

Dear Councillors Freeman, Rea and Vincent,

*I didn't have time to write a short letter, so I wrote a long one instead*  
— Mark Twain

This sentiment certainly applies to residents of South Bloomsbury over the last few days. We are scrambling to compile a response to officers' shocking recommendation of approval for the 6 Coptic Street planning application, just one working day after they received revised documents.

I am writing, as my neighbours have, to request that this matter is referred to the Development Control Committee, and also provide a PDF summary (attached) of all the comments this weekend.

Over the six months since application validation we have made numerous calls, and sent around 100 letters and emails. I have personally spoken to almost all adjoining residents, and none have been asked clarifying questions, nor feel they have not been properly consulted. Naïvely, we assumed this meant officers had understood and accepted our points.

Unsurprisingly, a report compiled in one working day is riddled with errors, inconsistencies and omissions, leaving open tens of issues that could doubtless be resolved through proper analysis before the application reaches councillors for a decision.

Below, a summary of the points we have collectively made, and a few new points from me.

I ask that you refer the application to the Development Control Committee, so we can be heard in a fair tribunal.

We have now lost confidence in officer's approach to assessing this application. I request that you direct officers to ensure all required documents are provided, including drawings meeting Camden standards, and a full Daylight and Sunlight assessment. They should then work with residents to compile an accurate and complete report for the Development Control Committee. Clearly a different standard of work will be required if we are to avoid this application taking up further unnecessary committee time.

Finally, I would like to put on record our appreciation for your help with this matter. Thanks for reading all our emails.

Kind Regards,

Chris Jackson

Resident at 3 Stedham Place

There are 8 main points officers have inadequately addresses, and hence we have raised to you this weekend:

1. Disproportionate impact on the community (Cllr. Olad, Cathy, Louise, Mirona, South Bloomsbury Residents' Association, and I)
2. Loss of sunlight/daylight (and the inadequacy of the evidence provided) per CPG6 section 6 (Cathy, Louise, Mirona and I)
3. Poor design, causing damage to the Bloomsbury conservation area (Cathy, Louise, Mirona and I)
4. Procedural issues with how the application has been handled, including missing information, no mention of recent and relevant enforcement action at an adjoining property, numerous inaccuracies, and even a lack of knowledge of addresses affected (Cathy, Louise, Mirona and I)
5. Reduction in green space and threat to biodiversity per CPG6 Amenity, LB Camden Replacement Unitary Development Plan, and the Camden Biodiversity Action Plan 2013-2018 (Cathy, Louise, Mirona)
6. Loss of outlook per 7.8-10 of CPG6 Amenity (Cathy, Louise, Mirona)
7. Effect on wind velocity and pattern disruption, per 10.6 of CPG6 Amenity (Mirona)

8. Inconsistency vs. previous decisions including two decisions upheld by the planning inspectorate  
(myself)

For convenience, I have compiled a single PDF with all comments, which is attached to this email.

Please note 10 objections from more than 10 neighbouring addresses have been published on the Camden website, many of which also address these points. Objections have been received from the Bloomsbury CAAC, South Bloomsbury Resident's Association, and Stedham Chambers TRA. There is only a single letter of support. We could point to tens of other issues with this application, and with its assessment, but will draw the line here.

I personally wish to highlight just four examples of the harm this development could cause, and lack of rigour in its assessment:

1. Damage to the Bloomsbury conservation area

Allowing this application to proceed would clearly cause damage to the Bloomsbury conservation area. The site is prominent, being visible from some distance along Coptic Street (considered an important view to the British Museum) and Little Russell Street.

Number 6 is part of a distinctive, uniform terrace stretching from 5-10 Coptic Street. The officer's report incorrectly characterises two distinct groups. Evidence from a more careful inspection suggests this is the remaining part of a previously much greater group, largely lost during the construction of New Oxford Street to the south. Remaining houses to the north (numbers 5 and 6) are indeed shorter than the rest of the terrace, probably to safeguard light for buildings at the site of the present day Stedham Chambers, and necessitated by the slight southerly slope towards the river.

In 2012 Number 7 was developed without planning permission to accommodate a roof terrace. Enough traditional roof was maintained that this development could not be seen from the street. Regardless, Camden Council proceeded with enforcement on grounds of appearance, and in late 2013 this was upheld on appeal by a planning inspector, following a public hearing. The inspector described the terrace in his report:

I has a traditional 18th century or early 19th century appearance with a brick exterior having regular window openings and it had a low pitched butterfly roof set behind a front parapet. The four properties are divided from each other at roof level by party walls/ firewalls. It is described in a townscape appraisal as making a positive contribution, but is not a listed building. In the context of a traditional building forming part of a terrace, however, the alteration to the roof is a significant change.

Inexplicably, all mention of these proceedings is missing from the officer's report.

The Conservation Area plan also establishes the uniform nature of the terrace, and this is supported by identical features including decorations at 1st floor level on the front elevation, the style and decoration of many remaining internal features, for example identical tiling around fireplaces across numbers 5 and 8. These buildings are not listed, and therefore decorative and internal features are not protected. However, their existence supports the position of the many previous experts that this is a coherent group of buildings, which would be damaged by the introduction of mid-terrace french-style mansard roof.

It appears that the Victorians knew what they are doing! It is clearly not Camden policy to use 20th century piecemeal development as an excuse for further damage to remaining buildings.

## 2. Inconsistency with previous decisions

Approving this application would represent inconsistency with previous decisions, across both the roof and rear extension.

As discussed above, a lesser roof modification at number 7 is subject to an enforcement order. In addition, a similar scheme at number 8 was refused at pre-application stage.

Neither application is mentioned in the officer's report, despite clearly being highly relevant. I have personally raised this with officers, and been told they represent material planning considerations, so there can be no valid reason to totally exclude them from the report.

A similar rear extension was refused at number 6 in the late 1980s, and this decision was confirmed on appeal. The planning inspector said:

I find further cause for concern in the likely effect of the proposed extension on the daylight and sunlight reaching neighbouring properties. The proposal would, in my view, have a serious effect on the light reaching the premises on either side, Nos 7 Coptic Street and 3 Stedham Place.

There has been no significant construction in the area since this report was written. Indeed, I had read it before taking residence in this area, and took it as a guarantee that a similar extension to the south of our garden would not be permitted. This case is listed, but not discussed in the officer's report.

I note that Stedham Place has been consistently visited by bats during the summer months, which must be of high interest to Camden Council and suggest updates to existing surveys of their local habitats, and that birds have taken to nest in the hedgerows intended from them, which validates our efforts in creating a safe haven in the heart of the city.

We cannot understand why Camden would contemplate such an inconsistent decision, and are very concerned by the optics of not discussing highly relevant previous cases in the report.

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The daylight and sunlight assessment is incomplete, and the officer's conclusions are incorrect. For example, the officer's report states in paragraph 3.6:

Whilst the report notes that 3 windows [...] would result in a loss, it is either marginal or to a secondary window serving a room.

This is clearly incorrect. The Daylight and Sunlight report states that the only window to our kitchen will lose 45% of sunlight overall, and 88% in the winter. Both overall and in winter the reduction is sufficient to take sunlight below the council's expectation (25% and 5% respectively, per CPG6 paragraph 6.16 green box).

The report totally lacks the required assessment of Average Daylight Factor, per CPG6 section 6 key messages. It clearly contained further information that has been removed before submission, including sunlight data for 29 of the numbered windows (many highly likely to have been affected by the development), information about the effect on gardens, all the typical methodology and recommendation

sections, and presumably an assessment of the ADF. As such, it is our assumption that the full report did not support the developer's case, and has been edited accordingly.

#### 4. Full information about the development

We have repeatedly asked for drawings in line with Camden's minimum standards, and these have not been provided. Therefore, we are still unclear on many details. For example, what is the height and depth of the wall that will block light to our kitchen and overshadow a green terrace containing over 150 species? The available drawings contradict the officer's report.

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Sue

I would strongly urge that a delegated officer decision is not the right course of action given the disproportionate impact this development will potentially have on our community.

Please consider this email as my objection to the planning application.

Best,

Awale

Councillor Awale Olad  
Holborn & Covent Garden ward (Labour Party)  
London Borough of Camden  
Camden Town Hall, London WC1H 9JE  
t- 0207 974 1986  
e- [awale.olad@camden.gov.uk](mailto:awale.olad@camden.gov.uk)  
w- <http://bit.ly/jyGV2P>

Re: OBJECTION TO PLANNING PERMISSION, 6 COPTIC STREET, WC1 (2013/5970/P)

I write as the Tennant of No. 25 Stedham Chambers, Coptic Street and as Treasurer of the Stedham Chambers TRA which represents the 15 Residents living in Stedham Chambers North (1-15) and the 15 Residents living in Stedham Chambers South (16-30). I wish to strongly object to the approval of Planning Permission for No. 6 Coptic St. on the following grounds:

Firstly, please note the front of Stedham Chambers South looks onto the rear of No. 6 Coptic Street. Despite the close proximity of Stedham Chambers South to the site, it was not registered on the Neighbours Details for Planning Application document. In addition, there is no photographic evidence given illustrating the position of Stedham Chambers South in relation to the site in the Members Briefing Report 3363629.

1. Sunlight/Daylight

If the proposed development goes ahead the Residential Amenities of existing and future occupiers of Stedham Chambers South would be adversely affected by loss of light. The loss of sunlight and daylight, overshadowing, loss of outlook and windows in the extension would result in feeling much more overlooked and cause lack of privacy (Note there is no mention of privacy relating to Residents of Stedham Chambers South in the Members Briefing Report 3363629, despite the close proximity of the proposed site to our building). There would be a greater sense of enclosure because of the height of the extension, resulting in the outlook being unacceptably closed in. The extension would be too dominant and overbearing in terms of the adjacent properties and the character of built form in Coptic Street/Stedham Place.

A Sunlight Assessment is missing for several crucial windows to the west of Stedham Chambers South. An Average Daylight Factor Assessment is also missing and this is required by Camden Policy (CPG6 section 6 key messages). There is no commentary from the Consultants on their method and conclusions, just an incomplete set of raw numbers.

2. Plants and Gardens

From Camden Policy (CPG6 para. 10.15) - You should consider the design of your proposal carefully so that it does not overshadow windows to habitable rooms or open spaces and gardens. This may be particularly difficult in Central London. However, it will be particularly important in Central London to prevent overshadowing of amenity space and open spaces given the limited amount of open spaces and the existing amount of shadowing.

Stedham Chambers South has an award winning communal courtyard full of mature plants. This area would be overshadowed by the development resulting in loss of Amenities The detrimental effect of overshadowing on our plants is a valid Planning concern, which many of us have raised, and has been dismissed with a misleading statement that the Application does not involve the 'removal or replacement of trees' In addition to the Courtyard, Stedham Chambers South features award winning balconies and several existing plants would be negatively affected by overshadowing.

3 Missing/Inaccurate Information

Light Consultants and Planning Officers refer to our block as a) Stedham Chambers, b) 2-4 Coptic Street, c) 2-5 Coptic Street, d) Nos 21-40 Stedham Chambers (note Stedham Chambers South contains flats 16-30) and Streatham Chambers This is evidence of a lack of care taken and clearly impacts the Assessment.

In 'Rear Extension 2.11' - "The rear elevation of Nos. 5 and 6 can be seen from Stedham Place. Stedham Place is accessed beneath a building through a controlled gate used solely by properties of Stedham Place." This is incorrect. All Residents of Stedham Chambers South have access to Stedham Place via a gate leading directly onto Stedham Place and have access to their properties via the controlled gate.

#### 4 Notification

The Report lists 7 objections from adjoining occupants. The Stedham Chambers TRA, of which I am the Treasurer, represents a total of 15 households who wished their objections to the proposal registered via the Stedham Chambers TRA. This was clearly stated in the objection and the number is not reflected in the Report. The listing "Stedham Chambers TRA (Secretary and Treasurer)" is not correct. I objected as the Tennant of No. 25 Stedham Chambers and as Treasurer of the Stedham Chambers TRA. This is evidence of a lack of care taken and clearly impacts the Assessment.

#### 5. Planning Considerations

Our objection specifically listed:

- Loss of Outlook
- Greater Sense of Enclosure

These are legitimate Planning concerns that do not appear in the Report and have therefore not been properly addressed.

The Stedham Chambers TRA does not believe the concerns of all the Residents of Stedham Chambers South, as stated above, have been sufficiently taken into account by Camden Council when making its decision regarding the proposed development of No. 6 Coptic Street. The fact that Stedham Chambers South was not included in the Neighbours Details for Planning Application document illustrates a disregard of the impact of the development on the Residents of Stedham Chambers South and this is reflected throughout the Report. Camden Council has a responsibility to ensure that 'development' is carried out in the public interest and that the character of an area is not adversely affected by changes to existing buildings. We believe Camden Council has failed in this responsibility.

In addition, the Planning Department should usually determine a Planning Application within eight weeks and extensions to this period arise where the issues involved are complex or a lot of people will be affected by the decision. It took the Council over 20 weeks to reach a decision and yet during this period nobody from the Planning Department consulted with any of the Residents of Stedham Chambers South or, to my knowledge, any of the Residents in all the adjoining properties and our legitimate concerns have been ignored by the Council.

In conclusion, having examined the Members Briefing 3363629 the Stedham Chambers South TRA find the discrepancies as listed above have resulted in Residents losing confidence in Camden Council and ask that you now:

- Refer this to the "Development Control Committee"
- Instruct Officers to work with us to complete an accurate and complete report

Sincerely  
Louise Gillic

Dear Sir / Madam

Please find attached my letter concerning the redevelopment & planning application of 6 Coptic St.

I have attached 2 photographs taken from my flat which directly faces Coptic St (though official address is 1 Little Russell St)

The photographs show the original roof of no 6 Coptic St & its adjoining neighbour no. 5 Coptic St.

Best Wishes  
Cathy Ward

Flat 13, 1 Little Russell St  
Bloomsbury,  
London WC1A 2HR





Cathy Ward  
Flat 13, 1 Little Russell St  
Bloomsbury  
London WC1A 2HR

23:02:2014

To whom it concerns

I would like to take this opportunity to put forward my opposing comments to the redevelopment of no.6 Coptic Street which is directly across the road from the block in which I reside, no 1 Little Russell St. This One Housing Group block also faces Coptic Street, my flat faces this street, as does many of my neighbours & will be impacted greatly if the redevelopment with the extended mansard roof & 4 flats goes ahead. This block holds many infirm & ill residents, who will be impacted by loss of light in their flats if the roof is extended. We have very limited green space in South Bloomsbury & loss of light is for us an important and irrevocable factor. The Daylight & Sunlight report submitted by the developer is vague on methodology & conclusions; no assessment of Average Daylight factors (CPG6 section 6 key messages) the sunlight assessment is missing for the majority of windows in our block of 1 Little Russell St. (also facing Coptic St) The officer's report states: "The applicant's sunlight/daylight report demonstrates the erection of a roof and rear extension would not exert any material harm upon any habitable window at No.1 Little Russell Street". There is no evidence that any residents were contacted, nor building entered, in order to gain access for any readings to support this statement.

With this proposed redevelopment loosing the traditional London Valley Roof of no 6 with its particular shape & charm is at odds with what it proposed which is a Mansard roof of French design. This is a London Conservation area, on a well used side road leading to our most important & visited institutions The British Museum. The quaint design should be preserved for this very reason. Its adjoining neighbour at no 5, with its sister roof profile, will thus look incongruous if this is extended. The Mansard roof at no 6 will make this row look un-uniform. At present the roof of no 6 is not at all out of place and adds great character to this street with its red slate terracotta roof & elegant tall chimneys. It would be a great loss to loose it. Please see attached photo taken from my flat.

I was involved in the case of no 7 Coptic Street where the developer had not applied for any planning permission what so ever, to alter a traditional butterfly roof, & converting it to a roof terrace. This alteration has an enforcement to be restored to its original traditional roof as the others in the row. (No 8 was denied planning permission to also alter the roof terrace pre-application advice by Camden Council.) This case, and the enforcement action, the all day public hearing and the Inspectors report was not mentioned in any of reports for no 6. This is a very relevant case for the residents of Coptic St & also being next door to this new redevelopment. I am enclosing relevant points from the Inspectors statement (14-17) Please see below.

So far I have had to endure the immense scaffolding erected before the planning has even been granted. The scaffolding is way larger than required for an internal 'soft strip' (Raj Patel 16<sup>th</sup> January) extending high above the roof & extending far back at Steadham Place "Upon inspection it can be confirmed that internal alterations and associated scaffolding are necessary for refurbishment/repair only." This is evidently scaffolding erected to rebuild & extend the roof & extend at the back.

Please can the application be referred to the Development Control Committee. The community needs communication & confidence from the officers that the report to the committee is accurate concerning this redevelopment of this building.

Yours Sincerely

Cathy Ward



## **Appeal Decision**

**Hearing held and site visit made on 5 November 2013**

**by V F Ammoun BSc DipTP MRTPI FRGS**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government**

**Decision date: 17 December 2013**

**Appeal Decision APP/X5210/C/13/2198147**

**Appeal Ref: APP/X5210/C/13/2198147**

**7 Coptic Street, London WC1A 1NH**

14. The merits of the proposal thus turn on the nature of the changes being made to this particular building. No 7 Coptic Street is part of a traditional and regular terrace of four houses with butterfly pitched slate roofs and intervening brick fire walls. The appeal development alters this form at one of the four houses, and introduces wooden patio flooring, glazed balustrades, and the air conditioning units. The setbacks from front and rear walls are not sufficient for the roof to absorb/accommodate the change without significant visual effect, and there has been a material change to the external appearance of the building. Both the materials used and more fundamentally the change to the form of the roof are not architecturally sympathetic to the age and character of the building and its traditional pitched roof. The effect on appearance is out of keeping with No 7 and with the terrace as a whole, and even after taking into account the greater variety of character in the upper zone referred to, I consider that it appears incongruous.

15. The Council acknowledged this was not the worst case of change to a roof, due to compliance with certain design features sought in CPG1. That guidance is, however, stated to apply where change is otherwise appropriate, and seeks to avoid roof alteration or addition where there is likely to be an adverse effect on "...the appearance of the building..." and where "...There is an unbroken run of valley roofs; ... Complete terraces or groups of buildings have a roof line that is largely unimpaired by alterations or extensions...."7. In the present case I consider that the change to the roof has had an adverse effect, and that this is not ameliorated or otherwise rendered acceptable by the presence of earlier changes to the terrace of which it forms part.

16. The Council has approved roof terraces on other properties in the area, but as already stated I do not consider that there is any objection in principle to them within the upper zone of this part of the Conservation Area. None of these approvals appeared so similar to the circumstances of the present appeal as to suggest inconsistency.

17. I have concluded that the appeal development has resulted in harm to the appearance of the Conservation Area. As indicated in my consideration of ground (c) the changes are significantly visible within the upper zone of residential occupation. There is nothing in guidance or policy to suggest that the acknowledged advantages of providing outdoor space should be secured at the cost of an adverse effect upon the character or appearance of a conservation area. I have concluded that the development carried out should not be retained.

Dear Sue, Flick and Roger,

I am writing to vehemently object against granting planning permission for the rear extension at No. 6 Coptic Street and urge you to refer it to the Development Control Committee on the following grounds, covered by CPG6 Amenity, LB Camden Replacement Unitary Development Plan, and the Camden Biodiversity Action Plan 2013-2018:

1. Severe loss of sunlight during September - March (from 8% to 1%) and significant loss of sunlight between April - August (from 42% to 23% across all year) to our main West-facing window and the majority of our 15 sq m garden comprising of 150+ species of trees, shrubs, wildflowers, many native and grown for wildlife, and to supplement our food for a more sustainable life

Please note paragraph 6.1 of CPG6 Amenity: "Access to daylight and sunlight is important for general amenity, health and well-being, for bringing warmth into a property and to save energy from reducing the need for artificial lighting and heating. The Council will carefully assess proposals that have the potential to reduce daylight and sunlight levels for existing and future occupiers."

and paragraph 10.18 of CPG6 Amenity: "You should consider the design of your proposal carefully so that it does not overshadow windows to habitable rooms or open spaces and gardens. This may be particularly difficult in central London. However, it will be particularly important in Central London to prevent overshadowing of amenity space and open spaces given the limited amount of open spaces and the existing amount of overshadowing."

Please note paragraph 4.10 of LB Camden Replacement Unitary Development Plan, particularly: "N2 - Protecting open space, B - Development bordering public and private open space, The Council will not grant planning permission for development bordering public and private open space that it considers would cause harm to its wholeness, appearance and setting, or is likely to intrude on the public enjoyment of the open space."

and paragraph 4.12 of LB Camden Replacement UDP, particularly: "Development bordering public and private open space, [...] Development that encroaches directly through land take, OR indirectly through inappropriate design, can have a negative impact upon these spaces and will be resisted."

2. Severe wind velocity and pattern disruption to a built-up environment with already challenging aerodynamics

Please note paragraph 10.6 of CPG6 Amenity, particularly: "We will expect you to consider the local wind environment when designing your scheme, both on and off the site. Where poor wind conditions exist in the area prior to development, a reasonable attempt must also be made to improve conditions in general."

3. Significant threat to a green space enhancing communal amenity, threat to biodiversity and wildlife habitat including locally and nationally protected species (see below), pollinators (bees, butterflies, moths), migrant dragonflies, etc.

Please note paragraph 2.7 of CPG 6 Amenity, particularly: "WHAT DOES THE COUNCIL REQUIRE? The Council's overarching aim is for new development is to be 'air quality neutral' and not lead to further deterioration of existing poor air quality. You will be required to include mitigation and offsetting measures to deal with any negative air quality impacts associated with your development proposals."

and paragraphs 5.16 - 5.18 of CPG 6 Amenity, particularly "[...] Artificial lighting can have particularly severe implications for the natural daily rhythms of a range of animals and plants[...]. If your proposed lighting is located within or adjacent to areas of open space we will expect that any biodiversity impacts arising from the installation or operation of the lighting is mitigated. This may require a survey to identify if there are any nesting birds in the immediate vicinity or if it is close to an area where bats may hibernate or emerge at feeding time. [...] You should contact Camden's Biodiversity Officer at an early stage to discuss measures to mitigate the impact of lighting schemes on biodiversity."

Please note Appendix 2 of Camden Biodiversity Action Plan 2013-2018, particularly within BAP Engagement and Strategy Priorities, the Strategy section, lead by "Halt loss of green to grey" and "Supporting endangered wildlife"

then pages 45-51, listing protected species including several types of bats, birds (e.g. house sparrow, song thrush, wood warbler) and insects that live in, and take shelter in our garden and Stedham Place at large, including bats visiting for hours a night during warmer months and birds nesting in the hedgerows we built for them, which the entire local community watches over, and which provide numerous Eureka moments and educational opportunities for children on our premises and in Stedham Chambers (who objected in block to this development and were dismissed as not neighbouring).

and then and pages 66-71 of Camden Biodiversity Action Plan 2013-2018, particularly suggested species (of which our garden comprises high ecological value native species like common hazel, blackthorn and wild cherry for its hedgerows, as well as silver birch, hardy fuchsia, hedge veronica, wild pear, ivy, silver wattle, barberry, firethorn, field maple, oak, lime, common holly, ox-eye daisy, bird's foot trefoil, grape hyacinths, snowdrops, crocuses, wild daffodils) and the mention "non-native shrubs with high wildlife value can also be considered" (we have planted oleander, syringa, forsythia. etc.)

In addition we grow a significant number of the plants recommended by the British Beekeepers Association, as a commitment to the In Midtown urban bees project (<http://inmidtown.org/delivery/urban-bee-project/>) e.g. other cherries (sour cherry, almond cherry, decorative cherry), roses, rosemary, 5+ species of mint, honeysuckles, jasmines, several types of clematis, hydrangeas, hardy geraniums, oleanders, tulips, and many other bee-friendly annuals.

Finally, food grown here spans cucumbers, courgettes, tomatoes, peppers, chillies, runner beans, french beans, broadbeans, raspberries, blueberries, strawberries, sloe berries, olives, chives, onions, radishes, carrots, pak choi, rocket, and a wide variety of herbs (rosemary, thyme, tarragon, marjoram etc.). For all these, and many more species, sunlight is essential for survival, especially between September and March.

Where useful, we can provide extensive photographic evidence of the above (planting range, wildlife, garden seen from above and beyond in summer months, at its greenest), and other factors can be assessed through a visit to the garden, as I'm aware an appropriate assessment of wind and micro-climate conditions as required by chapter 10 of CPG6 Amenity would involve specialist engineers, and surveying the local bat population would presumably require deploying equipment and skill throughout Stedham Place. We expected by now that both the developer and Camden officers would be in touch and ready to work with us. Alas, no sign of such contact.

We remain in awe that the existence of an established green, open space of this size on the 2nd floor of 3 Stedham Place (alternatively referred to as No. 5 Coptic Street) that works in tandem with the green, open spaces of Stedham Chambers has not been considered or addressed in the initial or the revised application, despite:

- the visible area, volume and composition (trees, hedgerows, wildflowers, etc.) of such a large green space for Central London,
- and our prior objections, simply dismissed with the unrelated statement that the application does not involve "the removal or replacement of trees", and no questions from Camden officers.

We have personally spent over 6 months years back researching options in Camden for the creation of this garden, studying sun paths, sunlight estimations, native plant species, local wildlife, eco-friendly potting mediums, the likelihood of extensions to existent buildings being granted (limited, as it had been rejected at No. 6 previously), and welcoming green communities (Stedham Chambers were former winners of Camden in Bloom, and have won again since, and the Phoenix Community Garden, a Camden Site of Importance for Nature Conservation is but a throw away).

We had no way of imagining, after that upfront commitment, and the ensuing 4+ years of working through set backs, expenses, sweat, tears, and climate change that we would also have to fight a cynical developer that is willing, with the help of Camden officers, to turn hard-fought-for green space to grey space by simply encroaching neighbouring spaces, and worsening existent challenging environmental conditions. While a lack of awareness of Camden's need and policies for green space, open space and biodiversity might be forgiven of a developer that's not local, Camden officers should know better.

Our garden is an outstanding example for the borough of what is possible with hard work and willing when it comes to urban greening, improving air & climate quality, pollution alleviation,

wildlife-friendly planting, and overall increased amenity to residents, inhabitants and neighbours alike, if the visual effect, indeed the improvement to everyone's outlook could be ignored. As it receives the majority of its sunlight from the South, our West-facing garden will be plummeted into darkness for the majority of the day, all year round, by the erection of an overshadowing wall on its Southern, and most important aspect for sunlight.

Our garden witnesses wind from the North (Stedham Chambers) that is frequent (hardly a day without) and strong enough (more gusts than breezes) to lower the temperature of the garden by a couple of degrees compared to neighbouring areas just meters away. This wind currently blows South, and we cannot even begin to imagine the devastating impact an immediate bulking and massing closet wing and its high wall will have on the garden, due to severely modified air flows and likely whirlwinds.

Not only we're not engineers, but even if we were, it is impossible from the current application to understand the exact height and width of this wall, as the drawings are not appropriate and the garden is completely ignored throughout. In addition, the Camden officers have put forward just last week, after months of silence and only one day of compiling their report, the following statements that are equally unhelpful, and as such, twice concerning:

"2.15 This proposal would seek an appropriately 'slim' (half width) closet wing extension. Although it would rise 2m above No.5 , it would be set back appropriately from Stedham Place, remain one full storey below roof level.

2.16 It is considered the erection of a half width, half depth closet wing extension, aligning with the existing extension at No. 5"

We have repeatedly pointed out that the supplied drawings do not meet Camden's own minimum standards. Drawings are of insufficient scale, and omit the required neighbouring property references, e.g. the wall of our garden, our hedgerows, our windows and glass door. The developer appears to have this week resubmitted the original drawings (dated July 2013) as a revision. Or have officers published the previous drawings as revised?

As such, we are unable to accurately judge the exact proportions of the extension, and the full effect on our windows and our garden. We wonder how the Camden officers were able to make an accurate assessment, and the same goes for the Daylight/ Sunlight consultant. How, for example, did officers determine that the rear extension is "half width", when a rough measurement of the available drawings indicates it covers two thirds of the rear of the property?

Moreover, neither developer nor Camden officers seem clear on the exact function of the building at No. 6. While in use as an office during the years it took us to establish a garden with minimal ambient lighting at night (while we employ low light lamps in the adjacent kitchen), we needn't worry about nighttime impact of lighting from the No. 6 building. Its intended rise, rear extension, and transformation to several flats raises a flag, and an ever bigger flag is added by

the intention of the developer to operate serviced flats at this address, i.e. a hotel. We're keen, yet unable to assess the lighting plans for the building, interior and exterior.

We would like to stress that in addition to loss of green space, wildlife-friendly space, and locally grown food, an inhospitable, uncomfortable space hosting a dying garden would be a sore sight for us and the community, and would also mean completely losing a room of our house, a room in which we invested the majority of our disposable income and spare time these years, and a room we use daily for extended periods of time, all year round.

Here we work, relax, enjoy nature (bats! birds! bees! blooms!), produce food, catch up with neighbours, dine, entertain and overall combat the limited natural light available on this entire floor of 3 Stedham Place. With its small, East-facing windows on the other side of the building heavily overshadowed by neighbouring buildings, our 2nd floor relies fully on its West-facing window and glass door, and the adjacent garden, to remain habitable. As a consequence, and as a lucid decision from even before moving in, the majority of our weekends April to August are fully spent outdoors, from sunrise to sunset, come rain come shine, so that we maintain a healthy lifestyle and good exposure to natural conditions, light in particular.

Attached, a few photographs taken this weekend. The sunlight our garden receives, as well as our enjoyment of its first blooms this year and of the open space have already been significantly impaired by the overshadowing and ill-kempt scaffolding erected by the No. 6 developer some 4 weeks ago under the pretence of inner building refurbishment, except in reality, to a size and shape that allow for extending the roof and the closet wing as per the application so far strongly objected by neighbours all sides of No. 6.

In fact, the monoflex sheeting in which the developer has covered part of this oversized scaffolding that suggests the size and effect of the future wall to the South of our garden has already taken the hit of the poor wind conditions in Stedham Place, tearing away more and more by the day. We have been in touch with the developer, and while they tried to secure the monoflex a couple of times at our insistence, the wind continues to cause visible and audible damage; that alone should see the developer assess and design for the special local wind conditions.

Our garden adds to a successful and awarded green oasis in that should be encouraged and nurtured by newcomers and Camden Council alike, especially when its makers and immediate beneficiaries reject a poor development and a developer whose dog ate half their homework. A new member of this tightly-knit community should seek to work with it, and to enhance its amenity and, thus, their own.

We trust you will agree that only a mindfully considered and altered version of the carelessly drawn and argued plans for No. 6 Coptic Street could ever see light of day, and grateful that you've read our objection, we hope you will refer the No. 6 application to the Development Control Committee tomorrow, for the much needed design scrutiny and public debate. Following that we look forward to working with Camden officers and the developer to achieve sustainable plans

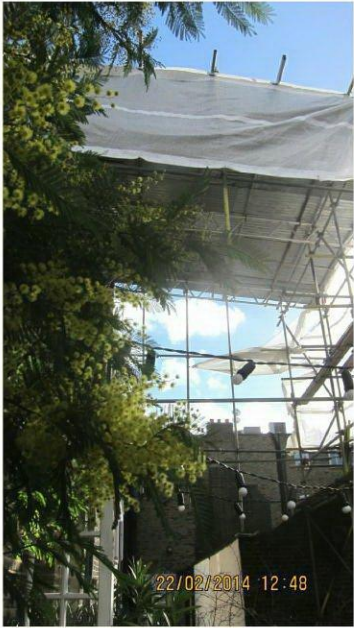
that aim to enrich the area and the communal amenity.

Many thanks in advance,  
Mirona Iliescu  
3 Stedham Place













Chris

Thanks for your email. You are correct - the application is being discussed at members briefing on Monday evening (24<sup>th</sup>).

You have not been notified of this event as members briefing is not a public meeting nor is it an opportunity to make oral representations. The purpose of members briefing is for the panel to analyse the application and a summary of the representations, to determine whether, a) the application proceeds via delegated powers, OR b) to advise the Director of Culture and Environment that the application be considered by members of the DC Committee. I have previously sent you information about this process, but please let me know if you need this again.

All of the information is available online (including daylight/sunlight, revised application form)


If you have any further observations on the merits of the application, I would suggest you send these to us by midday Monday so we can inform the Members Briefing Panel in advance.

Many thanks

Stuart

Stuart Minty  
Development Management Team Manager (East Area)

Telephone: 020 7974 2660



Stuart,

I see you have recommended the application for approval, and a decision will be made as soon as Monday.

We've not been informed of this decision, and we have not seen any of the new documents/submissions (eg sunlight assessment, updated application form). This looks a lot like you're trying to get the application through without anyone noticing!

As you know, we have strong grounds to indicate that this application is invalid, so I fail to see how you have enough information to make a positive decision.

Needless to say, you will be hearing from us further on this matter.

Chris



Dear Chris

Thanks for your email and apologies for not responding sooner. I note the comments you make below, however it would not be appropriate to comment on the merits of the scheme given that we have a current application which is pending a decision. Please be assured however that the issues you raise below are material planning considerations, and will be all be given due consideration prior to any decision being made.

We hope to make a recommendation on the application in the next two weeks, and should this be for approval this will be reported to our members briefing panel. A decision to refuse permission would be done so, via delegated powers. For further information on the members briefing process please see below:-

<http://www.camden.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment/planning-and-built-environment/planning-applications/after-an-application-is-made/deciding-the-outcome-of-an-application/?jsessionid=73C71036FB4D713AA92D30C0BB0B2942>

I hope this is helpful. Many thanks

Stuart

Stuart Minty  
Development Management Team Manager (East Area)

**Subject:** Re: 6 Coptic Street (was: Re: Surgery)

Stuart,

While I await your response to the query below, I'm going to summarise my understanding of the situation. This is an application to:

- a. extend upwards, destroying the traditional London valley roof
- b. extend at the rear, blocking light to neighbours
- c. change to residential use (or possibly C1 hotel use)

The case for planning permission is extremely weak across all areas:

- a. planning permission for a lesser roof development was denied by Camden at both number 7 and 8 Coptic Street, and the decision at number 8 has been upheld on appeal by the national planning inspectorate, after a public hearing (decision attached)
- b. In the late 1980s planning permission was denied by Camden for a very similar rear extension at no 6. The owners appealed, and a planning inspector rejected the appeal, stating that the proposal would "have a serious effect on the light reaching premises on either side" (decision attached)
- c. Change to residential use requires proof that there is no demand for the previous commercial use, typically consisting of 2 years unsuccessful marketing. Meanwhile, the property has been vacant for less than 1 year. There is no precedent for C1 use being granted in this area.

Meanwhile, we're being inconvenienced by speculative development. I'm sure there are processes to follow, but cannot understand why they would take so long.

Why has it taken six months to give a straight no?

I'd be grateful for a response on Monday.

Thanks,

Chris



Hi Stuart,

This application was submitted in September, clearly did not contain all necessary information, and proposes a roof removal more extreme than at 7 Coptic Street (made without planning permission, now subject to an enforcement order, confirmed after a planning inspectorate hearing), and 8 Coptic Street (denied permission at pre-application stage).

It is clearly not suitable for planning permission to be granted. Therefore, I have one question:

Why has planning permission not already been rejected?

We are now facing a developer who has constructed a huge scaffold in preparation of works, so clearly expects planning permission. We would all have been saved this pain if Camden had clarified the situation at any point in the last six months.

I await your response. Could you let me know today, since I plan to discuss this with various people over the weekend.

Thanks,

Chris

On 30 January 2014 13:46, Minty, Stuart <[stuart.minty@camden.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.minty@camden.gov.uk)> wrote:

Dear Chris and Awale

Thanks for your emails in relation to the current application at No 6 Coptic Street, and for drawing our attention to the potential for serviced apartments rather than self-contained residential units.

The current application is pending a decision, but please be assured that the issues raised in the various emails about the loss of employment (B Class) uses, the design of the extensions in the context of the conservation area, alongside the merits of any new residential use are all planning considerations that we will be considering carefully before making any recommendation.

We are working towards a decision timeframe within the next 3-4 weeks. In the event of a recommendation to grant planning permission, the application would be reported to our members briefing panel for consideration. A decision to refuse planning permission would be done so via delegated powers.

The scaffolding concerns are more health and safety issues, so would fall under the remit of the HSE. If you wish to raise concern with this, I understand there is an online form which can be completed and then the relevant concern will be investigated.

I hope this is helpful.

Many thanks

Stuart

Stuart Minty  
Development Management Team Manager (East Area)

Telephone: [020 7974 2660](tel:02079742660)



**Subject:** Re: 6 Coptic Street (was: Re: Surgery)

Hi All,

Another update: I have been contacted by the party wall surveyor appointed by the developer of 6 Coptic Street. They confirm the intention to seek agreement from adjoining neighbours for the mansard roof extension, per the planning application that is still outstanding.

The developer appears to be Concept Studio Apartments (<http://www.concept-apartments.co.uk/>) who provide serviced apartments. It seems likely they will operate 6 Coptic Street as serviced apartments, which is classified as C1 usage, whereas the current planning application is for C3 usage. This further weakens the case for change of use, since Camden does retain some policy exceptions where change of use will provide permanent housing.

I also discussed with the surveyor that the scaffolding construction is not properly secured. Through talking with the developer, the lead constructor and finally the scaffolder, I have now been told that the scaffolder will attend to rectify this, but not until the morning. Photographs from the front and back illustrate the current situation, which is quite worrying. Notice the bucket balanced on the party wall, the unsecured ladder and bowed braces from front to back. The picture from the front (thanks Cathy!) shows that the London-style valley roof has already been damaged.





Thanks,

Chris



Hi All,

Two further pieces of information that may be relevant here.

1. A picture, showing how far the scaffolding is from the existing building. This is clearly not built for refurbishment of the existing building:



2. The Planning Inspectorate decision regarding 7 Coptic Street, which establishes beyond any doubt that roof alterations in this area are not appropriate.

Thanks,

Chris

[REDACTED]

Thanks, Awale.

Adding Louise (a neighbour) to the thread.

Ed and Stuart, I am very happy to hep with evidence on this.

Thanks,

Chris

[REDACTED]



Hi Awale,

This is very useful context. Thanks for your work on that.

My reading suggested that two years of unsuccessful advertising is required, before change of use is permitted.

I also run a fast growing software business in the ward that is in need of larger premises, and know that office accommodation is in strong demand. If 6 Coptic Street were advertised for lease as an office, we would like to take a look! We have found no such advertisement.

South Camden could easily be the new Old Street, yet we know of companies who have failed to find suitable offices here. This includes SoundCloud (<http://www.crunchbase.com/company/soundcloud>), who recently raised \$50m investment, and failed to find an office in Bloomsbury.

It would be really interesting to understand the grounds under which change of use is permitted.

Thanks,

Chris



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