

[REDACTED]

From: Sandy Solomon [REDACTED]
Sent: 26 May 2025 22:16
To: Sam FitzPatrick
Cc: Planning
Subject: Objection to the amended proposal for 105 Judd Street

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I am the owner of 131 Thanet House, almost directly across Thanet Street from 105-121 Judd Street. I am writing to object, in the strongest possible terms, to the proposed amendment to the planning permission extended for the development project there. There are a number of objections, both substantive and procedural.

- 1) To take the procedural first. Having been granted permission for a building for one use, the developers now want approval for a very different use. The shift – from data-driven intellectual activity to active, lab-driven biochemical research—would involve the construction of an additional level, a seventh-story roof plant with five three-metre high chimneys that would not only be ugly to see (and not at all in keeping with the architecture of the building), but would result in even more reduction of light to neighbouring residences. The use would also involve production of a bio-chemical waste, about which more later. These changes are not trivial, but rather fundamental changes to the original plan, and therefore a matter for the full Planning Committee, where community objections can be made and heard in the light of day. For the changes to be waived through like this, to say the very least, risks the extremely unfortunate impression that the company knew what it was doing all along (it has, after all, been advertising the building as “lab ready,” as containing a 60:40 split of lab to office space that was not in the original planning application) and the impression that the Council may have been facilitating, if not colluding in, this deceit. It also creates something of a precedent, a path through Camden planning procedures that other companies might follow in the future. The proposed changes to the plan represent significant, indeed fundamental alterations, not mere amendments to the initial proposal, not “minor material changes.” The changes involve a massive increase of the plant on the roof and 16 level II “safe container” cupboards to remove toxic waste generated by two floors of labs. The proposed changes should go back before the full Planning Committee for consideration. This is a matter for renewed consideration and deliberation, for public disclosure and discussion.
- 2) To turn to the substantive issues, the building as “reimagined” would emit biochemical gases and possibly particulate matter, into the neighbourhood air. The higher “flues” required to avert the worst consequences of these emissions, would sit on top of a seventh-floor plant that would block even more light from the surrounding residential buildings and would substantially change the profile of the building. All of which would represent a further assault to the stated purposes of the Bloomsbury Conservation District, its human-scale and mixed-use development. The community south of Euston Road is a residential neighbourhood where even multi-family residential buildings are of moderate height, where most houses and shops are only a couple of stories high. This part of Bloomsbury is not full of high rises. The building, 105 Judd Street, does not abut Euston Road and is fully within the residential area that was designed for conservation.

It is far from clear that the Council would be able effectively to monitor the nature and extent of the pollution generated by this building, since emissions would vary from day to day. Release of odours, while a constant imposition on neighbours, would be the least of the prospective problems. Toxic air is the real threat. The proposal alleges that because active research is conducted at nearby “hospitals” and “university buildings,” the proposed changes will be nothing extraordinary for the area. The argument does not take into account the location of this building, nestled as it is right next to the flats and houses and small businesses that comprise the Bloomsbury Conservation Area. People are living all around this building unlike the other buildings in which bio-chemical labs operate. The argument that just because this sort of pollution already takes place down the street, we should allow more of it here also seems extraordinary. I, for one, do not want to have potentially toxic gases and possible particulate matter belched out across the street mere feet away from my window—all the worse in summer when the windows much be open for ventilation and temperature regulation. This use represents a threat to our health and well-being, from which threat the planning bodies should be protecting us.

Further, there is no reason why this sort of research should be located here, in the middle, not of a university or hospital campus, but of a residential neighbourhood in central London.

I understand that developers assume certain risks when they decide to invest so heavily in the transformation of buildings on this scale. If developers’ initial projected tenants have fallen through or they think they can extract more revenue from this (transformed) use of the site, *tant pis*: that is a matter for them and not the Council. It is certainly no reason why considerable added risks and potentially crushing damage should be inflicted on those living around the site. The developers should look for alternative tenants and stick to the plans as first approved. Camden should reject this application.

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