

To Camden Planning:

I write as Chair of Hampstead Hill Gardens Residents' Association in reference to the Royal Free Hospital's planning application Ref 2023/3103 - Replacement of chillers and associated work.

While we welcome the replacement of aging equipment at the RFH, which has plagued our neighbourhood with excessive noise for the past three years, we are concerned about several aspects of this application, and therefore ask that it be refused. Our concerns:

- Noise from the hospital site has been increasing over the past few years. For the past three summers some residents have found it impossible to have windows open or make use of their outside space because of the excessive noise from the RFH cooling equipment. It took the RFH years to determine the cause of the latest issue and it is only sporadically responsive to complaints from local residents. We are concerned that the same could happen with the new equipment. We would like to see a clear plan to mitigate any noise issues that might arise before the new chillers are installed.
- Our Residents Association is part of an Environmental Liaison group run by the RFH. In a meeting in May we were assured that we would be told in advance of any new planning applications before they were submitted to Camden Planning. This did not happen in the case of this application.
- The External Plant Noise Assessment that has been submitted to support the application is flawed and insufficient. Although the study may conform to recommended guidance by measuring noise levels close to the RFH, it is well-known that noise from the roof can be heard as far off as Hampstead Heath (this is the case this week). Some of the homes in our road look directly across at the RFH's roof, and the sound travels unimpeded to our homes. The RFH conducted studies in 2022 that clearly demonstrated that noise levels generated by its cooling system are too high in Hampstead Hill Gardens and recommended steps to be taken. (We can provide a copy of this report if appropriate.)

Given these issues we do not believe that the current plan is adequate, and we ask that you refuse the application until the RFH conducts a more appropriate noise assessment; clarifies steps that will be taken to prevent a similar situation with the new equipment; and more consistently addresses the current noise issue.

Thank you,
Audrey Mandela
Chair
Hampstead Hill Gardens Residents' Association