


3<sup>rd</sup> September, 2013

Camden Council

**RE: Application Number: 2013/4916/P, Type: Full Planning Permission, Address: 114/118 Southampton Row London WC1B 5AA, Ward: Holborn & Covent Garden.**



We write to raise our objections to the proposed planning application 2013/4916/P.

We reserve the right to raise further objections as the planning process continues but the main objections we have are:

1. Effect on the natural light in our property

The light report served with the proposed application is severely flawed. It is unclear from the report as to which windows of our property it is referring to, however assumptions are made that any windows with blinds or other coverings as "blocked up". It is assumed that these windows are for non-habitable rooms such as bathrooms. In so far as this relates to our property both of these assumptions are wholly incorrect.

All the windows that face onto the light well will be affected by the proposed development are the main windows to our property. They are our lounge and kitchen windows. Given the assumptions that have been made this makes the whole light report flawed. We note that nobody has asked to enter our property to take specific light readings.

We have serious concerns that the proposed development will significantly reduce the natural light to our property and the light report has increased our concerns rather than reduce them.

It is further noted that all the windows in Wall (B) will have a level of light after the development which is below the minimum requirement as set out in Appendix 2.2 of the BRE Report.

It is noted that again there is an assumption that all these windows lead to non-habitable rooms. Until that assumption is proven no reasonable planning authority could reply on this report as sound evidence when considering a planning application.

## 2. Lack of consultation

The application correctly makes the point that pre application consultation is crucial. However despite what is said in the consultation document we have never received any communication from the proposed developers at any stage. We did not receive an invitation to the public meeting and we were not served with the application itself.

We only found out about the proposed development through another flat owner about three weeks ago. We are very surprised at this as it seems our property is one of those most severely affected and we do wonder that is why the developers have not included us in the process. It also explains the failure to check facts in the light report and instead make incorrect assumptions.

We are particular concerned at the failure to consult with us given that the Bloomsbury CAAC specifically asked the developer to communicate with the neighbouring properties including Russell square mansions. Something the developers have chosen to ignore in our case.

## 3. Proposed Two Storey Extension

The applications suggest that a nine storey building is in keeping with the surrounding properties. However, it will be higher than the buildings behind the proposed development which are the ones we look onto from our property. We believe it should remain the same height as Ormonde Mansions.

We also note the planning authority previously refused requests to increase the height of the Bloomsbury Hotel to nine floors and a similar request to with extra floors to the post office building.

We believe that adding two extra floors on this property will be a departure from the current planning policy and will simply lead to an increase in the height of the surrounding buildings over time.

## 4. Long term issues with plant noise

It is noted that the development will lead to a flat roof near us which will contain a generator, air conditioning units as well as other undefined 'plant'. This will significantly

increase the noise that we will have to put up with. Again no noise surveys have taken place in our property – because of the complete failure to consult- and we do not see how without this work it could be argued that the increased noise wouldn't have an effect on the enjoyment of our property.

There does not seem to have been any attempt to have dealt with the effect of fumes and smells which will also be discharged from the building as a result of the planned new kitchen at the rear on the second floor as well as the undefined “plant”.

5. Effects on our privacy

We currently have offices - obviously occupied during office hours - some distance behind our property and the suggested development will as we understand it lead to residential properties – occupied 24 hours a day – been built closer to our property. This will significantly reduce our privacy to go along with the reduced light and the increased noise and smells.

Insofar as the developers deal with this at all their argument appears to be as our privacy is affected to a small extent now it means they have the right to affect it to a greater extent in the future. We do not follow this logic and believe it is a flawed argument.

6. Significant Security concern



7. Proposed development is not in keeping with the surroundings buildings.

As the planning authority will be aware this is a conservation area with some old and well maintained mansion blocks. The entire frontage in the area is in a similar style and of a similar age. . One look at the artist's impression of the proposed development shows notwithstanding the fact it has clearly been prepared to show the building in its best possible light it still sticks out like a sore thumb and is not sympathetic to the surrounding buildings.

There is no reason why the building could not be re-developed to generate employment and to give it a use whilst still maintaining its façade and not extending it by two storeys, thus avoiding the very significant effects on our and neighbouring properties. For that reason alone this planning application should be rejected.

**Spencer and Joanna Wood**

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