

Re: Planning Application Number 2023/3777/P

The Residents' Association wish to register the strongest possible objection to this retrospective planning application for the installation of an air-conditioning unit in the lightwell shared by the 36 flats comprising Russell Chambers and [24-28 Bloomsbury Way](#), offices which have recently been converted to shared workspace by new tenants of the building, Runway East. We believe granting this application will greatly impact the quality of our lives as well as undermine the value and utility of the Council's asset (Russell Chambers is owned by Camden Council).

The Residents' Association objects to this application on the grounds of:

- 1. Excessive noise generated by the equipment.** This equipment is already in situ and has been tested and left running all weekend, so we have experience of the amount of noise generated and the impact on the residents.
- 2. Location of the equipment.** The air-conditioning unit is situated on the ground floor of the lightwell. Any noise created in the lightwell, even of a low to moderate level, is magnified many times over, because the lightwell acts as an amplifier as the noise reverberates throughout. It is the same effect as speaking through a megaphone. We have had recent experience of this during the refurbishment work taking place at [24-28 Bloomsbury Way](#). On no account should the air-conditioning unit be located in this position unless the applicant wishes to maximise the noise and disturbance for the residents. If the applicant had chosen to locate the unit on the roof of the building, as is often the case with office blocks, it is likely that the noise impact would have been less severe for the residents of Russell Chambers.
- 3. Effect on Residents.** The flats at Russell Chambers are designed so that the bedrooms are all facing onto the lightwell so that noise is kept to a minimum and people can sleep undisturbed. This will no longer be possible if the air-conditioning unit is operational. There are night-workers living in Russell Chambers, who have to sleep during the daytime. Many residents work from home and use their spare bedroom as an office. They will no longer have a quiet place to work.
- 4. Hours of operation.** The Residents' Association is sceptical of any claims the applicant may make to limit the use of the air-conditioning unit to office hours. Our experience has shown that the applicant has been unreliable when making promises to residents. Examples are that the unit has been unintentionally left on throughout one weekend when testing was taking place. Also our experience with the lighting of the office building is that lights have been left on 24/7 for many weeks despite requests that the lights should be turned off. We note also that there was a failure to adhere to Camden's regulations concerning hours during which noisy building work can take place, until reminded of these rules by residents.
- 5. Mental pressure on residents.** We would respectfully remind the council that these 36 flats are our homes. Anything which makes life problematic is something from which we cannot escape and it will affect us 24 hours per day. There are residents who suffer from mental health problems and constant noise from which they cannot gain respite will be detrimental to the residents' mental health. We urge you to bear this in mind when deciding this application.

For all these reasons the Russell Chambers Residents' Association would urge Camden Council to refuse this application.

Regards

Russell Chambers Residents Association