
From: Helen Mc Murray
Sent: 21 February 2024 02:16
To: Planning
Subject: Planning application 24-28 Bloomsbury Way - 2023/5351/P - Roof terrace

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To: Camden Planning Dept
From: South Bloomsbury Tenants & Residents' Assoc

I am writing on behalf of the South Bloomsbury Tenants & Residents' Assoc. to strongly object to this application on the grounds that it will impact negatively on the quality of life and amenity of the residents of Russell Chambers.

Any new application for an ancillary use to a building which adjoins a residential block must take account of the potential impact of noise on the lives of residents, who in the case of Russell Chambers residents, have until now enjoyed a vital degree of insulation from unnecessary noise in their homes.

Measures to ensure this were seen as being necessary at the time the mansion blocks were designed and built in the Victorian era by arranging the individual blocks around lightwells so that residents could enjoy some quiet amenity in this busy part of central London. In order to preserve this state of affairs, it is absolutely crucial that any potential new sources of noise, even low-level ambient, is not picked up in the confined space within the lightwells where it will be considerably amplified and intrusive.

The plans indicate that the terrace will be sited adjoining and facing the lightwell at the centre of Russell Chambers. It is difficult to imagine a worse place to locate it where sound will not only be drawn into the central lightwell but probably into all three of them, reverberating around these confined spaces, unacceptably undermining residents' amenity.

Despite the proposal to install a noise barrier fence, it is surely something of a leap of faith to suppose that sound will not be heard by residents living closest to the terrace at the upper storeys, or that it will not filter downwards and around, undermining residents' quality of life. It is also difficult to have any confidence that the restricted hours of operation to working hours will not be contravened on occasion.

Furthermore, the barrier fence will undoubtedly reduce the amount of light and precious glimpse of sky that the lightwells were precisely designed to provide, creating instead a gloomy outlook and a sense of being 'hemmed in'.

Should the application be granted, it will result in a huge deterioration in the quality of life for residents, both families and individuals who include children, people working from home,

those who are chronically ill, older people, and night-time workers who need a quiet environment in which to sleep during daytime.

We believe it is incumbent on Camden to ensure that residents' health and mental wellbeing is viewed as important now as it was considered to be when the mansion block was appropriately designed and built to meet their needs. It would be unjust to allow the applicant's one-sided desire to achieve higher rental values to trump the essential needs of the community in Russell Chambers.

We believe that the application fails on the guidance set out in the NPPF: Noise Policy Statement for England 3.1 [Reference 1], states (paragraph 185) **where planning policies and decisions should aim to:**

- ... avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life;
- Identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason.

Camden's Local Plan states:

6.91 Noise generating uses...will likely have a greater impact on amenity when the background noise level is lower or in areas where noise sensitive uses such as residential developments co-exist with other uses.

Kind regards,

Helen Mc Murrery,