

Flat 3
Queen Alexandra Mansions
Grape Street
London WC2H 8DX

London Borough of Camden
Town Hall
Argyle Street
London WC1H 8EQ

By email

10 July 2023

Dear Sirs

Re: Composite Planning Applications (*Planning Applications*) in respect of proposals for the development of a series of plots bounded by High Holborn, Museum Street, New Oxford Street and West Central Street including Selkirk House, Museum Street (now reference 2023/2510/P, originally Labtech application 2021/ 2954/ P)

I refer to the Applications, as well as to previous correspondence and emails.

These Applications are both highly controversial and very complex.

I make this submission as a resident of Queen Alexandra Mansions, Grape Street. My building would apparently become part of the boundary of the proposed demolition and reconstruction site, with the rear wall possibly becoming a party wall. Just as importantly, local residents and businesses would be forced to endure the noise and vibration nuisance (as well as the dirt and dust and traffic disruption) of the demolition and construction period (which has, alarmingly, grown from 3 years (December 2020 zoom) to four years (as per the project website).

I propose to make a series of submissions, as I seek to absorb, in the very limited time available, the mass of data submitted by the applicant in relation to what are, in reality, a series of separate applications which have, for the sake of the applicant's own commercial

interests, been artificially bundled into a single planning application, now described on behalf of the applicant as a “resubmission”.

In this letter, I wish to make a single point. This relates to the characterisation of the application as:

Commercial Minor Alterations, New Mixed Redevelopment, Residential Minor Alterations

I am not sure who is responsible for coming up with or approving this description, but I presume the Council must take some responsibility for it, both as part of the “validation” process and as having loaded this formulation on to its official planning portal.

To describe the proposal to erect a 74 metre skyscraper, towering over the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, in these terms is a grossly misleading misdescription of these proposals.

This is not just a linguistic point; there is a serious risk that the use of the language misleads those scanning planning applications into assuming this is not an important application, raising very serious issues, including environmental and heritage ones.

This misleading description of the Applications is all the more serious in circumstances where the applicant (including its predecessor) has made a conscious decision, contrary to Camden’s policy recommendations, not to carry out any public consultation. Sadly, this decision seems, to date, to have been condoned by Camden.

I hope the Council will consider amending the language on its portal to reflect more accurately that what is being proposed is a major change to the local cityscape, with an unprecedented impact on listed buildings and the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Please treat this as an objection to the Applications in their current form.

This is an open letter.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Bloxham