



On a recent trip to Sydney, Australia, I had the pleasure of meeting Alex Singh, Sydney Council's Senior Solicitor in Legal & Governance, who explained to me that it was an important principle for them to enforce planning conditions stringently - not least to deter others from attempting to dodge their responsibilities further down the line. He felt that to enforce conditions now saved money in the long term because it strongly discouraged non-compliance in the future.

For me, the failure of Camden thus far to enforce the original planning conditions with regard to Athlone House reflects an appalling dereliction of duty to the local people of Highgate - be they Camden residents or neighbours of Camden - as well as a disregard and disrespect for the incredible history and heritage of the area.

My visit to Sydney, where a house of the historical value of Athlone House would be enshrined as a national monument, has reminded me of the incredible value of our built heritage. Once it is destroyed it is gone forever. While this is not a concern for developers - who see the pursuit of profit to be fair justification for any actions - it absolutely should be the concern of the local council, who are charged with protecting the local environment against such incursions.

I earnestly hope that you see fit to protect Athlone House by denying planning permission for a new house and enforcing the provisions of the original planning permission to have the house restored.

In my recent dealings with Camden Council I am constantly being assured of their new attitude and new respect for their "customers", the local residents. I hope to see the evidence of this in Planning as much as in other areas.



