

Letter to Camden from Sarre Road Residents

Regeneration and Planning Management
London Borough of Camden
Town Hall,
Judd Street
London WC1H 8ND



Your refs: 2013/7585/P and 2012/5012/P

Dear sir,

We refer to the Planning Application Consultation (Application ref 2013/7585/P) in which you invited comments in your letter of 28 November.

In her decision at the recent enquiry into the previous application for this scheme (2012/0512/P), the inspector took issue with the detailed design of the frontage which she found incompatible with the surroundings and rejected the proposal on these grounds. She went into some detail (paragraph 18. of her decision) in itemizing several aspects of the appearance of this scheme which do not fit with the surroundings. The developers response to each of these points has, in our view, been inadequate and in some cases made the appearance and character of the proposed scheme less compatible with the surroundings. We do not see that there has been any significant change in the overall feel of the geometry of this frontage and the expanses of brick and glass are if anything worse than with the initial proposal. A particular feature which is clearly at odds with the surroundings are the "glass boxes" (intended to emulate bay windows) which do nothing of the sort either in terms of appearance or functionality. We note that the space provided by these appendages are not connected to the normal living space and are likely to be utilized as storage space thus degrading the appearance of the frontage which is so conspicuous for us. We therefore contend that the revised scheme is not adequate for the same reasons relating to its design as was put by the inspector in her report. We also note that the balconies proposed in the design are in fact not a requirement for providing amenity space in the provisions set out by the councils core strategies. The inspectors comments on the incompatibility of the design in the original submission are emphasized strongly in paragraph 19 of her decision and have not been overcome by the appearance of the proposed scheme. In particular the proposal remains "very different in character" from the surroundings.


In addition to the reason for rejecting the scheme, the inspector was moved to comment on the issue of "White Land" which had featured in the developer's rationale for the scheme. In Paragraph 21 of her decision she noted that "White Land carries no weight either for or against development". We noted at the enquiry that the "White Land" featured very heavily in how the development was formulated. The developer was apparently intent on maximizing the proportion of this land in the development although he appeared to be unaware of the precise meaning of this term nor how the "White Land" was so designated. This

has the effect of forcing the shape of the development into an area which at best is arbitrarily defined and apparently has no significance in terms of development. We note that the recent Planning Statement seems to equivocate on this issue (paras 5.3.3 and 5.3.4.). However we contend that the shape, and particularly its height and proximity to nearby gardens and homes could be ameliorated if the development was not based on the arbitrary distinction. A scheme which was positioned a little further away from the street frontage and somewhat lower than the current proposal would allow a less offensive appearance from the point of view of our amenity to be produced.

With regard to the proposed scheme we note the comments of the inspector in rejecting the proposal as put to the enquiry. In her preliminary comments she stated that "the loss of views ...would reduce the enjoyment of their properties" although this would not be a reason for rejecting the scheme. We take issue with this since the proposed development has an obviously disproportionate impact on our current enjoyment of the open space.

You know that this scheme, as initially proposed (2012/0512/P), was earlier rejected by the Council. We note that at the enquiry, Camden Council opposed this scheme and noted that the previous scheme to build low level housing in the basin of the reservoir was a good reason for rejecting the current application. It was argued that this scheme is less intrusive and had furthermore been allowed on appeal. The residents of Sarre Road, in particular, were sympathetic to this line of argument which appears to be more equitable in terms of visual impact. We would hope that Camden Council will continue to take this line since it is in keeping with the DCC's rejection of this scheme.

We recognize that the reasons for rejecting the proposed development have moved on since the decision of the DCC on the original proposal. However we believe that the developer should not be allowed to build the proposed unsightly and obtrusive scheme. We hope that Camden Council will support us in this.





Importance: High

Categories: Orange Category

Application Ref: 2013/7585/P Associated Ref: 2012/0521/P

Dear Sir,

With reference to the proposed re-development of reservoir street frontage on Gondar Gardens, I wish to register the following comments;


Although the frontage and the roofing have been slightly adapted, the design is still totally out of keeping with the area, and shows little regard for the style of the surrounding buildings. The people responsible appear to have little imagination and, as a consequence, I believe the building will not be a good advertisement for Camden as a show case for modern, desirable, tasteful new builds.

The "gap" allowing clear views from the street is very narrow and will deprive local pedestrians of a much valued view across the site. Is there a guarantee that this will not be filled in the future?

I have lived in my house for 40 years and have always enjoyed the clear views across as I walked up Gondar Gardens. Whilst realizing that change must happen, I feel it is a great shame that developers are allowed to deprive people of their tiny plot of green and wild-life area in order to build totally unsuitable buildings in unsuitable places for the sake of making money.

As a close neighbour of the site the thought of at least 2 years noise and disruption affecting, in as yet unknown ways, the surrounding properties for this uninspiring development fills me horror.

I totally oppose the frontage design in its present form.



Jennings, Tina

From:
Sent:
To:
Subject:



Categories:

Orange Category

Dear sirs,

I object to Application Ref 2013/7585/P for the following reasons:

- Loss of the protected Open Space and the sense of openness of the area
- Loss of a Site of Nature Conservation Importance
- Loss of the amenity afforded by the existing public views of the Open Space from Gondar Gardens street
- The cumulative impact on the public infrastructure of West Hampstead: transport links, NHS facilities, schools, parking. These services are already under stress from the ongoing numerous and sizable new developments in the area
- The planning application is incomplete and fails to accurately define the envelope of the development
- Light pollution
- Destruction of the reservoir structure





19.12.13

Camden Council Planning

Application Reference 2013/7585 To the Planning Council:

I am writing in objection to Application Reference 2013/7585 on the following basis:

- The scheme is for a tall group of flats running along Gonder Gardens and using a large part of the area behind which up until now has been one of the few open and yet inaccessible green areas in North London. The buildings will block any views from the street or houses around the area as well as seriously compromising the wildlife habitat that has existed there for so long.
- West Hampstead is and has been an area of huge development over the last decade. There have been hundreds and hundreds of new small (1 and 2 bedroom) dwellings built in the area and there are many more planned. According to every estate agent I've spoken to the shortage in this area is in family houses. When I sold my previous property (a five bedroom house in Holmdale Road, NW6) it was on offer after 8 days for the asking price. This area is in serious danger of becoming viable for singles and couples only while growing families will have to move elsewhere. The initial development plans incorporating a number of townhouses mainly beneath the ground level would provide family housing whilst maintaining a sense of openness and 'sky' city areas rarely experience.
- The fact that vertical development has been sharply limited along the opposite side of the road effecting any new buildings for the last twenty years makes this new and very tall set of buildings even more overbearing and inappropriate.
- Finally, from a personal standpoint, my position directly opposite the site will be compromised in the extreme. I use the small annex at the foot of my garden (facing the road) as a studio. Both my light and my privacy will be effected in the extreme.

As I have stated in previous letters regarding the development of this site, when I bought this property 3 years ago I was well aware that there was discussion regarding the site. I also realise that London has a severe housing shortage and

that it is impractical to suggest that every green area is sacred and must be kept. I just think it is very short-minded to build flat after flat thinking that a sense of neighborhood will be maintained in the long run. The design of the proposed development is mediocre at best. It will in no way, aesthetic or practically, be an asset to the area.

Thank you for taking time to consider my opinion in this matter.

