

# Ms R Slosek comments

Page: Draft New London Plan

Section: N/A

I support the principle of addressing the housing problems.

However there are deeper issues than just making it easier to build.

For example:

There is a new block of flats around the corner from where I live. These flats a) have a very low percentage of social housing and b) after 3 years on sale and 8 months after completion, at least 20 have not been sold and the seller is getting desperate (tax paid, cheese and wine evening etc).

Next door to my allotment 2 houses were built on a site where previously there was 1 house. Ideal you might think according to the proposed plan. However one house has not sold after being available for sale for 2 years and completed over 1 year. The other house is sold and empty. No-one lives there.

In my road there were 2 HMOs with 6 bedsits in each. Both have/are being sold. So 12 housing properties become 2.12 low income properties become 2 high income. None of the people in those bedsits have been able to find alternative accommodation.

London is famous worldwide as a green city. It's been declared a national park city with a map of where the green areas are so Londoners and visitors can make the most of them. Good for their health and for the economy of the city. A large proportion of those green areas would have been built over in a previous 'housing crisis' in the 19th century and it was only campaigners who saved them (including the Corporation of London). Epping Forest was meant to be built on and was saved. Hainault Forest was built on. Hampstead Heath was meant to be built on and was saved. Highgate Wood, Queens Wood, Crouch End Fields to name a few local examples were all meant to be built on and were saved by campaigners. It's the green that makes this city what it is and a housing crisis needs solutions better than building on green space - including back gardens.

There is a large quantity of unused office space in London which is perfect for a change of use to housing. It's already there and it's already high density. A good example of this is at Archway Tower where a hideous barely used office block has been changed into flats. Change of uses like this transform a redundant existing building into housing, rather than building high rise in areas which don't have it (we are not New York) and ruining the area which is happening along the Thames for example. Even if proposed by a social housing body doesn't mean they get to do what they please (for example, Peabody Trust building a super high rise next door to the existing tower at Archway).

Much of the new development has poor landscaping. There are 'pretty' trees rather than anything that will connect folks to nature and provide respite from living in a big city. This has health consequences. New areas like Kings Cross are particular examples. There is little soul and people need soul as well as housing. Green areas with large native trees are also important for sorting out the pollution which is a well known crisis as well.

Houses being sold to foreign investors that then lie empty. A friend put a bid on a small family house. It was sold to a foreign investor for only £4k more and 3 years later no-one has lived in it since the sale. This isn't an isolated case as we all know. There are other examples such as the large house in Hampstead opposite Fenton House which is only used for 2 weeks a year. I expect not much can be done about cases like that but what about future house sales so properties need to be rented out at the least.

How do we know that these back gardens to be built on, the green space to be built on and the new housing isn't going to be sold to investors (foreign or otherwise) who will leave them empty or be sold to high income?

A large amount of council housing has been sold under Right To Buy and is now let out at a profit rather than lived in by the original people.

What about a version of student living accommodation where a block or large house has people with individual properties that consist of ensuite bed/sitting room and a shared kitchen to a really good standard.

What about using containers as housing - that's worked well in lots of places.

The tiny house movement - perfect for London. Lower cost, own space, and done with style.