



10/5/2013

(application reference 2013/1598/P) - Associated reference 2013/1787/P)

Dear Mr Richard McEllistrum,

I have owned (since Feb 2006) and am living in Flat 76 Sandwich House, Sandwich Street, WC1H 9 PW ('SST resident'), which is a ground floor flat facing the back of the Cartwright gardens development. In principle, I have no objections to the modernisation of Cartwright gardens, but I do have some objections to the behaviour of the developer and the proposed development. Our lounge/Kitchen faces the back of Cartwright gardens and the current building is dark, ugly, has a very dirty façade and looks out-dated. It actually resembles a 'prison', so I would welcome its removal and replacement by a modern building.

However, during the planning stage for the proposed development, the information disclosure to residents of SST has been patchy and bordering on the misleading. The plans for the development of the block were always in 2D and never shown in relation to the existing development, hence, it was never clear if the height of the existing development was being raised. I asked one of the architects/builders during an open evening if the height was being raised. He categorically said 'No' but this is clearly not the case. My reservations about the project concern 1). Raising the height (lack of light). 2) Noise nuisance from building new townhouses with access to Sandwich street. 3) Potential increased traffic & less parking availability. If these issues are not adequately addressed, I believe that the ongoing 'quality of life' of long term SST residents will materially suffer.

1) Being on the ground floor, we receive considerably less light than ground floor flats on Thanet Street which typically face 2/3 storey news properties. The proposed development will raise the height of the existing building and will likely completely block out some natural sunlight which we receive from the car-park area at the back of Cartwright Gardens. This is particularly a problem during winter months when days are short and the sun is low in the Sky.

2) The existing development currently has no student/pedestrian access onto Sandwich Street but this is proposed to change with the new townhouses & 187 more students. Noise from regular student parties is already quite bad (reverberates down the street), from open windows backing onto Sandwich Street. With the proposed development, we are likely to have more student congregations outside the new town houses, with increased late-night noise from drinking activity and a possible increased presence from drug dealers. Students are typically transient and not that bothered about the feelings or concerns of longer-term residents such as those at SST, so I see rising friction between SST residents and students of UCL and UCL itself as inevitable.

3) There is currently good parking and light traffic flow on Sandwich Street. This will deteriorate with the new townhouses, 187 more students and proposed Summer conferences, which could bring frequent & very noisy heavy vehicles (large coaches) onto Sandwich Street. The reverberation of noise on Sandwich from vehicles is quite high given the existing height of buildings and will substantially deteriorate under the new development.

I am in favour of a modernisation of Cartwright Gardens but overall, this development seems more about maximising development profit to UCL (they probably can't develop other sites in Bloomsbury due to planning restrictions, hence they are 'going for it' at Cartwright Gardens.), than taking into account the quality of life concerns of long term residents who form the real fabric of the community around Bloomsbury. I look forward to following the planning application with interest.

