

Flat C, 170 North Gower Street, LONDON, NW1 2ND

Date: 11.04.2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: (ref 20231/5048/P)

I wish to lodge a strong objection to the proposed ill thought out works applied for at 168 North Gower Street. I would like it put on record that the works were not properly advertised and it was only through a letter from a firm of surveyors that we became aware of the application. If I and other residents at 170 had known about the earlier application to 168, I for one would have objected to that for the same reasons as I set out below.

The existing HMO is already putting an excessive strain on the building and is over burdening the council provided services. Any additional occupancy is ill considered as it will increase the pressure on already stretched council services. The refuse system is inadequate and bags are piled up in the streets on corners; rats can regularly be seen, attracted by the refuse. The developer/applicant admits that the kitchen space “ is currently undersized for the amount of occupants - and is located deep inside the plan of the building away from any natural light or ventilation”. Surely an internal reconfiguration would be sufficient to address this, (as well as the landlord not trying to maximise his profits by packing in bodies), without poorly considered character altering extensions to the rear.

Not only are the roof terraces ill thought out, but counter intuitively, the green roofs suggested are going to have a negative effect on human health and air quality by restricting light and the circulation of air between already cramped and over heating buildings. Whilst they superficially suggest green roofs increase biodiversity, this is mere “greenwashing” there are better ways this can be achieved and for the reasons set out below, the proposals

will adversely impact on human health and neighbourhood amenity. There must be a policy which plans to enable cleaner air , and improving or at least maintaining quality in the city as a whole and Camden are obliged to adhere to this?

The lightwells are essential to the buildings' and the street's air circulation and importantly, to the flat occupants and their neighbours' opportunity to ventilate. The proposed works will severely restrict and remove the right to air and ventilation of living space. For the council to condone more people living in dark, light deficient buildings is an unhealthy regressive step. The planning design & access statement says this has been considered, but I suggest it is ill conceived and will not only darken the interior of 168, but will significantly adversely impact 170 North Gower Street.

The developers are admitting that the existing 168 is cramped and over occupied and yet an HMO was granted. This is a chance for Camden to show it knows what it is about and reduce over crowding. The suggestion that the area of "green roof" is proposed making the units far more effective in terms of energy use, is incorrect, it will lead to over heating and lack of ventilation.

It is untrue to say that there will not be a reduction in light, this is a Listed Building, light is limited by the character and design of the windows and light wells are there to provided air circulation and ventilation (both of which are in limited supply in a city in any event). The adjacent buildings will of course be impacted very heavily by the loss of light and outlook. It affects health, mental well-being as well as the property itself becoming affected by increased dampness if natural daylight is restricted. The integrity and character of the Listed buildings will be affected.

The applicant suggests that Strategic objective 1 has been considered and met by these proposals, I disagree. They do not preserve and enhance the borough's unique character and appearance.

It is mere puff to state that "Strategic objective 2 has been considered and are met by these proposals in so far as they further contribute to the provision of a secure, safe, socially mixed and balanced local area with strong, cohesive and resilient communities to help reduce inequality in the borough, while supporting the provision of the accessible facilities and services needed to meet community needs by increasing accommodation on the principle entrance level ". It will add to the stretched facilities and amenities.

Strategic objective 3 has not been adequately considered or met by these proposals in so far as they do not provide additional residential accommodation that meets the housing needs of existing and future residents in terms of number, affordability, quality, type of property and mix of dwelling sizes. It actually will decrease the quality of housing on this street for the lack of light, ventilation, adverse affect on air quality and the pressure on services like refuse, vermin control.

Strategic objective 7 has not been adequately considered and is not met by these proposals in so far as they definitely do not contribute to the promotion of high quality, safe and sustainably designed buildings, places and streets and preserve and enhance the unique character of Camden and the distinctiveness of our conservation areas and our other historic and valued buildings, spaces and places. It will result in a deterioration to the dwelling's character making it and its neighbours adjacent and to the rear dark and poorly ventilated.

The Applicant says that Strategic objective 8 has been considered and met, the proposal does not meet it. It is not improved or relevant.

Strategic objectives 9, 10 and Policy CC1 have not been properly considered and is certainly *NOT* met by these proposals. They decrease air quality, decrease building ventilation, leading to use of more air conditioning and air purifying units as a substitute for opening windows and letting in light. They put pressure on numbers and will increase energy use at 168 as well as at neighbours.

In summer heat waves, which everyone accepts are becoming a threat to health , especially respiratory, occupants will overheat and bake and in winter, shadow and lack of ventilation will lead to increased heating and mildew. Both of which are bad for energy consumption and health.

Mention of water run off mitigation and increased green space and improved biodiversity is untrue, if they were serious about their carbon footprint and the effect on the locality and living conditions they would recycle grey water and not be suggesting UPVC rainwater goods. I was of the belief that Listed buildings had to use cast iron down pipes etc?

In reference to Camden Local Plan (2017) Policies: Policy A1: The proposed works will give rise to adverse impacts to neighbours, as already articulated.

I would be grateful if you would give careful consideration to these objections and look forward to hearing how my concerns will be addressed?

Yours faithfully

Amanda Stembridge