

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2023/3870/P	Anna Rowe	13/11/2023 17:20:32	OBJ	The Brunswick Centre, Proposed Hotel Planning Application reference No 2023/3870/P and 2023/3971/L

I write to object to this proposal in the strongest terms, for the following reasons:

1. This area is characterised by the existence of numerous traditional, long-established hotels, such as the Imperial, the President and Holiday Inn. Speaking as a worker in a historic local pub, I know first-hand that these hotels are significant local employers and economic drivers for the area, with their residents and staff forming the basis of our trade. This proposal is for cheap, low-quality accommodation that will undercut existing hotels, which I believe will be detrimental to the local economy. I am not convinced that economy travellers can be counted on to spend significantly in local pubs and restaurants. Neither am I convinced that this proposal will create much in the way of jobs for local people. The business model set out by the proposed operators, Whitbread, describes minimal staffing, internet-enabled check-in processes, zero-hours cleaning jobs and contracted-out services. This should not be confused with the provision of meaningful local employment. Against a background of a hospitality industry in crisis, I believe Camden Council has an obligation to support the existing business community and local employers, not make trading conditions even more challenging.

2. I live on the top floor of Foundling Court, directly adjacent to one of the lift cores. As the roof of this building is the ceiling over my head, I am deeply alarmed to learn that it is proposed to cover our entire roof area with solar panels and to locate a plant room directly on top of my flat. The plan is also to route the hotel's ventilation ducts via the existing lift core, which is directly opposite my kitchen window. I am profoundly anxious about the prospect of constant mechanical noise and continual vibration being introduced into my living environment. When a pigeon walks across the roof, it is audible in the flat below, so it would take very little sound to inflict intolerable disturbance. The threat to my health and wellbeing is unacceptable and I would furthermore suggest that this development breaches my leaseholder's right to the peaceful occupation and quiet enjoyment of my home.

3. Flat-roofed properties are known to be vulnerable to roof damage and water ingress. As a result, they are notoriously difficult to mortgage and/or insure and can be tricky to sell. One cannot be sure that the presence of heavy plant and solar panels will not cause long-term damage to the roof or make it more difficult to repair if the need arises - not to mention the potential to damage the roof during installation. I would go as far as to say that this proposal threatens to compromise the value of my property.

4. The fact that all the energy generated by covering our entire rooftop space with solar panels would be used solely in the service of the hotel, and preclude us from installing our own solar generating equipment at a future date is a particular insult, given the exceptionally poor energy rating of the building as a whole and its current wasteful and costly heating and hot water system that is no longer fit for purpose and in desperate need of updating.

5. According to Cindex, ninety of the Brunswick Centre's 400-odd homes are classed as sheltered housing. For this, and other reasons, the estate can be said to accommodate a disproportionate number of vulnerable people, of all ages, with a wide range of mental and physical health needs. I count myself among this number. This is already a noisy and polluted place to live, with exceptionally poor acoustic insulation, sound from the busy shopping centre travelling long distances and an active night-time economy all around. It is going to be

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miserable to live on top of a building site for two years and people who predominantly stay indoors all day will have least resilience against the inevitable increase in noise pollution brought about by this development.

3. Beyond the obvious concerns about drilling and construction noise, residents are concerned about a remarkably wide range of sources of potential noise pollution, in addition to that which we already tolerate. For example, depending on the location of their home, residents are already disturbed by night-time deliveries to Waitrose or Tesco. Even though these delivery points are apparently concealed, the sound of trolley wheels and lorry engines travel extraordinarily far in this hard-paved environment, echoing above the shopping centre and passing through several floors of the estate. The type of traveller that this hotel aims to attract is likely to make use of economy night-time flights, which arrive and depart outside the normal hours of public transport provision, so that those of us that live next to pavements or above the proposed entrance to the hotel envision continual disturbance from Ubers coming and going at all hours, with running engines and slamming doors. It has been pointed out that the grating sound of wheeled suitcases passing our windows on narrow concrete pavements will be incessant. Our local pubs are obliged to close outside areas after 9.00 pm, out of consideration for local residents, but this proposal will see parties of excited chattering travellers gathering under our windows at all hours. And the proposed entrance to the hotel, in the covered walkway between Marchmont Street and the shopping centre is in no way large enough to accommodate milling groups of travellers and their luggage without blocking the ordinary flow of pedestrians, prams and wheelchairs.

4. It is profoundly alarming to think of anyone cutting into our building. The Brunswick is Grade 2-listed structure (Listing Number, 1246230). Nationally, we are seeing the effects of concrete deterioration in schools and other public buildings of this period and the Brunswick's concrete is not young. The building was a radical and experimental structure and, while it is much-loved, it is already riddled with difficulties, with major structural repairs urgently required. Noise travels through the concrete an astonishing distance. It is worrying to imagine what the excessive vibration of cutting into it will do, or to know what long-term structural problems might be unleashed. As Stuart Tappin has shown, the risks to the structure are potentially catastrophic and the application documents show the proposed measures of mitigation to be utterly inadequate. Post-Grenfell, the need to be mindful of the consequences of interfering with the architecture and configuration of housing blocks should be a priority.

Mr. Tappin notes: "The structural report by Heyne Tillett Steel shows the majority of the existing reinforced concrete slab at level -1 will be removed. They propose to strengthen some of the retained reinforced concrete columns to address the possible buckling that may result from an increase in the height of the columns. There is no mention of any assessment of the structural implications arising from the removal of the diaphragm action currently provided by the slab at level -1, and the detachment of the shear walls from the slab at this level. Any implications for the overall stability of the building is a fundamentally important structural issue. A clear response is needed to justify the proposed structural changes and confirm that there will be no structural issues for the overall structure is required. Without this the application should be rejected." (Stuart Tappin, engineer, letter to Charlotte Meynell of LB Camden 21 October 2023.)

5. In short, this proposal appears to contain not a single advantage to residents - only serious risks and intolerable nuisance. Over this weekend, residents went door to door to petition the entire estate about the proposal. Not everyone was in at the time, but based on everyone that answered the door, but we were able in a short time to gather 154 signatures of objection, with just one single person positively in favour of the development. We haven't asked for this and we cannot see a single benefit to be had. I am born and bred in

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Camden but I have come to the conclusion that this development poses an existential threat to our health, homes and way of life here. Along with all my neighbours, I call on Camden Council to reject this absurd proposal out of hand.
