

CONSULTATION RESPONSE – PLANNING APPLICATION 18/AP/1604
Letter and Appendix

Dear Planning Officers & Committee Members,

I have noted that late responsive submissions on this Planning Application have been collated and presented to the Committee in time for consideration at its Meeting on 25 September 2019, and that a further Meeting is to be held on 30 September 2019, which will include consideration of Objecting Responses. Therefore I ask that my response is also duly presented to the Committee for its Meeting tonight.

I also ask that, as with all the other submissions by members of the public that my name and address is redacted from any publicly published records.

Finally I confirm that I am resident at the address given below which is a part of the Southwark Council Plough Way & Chilton Grove Estate, which is partly in Rotherhithe Ward, and partly within Surrey Docks Ward, and within 250 metres of the CWM catchment area for local responses. The T&RA for this Estate has long since ceased to exist – for at least 15 years. I am aware that some sort of Twitter-based resident grouping by some anonymous persons relating to two specific blocks of flats in Chilton Grove (Nos 2 – 68 and 70 – 136) has started up this summer, but many people are not on Twitter and the only concern that this group has is about construction work now underway on their own blocks of flats.

GROUNDNS FOR OBJECTION

BIAS AND UNREPRESENTATIVE NATURE OF THE ROTHERITHE AREA HOUSING FORUM (RAHF)

The RAHF has submitted two responses in favour of the Application claiming to speak on behalf of all the Southwark Council residents on Estates within the CWM catchment area and indeed all of the Rotherhithe area.

It is neither fair nor just that a great deal of significance, weight and privileged attention is being accredited by Southwark Council Planning Officers, to this one “Local Interest Group”, the Rotherhithe Area Housing Forum, over whose functioning and representative nature very grave concerns have come to the surface over recent years, to such an extent that your own Council’s Cabinet has stated publicly in the last few weeks, that all of the Council’s Area Housing Forums, including Rotherhithe Area Housing Forum, are essentially dysfunctional in being unrepresentative, unaccountable and failing, and so destined shortly to be terminated. The axe will fall in October this year.

Your Officers’ Report to Members – Chapter 5, Statutory Consultation Responses, refers directly as follows: Summary of Local Interest Groups’ responses - Paragraph 132 – Rotherhithe Area Housing Forum (RAHF) - “Detailed statement submitted confirming broad support”.

The Rotherhithe Area Housing Forum (RAHF) has no legitimate right to claim it speaks for the tenants and residents in Southwark Council homes in the area affected by the CWM.

I have lived in the CWM-affected area in a Southwark home since 2006, and there has never been a functioning TRA on my Estate. It is therefore impossible for any resident on my Estate to play any part in the activities of the Rotherhithe Area Housing Forum, through any of the Southwark Council resident involvement channels. We are not the only Southwark Council Estate in the area covered by the CWM which doesn't have a functioning TRA and so is completely excluded from the RAHF.

I will briefly describe the state of affairs of Southwark's resident representation structure as it has stood for many years and the truth about which has finally been accepted by the Council since 2017, as a matter of record.

- i) The RAHF is entirely comprised of delegates from Tenants' and Residents' Associations (TRA) of Southwark Council Housing Estates in the former Housing Management Area of Rotherhithe, which was disbanded more than 5 years ago.
- ii) Over Southwark Council's Housing Estate as a whole, 80% of TRAs are inactive or defunct, as found by the Housing Scrutiny Report by Kaizen Associates in 2017, and Housing Committee's Resident Involvement Review and Co-Design Panel Report of 2019.
- iii) The dysfunctional and unrepresentative features of Southwark Council Housing's resident involvement system have been examined by Southwark Council Cabinet, with Recommendations to abolish the Area Housing Forums such as RAHF, and extensively reform the TRAs. Currently, a third and final Consultation is underway until mid-October 2019, reporting back to Cabinet.
- iv) For many years, certainly the last 5 years of communal involvement activity by the Applicant, as recorded in their SCI (Statement of Community Involvement) Documentation placed before the Planning Committee, many residents of Southwark Council Housing in the two most directly affected Wards which the CWM covers, Rotherhithe Ward and Surrey Docks Ward, have had NO functioning TRA at all. Therefore they have not been able to express their views and seek the support of any Southwark Council-sponsored resident representative body, and they have not been able to participate in, send delegates to or have engagement with the RAHF. Their views as Southwark Council residents in the CWM catchment area on this Planning Application have been effectively silenced for a long time.
- v) The RAHF cannot therefore claim that it represents the views of all Southwark Housing's residents in the CWM-affected area.
- vi) Southwark Council is due imminently to approve fundamental reform of its Residential Involvement system because it accepts the overwhelming evidential proof that its established system of the last 30 years has sadly failed, been abused and become hopelessly dysfunctional, and not financially accountable (£1,054,000 per year currently spent on residential involvement alone). All its 11 Area Housing Forums, including RAHF, will therefore be abolished.
- vii) The Officers' Report on the CWM Application Consultation gives very substantial weight to the response received from the RAHF which it says is broadly supportive of the Application. The RAHF is granted legitimate recognition to speak as a supporter of the Application as the legitimate representative of all Southwark Housing's residents in the locality, which is neither true nor legitimate.

- viii) Planning Committee Members giving such generous rights of audience to the RAHF to argue in favour of this Application on behalf of, and in some way with the support and mandate of those of us many thousands of Southwark Housing residents in Rotherhithe and Surrey Docks Wards, without any TRA representation and denial of access to the RAHF, should take all the above points of fact into account. I would ask Planning Committee Members to remember the unheard voices of many Southwark Council residents who are barred from the RAHF, and to bear in mind that this RAHF is shortly to be consigned to the scrapheap by its own sponsors, Southwark Council, for terminal failure in its functions and duties.
- ix) To give any credit to the RAHF's presentation to the Planning Committee, as conveying the views of some sort of sizeable mandate of Southwark Council residents who have invested their trust in, and authorised the RAHF to represent us in this Planning Application Consultation, is absolute nonsense. It will be legally questionable if Planning Committee Members do not take into account and publicly note in your deliberations, that the RAHF faces profound questions about its validity as a functional and representative body and as such faces imminent termination by its overarching sponsors, Southwark Council itself.
- x) An Appendix noting a pattern of pre-established RAHF bias in favour of the Applicant accompanies this Objection Letter.

Yours sincerely

APPENDIX 1 to Objection re: Validity of Rotherhithe Area Housing Forum

Indications of RAHF support and commitment to British Land at Canada Water for at least 14 years

1.

British Land Corporate Responsibility Report, 2006 – Public Consultation at Canada Water

- <https://www.britishland.com/~media/Files/B/British-Land-V4/reports-and-presentations/download-archive/CRreport2006.pdf>

Page 36: British Land states: “Over the last 3 years [*e.g. since 2003*] there has been extensive community consultation.”

██████████, Chair, Canada Estate Residents’ Association, is so described and quoted in the British Land Report as saying: “I have lived in this area my whole life and been involved with all the major contracts going on in the area and British Land stand[s] alone in having bent over backwards to listen to local people’s views and taken them into account.”

2.

British Land Corporate Responsibility Report, 2005 – Consultation at Canada Water

- https://www.britishland.com/~media/Files/B/British-Land-V4/reports-and-presentations/reports-archive/2005_cr_report.pdf
- Page 14: British Land states: “Local Interest Groups were engaged in Phase 1 [*Canada Water*] including.....the Rotherhithe Area Housing Forum.”
- ██████████ Chair of the Rotherhithe Area Housing Forum