking of its own promises.

We insist that you, our representatives, join us in showing Brent Council that this site should be developed in a way that is sensitive to the locality, rather than a manner which exacts the greatest number of units from the smallest space at the expense of all other concerns.

Signed: