

## Camden Square Conservation Area Advisory Committee

162 Agar Grove  
London NW1

**Date:** 18 November 2013

**Planning application Reference:** 2013/5969/P

**Proposal:** Change of use of basement & ground floor from restaurant (Class A3) to form 2 dwellings (Class C3) (1x studio and 1x 2 bedroom). Includes opening up of front light well, installation of railings and new access stair. Installation of 2 roof lights to existing rear ground floor extension

**Summary:** We object to the proposal. The development will harm the streetscape and will not enhance the conservation area

### Comments:

1. Both the drawings and the design and access statement have significant errors.
  - 1.1. This Victorian (not Georgian) building has uPVC double-glazed casement windows, not timber sashes as stated and drawn. These uPVC windows were the subject of a retrospective planning application in 2012 (2012/3561/P), which was rejected with a warning of enforcement action. (The 'existing' windows shown in that application were also incorrect.)
  - 1.2. The 'existing' front elevation drawings used in a rejected 2011 application for conversion to a guest house (2011/3007/P) were probably accurate. The Camden Square Conservation Area Gazetteer, updated by the CAAC in 2011 (and still awaiting comment or formal endorsement from Camden Planning), states of the group 160-164 Agar Grove that 'many of the windows appear original,... with 6-over-6 equal small panes'. It appears that unpermitted alterations to the property were carried out shortly thereafter.
  - 1.3. Other drawn inaccuracies include conflicts between plans and elevations. Most notable is the ground floor shop front elevation, shown in both existing and proposed versions as a single large sheet of glass, but in proposed plan as two smaller windows separated by a pier.
2. The proposal does not support the rhythm of neighbouring buildings
  - 2.1. The creation of a front light-well would cut into the consistent pavement line unless the shop front were recessed, possibly further than drawn.

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- 2.2. Recessing the shop front and creating a light-well with access stair would destroy the consistent form of this group of three 1850s shops with flats above.
3. The last use of the shop was as a food take-away. The Conservation Area and some adjacent streets have small groups of shops which outside larger local parades which appear to be difficult to let. The two shops on either side of this building appear to be well patronised, however, and the vast increase of housing in the nearby Maiden Lane estate as well as King's Cross could increase demand for shops in this area in the coming years. Camden's planning policies should take these often conflicting issues into account. The one solution we would argue against would be retaining vestigial shop use of such a small area as to be impractical
4. We have concerns about the viability of the internal layout
  - 4.1. The basement flat would have completely inadequate natural light.
5. Even if the significant errors in this application were corrected, we consider that it should be rejected.
  - 5.1. Creation of a front light-well would harm the Agar Grove streetscape and still not provide adequate natural light for habitable accommodation in the basement. I
  - 5.2. The argument in favour of increased residential development in an area currently subject to a major increase in housing should not outweigh the long-term consideration of what would suit this property and the Conservation Area.



**Signed:**

David Blagbrough  
Chair  
Camden Square CAAC

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