
From: Samantha da Soller [REDACTED]
Sent: 28 November 2023 22:44
To: Planning
Subject: Planning Application - 2023/3420/L

Application number 2023/3420/L - Adding comments to my previous objection on same application, 2 Waterhouse Square, 140 Holborn, London EC1N 2ST

Please find below further comments following the objection I filed on 16 September 2023:

My second submission follows the recent amendment filed by the 2 Waterhouse Sq project team asking for planning permission to use one of the future commercial units as a bar.

This additional filing is shocking for a number of reasons:

- the voice of local residents had been entirely ignored by the developers for months - from the moment they applied until 19 September when they finally accepted to have a meeting. This was despite the recommendation they received months ago from our local Councillor to engage with the local community and despite being given the relevant contact details to establish such connections. Until 19 Sep, their consultation was limited to market traders / business interests and they hid behind an erroneous description of our local area by Camden Council (describing it as a mostly commercial area) to ignore the reality of our neighbourhood as mostly a residential area when submitting their re-development plans.

- After the intervention of our local Councillor, two meetings were organised with the local residents on 19 Sep and 16 Oct where residents expressed their thoughts, notably in relation to the future use of commercial units. They clearly expressed their desire to have retail units which could fulfil their needs as well as those of the commuters who might be working in the redeveloped building. Local residents also clarified their concerns in relation to the future retail units which were three-fold:

1. Potential disturbance on residents' life, especially noise pollution during out of office hours (evenings and week-ends) as locals - which include many families with children whose windows will look directly into the bar - already have to endure very high level of noise at unduly hours from the Argyle and Christopher Hatton's pubs;
2. Potential rise in anti-social behaviour and insecurity in the area (based on previous security issues which have plagued the local area and seriously affected our local area community; these issues have required police intervention on a number of occasions as well as the removal of benches by Camden Council on the nearby square to come under relatively better control); and
3. Potential negative impact on the wellbeing of the most vulnerable members of our local community (notably those residing at the Lodge - managed by St Mungo - located only a few metres away from 2 Waterhouse Sq). Given a planning permission for a bar to open next door would not only appear as careless and cynical but could also have very damaging consequences for these local residents.

- The project team on 19 Sep and 16 Oct (on the latter date, it included David Hutton - CO-RE; Simon Whittaker - ORMS; Peter Woodward - WTP; Alex Neal - Gerald Eve and Duncan Hepburn - LCA) all heard the thoughts and concerns expressed by the local residents as described above and they adopted a very re-assuring tone, implying that they had no plans to add to local residents' worries and jeopardise the existing but somewhat fragile harmony within our diverse local community.

Therefore for the project team to file an amendment to obtain the permission to use one of their business units as a bar - only a few days after our second encounter - and not to advise us directly about it when we had been in direct email communications with them is a complete breach of the trust which we had painfully tried to establish over the few previous weeks. This really is not a good sign for what is to come, neither for the local residents, nor for Camden Council, as it puts into question all the re-assurances we received from the project team over the last two months and makes us seriously doubt now their sincerity on all topics, be it on the potential loss of light, the carbon footprint of the project, traffic management, road access to residential areas for emergency services and contractors, or management of air and noise pollution during the forthcoming works.

I sincerely hope that the planning team will realise how inappropriate and unfit for the local neighbourhood this planning permission request is and I urge you to reject it.

Best wishes,

Samantha da Soller