

**From:**

**To:** [Future Merton](#)

**Cc:**

**Subject:** Proposed Removal of Height Restriction for Buildings in Colliers Wood

**Date:** 11 March 2024 16:01:20

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Dear Future Merton,

I understand that the Planning Inspectorate has proposed **removing the clause which states that no building taller than 19 storeys shall be built in Colliers Wood** – this despite the *numerous objections that have already been made by local residents*.

I adamantly support **maintaining the restriction of the height of new buildings**, ideally to *well below* that of 19 storeys (i.e. in keeping with **the remainder of this residential area**, not the ghastly monstrosity of a tower block so loathed by the residents), and trust that I will be just one of many sharing this view, as evidenced by the comments to be found in the petitions that have already been submitted – and apparently dismissed or ignored, otherwise this matter would not still be under discussion.

I would underline my objections by saying that the existing *'Britannia Point'* is already far too tall, that it should never be treated as a 'benchmark' just because a mistaken historical judgement was made (I have qualified this below), and that I vehemently disagree with any permission being granted for the construction of any additional buildings of a similar height in Colliers Wood. Such developments would be (and already are) totally inappropriate, as they are completely out of keeping with a low-rise residential area.

There must be many legitimate grounds for *refusing planning permission* to Criterion, given the chronically deplorable attitude shown by this company towards the local community. Merton Council must be only too well aware of the resistance of local residents against allowing this company to build any new developments in Colliers Wood, and the Merton's councillors should be doing everything in their power to prevent them from doing so as the elected proxies acting on behalf of their voters living in the area.

The unsuitability of the site adjacent to *'Britannia Point'* for the construction of **any** additional tall buildings must also raise significant alarm-bells, given these existing issues that are affecting the area surrounding the existing tower block:

- its proximity to the River Wandle
- the fact that the site lies in a flood-plain
- the predicted (scientifically modelled) sea level rise associated with anthropogenic climate change that will increase the risk of flooding for properties and land adjacent to the River Wandle between Colliers Wood and the River Thames by 2030

- the additional requirements for water-supply and power generation
- effluent generation in high quantities in an area where the existing drainage systems already cannot cope with heavy rainfall as the drains will overflow
- the soft London clay substrate underneath and associated risk of subsidence
- the proximity to the Northern Line tunnels that prevented the original Lyon/Brown and Root Tower from being demolished by conventional means prior to the superficial refurbishment of a crumbling, almost 60-year-old building (see below)
- the issues of very strong winds that already pose a danger to the public close to the existing tower – particularly cyclists, young children (walking, or in prams or pushchairs) and the elderly
- an increased need for fence repairs in the area close to the tower caused by the channelling of prevailing westerly winds and require the replacement of wind-damaged street trees
- dust blown towards Singlegate School and other nearby properties from the *'Britannia Point'* site during construction work and remedial repairs
- shadow cast over the adjoining properties that deprive the residents and their gardens of natural sunlight – this issue would be exacerbated by the construction of any additional tall buildings
- shadow cast over Wandle Park affecting the micro-climate - this is already evident during the winter as the long shadow cast by the existing tower causes the shaded areas to remain frozen, rendering the paths, and particularly the plastic bridges, extremely slippery in cold weather, and posing a significant risk of personal injury
- shading to a lesser extent by the hotel, also recently developed to a greater height, and known to have been releasing untreated effluent directly into the chalk stream in Wandle Park and causing environmental pollution to this rare habitat
- additional light-pollution
- additional heat generation
- increased traffic, reducing flow – note that traffic including public transport is already often at a virtual standstill, and consequently generating an unhealthy level of pollution from the additional emissions of petrol and diesel vehicles
- affordability – rented vs. owned
- the building's unsuitability for human accommodation because of the inability of the designers to air-condition it properly
- the current site owner's inability to have been able to provide an adequate waste-disposal system that is fit for purpose
- falling and cracked windows - the scaffolding, supposedly protecting pedestrians and traffic underneath (unless there is a strong wind!) after the potentially lethal event where one of the windows fell from the 13th floor has

now been removed, therefore **potentially exposing pedestrians to precisely the same risks as before its erection**. This is outrageous and shocking! There is still no evidence of any repairs having been carried out (see below).

- the residents have not been treated well, both inside *'Britannia Point'*, and in the surrounding area!

Little acknowledgement appears to have been given to the fact that the construction of the original tower by Lyon (for an entirely different purpose than residency) was a catastrophic error of judgement. Tall buildings of this type seem to have been constructed with little thought given towards their eventual fate – out of sight, out of mind for those responsible, as they will probably be dead by the time that the consequences of their actions become the responsibility of others to deal with as the buildings deteriorate. There is little evidence of any change in attitude in this respect since the 1960s!

This is an issue that was clearly already affecting the (then) *'Brown and Root Tower'* prior to redevelopment as the derelict structure's external surface was already crumbling prior to the refurbishment – **which must have either been undertaken using sub-standard building materials and/or building practices, otherwise 74 windows wouldn't have needed to be replaced**. Incidentally, there is **little evidence of progress with the proposed repair, some 19+ months after the window fell from the 13<sup>th</sup> floor**, although the scaffolding has been removed – at last! Presumably this means that there is absolutely **no protection being provided for those walking near to the building** (remembering that a strong wind could potentially carry a falling window, sail-like, some distance away from the structure!). Any attempts to blame this window-breakage on a bird-strike are entirely unrealistic as construction materials (and particularly the glass used for high-rise buildings) are designed to withstand this, and the window fell outwards, not inside the building! Thankfully, nobody underneath was killed, although **a risk-assessment, if properly performed, ought to have mandatorily closed the building and the surrounding roads and pedestrian areas instantly until a full root-cause analysis had been performed, and any repairs should have been undertaken immediately**. Several windows are still being supported by sticky tape as I type – seriously! The fact that this happened at all should be sufficient grounds **for preventing any further developments by Criterion, and for maintaining a height restriction of no more than 7 stories for all future property developments in Colliers Wood, and ideally fewer than that**.

Any pledges made towards the protection of the Borough's environment are immediately undermined by the construction of this type of development – and a legacy that will be left for future generations to resolve and pay for. The responsibility for the full maintenance of (to an acceptable standard) and eventual demolition of tower blocks should be incorporated in any documentation granting planning permission in the first place.

Yours faithfully,