

# Community Right to Build Order – Examiner Rejects MPNF’s application

The external examiner of our Community Right to Build Order (CRtBO) has not ruled in favour of the Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood Forum’s plans. Despite the compliments he paid to the Forum, its conduct and its aims and objectives (“*The high quality proposal presented is a testament to all of those involved. I find that its aims and aspirations reflect a strong and welcome sense of civic pride. In this way, the Order, as submitted, should be regarded as a successful example of neighbourhood planning in action.*”) he deemed the CRtBO to be non-compliant for two reasons:

- **Car Parking** – he was not satisfied that the Royal Mail’s operational requirements that demand 198 private car parking spaces could be maintained if our plan went ahead.
- **Affordable Housing** – he was not satisfied that our viability calculations provided a sufficient degree of certainty as to guarantee the 30% affordable housing we were offering. This is an unavoidably simplistic summary of very complex and technical issue tied up in land value estimates that underpin viability assessments (and therefore how much affordable housing can be afforded). These concerns about viability were tied into a concern related to the ability of delivering the CRtBO site on its own, considering that the intentions of the RMG, and the policies of Camden and Islington Special Planning Document, aim for the entire Mount Pleasant site to be developed as a whole. Our attempts, supported by Camden, to include conditions to account for this did not satisfy the examiner.

This is bitterly disappointing for everyone, not least because of the inherent irony in both issues:

**Cars:** Our community wants fewer private cars (London NEEDS fewer cars) and contests the RMG’s demands for 198 private spaces.

**Housing:** One of our founding principles was the provision of as much affordable housing as possible, yet we have always been constrained by the RMG’s extant permission, which means that any housing we offer above the RMG’s 24% affordable housing makes our scheme less viable. We were therefore very proud to have offered 30% (2.6 times more the RMG’s 12% offer when they pleaded the former Mayor to call their proposal in), but the examiner deems this insufficient.

So, on cars, the examiner has disregarded local and London-wide policy while honouring the extant permission and the RMG’s demands, and on housing he has honoured local and London-wide policy and ignored the extant permission and the RMG’s offer.

The examiner and RMG get their cake and eat it, while the community is left wanting.

We are reviewing our options, but whatever we decide to do with the CRtBO, the Neighbourhood Plan becomes even more important in stopping developers and wealthy landowners from serving only their own interests at the expense of the local community and Londoners more broadly.