

**Re: 2013.6975/P - 73-75 Kenton Street: proposed change of use from offices to residential and alterations to building.**

The Marchmont Association objects to the above application. With regard to the proposed change of use, notwithstanding the loss of local employment space, we recognise the demand for residential accommodation in the area.

If the Council is minded to grant the proposed change of use, we insist that the proposed rear balconies and roof terrace be omitted from the scheme of works. The building backs directly onto the rear of other residential properties, so that the roof terrace and balconies will cause privacy and sound transmission problems. The rear corridor located between the Marchmont and Kenton Street properties acts like an echo chamber, with sound bouncing from wall to wall in such a way that the slightest conversation in external common parts reverberates, entering the bedroom windows of flats. Kitchen windows have been specifically designed to reduce sound break-out, which has proved very effective over the years. When there have been occasional office parties in 73-75 Kenton Street there have been times when residents in neighbouring properties have been seriously disturbed by a small number of people straying onto the rear fire escapes just having a chat, but unwittingly disturbing the sleep of residents. Thankfully, such incidents have been rare because the building has been generally only occupied by 9-5 office workers. If the building is changed to residential the propensity for such noise nuisance will increase to 24/7.

The Council has introduced an 11pm curfew for the residents of its 25 flats in adjacent Aberdeen & Robsart Mansions because of complaints about residents being disturbed by the reverberation of noise caused by people depositing refuse in the communal bins in the rear yard. The Council also has a strictly enforced 'no games' policy for the same reason. Over the years there have been regular complaints from residents about noise nuisance emanating from extraction equipment operating at the rear of commercial properties in Marchmont Street and Tavistock Place, which have been exacerbated by the echo chamber effect. These have resulted in extensive enforcement action by Environmental Health.

There will also be an issue of loss of privacy caused by the over-looking of adjacent properties from the proposed so-called 'amenity spaces'. Most of the neighbouring properties have their bedrooms and bathrooms at the rear. The flats directly backing onto 73-75 Kenton Street will be the worst affected i.e. 66-72 Marchmont Street and 50-52 Tavistock Place.

It is worth noting that over the years Camden Housing, who own the freehold of most of the houses in this block, have refused all requests for rear extensions, balconies and roof terraces on the grounds of potential loss of privacy and residential amenity (noise nuisance) for neighbouring properties.

We would ask the Council instead to require the developer to make a Section 106 contribution towards the cost of the upkeep of the Marchmont Community Garden, instead of permitting the proposed 'amenity spaces' to be attached to 73-75 Kenton Street.