

Objection to 2014/1621/P

21a and 22/23 Brownlow Mews

This site and the operation of the company is a controversial local issue. There is a long previous history and problems associated with the business. It should be noted that the operation of the business covers both 21A and 22-23 Brownlow Mews and furthermore that this business is solely responsible for the majority of motor traffic in the Mews. The company is a major transport business and boasts of its expansion. This expansion results in intensification.

The application facilitates the company's operation as a major ("One of the largest on London" – company's website) 24/7 courier and mini cab business. Their application is to turn 21a and 22/23 into a storage and distribution centre (a parcels depot) and control room and call centre. The applicant's documents do not sufficiently explain how they currently use the space available to them, nor how they are proposing it is used should planning permission be granted. There is significant evasion by omission. The claim that there is no expansion is simply not plausible. All one has to do is look at their admitted earlier claims about the business and the claims contained within this application.

The business already attracts an unsuitable amount of traffic. This and any evasion of the permitted hours imposed by the planning inspector will cause further considerable loss of amenity for residents and other users.

The key issue in this application is that if the so-called 'swap' were permitted, the floorspace available for use by this business that is not subject to controls on the permitted hours of operation is significantly increased (since the floorspace at 21a is considerably bigger than that on the ground floor of 22-23). This means more unrestricted floorspace to allow for expansion and intensification and resulting in further loss residential amenity.

In the decision of 22/6/2012 (Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/A/11/ 2167169), the Planning Inspector was clearly concerned about the residential amenity of Mews' residents:

"My greater concern relates to the disturbance which could arise within the street from uncontrolled numbers of employees coming and going from the premises, possibly talking, walking noisily over the cobbles or, despite the appellant's submission that most staff arrive on foot, the use of motorised transport. Smoking breaks in the mews could cause further disturbance. Brownlow Mews is an adopted highway, where people may come and go at any time. Even though taxis may arrive for the residents of Nos 21b-21e, and milk deliveries, brewery deliveries to the Blue Lion Public House, deliveries by City Post and food delivery vans may all occur early in the mornings, the comings and goings of employees would add to the general disturbance during the hours when people may reasonably be expected to wish to sleep. I accept that the level of business on the appeal site may currently be somewhat reduced due to economic circumstances, but the effect of varying the condition in the terms requested would pertain long after economic circumstances change.

17. I agree with my colleague, who allowed the earlier appeal on the site, and the Council who imposed condition 2 when granting planning permission Ref 2003/0083/P, that it is necessary to

protect residential amenity in the late evenings, early mornings and at weekends, when ambient noise levels are likely to be low.

The loss of time controls will create an opportunity for unrestricted expansion and operation increasing the intensification and resulting loss of amenity referred to by the planning inspector.

Increase in vehicular movements: In previous planning applications and appeal hearings the business has clearly stated that as it is a courier control centre they were not a depot and thus did not store packages, save for the few that could not be delivered at the end of the working day. Furthermore, they also stated that there was no particular need for delivery vehicles associated with the courier business to routinely attend the premises.

In the current application the applicant clearly states that the number of vehicular movements is 400 per week, and that their expansion is to collect and store parcels – a depot. This is an admitted doubling of vehicle movements in little more than a decade. We believe that the declared number of vehicles is a conservative estimate and that the true number of vehicle movements is higher, and that the now admitted use of a depot is further evidence of expansion and intensification.

Sufficient differentiation in the application is not made for the various uses of the two buildings, the different floors within those buildings and the activities resulting in vehicle movements and visits to both the premises.

It is clear that this is a major transport business with a significant number of vehicle movements, for which the Mews, being narrow and without pavements, is unsuited, and exposes pedestrians to unacceptable risk.

Far from being a simple 'swap', the application is a significant expansion of the operation of the business. The over simplistic claim of 'swap' is a measure designed to evade the current time restrictions on a major transport based business which declares itself to be operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

We **object** to this application, on the grounds of intensification, increase in vehicular movements to and from the site, and loss of residential amenity due to noise and nuisance.