

Alfie Williams,  
Principal Planning Officer,  
Lewisham Council,  
Laurence House,  
1 Catford Road,  
London,  
SE6 4RU

DC25/29  
16 June 2025

Dear Alfie,

**OBJECTION TO DC/25/139604 – BLACKHEATH STATION CAR PARK**

Please accept this letter, on behalf of a consortium of concerned members of the local community, as an objection to the above planning application, which seeks the redevelopment of the existing open car park with the erection of 45 dwellings and a significant quantum of non-residential uses within buildings up to five-stories high.

The proposal is not in accordance with the Council's Development Plan and there are no material benefits of it that outweigh that conflict. In particular:

- The application fails the flood risk sequential test and is therefore not a sequentially acceptable location for new development. The failure of the sequential test also disappplies the 'tilted balance' at Paragraph 11d of the NPPF;
- The application would result in the loss of train station parking that is well used and critical to maximising the use of the railway, a key sustainable mode of transport;
- The design and layout fails to preserve or enhance the Conservation Area due to the loss of the existing open space, the inappropriate massing and design of the proposal and the impacts of off-setting existing car parking into the neighbouring streets;
- There would be an unacceptable impact upon the amenity of adjacent residents and the safeguarding of the Primary School due to the overbearing and overlooking impact, the loss of light and the loss of car parking;
- The farmers market, which is a valued and protected community use, would close during construction and, in the unlikely event it did resume, would be fatally compromised; and
- The local economy would be damaged due to loss of parking and resultant footfall.

As there is no realistic prospect of the application being made acceptable through amendment, particularly given the *in-principle* conflict with the flood risk sequential test, it should be refused without delay.

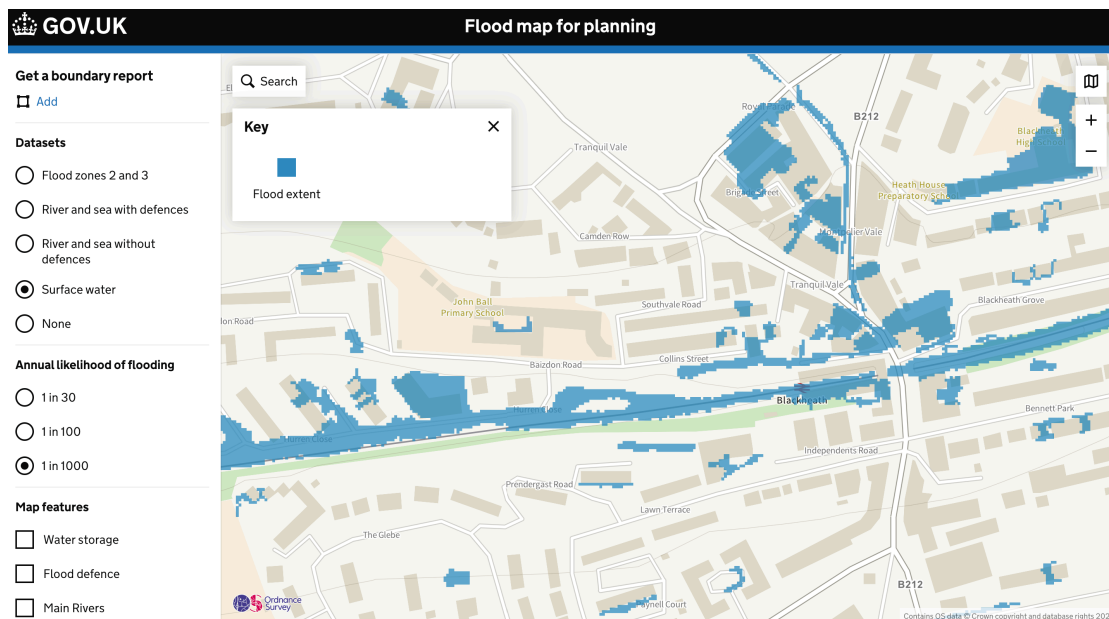
Yours sincerely,



**David Cranmer BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**  
**Founder & Director**

## 1.0 FLOOD RISK SEQUENTIAL TEST

1.1 It is accepted by the applicants, at Paragraphs 4.5.1 – 4.5.9 of the submitted Flood Risk Assessment, that the site is at risk of surface water flooding and that “the mapping indicates a potentially significant flow route through the site” with “areas of low, medium and high risk seen across the site”, as per the Environment Agency (EA) mapping:



EA Flood Map for Planning showing 1 in 1,000-year surface water flood risk

1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires, at Paragraph 173, that “a sequential risk-based approach should be taken to individual applications in areas known to be at risk now or in future from any form of flooding”. Surface water flooding constitutes “any form of flooding”.

1.3 Therefore, unless “a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrates that no built development within the site boundary, including access or escape routes, land raising or other potentially vulnerable elements, would be located on an area that would be at risk of flooding from any source, now and in the future” (NPPF Paragraph 175) a sequential test needs to be undertaken to “steer new development to areas with the lowest risk of flooding from any source” (NPPF, Paragraph 174).

1.4 The application has not undertaken a sequential test and no attempts have been made to avoid building or accessing the site over areas at risk (when undertaking a sequential test, potential mitigation measures are not able to be taken into account; the test is undertaken on the existing condition of the site). The application therefore fails the sequential test, indicating that it is not a suitable location for new residential development, contrary to Policy 10 of the Lewisham Core Strategy 2011, Policy SI12 of the London Plan 2021 and the NPPF and this constitutes an overriding reason for refusal.

1.5 It should also be noted that the fact the site fails the sequential test results in the presumption of sustainable development, at Paragraph 11d of the NPPF, not being engaged as “areas at risk of flooding” is listed at footnote 7 as a matter which “provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed”. The application would therefore not benefit from the ‘tilted balance’ of assessment in the event the Council is unable to demonstrate the requisite housing land supply.

## **2.0 LOSS OF TRAIN STATION PARKING**

### ***Maximising the use of the train station***

2.1 Policy T1 of the London Plan requires that “development proposals should facilitate the delivery of the Mayor’s strategic target of 80 per cent of all trips in London to be made by foot, cycle or public transport by 2041”.

2.2 In achieving this Government Policy, set out within the Department for Transport (DfT) report ‘A Railway Fit for Britain’s Future’ published in February 2025, is clear that rail travel has “repeatedly proven itself as a powerful catalyst for growth, opportunity, and social change. As this government embarks on its mission to rebuild Britain and deliver a decade of national renewal, we must get the railway firing on all cylinders and ready to play its part”. One of the Report’s “six clear objectives” (pg.7) is that they are “accessible – so that our railways are available for everyone to use”.

2.3 Blackheath Train Station is a critical cog in the public transport network accommodating three major routes (Dartford – London Charing Cross, Gravesend to London Victoria and Crayford – London Cannon Street). Maximising the use of these railway routes is therefore key to promoting and achieving sustainable modes of transport.

2.4 The submitted planning Statement acknowledges, at Paragraph 2.3, that the site is “primarily functioning as a car park for Blackheath Station”. Given this the site should therefore be utilised for “realising opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure” (NPPF, Paragraph 109) as opposed to removing any prospect of future growth of the use of the Train Station as one of, if not the, most sustainable mode of mass public transport.

### ***The appropriate baseline***

2.5 The application is upfront that the proposal is driven by the fact that the site has been “identified by Network Rail as a strategic disposal” (Pg.3, submitted Design and Access Statement) but does not elaborate on why that is the case other than making it clear that the land is not controlled by the train operator (so the decision is not linked to any judgement made upon the need for the car park by the railway operator).

2.6 Within this commercially driven context there is concern amongst the local community that the owners of the site may have been creating a climate that does not encourage the use of the site for parking, for example through increase in parking prices. The applicants submitted survey, showing a 61% reduction in parking on site from 2018 levels, should therefore be seen within that critical lens.

2.7 The submitted survey also does not include the dates it was undertaken so it is not possible to conclude that it is representative of usage, for example that it wasn't undertaken during school, public or bank holidays. Furthermore, from what we do know, the survey was undertaken between 07:00 and 08:30 so does not account for other arrivals generated, for example, by flexible or shift working patterns.

2.8 Regardless, even within this context, the 2024 survey showed demand for 55 spaces and the submitted Transport Assessment accepts, at Paragraph 4.23, that “there is demand for long-stay commuter and employment parking at the site”.

2.9 The appropriate baseline for assessment is therefore that, despite the parking area allegedly not been optimised to encourage use, it remains well used and its 163 spaces are a key facilitator of usage of the train station by all sections of the community, in accordance with the objectives of the Government's report, ‘A Railway Fit for Britain's Future’.

### ***Loss of parking spaces***

2.10 The application will result in the loss of over 90% (148 of 163) of spaces available for those relying upon it to utilise the train station. The remaining 17 spaces, which the submitted Car Park Management Plan identifies, at Paragraph 3.2, may only be available for weekday season ticket holders, would not meet the existing needs that the survey identifies for the peak demand of 55 spaces, or even the 25 arrivals between 7:00-8:30 that went on to stay for at least eight hours. Therefore, even if the applicants survey was to be relied upon, the proposal would result in less parking that is currently needed.

2.11 It is noted that, within this context, the applicant considers, as set out at Paragraph 8.18 of the Planning Statement, that, regardless, “there is no need to use the private car to reach the station, except for those with mobility issues or disabilities”. However, not only does this contention undermine the fact that getting as many patrons to the train station as possible is the Governments stated aim, so we shouldn't be reducing the options to access the train station, but also belies the fact that there is also a lack of drop-off facilities at the Train Station.

2.12 Whilst the Planning Statement's assertion is therefore clearly contradictory to the conclusions of the submitted Transport Assessment (as set out at Paragraph 2.8 above – “there is demand for long-stay commuter and employment parking at the site”) it is nonetheless, on its own merits, not a statement that is followed through in detail given that only two accessible parking spaces are proposed by the application. Furthermore, there will naturally be competition for the two spaces between prospective train stations users with mobility needs and the occupants of the four proposed apartments designed

for those with mobility needs. The proposed approach would also fail to encourage any other potential users of the train station with mobility needs to utilise the railway.

### **Summary**

2.13 The submitted Transport Assessment, at Paragraphs 6.9-6.10, includes a section titled “supporting bus and train trips” that, whilst setting out how future residents of the development would have excellent access to the train station, fails to counterbalance this conclusion with any assessment of how those who currently (and any future growth in numbers) utilise the station via parking on the site would no longer be able to do so. Such a lack of consideration or conclusion in this regard is notable for its absence.

2.14 The application has therefore failed to demonstrate that it would not have a significant detrimental impact (a net loss) upon sustainable transport options contrary to Policy 14 of the Lewisham Core Strategy 2011, Policy T1 of the London Plan 2021 and the NPPF.

## **3.0 DESIGN & IMPACT UPON HERITAGE ASSETS**

### **Baseline**

3.1 The train station at Blackheath, arriving in 1849, was, as set out within the Council’s Blackheath Conservation Area Appraisal (Pg.11), “a major factor in the development of the layout of streets and roads in the area”.

3.2 The application site accordingly contributes positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area with the Conservation Area Appraisal, at Pg.17, noting that:

*“A surprisingly large open public space in the conservation area is the car park to Blackheath station. Its contribution to the character of the conservation area relates to the space with which an area like this allows for the appreciation of other buildings. Views of Collins Street, the station, across to Winchester House and importantly the rear of the listed buildings to the bottom of Tranquil Vale all add to the character of this open space. The fact that it is a publicly accessible space notably used for a weekly farmer’s market forms part of its positive character”.*

3.3 Furthermore, as set out at Pg.63 of the Appraisal:

*“The roofscape of Collins Street and the parallel terraces above is a strong defining image to the train traveller to Blackheath, this being one of the first views of the Village on looking north from the train track”.*

3.4 This application site and the surrounding are therefore contributes positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, as specifically identified by the plan included with the Conservation Area Appraisal:



Extract from Pg.64 of the Blackheath Conservation Area Appraisal 2007

3.5 The “good late Victorian stock terraces (1869 and 1870-71) in good condition with a good survival of original features” on Collins Street are also identified as locally listed by Pg.86 of the Conservation Area Appraisal.

3.6 The application site is therefore located in a highly sensitive context with multiple heritage receptors that are vulnerable to change.

### ***Principle of introducing development***

3.7 As set out above the application site, with its open space and lack of built form, contributes positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, in particular the setting of Collins Street and its locally listed buildings.

3.8 However, the introduction of built form, never mind such a significant quantum as proposed, will completely occupy the site resulting in harm to the Conservation Area and setting of the locally listed buildings. Accordingly, the principle acceptability of introducing any built form on the application site has not, in this regard, been established by the application and the optimal viable use for the land, in heritage terms, is likely to be its current use which is compatible with it remaining as an open space whilst also retaining a link to the heritage of the development of the adjacent railway.

### ***inappropriate massing and design***

3.9 In the event that the application site was to be developed the planning policy context for such a sensitive location sets a high bar. Policy 30 of the Local Plan requires “all development proposals to attain a high standard of design” whilst Policy 15 of the Core

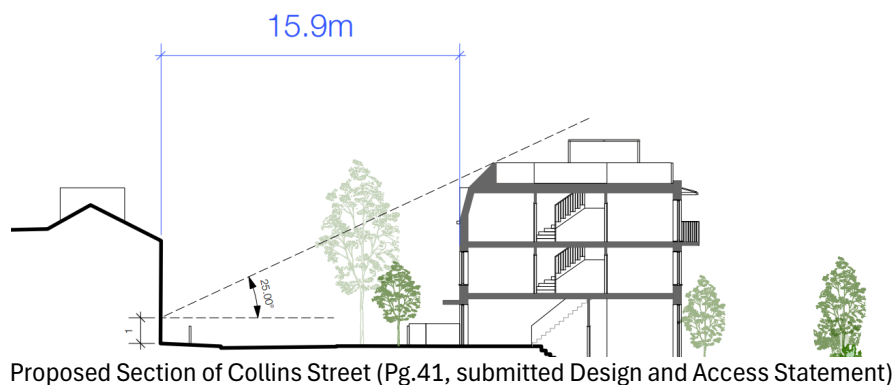
Strategy requires the “highest quality design and the protection or enhancement of the historic and natural environment”. The London Plan accordingly makes clear, through Policy D4, the expectation that “the design of development proposals should be thoroughly scrutinised by Borough Planning, Urban Design, and Conservation Officers”.

3.10 The proposed Block B would introduce a significant unbroken mass of horizontal development that has no relief. Being visually impenetrable and a storey higher than the adjacent terrace on Collins Street it would present as a barrier to views into and out of the Conservation Area in addition to harming the setting and special historic character of listed buildings at the lower end of Tranquil Vale.



Proposed north elevation of Block B

3.11 Furthermore, due to the applicant’s choice to design Block B as three storeys, it is unable to mirror the treatment of how the existing terrace on Collins Street addresses the streetscene as a front garden space is needed to attempt to ensure there is sufficient front-to-front separation to respect residential amenity (n.b. without success, given the three-storey height it is still too close to avoid overlooking). The proposal would therefore introduce an arrangement 15.9m wide that is not in character with the Conservation Area (for example there is only 13m front-to-front on Southvale Road).



Proposed Section of Collins Street (Pg.41, submitted Design and Access Statement)

3.12 Block C is of significant height, rising to over 16m, and does not benefit from any significant relief, either in its height or elevational mass. The sheer scale of the building is challenging to comprehend given the extent of the juxtaposition it would have with its surroundings.

3.13 Whilst the submission documents present the proposals as relatively appropriate heights it is inappropriate to compare the height of Block B to Block C and so forth. A more appropriate barometer for assessment is the prevailing pattern of development that gradually extends higher to the north of the site (i.e. the adjacent Collins Street is two-storey, Southvale Road further north three-storey and parts of Camden Row and Tranquil Vale extending to four-storey, inclusive of rooms within roofscapes), aided by the rising topography. The proposal does not respect this established pattern of



development that is a key characteristic of the Conservation Area and one which the Conservation Area Appraisal, at Pg.63, identifies as regularly experienced and appreciated by train travellers arriving in Blackheath.



Proposed Block C

3.14 The proposal also does not include any ground floor private amenity space nor any meaningful areas that are not dominated by hardstanding. This is contrary to the established pattern of the area where local dwellings commonly have rear private amenity space and are formed in perimeter blocks. It is therefore clear that, combined with the excessive height and inadequate space for the farmers market, these factors are highly indicative of the overdevelopment of the application site and a clear disconnect between the research that the applicant has undertaken, and purports to have relied upon, and the proposed design.

3.15 Furthermore, the proposal only includes 17 parking spaces, a displacement of 148 existing spaces. As set out within the submitted Transport Assessment (at Paragraph 7.5 of Parking Survey Analysis report – Appendix G) the applicant envisages that the “vehicles which could be displaced from the Blackheath Station Car Park could be accommodated elsewhere”.

3.16 It is therefore inevitable, given the dual destinations of the train station and the Primary School, that the proposal would result in the offsetting of existing parking on the site into the neighbouring streets and beyond, within the Conservation Area. Introducing this additional intensity of parking and visual clutter into the Conservation Area would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, failing to preserve or enhance it.

### ***Summary***

3.17 The proposal would result in the loss of the existing open space that contributes positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, particularly the setting of Collins Street, the locally listed building located on it, and the listed buildings on Tranquil Vale. Thereafter, the introduction of a visually impermeable run of buildings, of significant and discordant height, would be incongruous and have no regard for the prevailing positive character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This would be exacerbated by the displacement of parked vehicles onto streets within the Conservation Area, particularly Collins Street and Southvale Road.

3.18 Whilst the application seeks to establish public benefits to outweigh the identified heritage harm it is clear, given the extent of harm and the minor nature of the benefits,



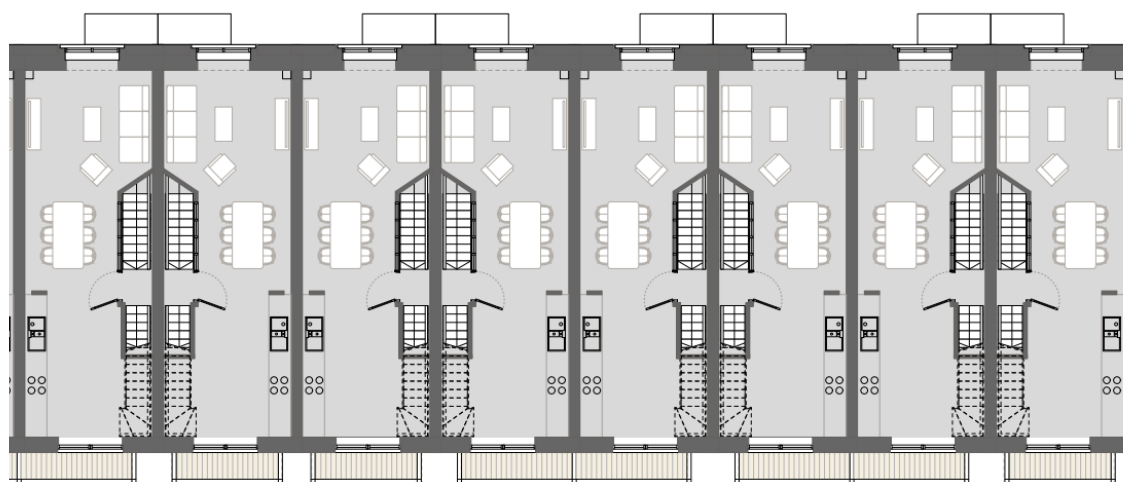
that this is not the case, The application is therefore, in this regard, contrary to Policies 32 and 36 of the Local Plan, Spatial Policies 3, 5, 15 and 16 of the Core Strategy, Policy HC1 of the London Plan and the NPPF.

## 4.0 AMENITY OF ADJACENT RESIDENTS AND SAFEGUARDING OF THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

4.1 Policy DM32 of the Local Plan, supported by Policy D6 of the London Plan, requires that all developments “provide a satisfactory level of privacy, outlook and natural lighting both for its future residents and its neighbours”.

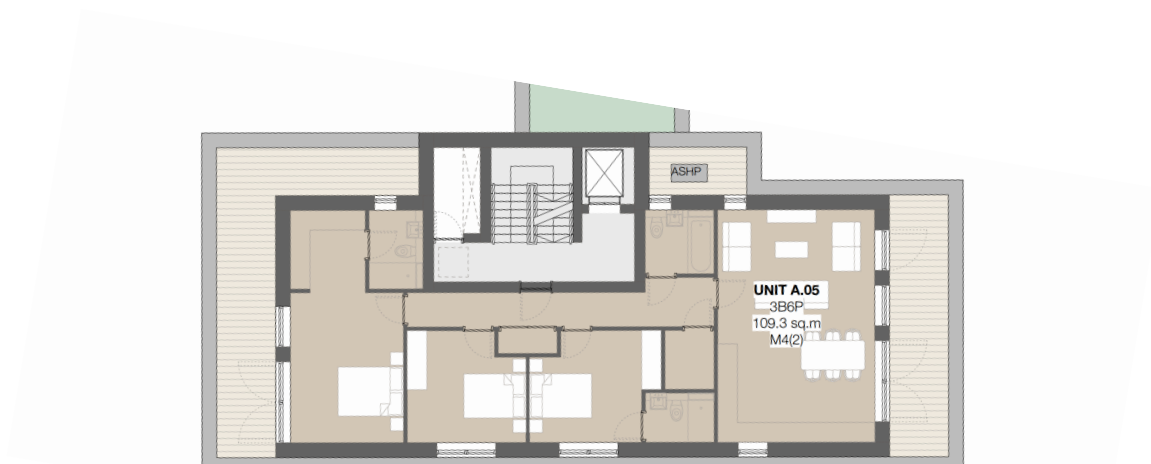
### *Overlooking impacts*

4.2 The proposed units facing Collins Street would have primary living accommodation, in the form of a lounge, facing directly towards the existing terraced dwellings. Given that the dwellings on Collins Street have bedrooms at first floor level this means that there will be direct, and unacceptable, overlooking down into the bedrooms.



Proposed Block B Second Floor Floorplans

4.3 Furthermore, proposed Block A includes an outdoor terrace on its third-storey, as shown below, which would also have a direct line of sight, particularly from its western end, into the private amenity of dwellings on Collins Street.



4.4 The unacceptable overlooking impact, as a result of the design choices made by the applicant, is therefore in conflict with Policy 32 of the Local Plan, Policy D6 of the London Plan and the NPPF.

### ***Overbearing***

4.5 The scale of the proposals is disproportionate to the modest character of Collins Street, which is characterised by two-storey residential development. The proposed three-story Block B, four-storey Block A and five storey Block C would dwarf the existing built form with little consideration for how it would be perceived or experienced by existing residents. The impact would also be exacerbated by the proposal being located to the immediate south of the existing dwellings so having the worst possible impact upon daylight and sunlight (it is noted that the submitted Daylight and Sunlight report does not assess overshadowing other than for a few selected external private amenity spaces).

4.6 The foreboding massing of the proposal, in particular the unrelenting mass of Block B, would therefore have a significant and unacceptable impact upon the amenity of existing residents on Collins Street, particularly during winter months when the sun is low within the sky and daylight hours short. The application is therefore, in this regard, in conflict with Policy 32 of the Local Plan, Policy D6 of the London Plan and the NPPF.

### **Loss of light**

4.7 The application is accompanied by a Daylight and Sunlight study that accepts, at Pg.2, that 18% of neighbouring windows will not achieve the expected numerical values, as set out in the BRE guidelines, that constitute an acceptable impact.

4.8 Whilst the application seeks to excuse this shortcoming by providing planning appeals that considered such a level of harm was outweighed by other benefits, the appeals are not comparable with the proposal and, in any event, this application must be assessed on its own merits.

4.9 Given it is particularly pertinent to note that the impacts are of the applications own making, insofar as it does not need to be as high as it is proposed nor composed with such impenetrable massing, there are no reasons why the requisite standards could not be fully achieved. The unacceptable loss of light to neighbouring windows is therefore in conflict with Policy 32 of the Local Plan, Policy D6 of the London Plan and the NPPF.

### ***Parking***

4.10 The proposed parking provision, which would displace 148 spaces and not meet the existing needs of the primary school and train station, would result in pressure upon any available spaces within the local area, to the detriment of the local community and their visitors, including services and deliveries.

4.11 Furthermore, any spaces that are available are essential for the local community to function given the existing Controlled Parking Zones and the fact the entirety of Blackheath falls within Zone BHA, in which parking is restricted to permit holders only between 9am and 7pm Monday to Saturday.

4.12 It is therefore clear that the applicant's contention, as set out within the submitted Transport Assessment at Paragraph 7.5 of Parking Survey Analysis report – Appendix G, that the “vehicles which could be displaced from the Blackheath Station Car Park could be accommodated elsewhere” is neither feasible nor acceptable.

### ***John Ball Primary School safeguarding***

4.13 The overlooking and overbearing issues outlined above would also impact John Ball Primary School which, due to its location to the north/north-west of the proposal, would also suffer from a loss of light. Clearly, given the vulnerability of the users of the school site and the statutory safeguarding requirements placed upon the operation of the school, the unacceptable impacts would be exacerbated.

4.14 Furthermore, with yellow lines on Collins Street outside the school, many staff, visitors and parents are reliant upon the existing car parking provision at the application site, as accepted by the applicants in the submitted Transport Assessment which, at Paragraph 9.3, stated that “it is acknowledged that there are limited opportunities for school drop-off/pick-up to occur”.

4.15 Within this context the submitted Planning Statement, at Paragraph 8.15, notes that 33% of cars using the car park are for “Baizdon Road (the location of John Ball Primary School)” and the applicants therefore offer to fund a Travel Plan for the school. However, not only is this not commensurate mitigation but it is not evidenced by the application that the School is willing to work with the applicants in this regard.

4.16 The proposed development would therefore have a detrimental impact upon the safe operation of the school, removing access options with no feasible alternative for those users who rely upon being able to park within close proximity, particularly given the school is for primary age pupils and proud of its inclusive community for children with special educational needs (<https://www.johnball.lewisham.sch.uk/SEND/>).

## **5.0 IMPACT UPON THE FARMERS MARKET**

5.1 The award-winning weekly Blackheath farmers market is a highly valued community asset, as recognised by its placing as runner up in 2017, and winner in 2018, of the Time Out Love London Awards, which are supported by the Mayor of London. Featured by the BBC, on The Farmers Country Showdown, the market is famed – *‘root veg in January, wild garlic in March, asparagus and strawberries in May, peas in June, cherries in July, apples and plums from August, corn in September, game in October, celery in November, turkeys in December’!*

5.2 The farmers market has permanent planning permission and its presence forms part of the lawful planning use of the application site. Accordingly, as a valued community use, the farmers market is protected from its inappropriate loss by Policy 19 of the Core Strategy, Policy GG1 of the London Plan and the NPPF.

5.3 Within this context the proposed development would have both construction and operational impacts upon the farmers market, not least because it would not be able to operate during the construction period (as confirmed at Paragraph 4.7 of the submitted Construction Environmental Logistics Plan). Whilst the submitted Planning Statement, at Paragraph 2.15, anticipates a two-year construction period this is considered optimistic given the scale of the build and the complexities involved. Therefore, given the period from the farmer market closing and any prospective date for it reopening will likely be extensive, there are significant concerns that it will simply never reopen.

5.4 Whilst the local community were informed that the farmers market would be temporarily relocated during construction works there are few details provided by the application let alone a firm commitment. Given that any temporary location proposed would need to be commensurate to the current arrangement, and would also likely require its own planning permission and licensing, there is no evidence to enable the council to conclude such an arrangement is possible and, as such, any suggestion of a temporary relocation should be afforded little, if any, weight.

5.5 Furthermore, the proposed future arrangement of the farmers market, in a one-sided linear format, is not conducive to a successful market, particularly the 'set up and close down' process which requires vehicular access, nor community cohesion. This would be compounded by the close proximity of the proposed residential units which would be unlikely to be compatible with the noise and air pollution from the farmers market, leaving the market vulnerable to either unworkable restrictions or pressure to cease operation from Environmental Health legislation.



Space adjacent to Block B where the farmers market stalls are proposed in close proximity to residential amenity (Pg.33, submitted Design and Access Statement)

5.6 The application has therefore failed to demonstrate that it would not have a significant adverse impact upon a community use protected by Policy 19 of the Core Strategy, Policy GG1 of the London Plan and the NPPF.

## **6.0 IMPACT UPON THE LOCAL ECONOMY**

6.1 In seeking to diminish the impact upon patrons of the train station the submitted Planning Statement identifies, at Paragraph 8.15, that 41% of cars using the car park are for “Blackheath Village”. The loss of these spaces will have a significant impact upon the vitality and viability of the local economy and this would be exacerbated by the loss of linked trips to local shops and services from those using the car parking for the train station and Primary School.

6.2 The impacts upon the farmers market would also reverberate amongst the rest of the local economy with its linked footfall lost completely during construction and much compromised once the proposed development is operational. There is therefore concern amongst local traders, for whom Sunday is the busiest day of the week due to the farmers market, that the impacts of the proposal would significantly harm their businesses and, in turn, the local economy.

6.3 The application is therefore in conflict with the aims and intentions of Policy 13 of the Lewisham Local Plan 2014, Policy 6 of the Lewisham Core Strategy 2011, Policies SD6 and SD7 of the London Plan 2021 and the NPPF.

## **7.0 OTHER MATTERS**

7.1 The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) is a non-ministerial Governmental department responsible for the economic and safety regulation of Britain’s Railways. Given that the proposal has the potential to have a significant impact upon the operational capabilities of the train station, both now and with regard to future growth opportunities, they should be formally consulted on the application.

7.2 There is particular concern amongst the local community that there may be a failure to recognise that Network Rail, as landowner, appears to be acting in a purely commercial manner and is not the railway operator. The views of the railway operator at the train station, Southeastern, and the ORR should therefore be sought to ensure that the impacts of the proposal upon the operation of the train station are fully understood. Without such input the Council would not be in a position to take a fully informed decision.

7.3 The application does not include a Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA) but rather relies upon Computer Generated Images (CGI’s) to illustrate the proposed visual impact. However, there is no depiction of the proposal in either the winter months, at nighttime or from other identified views, such as for those arriving in Blackheath by train. Little weight should therefore be placed upon the CGI’s.

7.4 The submitted Planning Statement places significant weight upon the benefits of the proposal to meeting housing need, albeit it has already been established that, due to the failure of the flood risk sequential test, the application does not benefit from the ‘tilted balance’ of Paragraph 11d of the NPPF. The benefits of the proposed housing are also significantly tempered by the below policy compliant offer of only 21% affordable housing and the lack of detail to substantiate why commencement of development in “early 2026” (Paragraph 2.15, Planning Statement) is feasible given permission is not yet in place and, even if it were, pre-commencement conditions are not yet known, never mind satisfied.

7.5 Furthermore, concern is particularly heightened amongst the local community given no evidence has been provided to demonstrate that proposed developer has a successful track record of the timely delivery of developments. Given the previous performance of a developer is a material consideration this is a matter the Council may consider it appropriate to give weight to.

7.6 The application seeks permission for units under Use Class E but does not include specific uses. Therefore, given that Class E is wide ranging the Council needs to be satisfied that the assessment of impacts by the submitted reports include the potential impacts from the full range of Class E uses.

7.7 Whilst the application sets out how the local community have been engaged, questions have rightly been raised within the local community regarding how meaningful it was and whether there is any demonstrable link between the feedback of the community and the design choices pursued by the application. Furthermore, whilst the Planning Statement includes details of numerous pre-application meetings that the applicants have had with the Council these are only excerpts and the submission does not disclose the substance of the response from the Council.

7.8 This approach prejudices the ability of third-parties to participate in the application process as it denies the opportunity for scrutiny of the reasoning behind the advice that the Council has given at the pre-application stage. Other Authorities disclose all such advice consistent with recent case law (see the following link for a case in Richmond - <https://www.casemine.com/judgement/uk/65df7bf2d65e0a43a38b3c4e>). The Council should therefore publish, in full, the pre-application advice it has provided to the applicants.

7.9 In any event, pre-application advice is not binding and it is the application process which must consider the application on the facts and merits of the case, noting the clear conflicts with the Development Plan identified in this Report.