

From: CHRISTINE HANCOCK
Sent: 16 December 2024 06:06
To: Planning
Subject: 2024/4953/P 33-35 Jamestown Road.

Dear Madam/Sir,

Full Planning permission. New Mixed Redevelopment

33-35 Jamestown Road, London , NW1 7BY . 2024/4953/P.

I wish to object to and to comment on the proposed redevelopment in Jamestown Road and Arlington Road, currently applying for full planning permission.

My comments and objections are as follows:

Main objections are :

- The height and design of the proposed development, which is inappropriate for the local character and setting
- Much of the use being for student accommodation when student numbers in higher education are falling. The balance is incorrect between social housing and student housing.
- The impact on traffic and road safety
- The noise and disturbance to a residential area both during construction and in its use, including the commercial units.

1. Height and design of the proposed development

The height of the proposed development is such that it will dwarf many of the neighbouring buildings. This is mainly a residential area with relatively low-level buildings. In particular the public house on the corner of Jamestown Road and

Arlington Road will remain in situ but the proposed 6 and 7 storeys plus plant at roof level, will be much higher than the pub itself as well as other adjacent and nearby buildings. I suggest that the proposed buildings should be no higher than the existing pub, in order to retain the pub's landmark quality. In addition the redevelopment on Arlington Road will be opposite The Glass Building, an iconic architectural designed (Piers Gough) stylish 20th century building. The design, size and height of the proposed development are out of keeping with the existing neighbourhood.

The suggested design is of solid building blocks of vertical flat facade, produced by this company in many local developments. It fails to reflect the wealth of architecture as represented by the houses in Gloucester Crescent, Jamestown Road, Gloucester Terrace, Arlington Road and Inverness Street. Outside of daylight hours, the sheer flat brick facades will present foreboding and intimidating environment for a residential area. Previous Camden responses to applications in this area have been rejected if not sensitive to the present character and setting of the area.

The design fails to take into account the residential nature of the area between Jamestown Road and Inverness Street. The character and setting of this residential area will be lost by this massive construction.

2. Student Numbers

The overall design presupposes constant and possibly increased numbers of students living in Camden for tertiary education. I believe that this is an incorrect assumption:

Both the Government and the Tertiary and post graduate Education Sector have now accepted the October 2024 Report (report 179) from the Higher Education Policy Institute that

Reductions in student demand in England, which is already affecting the higher education sector will cause serious problems as the number of 18-year-olds in the population declines after 2030

In addition

- More UK students are preferring alternative pathways to professional qualifications such as apprenticeships.

- More UK tertiary education students are living at a family home to reduce the escalating costs of tertiary education.
- Increasing numbers of tertiary education students are learning from the 'covid' experience. Living further out of central London is less expensive if the student does not travel every day.

For the last thirty years universities have masked the impact of fewer UK students by recruiting significant numbers of overseas students. Vice chancellors now accept that far fewer overseas students will be undertaking tertiary education in the UK and particularly in London.

There is, therefore, considerable evidence, and acceptance by both government and Higher Education bodies, that overall student numbers are likely to reduce, both from UK applicants and from overseas students. Recent articles both in the press (The "I" independent, 6.12.24) and in official reports (eg The Office of Students), report, that some universities are in 'crisis' and that some will likely close. This includes universities in London. I therefore question the need for this quantity of PBSA in this proposed redevelopment.

3. Inaccurate drawings

The existing drawings are inaccurate in that they do not show the entrance to the garage of The Glass Building (226 Arlington Road). This may be a problem in relation to the construction period when the site entrance on Arlington road is being used by heavy lorries etc. Traffic and congestion will worsen.

4. Loss of light

Such large buildings close to existing dwellings will reduce light in general and particularly sunlight to both nearby Arlington Road and Jamestown Road houses and their terraces. Camden Council has changed Jamestown Road traffic flows and is 'greening' the street to encourage more pavement style cafes, dining etc. The height of this proposal will plunge the area into becoming a non sunlit chasm. These two new buildings will also affect the privacy of existing housing, both adjacent and those opposite in Arlington Road

5. New uses of the proposed buildings

I welcome the social housing, and especially for social rent, but I question the proposal of 187 units for purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA). and whether more of the site should be used for affordable housing. There should be some certainty by legal or otherwise mechanism that such property cannot be converted into Airbnb or similar tourist accommodation if or when it is not used by students. At the moment, the area has a mass of Airbnb

6. Flexible Commercial units.

Concerning the introduction of commercial units on the ground floor. There are other commercial units remaining vacant in Camden many months/years after their completion so I question their viability. One possibility is that they extend the array of restaurants and bars along Jamestown Road into the more residential area. This will affect the neighbourhood in terms of noise and disturbance, particularly late at night. I request that consideration be given to any licences awarded and that these would not be given late night, or without the requirement for 'doormen' as is the current licence for the Public House on the corner of Jamestown Road and Arlington Road.

7. Access for people with disabilities.

I accept that Camden should be encouraging fewer car drivers. No allowance is made, however, for parking for people with disabilities, either in the social housing or the student accommodation. This would appear to significantly disadvantage those with disabilities who depend on motorised transport for their everyday life, whether for living or as visitors.

8. Impact of noise from plant equipment.

I welcome the proposal's inclusion of air source heat pumps as an energy source. However the plant equipment is planned for the top floor. This raises the question as to whether there is likely to be noise intrusion from plant to adjacent housing especially in the summer when windows will be open and people on their terraces. Experience is beginning to show that air source pumps installed above ground level has a higher noise impact on the neighbourhood. Given the size of the plot for development, would not ground based heat pumps be the correct answer?

9. Impact on traffic parking and road safety.

I recognise that the proposals provide no car parking and residents parking will not be available to the new residents. There is however very little opportunity for visitor parking, as the limited street parking is already congested.

Camden has introduced traffic calming measures which significantly challenge access to vehicles from Jamestown Road to Parkway. This development will worsen access for emergency vehicles, in particular during rush hours when the roads are already blocked.

10. The application has considerable 'supporting documents'.

Despite the vast number of supporting documents, many of these outline what the planning obligations suggest or the possibilities, but do not clearly state which are commitments in this proposed development. For example the sustainability documentation recognises training opportunities during construction but there do not appear to be concrete commitments by the developers to train local people, even though there are statistics included in the documentation that show that there is a higher proportion of non-working people in Camden. Equally the HIA is notably over 'optimistic', in its interpretation and assumptions.

11. During Construction.

Camden has for over twenty years been attempting to achieve a balance in the area for local people's transport requirements and that of through traffic required for people to access work opportunities to the south of the Borough. The area continues to be fairly congested of traffic and the construction related traffic will add considerably to this congestion at the junction of Jamestown Road and Arlington Road. This traffic will increase noise and air pollution.

It is unclear which entrances to the site will be used as access points, for heavy lorries etc and deliveries. Turning space in the roads is limited. There is likely to be considerable disruption for local residents and supply vehicles for local businesses during the demolition and the construction phase.

12. Learning from the Grenfell Inquiry

I cannot see that the design reflects the lessons demonstrated in the Grenfell Inquiry Report. In particular to have multi occupancy of taller buildings, with only a single staircase / fire escape seems irresponsible.

In consideration of all the above I am firmly of the belief that Camden must review its support to these proposals for social housing and to reflect on the lessons of the Grenfell inquiry, it does not need further student housing and the development should better reflect the character and setting of the area.

In summary my main concerns are

- The design of the building especially its height. The character and setting of this residential area will be lost by this massive construction.
- The balance between social housing and student accommodation
- The impact on traffic and road safety
- The likely disturbance and noise for residents both during construction and once the development is in use.

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