

# Northview

Northview Residents' Association's response to planning application no P121620

*"The impact of the new storey would be significant and would devastate the appearance and nature of the existing buildings and community of residents"*

*Jeremy Corbyn,  
MP, Islington North*



Northview is the only 1930s estate of its kind in Islington, possibly London. It has a village-green layout, with its human scale and clear boundaries giving it a cohesive feel and creating a community corner. Although it is between two main roads, it provides a restful setting, with green areas and mature trees.

Its architecture has received official recognition. Campaigns to protect it have received support from national and local heritage bodies and nationally and internationally renowned architects.

As the London Plan says, many successful neighbourhoods built in the interwar years no longer exist. Northview is such a neighbourhood, and has survived reasonably intact, with original features.

What is proposed – a clumsy zinc and glass storey on the rear, larger block – would ruin it for ever.

The proposal contravenes numerous council, London and national policies. Worst of all, it will ruin a community and a unique piece of Islington's heritage.

A natural community on a human scale: 14-43 Northview, the "back block", is part of an enclave tucked behind Holloway Road. Below: its grounds contain mature and protected trees. Viewed from Northview's front block, nos 1-12.



Tufnell Park's 1930s art deco setting: note the stepping down from the Odeon to 1-12 Northview (with white balconies) then to 14-43 on the left. Now picture 14-43 with an overwhelming storey of standing seam zinc and glass on top, with harsh stripes of shadow from the standing seams drawing attention to it

*"The small scale of the existing building and courtyard and the character of its architectural detail make it impossible satisfactorily to add an extra storey to it"*

*James Dunnett, MA (Cantab) Dip Arch RIBA,  
co-chair, Docomomo-UK*

# Why Northview needs protection

## Why we are objecting to proposal no P121620

Northview Residents' Association is objecting to this for several reasons, including:

- In size, bulk and effect, the scheme is nearly identical to application no P0101448 rejected unanimously by committee last year;
- It will increase the size of the block by 38%, an effect exaggerated by the materials used;
- It is unsustainable, as both as a long-term place to live and in ecological terms
- It will have significant adverse impacts on community cohesion, safety and security, urban design and the historic environment, while providing no homes that are affordable, accessible or suitable for families with children or older people.
- The design is overbearing, unoriginal and already looks dated;
- It will cause irretrievable damage to a 1930s enclave that is the sole survivor of its type in the borough, possibly London;
- Rare original art deco banisters, which are intact throughout the estate, will be damaged;
- It would unduly dominate the courtyard and create an enclosed, dark feel;
- The scheme is clumsy, unattractive and takes no account of its surroundings;
- The materials – cheerless swathes of zinc and dull glass balconies – are unsympathetic, detracting from the visual amenity;
- Information on light and privacy is inadequate and relies on discredited papers from a previous application;
- Drawings are misleading;
- Implications for the new build at Holbrooke Court have not been considered
- The applicant has failed to consult those materially affected;
- The applicant has failed to consider council, London and national policies and legislation.

This application is similar in many ways to the previous one that was rejected unanimously by the council in September. Given this and its multiple failings, we call on the council to reject this scheme.

Paul Thurlow, chair  
Ben Porter, secretary  
Sarah Lawrie, assistant secretary

Northview Residents' Association  
September 2012

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# Plans and their feasibility

## Comparison to previous application

This latest application has given us a great feel of *deja vu*. It must have the same effect on officers and councillors. In bulk, the flats are nearly identical to the previous application (P0101448) but made of zinc and glass, like the first application made in 2009 (P092219).

The main differences between this application and the previous ones are:

- illustrations adopt light colouring and skewed perspective so, at first glance, the new storey look less oppressive this time round;
- the material is standing seam zinc and glass;
- the balcony walls will sit just behind the parapets, rather than on top of them – a move negligible in magnitude;
- water tanks have been moved, and will encroach on the roofline and block light;
- the internal arrangement of flats has changed, but they still fail to meet space or sustainability standards;
- roof eaves project further.

The latest plans will cause losses of light, openness and visual amenity, and make village green feel become enclosed and gloomy. The new design is extremely detrimental to the architecture and character of both Northview and its setting between conservation areas and as part of a 1930s cluster of buildings.

## History

The description in the application of previous attempts to build on Northview is misleading.

The statement about the first application being withdrawn is correct – officers advised the applicants that it would be rejected.

Errors in the preface include:

- Blitzgold and Associates does not employ an architect, nor were any architects registered at its address. The same applies to Pinnacle, another “architectural” firm employed on designing P101448.
- Application no P101448 was made in 2010. The first application was declared invalid. The next breached lighting standards, blocking natural light to several habitable rooms in 1-12 Northview. The applicants then submitted another plan, this time with one end of the extension bluntly chopped off to let light past.
- This final application (the fourth incarnation of P101448) was refused unanimously by Planning Committee B on 29 September 2011, not on 14 October.

This is the applicants’ fifth attempt.



## Planning by attrition

These repeated, similar applications have been described as an attempt to gain “consent by attrition” by a Tufnell Park Road resident. In addition, they represent a huge and unnecessary drain on public resources.

The previous schemes merited rejection – the same should apply to P121620.

Hansard

Parliament is not in favour of repeat applications, as per *Hansard* of 11 June, when Robert Neill said:

“In those specific instances where local planning authorities have previously refused permission within the past two years for two or more substantially similar proposals on the same site [...] they have powers to decline to determine applications.”

## Is it feasible?

The Design and Access statement says the planning committee said the principle of “one additional floor to the building itself is not considered to be harmful to its general appearance or integrity.” The committee meeting minutes did not discuss how a structure would affect the “appearance or integrity”. Indeed, it would be impossible for committee members to comment on the effect a scheme would have before it had even been designed.

The decision letter and the refusal notice, both dated 14 October and sent to the applicants, are silent on matters of “appearance” and “integrity”.

Rather than get caught up in theoretical arguments, we have been given professional advice.

Our courtyard: will be overwhelmed if all these flats are extended by 38% of ridged zinc

## Professional advice

Until now, no one has looked at whether it would be practicable to build an extra storey on top of Northview without giving rise to the reasons for the refusal cited in the refusal notice and decision letter.

We have been fortunate to have been given expert advice by Islington architect James Dunnett MA (Cantab) Dip Arch RIBA, co-chair of modern architecture body Docomomo-UK, on practicalities of adding an additional storey or mansard roof. He writes:

“It remains probably an impossible task satisfactorily to extend this small-scale building by a whole extra storey, representing an increase in height of nearly 38%. The ‘feel’ of the courtyard and the character of the architectural detail make this an impossibility.

“It is perhaps possible to imagine an extra mansard storey that was well set back behind the low existing parapets on both fronts and itself sloped well back so as not significantly to reduce the light reaching the courtyard or the feeling of sky there, but it would appear from the plan and section that such an extra storey would not be viable due to the narrow plan form of the existing building.

“I would therefore conclude that the small scale of the existing building and courtyard and the character of its architectural detail, make it impossible satisfactorily to add an extra storey to it, and consent should be refused.”

In addition, it is more than likely that there will be practical problems with building on top of Northview, given its structure, services and ground. These are in the section on Building Regulations (page 18).

# Proposal documents

Were this paper an academic study, it would not get past peer review.

There are breaches of UDP Policy D2, which says: “The Council will require all planning applications for new development to include appropriate, clear and accurate drawings and a supporting design statement.”

It appears to have been knocked out quickly, given the paucity of information, typing and grammatical errors, use of images and lack of consideration for local, London and national policy and law. Light studies are based on drawings that are not part of this application that have been discredited as inaccurate and difficult to understand. Structures, including entire new blocks of flats, are omitted.

Many of our points on policy breach apply to previous applications; these breaches have not been addressed, even though our previous document has been downloaded several hundred times in recent months.

## Preface and Revision summary

These are discussed in their specific areas in this document.

## Site context and surroundings

Only four-storey neighbouring buildings are mentioned. Lower-rise ones, such as those on Parkhurst Road, are omitted.

There is a very odd picture taken from Tufnell Park Road, which mainly shows the service road that goes around the back of Tufnell Park Mansions and the flank wall of 1-12 Northview. Moving a few feet would give a more informative image. This shows a lack of attention, knowledge of how to picture

buildings, or a slapdash attitude.

The garden described as sunny, when it is predominantly shaded by mature trees, a number of which are protected. It used to be part of a formal Victorian park.

The Design and Access statement says: “The smaller rear block has a particular intimacy derived from its general form and scale” – then backs plans to destroy this completely.

## Illustrations

This time around, illustrations act as value drawings to make the proposed scheme look light and open – but even they cannot hide completely the sheer unwieldiness of the additional floor and the destruction of original architectural lines. They are misleading:

- the balconies appear lower than they do in the drawings of the proposed elevations;
- the zinc appears smooth, not ridged; its standing seams will have an extrovert or even aggressive feel, with sharp bands of light and shade drawing attention to it;
- the “proposed” drawing is lighter in colour than the “existing one”, which makes it look less oppressive;
- the courtyard is illustrated as if a wide-angle lens were used, which gives the impression that it is far larger than it is so could take taller surroundings;
- the north end of the back block, where the end of the proposed storey was lopped off, is conveniently out of sight, behind the front block. Had this been shown, it would highlighted scheme’s outright awkwardness;
- the water tanks added to the north end of area are not shown on the 3D visuals. These

structures appear to be roughly the same size as other features so it is not unreasonable to expect that they should have been shown;

- the aerial view in the top-right drawing No 1310 P 005 has a skewed wide-angle lens type perspective. This downplays the bulk of the additional storey; it appears lower than 1-12 Northview, and lower still than Tufnell Park Mansions. This gives a misleading idea of the proposed storey's effect. It also appears that Northview has gained some extra open space and has annexed part of Holbrooke Court for garden space.
- the image of the balconies shows a wide balcony, with dark wood flooring, looking out over rolling countryside.

### Holbrooke Court

Holbrooke Court is described as a 1970s development. Its two new blocks – Northview's near neighbours – are omitted from both the statement and the drawings. This has made us question whether the architects have visited the site or checked Islington's online planning records (not difficult).

The "rear view" of Holbrooke Court is taken from its southernmost part near Parkhurst Road. Other parts of the estate are nearer.

### Flats layout absent

The internal arrangement of existing flats is not shown, so it is not possible to see how the rooms will stack; residents have had to rely on their own knowledge instead.

Stacking has implications for noise nuisance and sustainability. This matter was raised by



The tanks that feed all these flats are to be grouped at the north end of the back block (the nearest part of the roof here). They will have to be raised significantly to allow sufficient fall in the water; this will affect the roof line and the light received by the front block.

the chair of Planning Sub Committee B.

Drawings of the new flats do not show circulation spaces, room or corridor widths or door opening spaces.

### Inaccuracy on roof structure

The water tanks that supply 14-43 are shown on the north end of back block in the drawings. Their position does not allow for an adequate fall in the pipes, and the tanks will have to be raised significantly to allow for this.

These tanks will be visible from the front in an intrusive, unattractive way; they aren't very attractive and are currently set back. They will also block light to the front block.

# Consultation

The NPPF emphasises the involvement of local communities on planning decisions, and does not restrict this to major developments.

The NPPF says that "applicants are expected to work closely with those directly affected by their proposals". However, they have failed to provide information – let alone ask our opinion – despite several requests going back to December 2011, when we first saw strangers with clipboards roaming the estate.

The applicant has failed to consult us even on matters that are unlikely to cause a great deal of controversy, such as the use of an existing structure for a bike store. It is not possible to tell whether all Northview leaseholders have been consulted because the list has not been published on the council's website.

It is not known whether the applicant consulted the council's housing department over the effect on new and 1970s buildings at Holbrooke Court.

### Misleading information

The applicants wrote to residents on 19 July, saying they had applied to build a fourth floor with seven flats, and we had 21 days from the date of the letter in which to raise any objections with the council.

This information was wrong – at the time, the council had not even received the application, let alone validated it and put it on its website.

The council told the NRA secretary that the applicant's practice was "not illegal", and that the most recent application was the one refused last year.

### Council information

Information requested from the council on position and size of the tanks on the north end of the block, and for copies of correspondence that names the NRA (mentioned in the latest application) has not been provided.

# Planning policy

## National policy

The law on planning changed completely this year, with national law replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework.

It is a shocking omission that the property professionals and architects involved in this application have failed to consider it.

Other recent council documents, such as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and the healthcheck on Nag's Head (which has its own strategy), have also not been considered.

There has been an increase in the emphasis on heritage in local and national planning policy. This application will erode the heritage of both the estate and its setting, and require the destruction of intact original features.

## NPPF

The proposal does not meet the standards set out in the NPPF (section numbers given first):

- 7. The flats will not meet identified need, and the proposal will reduce the quality of the built environment;
- 7. it will damage the historic environment;
- 7. the plans make token gestures towards environmental protection, and do not take sustainability seriously;
- 17. the design is of a poor quality, being bulky, insensitive and using inappropriate materials,
- 17. it undermines the deco design and community feel of Northview, taking no account of its character;
- 17. the standard of amenity is poor; it will cut residents' light and provide cramped homes that do not meet space standards;
- 17. its affect on the heritage of Northview and its setting will detract from its contribution to quality of life and enjoyment for future generations;
- 64. the design is poor and will cause material harm to the character and quality of the estate and its setting;
- 66. the applicants have failed to work with –let alone involve – those directly affected, despite requests for information;
- 69. the scheme will make Northview feel less safe, undermine quality of life and community cohesion.

## NPPF 12. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

The NPPF has made heritage a core part to planning policy. It points out that heritage assets, including undesignated ones, are

Northview is part of nearly intact group of 1930s buildings; the scheme does not complement the "local identity" but break up a setting with considerable group value



irreplaceable. Many of our concerns relate to Northview as a heritage asset:

- 128. The applicants have failed to describe Northview's significance as the last survivor of its type and its contribution to its setting in a group of a 1930s buildings and neighbouring conservation areas;
- 132. Its justification giving to harming a heritage asset and its setting is inadequate.

Interestingly, this part of the NPPF refers to assets that are at risk through neglect and decay, which applies to Northview.

Other parts of the NPPF are mentioned in the relevant sections.

## Core Strategy

There are breaches of the Core Strategy and other policies, concerning equalities, safety and feeling safe, sustainability, environmental matters, building character and heritage.

### Breach of policy

Against the Core Strategy objectives 1, the proposed development:

- will not encourage a mix of tenure and type of household but will increase the proportion of flats let to flat sharers on short lets – assured shorthold is already the dominant tenure;
- will not help tackle inequality and exclusion – the flats will not be suitable for families, elderly people or those with disabilities, and flexibility has not even been considered
- will provide a poor-quality environment, making our attractive 1930s enclave ugly
- could cause health problems – the extra homes and their layout will lead to noise nuisance;
- will damage wellbeing by making Northview feel less safe;

● will damage the historic environment – this is reprehensible as Northview is the last survivor of its type in Islington – and does not consider conservation of existing structures. (A leasehold valuation tribunal recently criticised Northview’s managing agents for failure to maintain these);

● contains no measures to reduce its impact on the environment.

Key issues highlighted in the Core Strategy include:

● conserving what is best about the borough’s built environment;

● ensuring that new development results in a high-quality built environment that feels welcoming and safe;

● lessening our impact on the environment and preparing for climate change;

● housing for the “missing middle”.

The application will act against Islington’s priorities for all these.

The Core Strategy is referred to throughout this document. Paragraph numbers and policies are usually prefixed with CS.

## Sustainability

Policy highlights the importance of sustainability in development. This application fails to meet standards and policy on sustainable homes on numerous grounds. See page 15.

# Applicant’s claims

The Design and Access statement includes a Planning Compliance [sic] Matrix.

## UDP D3

It says it complies with UDP D3, that open space and light will be satisfactory because the footprint of the “existing building and surrounding amenity spaces are unchanged”.

This assumes that only the footprint of a building will affect light and amenity, not height or bulk, nor the increase in the use of the garden areas, common parts and car park.

## UDP D4

It claims the extension sits behind the parapet in a sympathetic way, showing a distinction between old and new, and is in line with the height of the surrounding buildings.

Expert opinion says the parapet effect will be smothered, and that zinc and brick will not work together. The scheme will destroy integrated patterns at macro and micro levels.

The aggressive lines inherent in standing seam zinc are harsh. This material is better suited to a large distribution warehouse on an industrial estate (picture on page 9).

The whole thing is anything but sympathetic.

Islington UDP D11; London Plan UDP D11 says that “in some cases, good

modern design, respecting the character of the original building will be acceptable”.

The proposed design is not “good” – it will overwhelm our enclave and negate original features; it will not complement it.

The extension is dull and dated; glass balconies are commonplace. The balconies will not emphasise the parapets, but subsume them into a heavy design. The zinc is just wrong.

## Core Strategy CS8

This section refers to Islington’s character – the application refers its role in protecting and enhancing the built and historic environment.

Adding seven ugly flats that will destroy a heritage asset and undermine community cohesion will not “enhance the locality”.

## Core Strategy CS9; London Plan

This section specifically refers to the use of architecture and urban design to make Islington more inclusive and safer. This application will have the opposite effect.

Specifically, the proposal is not “sympathetic in scale and appearance” nor does it fit the context of the existing facade. It does not complement the “local identity” but break up a setting with considerable group value. CS9 is explicit in that it covers non-designated heritage assets.

We have already described how the scheme will erode the character of Northview and its setting, and suffocate its design. A bulky expanse of grey metal ridged with standing seams drawing attention to it will be anything but “reserved”.

The above applies to the applicant’s comments on the London Plan ss7.1 and 7.4.

See also Sustainability (page 15).

## CS12

There are several breaches of this.

CS12 A: the proposed homes are suitable for neither families, let alone middle-income ones (one bedroom flat at Northview has been advertised to let at £290pw, a two-bedroom flat at £360pw), or older people. Space standards are to be increased – yet flats proposed here fail to meet London Plan minimum standards.

In addition to failures on space standards, these will not meet identified need, nor will they be accessible or affordable.

Nag’s Head is not in an area for intensification nor is it an opportunity area, so does not need extra homes of this type stuffed into it.



The NPPF recognises that assets can be at risk through neglect and decay, which applies to Northview

# Design, character and heritage

High-quality design is essential to ensuring that “your area is an attractive and functional place to live”, according to the government’s chief planner (DCLG, 2011).

Northview is designed to be home to a community. It has remained a functional and attractive place to live for decades, despite long-term neglect and poor management as highlighted by the leasehold valuation tribunal.

## Distinctive enclave

Most people think of famous Georgian terraces when asked about Islington’s heritage. As a result, small, later schemes can be overlooked. While small scale, Northview is unique and certainly of architectural and historical interest, and deserves to be preserved.

The 1930s architecture in the area tends to be large blocks of flats, houses, rather grand shops (eg Marks & Spencer) or churches – plus the spectacular Odeon opposite.

The buildings have pleasing proportions with a restful rhythm, provided by the tall windows lighting the stairwells and the detailed, curved rendering between windows.

The facade of back block is made from a rare type of red gravelled brick with rendered cream painted bay windows. Its parapets provide a delicately serrated skyline.

Islington’s policies support maintaining local distinctiveness (CS10) and highlight the borough’s legacy of attractive domestic architecture. The distinctiveness of Northview and its feel as an enclave in its 1930s corner will be irretrievably damaged by the proposed extra storey.

Northview is not well known. Most of it is not on a street front, so it is easily missed. However, there is nothing like it in Islington; as yet, we have found nothing like Northview in the whole of London.

## Village green

Northview is an example of 1930s “village green” architecture, complementing the Holloway Odeon to create a deco corner with considerable group value.

The proposed floor would irrevocably damage the appearance and the community feel of the present enclave.

It works well as a whole. The London Plan highlights that successful neighbourhoods were created in the inter-war years but adds that many no longer exist.



An important characteristic of Northview is that it opens up as you enter from the street. The increase in height will make the village green space feel poky and hemmed in; the approach will be creepy rather than welcoming. The design and access statement itself says: “The smaller rear block has a particular intimacy derived from its general form and scale” – yet supports plans drawn up specifically to destroy this.

Above: 14-19 Northview, showing parapet with detailing above the staircases and gently curved bays either side

## Official recognition

Northview’s architecture received official recognition last year when we were invited to take part in Open House London.

Its heritage has been recognised by people from modern architecture expert James Dunnett, joint chair of the UNESCO modern architecture body Docomomo-UK, to the commercial manager at Crittall windows. Its distinctiveness has been recognised by, for example, SAVE Britain’s Heritage and CABE. It is registered with London Deco flats. English Heritage sent a support message to our campaign to stop the previous application.

A recent campaign to protect Northview from redevelopment and include it in a conservation area was supported by Gavin Stamp, a trustee of the 20th Century Society and author of the Piloti column in *Private Eye*.

## Context and setting

One objective of Islington’s Housing Strategy is safeguarding the heritage of homes and

neighbourhoods. The council's policies state that "a high standard of design" includes context as a key issue.

There is an unusual consistency in 1930s architecture at this end of Tufnell Park Road, providing considerable group value. 1-12 Northview has a sharper, more extrovert design than 14-43, providing an effective stepped bridge in design between the latter's lower-rise, gentle domestic architecture and the flamboyant Holloway Odeon. Continuity is provided in architectural detailing.

It seems a strange omission to us that the 1930s corner at the bottom of Tufnell Park Road is bisected by the Mercers Road/Tavistock Terrace border. It would be logical to include Northview – which, after all is nearly intact and built in the same year as the Odeon – in this.

When phone company O2 used images of the Odeon for an advertising campaign, they kept 1-12 Northview in the background – it wasn't substituted or Photoshopped out.

The estate's various features mean it provides a tangible record of social history. The front block has two special designations.

Northview is not a museum piece – it continues to work very well as a sustainable community, contributing to place-shaping, over 70 years after it was built. Such matters are highlighted in government policy (HE7.4).

## Designation

1-12 Northview has been designated both as a special policy area and an area of special character, so the effects on it of any development should be considered. This is omitted in the application.

Its effect on the neighbouring Mercers Road/Tavistock Terrace conservation area has not been considered.

The application fails to give the full picture of its location and the sensitivity of the area.

## Size, bulk and design

The additional floor has the same footprint as that proposed in the previous application, which was rejected for its bulk. The size of the building is the same, with the balconies shallower by a miniscule amount as they sit behind the parapets, rather than on top of them. Eaves reach to and beyond the walls.

The extension will increase the bulk of 14-43 Northview by 38%, a substantial amount, and draw attention to itself, especially with its line of glass along the front and the strident ridges on the roof.

The bland, heavy design will emphasise its bulk. It will be horribly out of kilter with the existing flats.

In addition, it would destroy the "rule of thirds" often represented in deco buildings, as described by art deco architectural historian



Out of place: imagine Northview (above) weighed down with a floor of standing seam zinc (right), material typically used to grab attention on industrial estates but ghastly on art deco homes.



Valentin Mandache.

The roof extension will be visible from the gate and from across the road by the Odeon. The contrast in styles between delicate 1930s art deco and strident standing seam zinc will draw attention to it.

This is a unique 1930s corner. The extension will therefore be detrimental to the appearance and character of the area (policy D25).

Glass and zinc were the materials proposed in the first application in 2009. The case officer in January 2010 described the 2009 proposal as "ugly" and "awful".

## Standing seam zinc

The Design and Access statement says the structure, made of zinc will be "light in appearance".

It does not mention that the proposed roofs and walls will be made of standing seam zinc, although this is mentioned in small print on two drawings.

Standing seams are created by crimping sheets of metal together. The resulting ridges create an attention-grabbing, even aggressive effect in contrasting parallel and/or angled stripes.

This visual effect brings standing seam zinc roofs forward rather than make them appear "recessive" – in fact, this feature is sometimes used to draw attention to a structure.

It is a look more fitting to a large distribution warehouse on an industrial estate, where zinc roofs are traditionally used. Such roofs are

*“The delicacy of the existing architectural detail will be overwhelmed...”*

James Dunnett RIBA gives his expert opinion on light, eaves,

The present openness and feeling of the sky in the courtyard are critical to it continuing to feel like a green space and not a light well. There can be no doubt that the weight of the extra storey will seriously detract from the feeling of light and air in the quite narrow courtyard.

The impact on the existing central open



space needs to be clearly set out. It has to be said that errors [in the daylight and sunlight reports] make one question the care with which the actual technical assessment has been made.

As it stands there is no technical conclusion offered in respect of the single most important issue – the impact on light and sunlight reaching the courtyard/central open space. But the key issue is in fact its ‘feel’.

The delicacy of the existing architectural detail will be overwhelmed by the weight of the new storey, which is emphasised by the proposed projecting eaves detail whose strong horizontal emphasis defeats the serrated skyline presented by the present parapet in the courtyard, with its raised sections above every staircase. The present facade is characterised not by continuous horizontal bands but by rhythms and discontinuities in the skyline and the pattern of bays, staircases and intervening windows. The proposed glass balcony parapets will not marry well with the existing brick parapets and the solution proposed is awkward where the higher parapet is reached next to the stairs. Because the existing parapets are so low, the additional storey appears exceptionally high where, had the parapets been of midrail height, where visible additional height would have been much less.

It also has to be said that it is difficult to detail zinc cladding elegantly, with the result that the whole extra storey is likely to appear cumbersome and even crude – an effect that its otherwise-welcome stopping short at the northern end towards Tufnell Park Road will emphasize. It is unlikely that consent would be granted for an extra storey on a private house with such adverse effects all round.

Left: James Dunnett at Northview:

known to cost less than brick over time.

This harsh patterning, combined with the sheer bulk of the extension, will make Northview look completely overwhelmed.

### Oversailing eaves

The roof plan (Dwg No 1310 P 003 Rev A Roof Plan) clearly shows that the proposed roof will more than cover the existing roof.

“Oversailing eaves”, by definition, overhang walls. Their use will not “lower site [sic] lines and reduces the visual impact of the extension”, as the Design and Access statement says. The drawings are explicit that there is a “zinc projection to windows to front”.

These appear to reach over to the front of the balconies.

As James Dunnett says, “the weight of the new storey is emphasised by the proposed projecting eaves detail whose strong horizontal emphasis defeats the serrated skyline presented by the present parapet”.

The zinc slopes over the top of the stairwells look ridiculous and extremely ugly.

The box gutters will extend beyond the walls to the rear.

### Parapets and roofline

James Dunnett says: “The proposed glass balcony parapets will not marry well with the

existing brick parapets and the solution proposed is awkward where the higher parapet is reached next to the stairs."

Northview takes a "stepped" design, fashionable in the 1930s, from its whole structure to its details, with rhythms and discontinuities in its design.

The glass balconies will not create a distinction and emphasise the parapet line, as the Design and Access Statement says. The serrated effect, with the raised section above each stairwell, will be subsumed. The extension will just look oppressive and stultifying, and a characterful roofline will be replaced with a boring expanse of grey zinc.

Mr Dunnnett (left) gives an informed view on how the proposed floor will overwhelm the existing delicate architecture.

### Water tanks on view

The north end of the back block will be used to site water tanks. The tanks will have to be raised significantly to allow adequate water flow, especially those that feed the flats at the opposite end of back block.

These tanks, which are not attractive, will be visible from the courtyard, break up the roof line and block natural light to habitable rooms in front block and in the new build at Holbrooke Court.

### Stairwells

The UDP says the extensions and alterations should respect the architectural character and detail of the original buildings.

The stairwells boast original deco steel balusters with a papyrus motif – Egyptian designs and repeating motifs were very fashionable in the 1930s – and turned wooden banister rails. All those in back block are lit by full-length original Crittall windows. These balusters are intact throughout the estate.

The staircases are to be extended for a



Now you see it: deco banister to top floor of back block. This section will be destroyed to fit the new staircases, but this act of cultural and architectural vandalism does not get a mention in the application. These banisters are on all staircases, except for one flight in 1-12 Northview's hallway, shown on page 19

further storey. From the drawings, it would appear that the art deco banisters will be irretrievably damaged at least. Nowhere in the application is this act of vandalism mentioned.

### Height and a local example

Back block is designed and works as a whole structure in the context of the entire estate – it is not rows of flats just plonked on top of one another. The proposed storey will jar.

Adding a storey has not been successful at Northview's neighbour, Tufnell Park Mansions. It was built by the same people proposing to build on top of Northview.

As CABE points out, only a small proportion of recent schemes have been "good" or "very good".

### NPPF

The significance of both Northview and its setting will be seriously harmed by this scheme (NPPF, s132). The scale of harm will outweigh any benefit (s135).



An extra storey was recently added to Tufnell Park Mansions: its heaviness and excessive size has not been alleviated by the use of yellow point. It was built by the applicants for the Northview plans

# Light and privacy

## Daylight and privacy

### Discredited drawings used

Daylight and sunlight studies, dated April 2011, used in a previous application, are included in this present one. They are based on drawings that were discredited by the planning committee for being inaccurate and difficult to understand.

Given that the light studies are based on these misleading and inaccurate drawings, we would argue that they should be withdrawn.

For example, the drawings:

- show window frames as hefty columns of masonry
- show views that cannot exist
- have major errors concerning the design, size and appearance of windows, which have implications for light;

In addition"

- they fail to consider Northview's nearest neighbouring building (see below)
- the layout of the proposed flats and their windows have changed, so privacy/light issues will be different.

We would like to know why the council accepted the studies and the old drawings as part of the current application.

### Encouraging crime

The local police, supported our opposition to the last scheme; they specifically said the loss of natural light would make the area more vulnerable to crime.

### Comments

Many of our comments are the same as in our objection to application number no P0101448.

The BRE minimum values are referred to as "target" values – ie as maximums to be attained rather than minimum acceptable values.

Paragraph 3.1.3 looks like the standard disclaimer you'd get in any professional guide. A recommendation to use guidelines flexibly is not a licence to cut light to people's homes and downgrade what is acceptable; the opposite should apply – flats in built-up areas need all the natural light they can get for reasons of wellbeing, and light should be protected.

A limitation of this study (acknowledged) is the variety of glazing installed (some without Building Control permission by the applicants).

### 1930s and light

Architects and builders of the 1930s were very concerned with homes appearing light and airy. The effect of light on the estate in context of its style has not been considered.

Holbrooke Court and other neighbours  
The effect of the proposed storey on the new homes at Holbrooke Court has been omitted. There are implications for both light and privacy for residents of both schemes.

The new scheme appears nearer the new Holbrooke Court blocks than the acceptable 18m suggested by council policy or the 20m "rule of thumb" suggested by the government and CABE – so may represent an unacceptable intrusion into residents' privacy.

Likewise, this appears to apply to Parkhurst Road, although it was not possible to measure the distance accurately as we do not have access. While the space below 71 Parkhurst is marked as "non habitable", the report does not say what its usual use is – it could be a habitable kitchen, albeit a void one.

### Room use and BRE breaches

The application says that the breaches are minimal. However, they provide no evidence that they would be minimal to those occupying the rooms affected.

Breaches are described as "borderline" and "minor transgressions". No evidence is given to support these assertions. Expert opinion has long been recognised as being among the least reliable in the hierarchy of evidence.

It appears that a whole row of windows at Tufnell Park Mansions will fail the No Sky Line



Left: afternoon sun casts shadow on wall in hallway. Note the original art deco banisters with papyrus motif

test (33, 36-41, 44-51, 71 and 74). This will increase the “single aspect” feel of the best part of a floor. Council and London Plan policy does not favour single-aspect housing.

The issue of not being able to ascertain the use of the room at window 63 is strange, given that is managed by the applicant.

All the Tufnell Park Mansions windows have been labelled Supp Light. We would question this as the following habitable rooms (based on the flats’ traditional layout) in 1-12 Northview have been labelled as Supp Light as follows:

- Windows 1, 2, 3, 28, 29 and 30 are to kitchens
- Windows 7, 8, 9, 22, 23 and 24 are to bedrooms that may be used as bedsitting rooms by flat-sharers.

### Loss of light to habitable rooms

The sitting rooms and main bedrooms of the back block overlook the courtyard, so those in the south part of back block get most of their strong daylight from the west in the afternoon and evening (see picture, right).

The loss of evening light, particularly important for those living in back block, has not been considered, which will have implications for wellbeing.

As one resident of a one-bedroom flat says: “At the moment we enjoy lovely glorious sunshine in the late afternoons and evenings in our living room and bedroom. At about 8.30pm when our back walls are spectacularly lit up by this gorgeous sunlight.

“If the extension were to be built we would miss out on the best part of our sunset and a large percentage (30%?) and the best of our total sunlight for the day. The two flats under us will also be affected by this.”

The London Housing Design guide says that all homes must provide for direct sunlight to enter at least one habitable room for part of the day, and that living areas should preferably receive direct sunlight. Rooms in the southernmost part of Northview facing roughly north-west rely on evening light for this.

## Privacy

People on the new balconies may be able to see into bedroom and living rooms on lower floors, especially those near the central “corner” of 14-43 Northview. People on balconies near the northern end of back block will be able to see into bedrooms.

Tenants sitting out on balconies will be able to look directly into flats.

While the application refers to sound insulation, it does not refer to the “sound well” effect of the courtyard, which could be increased with an additional storey. In this enclave, sound is amplified by many times over; you can hear a pin drop in the car park. Any socialising on the balconies would disturb everyone.



Above: evening light on back block – this is the only direct sunlight living rooms and some bedrooms receive. It will be considerably reduced by the proposed scheme

*“There is no technical conclusion offered in respect of the single most important issue”*

James Dunnnett gives his expert opinion

While the analyses supplied by Right of Light Consulting purport to show that the amount of light reaching no individual window in the existing property will be so badly affected as to fall below the standards set by the BRE, it is notable that no conclusions are offered whether by accident or otherwise – concerning the effect on the central open space, even though section 3.4 of the report sets out the criteria to be adopted in an assessment of it.

In addition, the Executive Summary conclusion para 1.1.4. and the Final conclusion para 4.5.1 refer to the impact on ‘neighbouring windows’ and ‘neighbouring properties’ respectively even though the Report in question is specifically entitled Daylight and Sunlight Study (Effect on Existing Dwellings at Northview) and the effect on neighbouring properties is the subject of a separate study (in which a conclusion regarding effect on neighbouring open space is also offered). The impact on the existing central open space needs to be clearly set out, and it needs to be clarified which windows are being referred to. It has to be said that these errors make one question the care with which the actual technical assessment has been made.

As it stands there is no technical conclusion offered in respect of the single most important issue - the impact on light and sunlight reaching the courtyard/central open space. But the key issue is in fact its ‘feel’.

### Layout and quiet enjoyment

Related to privacy and noise is the issue of being able to hear neighbours.

In contravention of Islington’s council’s policy on conversions, the living/dining/kitchen space of most flats is directly above the bedroom of the flats below, which will disturb existing residents and cause noise nuisance. This matter is covered in more detail in “Sustainability”.

# Safety and environment

The Core Strategy, which the council says should be seen alongside the Sustainable Communities Strategy, says at par 1.07 that Islington is “particularly focused on ... people’s feelings of safety” and wants to “build stronger communities”. The proposed development will weaken community cohesion and make people feel less safe.

The Design and Access statement does not consider safety, fear of crime or community cohesion at all, or the effects of the new scheme on this.

The local police supported our opposition to the last scheme, which is the same size, because of its effects in these matters. They specifically mentioned the loss of natural light would make the area more vulnerable to crime.

There is no mention of criminal activity and antisocial behaviour. There have been problems with street drinkers causing nuisance; we have found human excrement and condoms in the grounds. As a settled community, we have been able to work with the police on this.

## Policy and practice

In addition to the Core Strategy, the UDP Env 12 says that enhancing community safety and reducing opportunities for crime will be of the highest priority. The London Plan says it is important for London’s ongoing attractiveness that residents feel safe in their homes.

The council has said that new developments should promote safety and security. The London Plan supports “safe, secure and appropriately accessible environments where crime and disorder and fear of crime do not undermine quality of life or community cohesion”.

The London Plan also says that measures to improve safety and security should be incorporated at the design stage.

Yet the application makes no mention of Safer Places, Designing Out Crime or Secured by Design, or that the applicant has taken advice from the police. No mention is made of problems with break-ins or poor security between Northview and the commercial and residential premises around it.

Crime, community safety and nuisance have not been considered, for example, in relation to how increasing the number of homes sharing each stairwell increases the potential for noise and nuisance.

## Resident turnover

Northview has become dominated by flat sharers on assured shortholds, often students who require accommodation only for a set time. We understand that the “family” flats at

Tufnell Park Mansions, which is under the same management as Northview, have been let to flat sharers. It is likely this trend will increase.

Safety is becoming increasingly compromised by a high turnover of tenants – there are many unfamiliar faces, and this is set to rise. Islington’s figures show turnover is very high in the private rented sector – two thirds of these households have lived in their current home for less than two years.

The Nag’s Head town centre strategy mentions “[encouraging] a sense of community identity and welfare” and “[reducing] crime, antisocial behaviour and the fear of crime”. This addition will do the opposite and reduce community cohesion.

The *North London Strategic Housing Market Assessment: Local Area Report for the London Borough of Islington* March 2011 highlights the undesirability of building homes for transient populations (see Local Housing, page 19)

People on a short term tenancy are more likely to move on when there are problems than those with a longer-term interest. Increasing this will detract from the natural security in the estate.

## Fly-tipping

In addition, there have been problems with furniture being fly-tipped between tenancies. This could increase with yet more short-term tenants moving in.

Enlarging the bin shed and building a recycling area will be negated by the agent’s refusal to provide its tenants with keys, which is already leading to problems with fly-tipping and with tenants forcing the doors. This gives the estate a “rough” feel (picture, page 16).

## Town centre

*Town Centres: Review and Healthcheck* (2012) says that the lack of cultural activity to complement the retail offer at Nag’s Head that could attract visitors from further afield. It also points out there is a lack of open space, which can make a place unattractive.

Northview provides a welcome “breathing space” for the residents and visitors. In addition, its acceptance by Open House shows it has potential to bring architecture and local history buffs into the area who may then return to shop. The long queues of people waiting to see houses in Mercers Road and Dalmeny Roads are evidence of the popularity of such events.

Building on it will make a light enclave feel enclosed and ruin its heritage aspects. The applicants’ claim that it will boost the town by providing shoppers is empty.

# Sustainability

“Sustainable means ensuring that better lives for ourselves don’t mean worse lives for future generations ... Sustainable development is about change for the better (United Nations Resolution 42/187, cited in NPPF).

The Design and Access statement refers to building materials and refuse/recycling facilities entirely in the context of reasons for the last application being refused. It does not even mention national guidance on sustainability, such as the Code for Sustainable Homes or Islington’s SPG on Green Construction. It does not show its Code for Sustainable Homes scores for different areas.

The Core Strategy emphasises “green building”, including the use of energy as well as water. While the application says that sanitary fittings will be water-saving, joining the new build into the existing communal hot water system is not discussed.

Islington’s local development scheme at par 3.8 highlights the council’s statutory duty “to undertake their planning functions with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development”.

Sustainability here is considered in two main contexts: of building homes that will stand the test of time; and in “green” terms. Sustainable transport is covered in its own section

## Homes that stand the test of time

### Sound insulation and stacking

The flats are designed in an unsustainable fashion regarding layout and “stacking”, which the UDP says is a vital consideration; this issue was raised at the committee meeting on 29 September, where the stacking of the proposed flats in the previous application was deemed unsatisfactory.

The Core Strategy says that high-density housing requires noise minimisation to be a top priority and that noise from neighbours can cause stress, prevent sleeping, make studying difficult, lead to conflicts and contribute to poor mental and/or physical health (CS 3.3.13).

In addition, bathrooms and toilets have been placed at the front, while waste water and soil pipes are to the rear. Dishwashers and washing machines in kitchens could disturb people in bedrooms below. For example:

- Flat A – the living area is over a bedroom. The kitchen is over a bedroom and at the front although the drains are at the back;
- Flat B: The living area and kitchen are over

Floor areas		
Proposed areas compared to minimum standards stipulated by the London Housing Design Guide		
Size of flat and occupation	Minimum area stipulated	Proposed (sq m)
1 bed, 2 person	50 sq m	49, 51
2 bed, 3 person	61 sq m	64, 57
2 bed, 4 person	70 sq m	72, 68
3 bed, 6 person	86 sq m	87
Note: figures for proposed flats have been rounded; we were not able to check the degree of rounding because dimensions for all rooms are not given on the plans		

the bedroom. The kitchen is at the front when the drains are at the back;

- Flat C: the living area is over the bedroom. The toilet is at the front although the drains and soil stacks are at the back.

- Flat D: the kitchen is over the bedroom

- Flat E: the bathroom is over the bedroom

- Flat G: the living/kitchen/dining area is over a bedroom; this flat will house four people, which will disturb people below.

This poor stacking will cause noise and disturbance, especially as the flats are likely to be let in multiple occupation.

Tension as a result of noise nuisance could increase tenant turnover, which will in turn affect community cohesion and safety further.

### Space standards breached

In addition, the gross internal floor areas for the one-bedroom and three-bedroom flats are below minimum standards stipulated in London Plan.

The London Plan minimum area for a combined living/dining areas is 29 sq m. Flat G has a combined living/dining area and kitchen of 24 sq m.

Flat F has a small, separate kitchen. Given that flat F is for four persons, it is more likely that people will use the living room for dining as well; this is 22.5 sq m.

The following flats have separate kitchens but overall, small areas in total for living/cooking/dining. We have worked them out:

- Flat E:  $7.5 + 17 = 24.5$  sq m.
- Flat D:  $15.6 + 7.5m = 23.3$  sq m

● Flat B:  $16.4 + 7.2 = 23.6$  sq m

● Flat A:  $17.4 + 6.3 = 23.7$  sq m

Council policy, citing the Code for Sustainable Homes, notes that residents, including those with disabilities, find the combination of kitchen and sitting room unpleasant. However, flats G (four person) and C (six person) have combined living/dining/kitchen areas.

While areas of individual rooms are given, measurements for room widths, door turning areas and turning circles are not given.

The Core Strategy recognises that inadequate standards can lead to pressures and recognises the minimum standards “can easily come to be seen as maximum standards” and intends to use them as a “starting point in discussions with developers”. This view is reiterated in the London Housing Design Guide.

Policy CS 12 says that, to help achieve a good quality of life the residential space and design standards will be “significantly increased”. So, in future, the spaces here will be even further below minimum standards.

### Shared space and HMO standards

Flat C, for six people, with no single rooms, and one common rooms for cooking, eating, studying, entertaining, watching TV etc is a recipe for unsustainable living. It may be that, if this flat is let to flat sharers, it will lack sufficient bathroom and cooking facilities to comply with HMO standards.

### Sense of community

The UDP at 3.1.2 points out that discontent over development can stem from it appearing less “friendly” to individuals and the community. An increase in housing for short-term tenants and an increase in turnover (see above), increase noise and more wear and tear on the communal spaces will make Northview look less friendly.

In the Community Safety section, we argue that the development will reduce community cohesion and safety. If nuisance, crime or the fear of crime rise, the whole estate will become less sustainable. Government policy has long recognised that development affects the social fabric of communities and safety.

### Accessibility and mixed communities

The Design and Access Statement just states building to Lifetime Homes standards is unfeasible and impractical. It is as if the applicant has put a quick tick in the “no” box. It says there is a “change of level” at the ground floor – this is a shallow step.

Islington has taken a realistic approach to accessible homes, with its “flexible homes” approach set out in paragraph 3.3.22 of the Core Strategy and supplementary documents. Policy CS 12 H requires all new housing to comply with flexible homes standards

Flats on the top floor with no lift are unlikely

to attract families or anyone with mobility problems. The census showed that one household in every five in Islington includes someone with a long-term limiting illness.

Short-term tenants of Northview are predominantly young flat sharers or couples, often students – there are very few families. The lack of accessibility will therefore make Northview less of a mixed community.

## Green building

The NPPF is explicit about the effects of climate change on new developments, yet the proposals omit some commonplace features to reduce the effect of climate change.

Sustainable water use is more than installing low-flush/dual-flush toilets. The plans do not say, for example, whether power showers, which consume a lot of water, would be installed. There is no mention of collecting/using grey water.

Zinc is not a particularly sustainable choice, given that concerns have been raised over future zinc shortages. Minimisation of construction waste is also absent.

Also omitted is how rises in CO<sub>2</sub> emission because of increased occupancy will be tackled. Council policy has demanded action to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in residential developments of one unit or more.

The Core Strategy describes looking after the environment and tackling climate change as “key priorities”.

### Energy use and decentralised systems

The NPPF puts an emphasis on decentralised energy (96 and 97), and both council and London Plan policies support district systems. Northview has a district hot water system, yet the applicants have not even considered extending this to the new flats.

Heating and lighting methods and systems are not discussed.

### Waste and recycling

The application includes new refuse/recycling facilities. Should consent be granted, it should be a condition that tenants are provided with keys. Tenants now have to buy keys to the bin shed from an ironmonger’s; the consequences are predictable (right)



While the proposal says that rubbish and recycling facilities will be provided, it does not discuss access to these. Any provision will be negated by managing agent's refusal to provide its tenants with keys to the bin store, expecting them to go out and buy their own; this is already leading to problems with fly-tipping and with the doors being forced.

We would argue that, if this application is approved, providing tenants with keys is made a condition.

### Trees and green spaces

Northview has several mature trees in its grounds, a number of them protected.

It is likely that the gardens between the houses and the back block of Northview will also lose daylight. This has implications for the sustainability, from both the environmental point of view and as places to live.

Unauthorised works were carried out to some of them earlier this year, so we would wish to see additional protection and monitoring in the conditions, were this application to be granted consent.

### Parking

Adding another 24 people to an estate of 42 flats will increase demand on the limited parking spaces on the estate. This will have implications for community cohesion and nuisance, making the estate less sustainable.

Access for people with disabilities is not considered (NPPF, s35).



Unauthorised cutting of protected trees, 2012

### Cycle storage

The application proposes using a garages for cycle storage for a "minimum" of 10 cycles. This is an improvement on the previous application, which suggested building a bike store on communal open green space.

The proposed floor is designed to house 24 people. Council policy DM23 puts the standards as one cycle space per person. There is no cycle parking space for visitors, as recommended in the London Plan.

In addition, there are a number of cyclists in the other 42 flats on the estate.

Had the applicants wished to support sustainable transport, they could have consulted with residents over this to encourage cycle use. (For example, some of us wondered if the old pram sheds could be let out for bike storage.) This is disappointing – the cyclists living here could have provided useful input.

## Sources

In making our comments, we have drawn on a number of documents and sources, as well as advice from professionals. Some are referenced within the main text.

Islington Council  
 Town Centres: Review and Healthcheck (2012)  
 Core Strategy 2011  
 UDP 2002  
 Islington Urban Design Guide  
 Local Housing Needs Assessment 2008  
 Islington's Local Development Scheme, October 2010  
 Housing strategy 2009-2014  
 North London Strategic Housing Market Assessment: Local Area Report for the London Borough of Islington March 2011  
 Planning – Statement of Community Involvement  
 Accessible Housing in Islington  
 Nag's Head Town Centre Strategy  
 Our Vision for 2020 – Islington's Sustainable Community Strategy  
 Development Management Policies Direction of Travel Draft, November 2010 (part of local

development framework) – while this is a consultation, it gives a useful guide to the standards the council wishes to achieve

Department for Communities and Local Government (and its predecessors)  
 National Planning Policy Framework  
 Design and Planning, letter from chief planner Steve Quartermain, May 2011  
 Better Places to Live  
 Code for Sustainable Homes  
 Houses in Multiple Occupation in the Private Rented Sector,  
 Tree Preservation Orders: a Guide to the Law and Good Practice

London Mayor's office  
 The London Plan  
 Housing Design Standards  
 London Housing Design Guide, Interim

Academic  
 Davies H, Nutley S (2002) Evidence-based policy and practice: moving from rhetoric to reality. Research Unit for Research Utilisation, University of St Andrews

# Building regulations

## Building regulations

We were disturbed to note that the applicants have been insistent that Building Control should not be involved until after a decision has been made, and that this comment is part of the application.

This is a surprising comment to see on an application as most developers would intend to save time and expense by ensuring their plans complied from the outset. We can only surmise that this may be because alterations have been made to the freeholder's flats without Building Control permission.

We believe it would be impractical to build on Northview because:

- the building may not be strong enough – there is a large crack running down the flank wall on the east side of back block
- a leaseholder in the back block was advised by a construction professional that the block would need underpinning to support another storey.
- we have been advised by Islington's building Control department that the foundations are shallow, as would be expected in a 1930s building of this size and design.
- the drains do not have the capacity to cope with the extra use, evident by their frequent blocking;
- the suggested resiting of the water tanks will give an inadequate fall, resulting in possible pooling and stagnation.
- the estate has been neglected and allowed to fall into disrepair; this was remarked upon by the leasehold valuation tribunal in February 2011. It is in no condition to be built on.

### Underground river

No account has been taken of the Hackney Brook, an underground river believed to flow beneath Northview.

- a structural report by Colin Toms & Partners in 2009 mentioned the presence of perched water in the area;
- there is evidence of water in the area shown by structure in maps dating from medieval times to the 20th century;
- the Hackney Brook was not completely enclosed by the Victorian sewage system as previously thought. There is evidence of this in later maps. We understand it caused a road collapse outside Barclays bank around the middle of the 20th century;
- The Hackney Brook's two sources meet by Northview, as shown by old maps shows this likely to be the case.
- Discussions with a local archaeologist and



with a professional concerned with the redirection of watercourses for the St Pancras Station development have backed up our findings.

Unlike the application for Holbrooke Court, this application is not accompanied by a structural report to see if it would be viable.

As the council's Core Strategy says, good planning policy needs good evidence. We say that statements in planning applications, likewise, need to be underpinned with good evidence.



Neglect and disrepair: clockwise from top left: staining from drainpipes; broken coping stones to roof; common parts; blocked drain; crack on east flank of back block

Right: window installed without Building Control consent – note ground floor window next to door has small pane at top, while all other windows have larger pane at top



# Local housing

There has been considerable housing development around Northview, particularly student housing. Islington's completion rates remain "exceptionally high, and remain well in excess of the current target" (CS 3.3.39).

Islington has gained more from the New Homes Bonus than comparable boroughs in the past two years (DCLG, 2011; 2012). It is the most densely populated unitary authority in England and Wales (Office for National Statistics, 2012).

Holloway Nag's Head is not in an area for intensification, nor is it designated an opportunity area.

So this proposed development will not make up for any shortfall in provision.

In addition, the homes are unsustainable (see section on sustainability) and contravene standards in Policy CS 12 and the London Plan.

## Demand for market housing

The proposal does not even consider the strategic market housing assessment (NFFP, s159).

The *North London Strategic Housing Market Assessment: Local Area Report for the London Borough of Islington* March 2011 says: "It is also noteworthy that provision of additional market housing may have unintended consequences," ie that supply of housing for rent, rather than ownership, leads to a more transient population, and that many new build flats are owned by investors and let on assured shorthold tenancies (as at Northview).

## Balance and the missing middle

Northview leaseholders tend to be middle income households. Many of us are the "missing middle", who the council wishes to attract, having here moved here as first-time buyers and elected to stay (CS 1.1.22; CS 3.3.18). Our diverse community (CS 1.1.11), with a mixture of ages and backgrounds, is a great source of strength to us as a community as we can all bring something to the estate as a whole.

Flats on the fourth floor with no lift are likely to be let to flat sharers, as with the so-called "family" flats at Tufnell Park Mansions. There are many students living here, and Islington has already exceeded its targets for student housing.

They will not be suitable for families with children, older people or people with mobility difficulties. Nor will a single affordable home be provided; a one-bedroom flat was recently advertised to rent at £290 per week.

Islington has recently seen a large proportion of smaller flats being built like those proposed here which do not necessarily match housing



Adding seven small flats that breach space and flexible homes standards will not help meet housing needs in Islington

need (CS 3.3.11).

Flat-sharers have been here for some time (although the leases stipulate that the flats are only let to whole households). Making the estate more unbalanced will make it less attractive to longer-term occupiers and eventually turn it into a multi-occupied ghetto.

Northview, like much of the area around it, is gradually becoming dominated by assured shorthold tenure and flat sharers, often students in the same age group – developments of the same tenure and predominance of age groups are both discouraged in the Core Strategy (3.3.19; 3.3.18).

We did not object to the building next door at Holbrooke Court for several reasons, one of which was because it would provide some much-needed affordable, permanent homes.

Adding seven flats will make little difference to housing provision in the local area, will address no identified need, will encourage the dominance of short-term tenure, while coming at a great cost to the small community at Northview, and damaging its unique 1930s character.

Hallway in 1-12 Northview, with stair rails echoing banisters



# Summary

The proposed floor will be seriously detrimental to Northview, both socially and architecturally.

Its adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh any benefits.

It is unsustainable in terms of environmental matters as well as in the homes provided.

The significance of both Northview and its setting will be seriously harmed by this scheme (NPPF, s132). The scale of harm will outweigh any benefit (s135).

In line with the National Planning Policy Framework, it should be rejected.



- The scheme is very like the previous, rejected application. The drawings are misleading, with skewed perspective. National, London and council planning policies are breached.

- The scheme will increase the size of the block by 38% and overwhelm it, an effect exacerbated by the use of standing seam zinc, with its repeated ridges, as the main material.

- None of the seven flats will be affordable. None will be suitable for families, people with disabilities or older people. They will house a predominantly transient population.

- The proposed development is hideous and awkward. It takes no account of its immediate surroundings or its wider setting.

- Northview was built as an entity, its design and layout acting physically to provide a natural community. This, along with its restful, welcoming feel – important in a built-up area – would be seriously disrupted.

- The application fails to consider environmental matters as core issues, treating them as an “add-on” for box ticking.

- It will cause irreversible harm to a heritage asset. Northview is a rare and probably unique enclave of 1930s domestic architecture. Council policies support maintaining local distinctiveness but the proposed changes will irretrievably damage this architectural gem.

- It will compromise residents’ safety and security, as well as cutting daylight and sunlight to our homes.

- The layout, with kitchen/living/dining areas over bedrooms, will result in noise nuisance. Some flats are cramped and breach space standards.

- The area is already heavily developed. This extra storey will add just seven flats while coming at great cost to the existing community.

*“Altering and enlarging this interesting 1930s enclave seems unnecessary and certainly undesirable”*

*Gavin Stamp, 20th Century Society trustee, and Private Eye Piloti columnist*

*“The whole extra storey is likely to appear cumbersome and even crude. It is unlikely that consent would be granted for an extra storey on a private house with such adverse effects all round”*

*James Dunnett RIBA*