

From: Peter Bloxham

Sent: 21 September 2023 18:59

To: Planning

Subject: planning and listed building applications ref 2023/2510/P and 2023/2653/L

Re: Composite Planning and Listed Building Applications (*Composite 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 (formerly Travelodge) (now reference 2023/2510/P and (listed building) 2023/2653/L), originally Labtech application 2021/ 2954/ P)

Dear Sirs,

Please register this as additional grounds for objection to the Composite Applications.

The recent news of the financial problems of Birmingham Council provides a vivid illustration of the pressures on local government funding deriving in large part from over a decade of austerity and hostile central government policies. It is therefore natural that local authorities should seek creative ways of raising funds and be tempted to support schemes which might generate a financial benefit.

However the need and desire to generate monies cannot justify departing from application of the Council's own policies (as well as other applicable policies), or provide any exception from the requirement to make reasonable, balanced and proportionate decisions on matters which give rise to the prospect of the council receiving funds or other benefits.

In the case of the Composite Applications, it is hard to see how (to cite just a few of the problems a grant of approval for the Composite Applications would cause) the permanent damage to the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, the listed buildings forming part of the sites the subject of the Composite Applications and, more generally, to central London and its views could be justified on the basis of the possible level of eventual financial benefit that might accrue to Camden, together with the contingent prospect of a relatively small increase in residential provision, particularly bearing in mind the poor quality of the new accommodation proposed.

At a meeting in 2022 Camden officers made plain that they had concluded that the applicant's 2021 application was not capable of being approved in its then current form.

The applicant has made very few changes to its proposals and has admitted that the Composite Applications are substantially unchanged from the revised 2021 application. The applicant has not done enough to convert an application rightly dubbed by the Council as incapable of approval into one which merits consideration, let alone approval.

Many thanks

Regards

Peter Bloxham