

PEH/EC/DP2557

1st June 2010

FAO Ms Amanda Peck
Planning and Public Protection
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Dear Ms Peck,

**87 HOLMES ROAD, KENTISH TOWN, LONDON.
PLANNING APPLICATION REFERENCE 2010/1342/P, LISTED BUILDING
CONSENT APPLICATION REFERENCE 2010/1350/L.**

We write in response to your email received on 27th May regarding the proposal to remove the infant staircase at ground and first floor level of the above property.

There are several reasons why the retention of the infant staircase compromises the operation of the school.

Firstly rooms need to be in excess of 50m² because within the French Educational system it is necessary to have “des coins” or corners that permit organisation for group work. Due to the historic fabric of the building, our client has accepted that several of the rooms will need to be slightly smaller and that these rooms could be reallocated for ICT or group work. However classroom 0.14 is only one of two rooms serving the Primary School on the ground floor that is above 60m² and can accommodate 30 pupils. Without this room the quality of teaching accommodation for the Primary School will be seriously compromised as it will reduce the opportunity for whole class teaching and interaction, which is equally important to group work within the French Curriculum.

It is widely acknowledged by educational practitioners that classrooms which are undersized and inadequate for purpose are detrimental to the learning objectives of pupils; this is because if there is insufficient space to work with the necessary equipment, children become easily distracted. With this in mind, having a majority of undersized rooms will compromise the quality of education that can be delivered at the school.

With regard to the first floor library and quiet area, this space has been designed so that Primary and Secondary pupils can be taught separately. Primary and Secondary school pupils can not share the same space as there are different requirements for each curriculum; for example Primary pupils need to be read to by adults which requires a quiet room which is big enough to accommodate young pupils and adults. If the infant stair is retained the quiet area would only be



37m² which is insufficient space to accommodate library books, associated equipment, adults and children; this space would be rendered entirely ineffective.

In addition, the retention of the infant stair would mean that the main library is reduced by half to 56m²; once this room was equipped with books there would also be little room for this space to be used effectively.

Whilst the architects have tried to reconfigure this space to retain the infant stair, these alternatives do not provide a solution which provides usable space for the school. The retention of the infant stair will prejudice the future occupation of the building by restricting the classroom accommodation to standards that are not suitable to deliver the French Curriculum.

As it stands the scheme proposes the least amount of alterations both internally and externally, that are required in order for the school to function effectively. Whilst reducing the size of one classroom, the library and the quiet room may seem insignificant, when taken as a whole, the overall effect of this on the operation of the school will be considerable.

The key message in PPS5 is to find long term viable uses for vacant historic buildings and the preference is always to re-use them for the purposes for which they were originally designed. Taking into account all of the other constraints on the operation of a modern school curriculum brought about by the listed building's status, the retention of the stairs seriously threatens the viability of the proposed use, which undermines the intentions behind PPS5.

Despite this, as you are aware, our client is keen to secure the necessary planning consents for the site within a short timescale and therefore on this occasion our client is reluctantly prepared to retain the infant staircase. It should be emphasised that these revisions to the scheme are made on a strictly "Without Prejudice" basis as the retention of the stair will seriously compromise the operation of the school and the provision of a high quality educational environment.

We enclose 3 paper copies (A1 and A3) of the following drawings:

- Drawing No 4003 P4 Proposed Ground Floor Layout;
- Drawing No 4004 P4 Proposed First Floor Layout.

Should you wish to discuss the application please contact either Paul Henry or Emma Cleasby at this office.

Yours faithfully

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