

ALISON PAYNE INTERIOR SOLUTIONS

9 GONDAR GARDENS LONDON NW6 1EW

11.01.2014

Camden Council Planning Department
Application Ref 2013/7585/P

To the members of the planning committee,

I am writing in regard to planning Application Ref 2013/7585/P. My home is right across the road from the site under discussion and since moving here just three years ago I have understandably watched the developments with great interest. From the moment I looked at this house I accepted that something would be built on the site across the road but I am absolutely staggered by the Council's having granted permission for such a massive structure to be built there.

Having followed the arguments for and against the proposed schemes the latest scheme does indeed protect the designated wildlife area best. My argument is with the design of the building as it is being put forth at the next application meeting based on the following points.

1. The height of the building matches the two Edwardian mansion blocks on either side *however* the top floor of the new building is residence space with windows and balconies looking over the row of gardens and houses opposite. There is no precedence for this in the immediate area. While there are some converted loft areas with windows on other houses on Gondar Gardens they look out on the wildlife site or onto Hampstead Cemetery. This would constitute a very serious breach of privacy for the residents on this side of the road.
2. The 'glass boxes' that feature as a design element on the front of the building are not in keeping with anything architecturally in the area and provide impractical space to the apartments they are part of. This design element is seen more and more often around London - a glass box that suggests it is part of the room it adjoins but has to be separated by a fire door and as a result becomes a dumping ground/storage area. The windows will have an unattractive view, will be cold in winter and become heat traps in the summer. As seen in the example of the new townhouses just at the base of Gondar Gardens, picture windows of floor to ceiling glass do not make comfortable living spaces when facing the street. They become 'fish-bowls'. The brand new townhouses each feature such a window. Three have installed window blinds that are permanently closed and the fourth shows a lovely study that I've never seen anyone using. In addition they protrude over the building nearly breaching the developers own perimeter line and as a result visually create an even more dominating feel to the facade.
3. From a design standpoint these glass box extensions do little to enhance the interior space to which they are attached. In 6 out of the 7 examples (on the front of the building) they have been added to bedrooms. Not only does this compromise the privacy of that room it is not adding valuable space in these instances but merely adding a few more square feet to be sold.

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4. Finally the development very wisely has included on-site parking for residents. In this parking-starved area it would make great sense to require that they also provide visitors parking on-site and that parking privileges are suspended for residents therefore avoiding any additional demands on street parking availabilities.

Thanks you for taking my views into consideration. As a member of staff at Inchbald School of Design I consider one of my main roles to encourage students to question every aspect of their design's development. Too often in 'real life' the process of evaluation is virtually overlooked in the interest of time and demands of the development companies. This particular development has been contested by the local community and they have lost. It would be nice to think that Camden will take interest in trying to ensure that the proposal at least strives to meet the highest architectural specification and can someday be looked at as an asset to the community.

Yours sincerely, Alison Payne