

# **Kentish Town Neighbourhood Forum Response to the Camden Film Quarter (CFQ) Consultation September 2025**

## **Introduction**

Kentish Town Neighbourhood Forum (KTNF) applauds the amount and quality of consultation Yoo Capital and CFQ have conducted, the amount of work that has gone into the project and the attempt to integrate commercial, residential and green space elements into the masterplan.

We note the absence of a public consultation from Joseph Homes which are said to be very close to submitting their own planning application.

We welcome the proposed increased permeability with cycling and pedestrian routes, affordable housing and new jobs along with new pavements, street lighting, landscaping, green spaces and play areas along with efforts to make the heating systems sustainable.

However, KTNF is surprised that the location of the recycling centre was not made public until very late in the process when residents noticed its re-positioning.

We are also surprised that it has only just emerged in reporting by a local newspaper that there has been a deal between Camden Council and Yoo Capital that allows much greater heights than specified in the draft local plan in exchange for 150 social-rent flats and 100 for intermediate rent, in total a rate of 50% affordable homes on Yoo Capital's land. This trade-off between maximum height limits of 52 metres and the number of affordable homes was never mentioned in the numerous rounds of consultations. The misrepresentation of such crucial facts can only be seen as misleading.

KTNF is also cautious about having a single specialist industry, prone to boom-and-bust cycles as opposed to a diverse number of industries and employment opportunities in the industrial centre.

The commitment to providing new educational facilities is generally welcomed. Firstly, the London Screen Academy building, which you have stated will 'unlock potential across Camden's communities by providing clear, practical pathways into film.' The KTNF would be keen to understand how this academy will work, specifically within 'Camden' for its workforce and residents. Will there be programmes that are borough-specific? These comments also relate to the NFTS. In what ways will the school 'open new doors' (other than by geographic proximity) for the residents of Camden? We note that you mention apprenticeships and employment support – more details on the extent of these schemes within the overall intake of new students/workforce are essential for an evaluation of the benefits of these proposals for the local population.

We are also surprised about the lack of focus on Kentish Town Square, which is a key part of the KTNF Plan. The idea of a Kentish Town Square originated from consultations with the community and aims to establish a sense of place, creating an event to welcome visitors upon arrival from the tube/railway station. Given that the 'square' could form the most critical connection between the high street, the tube/ railway station and the Film Quarter, the lack of attention on this threshold is disappointing. Similarly, the potential for traffic congestion at this entrance point has been raised many times in consultation. A clearer idea about how vehicles and pedestrians will move across the High Street will be an important part in evaluating the practicality and potential of the scheme.

## **Heights**

We are concerned about the proposed heights of the film studio and residential buildings. Even at the previous outline of 10 storeys, these blocks would be more than double the height of the existing Camden Council depot on that site and are set to have a deleterious impact on the abutting Inkerman Conservation Area respectively Kentish Town High Street.

We note Policy D3: Design Principles of the KTNP, which states that: "Proposals must be based on a comprehensive understanding of the site and its context [and] must be well integrated into their surroundings and reinforce and enhance local character."

We request to be informed about the exact height in metres of the proposed buildings, particularly the residential blocks, the studios and the recycling centre.

We note that there were many objections from the community over proposed 18-19 storey buildings at the Murphy site, and impacts of views in relation to Hampstead Heath.

## **Massing and distances between buildings**

We are concerned the massing of the film studio building outlined in the masterplan will adversely affect the proposed residential buildings nearby and their daylight levels (especially the south-facing flats of the Heathgate Tower, which will look onto the blank face of the studio building), and the impact on planting and the quality of the green spaces below.

We cannot comment accurately because we do not know the spaces and distances between the buildings and the effect on the lower-level flats and require this information.

## **Typology of buildings and stylistic and spatial interrelationship**

Whilst the development area hardly requires a totally homogeneous typology, the architecture of the individual buildings appears strangely disconnected from each other.

The central building appears vast in terms of its massing compared to the rest of the site (not just the relation to the residential blocks as mentioned above). Whilst we appreciate that the studios may need to be a certain volume, a more textural approach – staggered heights or

stepped massing would key the new buildings better into the neighbourhood. The windowless nature of the studio heightens the sense of bulk.

We request clearer information on the 'border' treatment between the development and the streets around it– how do the proposed buildings sit within the neighbourhood? Illustrations at present tend to stop at the threshold of the site. To evaluate the master plan and individual buildings in terms of the fabric of the whole neighbourhood, a clearer idea of how these thresholds will take form, signpost the new quarter and increase the connectivity between, for instance, the High Street, Gospel Oak, Holmes Road and the residential areas to the south and west of the site. As mentioned, a porous space with multiple through-routes is welcomed by the Forum, but also recognises that the site should not just be about routes, but also how the edges interweave with the existing surroundings.

### **Affordable Homes**

We applaud the commitment to 50% affordable homes, but are under the impression that Joseph Homes are only going for 35% affordable homes. Is this true? Please clarify what the overall number of affordable homes will be.

### **Business plans**

KTNF is concerned about the future viability of the film industry, in relation to the viability of film studios in Kentish Town, given several studios in London (Acton) and England (Ashford) have ceased to operate over the last year. We would like to see the future 'comprehensive business plans' outlining future viability.

Has the design of the studio building allowed for any flexibility in use, if, for example, the studios were underutilised?

What are the plans for use of the site if the film industry goes into recession? Simply saying that the space will be given over to community use is not a reasonable answer as the site would not be commercially viable if the poor state of the film industry persisted for any length of time.

### **Location of the recycling centre**

A repositioning of the recycling centre near existing homes is not acceptable. The proposed building is overbearing in its overshadowing and massing to its neighbouring homes. It is squeezed between the grade-listed II Police Station and two locally listed Georgian cottages and dwarfs these community assets.

We refer again to Policy D3: Design Principles of the KTNP, which states that: "Proposals must be based on a comprehensive understanding of the site and its context [and] must be well integrated into their surroundings and reinforce and enhance local character."

The balconies would overlook the neighbouring properties and have a negative impact on light levels to up to 20 neighbouring buildings. KTNF along with more than 350 signatories signed a

demand in August to not have the recycling centre moving closer to existing residential homes and schools than at its current distance.

We appreciate the phasing aspect of the recycling centre and the stipulations of the agreement with Camden Council, but we are disappointed that despite extensive consultations, the wishes of a substantial part of the local population have not been taken care of. The current plans are not welcome. We don't have access to the current recycling rates at the current recycling centre. The proposed plans allocate a smaller plot than the footprint of the existing recycling centre. However, taking into account the developments at the Murphy site, the Regis Road site and the West Kentish Town Estate, there will be close to ten thousand new residents in the immediate local area. How are the calculations of the needed space being done? What assessments have been done so far in terms of usage, who the users are and where they come from, their means of transport, what categories of recycling materials they are taking to the current recycling centre?

Equally, how will recycling materials be removed from the site (how will skips be exchanged or emptied), and what impact will these operations have on the residents and workers next to the facility? Concerns also centre around smell, noise, vibration, birds, vermin, and air quality, including air emissions, including dust, which are all issues highlighted by the Environmental Services Association, Residential Encroachment Review, October 2024. While this report focuses on waste rather than recycling centres, we are concerned that the costs associated with controlling and maintaining the correct environmental conditions for both recycling centre users and residents above will be substantial.

Are there any examples of flats on top of a recycling centre in London or the UK and how successful have they been? We are concerned that not enough compromises have been made towards the needs of the existing population to limit nuisance caused by the internal operations and caused by visitors in terms of opening hours, etc. The mental health and needs of existing neighbours plus new tenants living on top of the recycling centre would need to be very well protected, e.g. the centre would need to be closed in the evenings, during bank holidays and weekends and KTNF questions the viability of such a centre.

### **Impact of additional people in Kentish Town**

It has been estimated there will be an extra 7,500 to 10,000 residents around Kentish Town with Regis Road, Murphy and West Kentish Town Estate developments. The population of Kentish Town South ward alone will increase by an estimated 30%. KTNF hasn't seen the impact studies on health centre capacity, education provision and transport impacts.

### **Traffic routes**

KTNF needs more clarification on traffic routes. There is confusion about one way and two-way roads and Phase 1 and 2.

Overall, we miss the **Cumulative Impact Assessment** - a detailed study in flows of people, of expected traffic, the impact on the environment and health and educational institutions.

## **Greening**

The individual green spaces are small, and we fear they will be overshadowed by the heights of the surrounding buildings. This would mean that some planting will therefore not survive. It will be affected by wind tunnel currents between the tall buildings. KTNF suggested vertical greening of building facades and terraced gardens before. We are disappointed to not see any greening facades and terraced gardens in the plans.

## **Feedback**

KTNF would like to see the feedback from the community consultations.

## **Other issues**

We appreciate that Yoo Capital has only control of its own land parcel. Yet Joseph Homes is part of the masterplan, so why have Yoo Capital and Joseph Homes not consulted together on their plans? This appears surprising since the plans for both developments have been progressed in very similar time scales. Since we had no opportunity to see the Yoo Capital and Joseph Homes plans together, it is very hard for us, and indeed for anyone, to judge spaces and effects to provide an overall picture. Please present us the joint plans.

**Compulsory Purchase Orders:** (CPOs) Is Yoo Capital considering CPO purchases, to be able to create a separate access route for heavy lorries and the Town Square? What is plan B if UPS does not agree to share its road?

Again, it is paramount to protect the existing residents of the north side of Holmes Road and Arctic Road from heavy traffic caused by servicing 3000 or so new inhabitants (visitors, trades people, deliveries etc) as well as the film studios.