

OBJECTIONS TO 154-160 ARLINGTON ROAD NW1

REF: CEX0200806/ PEX0200805

We object strongly to the elevational treatment of House No.s 156-160 of this application as follows:

- 1 The replication of the Neo-Georgian (prob. 1930s) facade of No. 162 Arlington Road across what is effectively a block of flats is not an appropriate use of facsimile design and will have a detrimental effect on the setting of 162 and its mirrored neighbour No. 164 (these two houses have been designed as a pair adjacent to the red brick double-fronted end house No. 166).
- 2 Whilst the horizontal proportions of openings have been copied over from No. 162, the vertical rhythm (placement of windows in relation to doorcases, party walls etc.) has not been adhered to, resulting in a fundamental distortion of the original. Indeed the subdivision of the proposed blocks into flats (and their internal plans) bear no relation whatsoever to the facade design, acknowledging the fact that this is badly conceived facadism and as such neither preserves nor enhances the character of the Conservation Area (eg. door within facade of 156 is for use of flat within elevation of 154).
- 3 It will be impossible to provide the fine glazing bars (transoms, mullions and meeting rails) that gives the 'traditional' timber framed box-sash window its sense of proportion, lightness and elegance within this design. This is due to the necessity for double glazing, in particular the new Part L of the Building Regulations which came into effect in April makes it impossible for facsimile sash windows to meet aesthetic criteria over heat loss criteria in new buildings. The facades of 156-160 are drawn as exact copies of 162. In reality, in view of Building Regulations (modern wall construction, double glazing, air tightness etc.) the resulting buildings will be a pale imitation of No. 162 with none of the grace of the original.
- 4 The materials table does not actually specify that the 'traditional' box sashes will be made of timber. There is also no detailed section to show where the windows will be set in relation to the face of the brickwork (they must be set a brick's depth behind the facade). uPVC is not acceptable within the Conservation Area both for its poorly proportioned framing and for the fact that uPVC framed windows are often set almost flush to the brickwork destroying the apparent depth and shadowing of the facade.

We make the following comments in relation to the front facade of 154:

- 5 The proportioning of openings is poor: the windows of the ground, first and second floors are all of the same height and therefore do not relate to the exaggerated piano nobile of the adjacent proposed block. The reconstituted Portland stone "architraves" (actually spandrel panels) aid this sense of disproportion. The alignment of the top of the 'stone' panels with the adjacent block's parapet results in this feature being given further and undue emphasis and in the attic storey windows of No. 154 being too short.
- 6 Whilst we do not object to the proposed use of reconstituted 'stone' elements per se, their successful integration into the facade design relies upon the details. There is insufficient evidence to show how this is proposed to be achieved (depth of panels, jointing etc.). We believe that the pieces of 'stone' are too large to allow them to be seen as external architraving or mouldings and in this instance will read as flat panels which have been merely 'stuck' on.

In general:

- 7 The rear facades, whilst obviously of subsidiary importance, are extremely monotonous and will not enhance the view from the adjacent public car park nor from Underhill Street. Also the proposed depth of the development may cause loss of amenity and daylight from No.s 162 and 164 Arlington Road.
- 8 We are concerned that the car parking will cause further congestion within Underhill Street (often already completely blocked by cars queuing for space within the car park and by M&S delivery lorries) and Arlington Road. Residents in adjacent houses already suffer considerably from noise and pollution as a result of the existing car park. In order to enter the proposed basement car parking of No.s 154-160 the residents will at times be forced to wait their turn in the M&S car park queue until they get to their turn off! This development should be car free in accordance with the policies contained within the Draft London Plan.
- 9 The proposed pedestrian entrance to the car park within Arlington Road is liable to attract illicit usage and litter and will not enhance the streetscape at ground level.
- 10 The top storey flats are poorly planned and this proposal is likely to result in substandard accommodation in terms of outlook and daylighting.
- 11 Cyclists are inadequately catered for. It is likely that accidents will result from the use of the same ramp for cars and bicycles.