
From: Catherine Mayer [REDACTED]
Sent: 30 November 2023 10:50
To: Planning
Subject: Urgent re planning application number 2023/3420/L

Application number 2023/3420/L

For addition to my original objection to the same application relating to 2 Waterhouse Square, 140 Holborn, London EC1N 2ST

To Camden's planning service,

Among the many alarming aspects of this planning proposal—and its conduct—is the extraordinary gaslighting of local residents by the developers and other bodies pushing for the development. This sits within the context of Camden Council itself failing residents at when it comes to the absolute basics of ensuring wellbeing—clean air, sanitary conditions, security, and reasonable noise levels.

This development has been proposed on the wholly false premise that the area is predominantly occupied by commercial and retail space when in fact it is densely populated by full-time residents immediately adjacent to the site and within a wide radius around it.

The developers originally failed to consult with most residents, including those most immediately impacted by the plans, despite having claimed to do so. When they were alerted to their “mistake”, they blamed the failure on a contractor they hired for a leaflet drop. However, this now looks like a knowing mischaracterisation given that their November 2023 planning statement repeats the calumny as follows: 3.10 The surrounding area is predominantly commercial office and retail properties, characterised with a mix of contemporary and periodic historic architectural styles reflecting the Hatton Garden Conservation Area and the nearby Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

Indeed, the developers seem to be ignoring every point of information or concern raised by residents in our communications and in person at the meetings of 19 September and 16 October. These meetings took place only after residents protested vigorously about the absence of such consultations.

The latest sign of apparent bad faith is the application by the developer to place a bar within one of the proposed commercial units.

Residents have made crystal clear to the developers that there this is the last sort of enterprise needed or wanted in proximity to the square created by Beauchamp Street, Brooke Street, Dorrington Street and Brooke's Market. The reasons for this are well documented:

- A history on the square (three quarters of which is bounded by high-density residential accommodation) of late-night antisocial behaviour including violence that led to a successful local partnership between residents and the police to have the seating removed from that area. Calls to

the police in relation to such disturbances reduced after the removal of the seating from 69 in 2020 to 19 in 2022.

- The presence on the square of the Lodge, a residential home run by St Mungo's for long-term homeless people with the aim of rehabilitating them into the community. Many arrive with alcohol problems.
- Exacerbation of the noise pollution to people in all the adjoining buildings.

Residents have made clear in their dealings with the developers that they are not opposed to development per se, but that the development should be in keeping with Camden's aspirations to reach net zero and should address urgent issues with poor environment rather than adding to them. The November 2023 report on the Active Travel Zone states that the air in the immediate area of the development fails the annual mean objective for NO2 air pollution. The report then proposes, ludicrously, to solve the problem by installing low-level planters.

Such a proposal ignores the source of key pollutants—including emissions from the stallholders on Leather Lane, who every day send smoke into residential properties, pour cooking oil down drains and across pavements and yet are cossetted by Camden—and the toxins that the proposed demolitions works and attendant increased traffic will send into the air.

There is also no sign of a workable traffic plan if the development in any form goes ahead, with the first draft seen by residents giving every indication that it would be a disaster—and potentially life-threatening. The scheme described would make living in the area not only difficult but actively dangerous to health, block access to emergency vehicles, bring about a substantial increase in motor vehicle emissions and, as ever, inflict yet more noise, disrupting not only those who live in the area but work here.

I urge the outright rejection of the application for the bar and that everyone with a role in deciding on the outcome of the wider proposal withholds consent unless and until the developers fully and satisfactorily address the all too real concerns of residents about their plans and their execution.

All the best,

Catherine Mayer

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