Your name and address

Mr Andrew Thornley

Directorate of Regeneration Enterprise and Skills

The Woolwich Centre, 5th Floor

35 Wellington Street

London, SE18 6HQ

Dear Mr Thornley

I write to you as local resident with very serious concerns around the current planning application (**20/1730/O**) for Morden Wharf. While I welcome the principle of developing the site, I object to the current plans on several grounds. Most of these ultimately relate back to the proposed height and density of the buildings including the failure to meet a range of planning requirements, guidelines and principles set out by the Council, Greater London Authority and Maritime Greenwich World Heritage Site. My main concerns are as follows:

1. **Lack of compliance with planning** **policy** – the current plans do not meet several of the Council’s own guidelines for the development of the site. As a result, I strongly believe they will have significant implications for local residents and visitors. Three particular concerns include:

**1.1 The site “is not suitable for the establishment of a distinct cluster of new tall buildings”**

The Site Allocations Plan (SAP) of February 2021 states that *“While the site is identified as a location that may be appropriate for tall buildings, the predominant context is a mix of open areas and low/ midrise industrial buildings which is unlikely to change significantly due to its SIL designation. The site also falls within the setting of the World Heritage Site and the Protected London Panorama from Greenwich Park****. The sensitive setting of the site means that it is not suitable for the establishment of a distinct cluster of new tall buildings.*** *If any taller buildings are proposed their height should be demonstrably subordinate to those developed at Enderby Place, and* ***taller elements should be integrated within a predominantly mid-rise (4-8 storeys) scale of development to ensure an appropriate transition to and integration with the predominantly mid-rise surrounding context and the traditional scale of the working river in this location****.”*

The current proposals for new blocks at 9, 11, 16, 19, 21, 25 and 36 storeys clearly do not align with the guidance set out by the Council and, importantly, will have a detrimental impact on existing residents in the local area. Currently the tallest 13 story building in the neighbouring site at Enderby Wharf is 39 metres. Current proposals would make the tallest blocks up to more than three times as high towering over existing residents. Even the highest existing 52 metre building in neighbouring Telegraph Works (Gooch House) would be dwarfed by the proposed height of the new towers.

Given the lack of compliance with the Council’s guidance and sheer lack of proportion to existing building heights, on this basis alone the proposals should be significantly revised and re-designed to a lower height more in-keeping with the local area.

**1.2 Resulting impact on light levels for existing residents and pedestrians at ground level**

A further aspect of the Council guidelines relates to ensuring adequate day light in the local area, stating that: “*If tall buildings are proposed, they must be appropriately located with sufficient gaps between buildings to create a legible cluster and to* ***ensure good levels of daylight/sunlight at lower levels of accommodation and to public/amenity spaces****”* There is also a requirement that “*Layout, scale and massing of proposals must provide for regular gaps to ensure a visual and physical connection to the river*” which is consistent with the Draft London Plan Policy D8 for ‘Tall buildings’ which states that buildings near the Thames, particularly in the Thames Policy Area, should not contribute to a canyon effect along the river that encloses its open aspect and riverside public realm, or adversely affect strategic or local views along the river.

Yet, while planning documents have been produced by U&I in an attempt to try and demonstrate some adherence to these guidelines, the simple fact is that **buildings of the current proposed height and density will necessarily and substantially reduce levels of light to lower levels of accommodation and ground level and also enclose the open aspect of the riverside**. The result will be a dramatic reduction in the quality of life for existing local residents and visitors who increasingly enjoy walking around the riverside area in this part of East Greenwich. It does not have to be this way.

**1.3 Severe impacts on very well-known existing transport problems in the immediate area**

Pre-COVID, pressure on local roads in the area including local bus routes passed breaking point with queues for buses to North Greenwich so unbelievably long that people took to taxi services on a daily basis simply to get to North Greenwich station. More recently, roads throughout Greenwich have become gridlocked with growing numbers of road users. Presumably in recognition of this, there is a clear requirement in Council guidelines to ensure “*Enhanced public transport via through routes for buses, in coordination with Site GP1* [Enderby Place]”.

However, the latest proposals (Transport Assessment Addendum of March 2021) show no attempt will be made to improve **public transport**. Instead, the idea of a **private** shuttle bus is proposed, carrying “a minimum of [20] passengers (mix of seated and standing)”. Yet, given that 1,500 new homes are proposed with total number of occupants being many times higher, this is clearly not an appropriate solution. First, the proposed shuttle will simply not be a solution for the majority who will instead continue to put pressure on the already overstretched local bus service. Second, as a private service, it does not meet the Council requirement above. The only true way of minimising the pressure on the very well-known local transport problems in the immediate area is for the plans to be rejected and re-submitted in keeping with the council planning guidelines of a more mid-rise development.

**2.** **World Heritage Site Impact**

As noted in the SAP, Greenwich is recognised as a World Heritage Site (WHS). Formal guidance on this is set out in the London Plan and Maritime Greenwich WHS Management Plan. With the WHS lying 1km to the south-west of the application site, the proposed buildings will be abundantly visible from the WHS across the open expanse of the Thames.

The WHS Management Plan clearly states that any proposals over 20 storeys on the application site must be referred to the WHS Executive which implies that the maximum potential building height that should really be considered on the application site is around 20 storeys.

As a local resident I enjoy regular walks through Royal Greenwich Park and know the views are a major tourist attraction in the area. It is beyond doubt that the current proposed height of the buildings would irreversibly damage the views from numerous vantage points in the park, given the close proximity of the development site. While high-rise buildings of Canary Wharf are of course visible further beyond the Thames, East Greenwich is not Canary Wharf.

Given the obvious and irreversible negative impact on views from the historic WHS of Greenwich Park the current proposals should be significantly revised and re-designed to a lower height.

As I hope you will agree, there remain very many strong reasons why the current proposals should be rejected. As a local resident I would welcome revised plans for Morden Wharf that were sensitive to the local area and its landscape, if they were in-keeping with existing local building heights, and if they respected the various requirements and guidelines set out by the Council and other bodies.

Yours sincerely,