

Application No:	Consultees Name:	Received:	Comment:	Response:
2023/5456/P	Rochester Conservation area	08/02/2024 21:51:27	OBJ	<p>South Kentish Town CAAC were invited consultees and respondents for the 2014 application for 14-16 Rochester Mews. We would have preferred the existing high-roof garage to be retained and refurbished. However in his report to Committee, planning officer at the time, Charles Thuairé approved the proposal, stating that “the replacement business space is considered adequate and viable as a B1/B8 unit in terms of quality and quantity”. The applicants proceeded with the scheme, diminishing the garage roof space and creating five well-lit units of accommodation above. The owners have since gained permission to for the ground floor premises as class E (ie almost any) use. We object to the new proposal to convert the ground floor into houses.</p> <p>Rochester Mews has a long commercial history, with garages and workshops on either side. It is adjacent to Rochester Conservation area at north end and close at the south end and was built in 1830s as the mews to villa houses on Camden Road. The Rochester Conservation Area Statement says of Rochester Place “The narrow street is paved in rectangular granite sets and is characterised by small scale intimate development, containing a mix of light industrial and residential uses.”</p> <p>For 100 years Hilger optical equipment works stood on the south side with a fine row of north-facing workshop windows on the ground floor. The company offices were on the north east corner of Rochester Place with Rochester Mews.</p> <p>The proposal site lies between several sites with Article 4 direction, restraining conversion of offices to housing (UK Dept. Levelling Up letter to Camden BC, February 2023), in Rochester Place and on Camden Road. We presume the workspace at 14-16 Rochester Place was not included by the Council because it was not in operation at the time. But the intention of continuing mixed commercial and residential presence along this axis through Article 4 direction is evident.</p> <p>The neighbourhood has exceeded its provision of new housing through development of the 250 units on the Hilger site (79 Camden Road/128 St Pancras Way), a building far larger than the nearby Council housing blocks (which have open green and play areas) on the St Pancras Road estate. The Council has policies to maintain public service buildings and the daytime economy, to which the garage property at No 16 would contribute.</p> <p>The way forward is to make the internal aspect of the space attractive and to market it at a price level acceptable for small businesses. The developers designed the space and have gained considerable return in the housing above. The applicants should now respect the 2014 application by making the ground floor work to everyone's benefit.</p>